The Resurrection of the Son of God

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Preacher: Kevin Murphy

[0:00] Today's scripture reading is from Luke chapter 4, the whole chapter.! Please follow along in your Bible or the Church Bible.! Our passage can be found on page 831 in the Church Bible.

On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared, and they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. But when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.
While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the man said to them, Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has reason.
Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise.
And they remembered his words. And returning from the tomb, they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary, Madeline, and Joanna, and Mary, the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.
[1:15] But this was what seems to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter rose and ran to the tomb, stooping and looking in. He saw the linen cloths by themselves, and he went home, marveling at what had happened.

That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. And they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.
While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?
And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?
And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him.
[2:33] But we had hope that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us.

They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.
Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But him they did not see. And he said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.
Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.
So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, Stay with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent.
[3:42] So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.

And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?
And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, The Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon.

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Then they told what had happened on the road and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace to you.
But they were startled and frightened and thought that they saw a spirit. And he said to them, Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.
[4:48] Touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have. And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling, he said to them, Have you anything here to eat?

They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them. Then he said to them, These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Lord of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.
Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures and said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.
You are witnesses of these things, and behold, I am sending the promise of my Father appoint you, but stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.
And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.
[6:06] And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God. Let us believe and respond to God's true and living word.

Great. Thanks, Colin and Kristen. Well, once again, good morning. Great to see you here. If you are visiting for the first time, my name is Kevin, and it's a joy to be with you this morning.
Now, each year, billions and billions of dollars around the world, which legally belong to individuals, such as you and I, go unclaimed and unaccounted for.
Stocks, dividends, mutual funds purchased decades ago, long forgotten about, insurance payouts, which beneficiaries never knew existed, contents of abandoned safe deposit boxes, which are so safe, they're still in there, even payroll checks that were from former employees, employers that were never collected.
Sometimes a loved one dies, and they've got a life insurance policy, but their loved ones never know about it. And so they never collect the insurance policy, meaning significant sums of money that the person wanted their loved ones to have on their passing, go uncollected and accounted for.
[7:32] Friends, I wonder how you would feel if one day you're on your deathbed, you've got a few hours left to live, and someone comes here and says, don't you know those tens, even hundreds of millions of dollars that belong to you?

You haven't claimed them? You haven't collected them? They're all going to waste. What a pity it would be if you never claimed, never enjoyed all that was rightfully yours.
Well, in order to enjoy the benefits that are rightly ours, we need to clearly and thoroughly understand what it is that has been given to us, what it is that we have, what it is that we are entitled to.
Now this morning, we're looking at Luke's gospel, Luke 24, and we're going to see a glimpse of just what it is that Christ has accomplished for us through his death and resurrection. If you've got a Bible, keep it open.
We're going to look at a couple of verses. We're going to be looking at that over the next half an hour or so. But this weekend is obviously Easter weekend. It is the high point of the Christian life, the Christian calendar.
[8:31] I hope that many of you were able to join us this weekend at the journey of the cross as we went through this hall and followed Jesus on his journey from Gethsemane to the tomb.

But of course, the Easter story doesn't end on the cross. It doesn't even end in Joseph's tomb. The Easter story continues through Good Friday to Resurrection Sunday when the disciples encounter the risen, resurrected Christ.
And that's what we're going to look at today. Now if you were paying attention during the reading, you'll notice that Luke here gives three accounts of very ordinary people that encounter the risen Christ.

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Three different stories of these people. And these accounts are all similar and different in some ways. I don't know if you have ever seen a piece of artwork made up of three panels.
There we go, something like that. It's called a triptych, I think, is the technical word. It's one piece of artwork made of three panels. And each art piece is not exactly the same as the others, but there's a continuation.
[9:38] There's a story that's told as you put them together. And the meaning of the art is found in both the similarities and the differences. As you look at each individual piece, it tells you something. But as you look at the piece together, it tells you a much fuller story.

