

I Am the Resurrection

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 17 April 2022

Preacher: Kevin Murphy

- [0 : 00] Today's reading is from John chapter 11, starting at verse 1, and we read. Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
- It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sister sent to him, saying, Lord, he whom you love is ill.
- But when Jesus heard it, he said, this illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.
- Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.
- Then after this, he said to his disciples, let us go to Judea again. The disciples said to him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?
- [1 : 13] Jesus answered, are there not 12 hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world.
- But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him. After saying these things, he said to them, our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I will go to awaken them.
- The disciples said to him, Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover. Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought he meant taking rest and sleep.
- Then Jesus told them plainly, Lazarus has died, and for your sake, I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe, but let us go to him.
- So Thomas, called the twin, said to his fellow disciples, let us also go, that we may die with him.
- [2 : 21] Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to consult them concerning their brother.
- So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.
- But even now, I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. Jesus said to her, your brother will rise again.
- Martha said to him, I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life.
- Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?
- [3 : 32] She said to him, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the son of God, who is coming into the world.
- When she has said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, the teacher is here and is calling for you. And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him.

Now, Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

Now, when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

When Jesus saw her weeping. When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

[4 : 45] And he said, where have you laid him? They said to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.

So the Jews said, see how he loved him. But some of them said, could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?

Then Jesus deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave and a stone laid against it. Jesus said, take away the stone.

Master, the sister of the dead man said to him, Lord, by this time there will be an odour, for he has been dead four days.

Jesus said to her, did I not tell you that if you believe you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone.

[5 : 45] And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me.

But I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me. When he had said these things, he cried out in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out.

Come out. The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips and his face wrapped with a cloth.

Jesus said to them, unbind him and let him go. This is the word of God. Amen. Great.

Thank you, Bernard and Angie, for reading that for us. Thank you, Christine, for sharing your story, a story which is full of tears, but also a story full of resurrection power.

[6 : 52] And we are excited to continue to watch your story unfold and see how the life of God is working in your life. So thank you for being vulnerable. Thank you for being real with us and not just putting on a brave face.

Thank you for letting us into your life, Christine. We really appreciate that. Well, Watermark, it is really great to be with you again. And it's great to be with you for the last time online.

Hopefully the last time in a very long time. Hopefully the last time ever. But at least the last time for a while. We are so excited to see you next Sunday at Ebenezer in person so that we can sing and pray and worship and listen and take communion together as a church family.

Bring your vaccine pass. Come early. We're excited to see you next Sunday. But today is Resurrection Sunday. It is the heart of Christianity. Today is the day that we celebrate not only that Jesus died on the cross to take