Luke's description of the resurrection is something like this. He gives us three accounts of people encountering the risen Jesus, which each speak to us individually, but also together as a whole.
So let's take a look at them. So the first story is this. The first one happens early in the morning.
John's gospel tells us this happened while it was still dark. Mary Magdalene and some other ladies go towards the tomb with spices that they'd prepared to freshly anoint the body.
But to their great surprise, upon arriving at the tomb, they discover the stone has been rolled away. The tomb is empty. And while they're wondering what's going on, they're probably assuming that either robbers have come in during the night or maybe the authorities have stolen the body and hid in it.
Jesus was a controversial figure. While they're wondering and trying to make sense of this, two angels appear and say to them, why do you seek the living in the place of the dead?
[10:52] He is not here. He has risen, just as he told you. And these ladies discover the empty tomb. Now, you may be new to church.

You may be new to Christianity. And you may be saying, come on, come on, come on. Dead people don't rise. Who do you take me to be? Am I a fool? Maybe you're a scientist. Maybe you say, listen, this is the 21st century.
We know these things, right? But isn't that exactly the point? Just like you and me, these women went to the tomb not expecting it to be empty, not expecting not to find a body.
They went there knowing that dead bodies don't rise. They went there expecting to find the tomb sealed, Jesus behind the tomb, and dead as he was on Friday. N.T. Wright, the famous theologian academic, said ancient people knew perfectly well that dead people don't rise.
We don't need modern science to tell us that. And that's exactly true, right? Despite everything that Jesus had said to them, they were expecting a tomb that was sealed in the body behind the stone.
[12:02] They were no more expecting an empty tomb than you and I would expect to come home from our grandmother's funeral, to walk into the living room, and there she is, sitting, eating dim sum, right?

That's what they were expecting, a tomb with a stone rolled over, Jesus behind there. The other gospel writers tell us that the tomb was sealed, shut.
There were guards put in place to make sure that no robbers could steal the body, and the disciples couldn't come and take the body and claim that he was risen. And yet, despite that, every precaution was taken to make sure the body of Jesus remained in place.
And yet, these first eyewitnesses, against their own intuition, against everything they knew about life and death, came to see that the once sealed, heavily guarded tomb was empty.
Now, some people might say, yeah, but, you know, the disciples, they were obviously intellectually or emotionally biased. I mean, they were looking for a resurrection. And so, they confused the hallucinations with visions.
[13:10] And they confused these visions thinking they saw the real Jesus. They thought this was appearances of Jesus. But friends, can't you see the whole point the historical writers are making is just how much these first witnesses were not expecting to find Jesus.

They weren't biased at all. They weren't looking for a risen Christ. They were looking for a dead body. And yet, despite everything that they should have known, what they saw was the empty tomb and were reminded of what Jesus said.
Okay, first story. Second story, what happens? Now it's mid-afternoon. Sunday afternoon, three days after, Jesus has been crucified. It's Sunday afternoon. Here we have two disciples. One of them is a man called Cleopas.
The other one, we don't know their name. And they're walking the 11 kilometer journey from Jerusalem to a town called Emmaus. And along the way, Jesus himself comes and walks alongside

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them.
And he hears them talking and Jesus plays the fool. He plays ignorant. And he says, hey, what are you guys talking about? And they say, where have you been? Don't you know? Jesus of Nazareth. [14:14] The one that we had high expectations for. He's been killed. The authorities killed him. And they say, don't you know what's been going on in Jerusalem? And sorry, Jesus says, no, no, what's been going on?

Tell me. And they tell him about himself. They say, you know, Jesus, the one we had hoped would save Israel, rescue Israel. And Jesus plays along for a little while and then Jesus says, but isn't that what the Old Testament scriptures said was to happen?
And starting with the Old Testament, Jesus goes through all the Old Testament and shows them, reveals to them how the Messiah has to die in judgment for the sin of his people.
Rise again in vindication. And then they stop for an early dinner and as they are breaking bread, suddenly their eyes are opened and they realize who it is that's in front of them and Jesus is no longer there.
And what do they say? They say, did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road and opened the scriptures? Here they encountered Jesus in such a profound way.
[15:17] It wasn't just intellectually. It wasn't just like, oh wow, okay, I guess let's just connect the dots. It wasn't just emotionally. They didn't have an emotional reaction. There's something so profoundly deep within them that the deepest longings, the deepest yearnings, the deepest hopes of their hearts were being engaged as they realized Jesus is not dead.

He's alive. And the point here is that these disciples, they didn't see the empty tomb. For them, they encountered the risen Jesus. How? In the scriptures and in the sacraments as they connected the dots and saw that Jesus was alive.
How about the third story? Well, the third story, it's now evening time. So we've had morning, we've had afternoon. It's now the evening. And Jesus appears again amongst the rest of his disciples in the house where they're staying.
And they not only see him, but they touch him. Jesus says, feel my hands, look at my feet, where the, he says, touch me and see. Look, a spirit doesn't have these things.
And the point here is that Jesus appears to them in physical, bodily form. This is not a spirit. This is not, Jesus just rose in their hearts philosophically.
[16:28] Jesus didn't appear from another world and send them a message from another world. Jesus physically, bodily appeared in their midst and showed them that he had risen from the dead.

And he eats with them and he speaks with them and he communes with them and he reveals himself to them. Okay, so there's three different stories. Now, what's the point of all this?
Why is Luke telling us these stories? Why didn't Luke just give us one story? Luke is building a case here. Luke is like a good lawyer, a good barrister, right? And he's building an argument and he's getting all his witnesses in place.
Imagine here in Hong Kong there's a motor car accident somewhere, right? And somebody is tragically killed. And the prosecutors, the DOJ, they want to prosecute the driver for maybe manslaughter or reckless driving.
And so they're building their case and they get all their witnesses and they find a lady who was on the side of the road and witnessed the accident. And then they see there's a residential block across the road and there's a guard that stays in the guardhouse and he witnessed everything.
[17:31] And then they find the car driving behind and they've got a dashboard camera and the camera witnessed everything and they get their three witnesses all from different angles and they say, tell us your story.

What did you see? What did you see? And the witnesses all tell the same story but from a different angle. Oh, I saw this happen. I saw this happen. It's the same story. Luke here is like a barrister. He's building his case and each narrative tells us the same story from a different angle. The woman discover an empty tomb. The stone is rolled away. There's nobody inside and they get a message saying this is the place of the dead.
Why are you looking for living people here? The disciples on the road to Emmaus, they encounter Jesus but they don't recognize him. They encounter Jesus in the scriptures and in the sacraments. As Jesus opens the scriptures and breaks bread and they recognize Jesus is with us. And then the other, the 11 apostles and the others with him, they see Jesus physically.

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[18:30] They touch him. They hold him. They look at the marks in his hands. And Luke is saying, look at all the witnesses. But each time the case is building and the evidence is getting more and more substantial. So the two women, they go to the tomb but they don't actually see Jesus.

They just see the tomb is empty and they hear angels. It's not the most compelling evidence. But then, the two disciples, they actually see Jesus and they've got a thousand years of testimony and witness and oh, it makes sense.
And then finally, the 11 apostles, these are God's authorized disciples that are going to go out. They actually physically see Jesus and touch him. The case is building, building, building. And Luke's point here is, it's real.
It's not what any of the disciples expected. It's not what they were looking for. No one had the bias that Jesus is going to rise again and yet it happened. It's true.
It's real. Jesus really rose. Except, Luke is saying more than that, isn't he? You see, in Luke's gospel, Luke's account of the death of Christ is different from all the other gospels.
[19:41] In fact, each gospel has its own emphasis. And Luke pulls out things that the other writers don't pull out. And so, look at one or two of them with me. One of the things, in the build-up to the crucifixion, Luke makes the point that there is kind of demonic, satanic activity that's kind of brooding around here.

Three times in Luke chapter 22, Jesus references Satan, or Luke references the work of Satan. Look at verse 3. He says, Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, and he went and conferred with the chief priest how he might betray him.
Verse 31, Jesus says, Simon, Simon, Satan has demanded to have you that he might sift you like weak, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And then when Jesus arrests in Gethsemane, he says, this is now the hour, the power of darkness.
And there's the sense that the forces of evil are like a kettle of velchers. They're kind of circling or a pack of hyenas. They're smelling something and they're brooding, they're moving in.
There's evil that's brooding around the scene here, right? But there's something else Luke also says in his Passion account. Luke makes the point of the innocence of Jesus.
[20:52] The innocence of Jesus. Three times during the trial of Jesus, Pontius Pilate says, I find no guilt in this man. There's nothing in here that makes him worthy of dying. And Pilate sends him away to Herod and Herod sends him back saying, I can find no guilt in him worthy of death.

Even, I mean, remember, Herod didn't really love Jesus, right? Herod wasn't a good man. But Herod says, there's nothing in him deserving of death. And then even while Jesus is dying on the cross, the centurions, the Roman soldiers whose job it is to make sure that he's dead and justice is served, the centurion says, surely this man was innocent.
And Luke is building the case here that everybody who had eyes to see could see that this was a travesty of justice. Jesus was an innocent man that did not deserve to die.
The authorities can tell, the centurions can tell, everybody knows Jesus was an innocent man. And you get the sense that for the disciples, part of their confusion, part of their despair, part of their hopelessness, is these two things coming together.
The sense of this evil forces that are brooding and the injustice that's going on, it feels like, well, where is hope? Is there any hope in the world? When you've got these two things going on, the sense is that maybe Jesus was a victim of a terrible plot.
[22:15] That the forces of evil and the forces of hell and the injustice of man, these things destroyed Jesus. And Jesus was a victim of a travesty of justice.

I wonder if that's what Luke's first readers were feeling. As they read at the end of chapter 23, they just think, what hope is there in the world? When you've got such evil in the world and such evil men doing these things, what hope is there for any of us?
But friends, don't you see? Luke wants to tell us that is exactly not what is happening. Jesus' death on the cross was not the result of evil forces and not the result primarily of the injustice of man. This was the purpose and the plan of God. This was God's doing. This is what God had always planned would happen. The excruciating death of the Lord Jesus was not because of evil forces in the world, not the cowardness of Pontius Pilate, not the jealousy of the Jewish people, not the treachery of Judas Iscariot.
In spite of all them, this was the predetermined plan and the purpose of the triune God, the sovereign God of Father, Son, and Spirit that He would send His Son into the world to die on the

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cross for the sins of all those who would believe in Him.
[23:36] to take upon Himself the sin of humanity and rise again on the third day as confirmation that His atonement offering was accepted. And that's why all three of these stories, all three panels, make the case that this is what was written about and spoken about hundreds of years before.

If you've got your Bible, look at the first panel. Look at verse 5. The angels said to the woman, Why do you seek the living amongst the dead? He is not here. He has risen.
Remember how He told you while He was still with you in Galilee, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified on the third day. The angels tell the woman, Why are you surprised?
Jesus said this was going to happen. Look at the second panel. Look at verse 25. Jesus said to them, Oh foolish ones, how slow of heart you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken.
Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer and then enter into His glory? And beginning with Moses and the prophets, He interpreted to them all the scriptures the things concerning Himself.
[24:43] Look at the third panel, verse 44. Jesus said to the disciples, These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me and the law and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

Then He opened their eyes to understand. And He said to them, It is written, the Christ will suffer and on the third day rise from the dead that the repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed to all nations.
Friends, this is what God's word said would always happen. This is what the entire Old Testament is about. This is what Isaiah said 700 years before that the suffering servant would give his life as an offering for sin, a guilt offering, and rise again and be vindicated and live forever.
This is what Hosea the prophet said 800 years before. He said that God would ransom His servant from the power of the grave, redeem him from death. This is what King David spoke about, Israel's greatest king, that he, the sinless one, would defeat death and the grave and live at God's right hand and experience the pleasure of God forever and ever.
Friends, this is what the whole Bible is about because this is what Christianity is about. It is written that the Christ will suffer and rise again. Why? Verse 47, so that the repentance for the forgiveness of sins may be proclaimed in His name to all people.
[26:11] Friends, this is what Easter is about. Jesus went to the cross, suffered, mocked, beaten, crucified, killed, rose again.

That repentance of sins, that hope in this life and in the world to come can be proclaimed for everyone. Later in 1 Corinthians 15, if Christ has not been raised, then our message, the gospel, the message of Christianity is in vain.
Then all of our faith is in vain and we are still dead in our sins. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.
But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead and therein lies our hope. Friends, in verse 1 of Luke 24, Luke writes this. He says, Now it was the first day of the week.
Friends, but don't you see, it wasn't just the first day of the week. It was the first day of a whole new world, a world in which hope was being restored, in which death and despair and hopelessness and fear was passing away.
[27:24] Now, what does this mean for us today? How does this help us today? Well, look at these three stories once again and what do you notice about the people in them?

What happens to the people? In all three of them, they undergo a profound change, don't they? And look at how Luke describes them before they encounter the risen Jesus.
In verse 4, they are perplexed and confused. In verse 5, they are frightened and alarmed. In verse 11, they are cynical and disbelieving. In verse 17, they are downcast and sad.
In verse 21, they are despondent and confused. In verse 38, they are troubled, doubtful, and fearful. Here are a group of people you could say they are not flourishing.
They are experiencing deep mental ill health, emotional ill health. And yet, each one of them go through a profound transformation. Look at how it ends. Look at verse 52.
[28:21] And they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were continually in the temple praising God. Here are confused, despondent, troubled men and women who are so deeply and powerfully transformed.

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They are barely recognizable. And this wasn't just a momentary transformation. As you read the book of Acts, Luke's sequel to his gospel, you discover this is a deep transformation that goes on. Many of them will go to their graves like this. Do you remember what the religious leaders say about these disciples in Acts chapter 4? They are joyful.
They are threatened. They'll say, if you don't shut up, we're going to kill you. And they say, okay, fine. We'll just keep on preaching. And they say, they recognized these as uneducated men that had been with Jesus.
Friends, they encountered the risen Lord and that changed them. What accounts for this change that takes place in them? They had encountered the risen Christ and suddenly it all makes sense.
[29:29] Jesus' death wasn't an accident. this was God's plan to rescue humanity from the dire and hopeless situation from which we could not save ourselves. Only a risen Christ who conquered the grave can defeat the tyranny of death, Satan, and hell.

Only a risen Christ could bring about the promised new hope, the new world, the new creation the prophets had spoken about and longed for. Friends, in seeing the risen Christ, they understand that Jesus is God who is sovereign and majestic and worthy of worship and the one who gives hope to the hopeless.
Now, friends, what does this mean for you and I? Well, I hope you can see Luke is not just telling us something. Luke is asking us a question.
In fact, he's asking us two questions. Luke is asking us two very important questions and I want you to think about these questions. The first one is this. Luke is asking, based on the evidence of your life, looking at your hope, your joy, your certainty, your conviction, your worship, what does that tell you about your belief in the risen Christ?
Friends, have you encountered the living Lord Jesus? Do you really believe in the risen Lord Jesus? Now, you may say, yes, of course I believe. I've always believed.
[30:55] I was baptized as an infant. I've believed all my life. But do you really? How would you know if your belief is genuine or just wishful thinking? How would you know if your faith is genuine saving faith or just religious superstition?

Cultural Christianity? Just religious wishful thinking? Friends, can you see what Luke is saying here? Those who encounter the risen Lord Jesus Christ, their lives are different.
Their hope is different. Their joy is different. Their purpose is different. Their disposition is different. Their entire ambition and character is different. Remember, Luke is a physician.
He's a doctor here. Like a good doctor, he's examining us. He's probing. He's pressing. He's examining the condition of our faith and he's asking the question, you say you have faith in the risen Lord, where's the evidence?
Where's the changed life? When risen Christ comes into our lives, he does not leave us the same.
Here's the second question Luke wants to ask us. If what the scriptures said about the coming Messiah, about his death and his resurrection proved true, what are you doing about the rest of the scriptures?
[32:09] You see, the Bible in its entirety and its totality is God's word. Jesus said the scriptures cannot be broken. It's not just that one or two pages proved true. Every single page, every promise of scripture from thousands of years ago right through today is proved true.

And if what Jesus said, if the scriptures said about Jesus' death and resurrection on the third day proved true against everybody's expectation, friends, what it means is that everything else from the scriptures is true.
And so what are you doing about it? What are you doing with the parts that speak about his atoning sacrifice, the fact that he died in your place as a guilt offering for your sin that you might be cleansed and justified and made new?
Friends, what are you doing with the scriptures that speaks about your need for faith and repentance? What are you doing with the scriptures that say that Jesus is Lord over all and has authority over every human being?
What are you doing with the scriptures that speak about his imminent return to judge the living and the dead? You see, if Jesus proved the scriptures foretelling his death and resurrection are true, it means everything is true.
[33:17] Well, friends, you may say, well, okay, that's good, but how does that help me with my job this week? How does that help me find a job or with my aging parents or find a spouse or the difficulties in life? Friends, not everything in life will be solved in this world.

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Jesus never promised us that follow him and everything will go your way. In fact, Jesus said that in this world you will have trouble, you will have difficulty, you will have hardship and tears and pain, but take heart, I have overcome the world.
And how do you know that's true? Because he overcame the grave. And so, friends, when work is hard and difficult and you feel all alone, take heart, Jesus has overcome.
And, friends, when your parents are old and aging and getting sick and it's hard to take care for them and you feel exhausted and worn down, take heart, Jesus has overcome. And, friends, when work is hard and money is tight and parenting is difficulty and you've come to the end of yourself, take heart, Jesus has overcome.
Friends, the grave is empty, the resurrection is true, new hope abounds. Friends, what happens if on your deathbed one day someone told you that you had tens of millions of dollars that was just waiting for you and you never appropriated it, never took hold of it, never used it, what a pity that would be.
[34:39] But, friends, what happens if one day the risen Lord Jesus Christ looks you in the eye and he says, I died and I rose again to give you new hope, new life, new joy in this world and forever and you never took hold of it, never appropriated it, never made it your own, that would be a disaster.

And so as we come to a close, let me remind you of the words we sang a little earlier. Though the sun had ceased its shining, though the war appeared as lost, Christ has triumphed over evil, it was finished upon the cross.
Death was once our great opponent, fear once had a hold of me and of you. But the sun who died to save us rose that we would be free indeed.
Yes, he rose that we would be free indeed. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we pray to you because you are not a philosophy, you are not an idea, you are not a concept, you are alive.
And God, seated in the throne of heaven, you hear our prayers. You hear the smallest prayers, you hear the prayers prayed with mixed motives, you hear even the most insipid and weakest of prayers.
[35:57] You come, you respond to our faith. Jesus, thank you for conquering the grave. Thank you for rising again. Thank you that the first day of the week is also the first day of a whole new world, a world in which we get to participate simply through faith and repentance.

Christ, come and be alive in our hearts, we pray. Come and make yourself real to us. Come and change our lives. God, for those of us that are weighed down with despair and despondency, God, come and open the eyes of our heart to see the new hope to which you've given us.
In your great and wonderful name I pray. Amen. Amen.

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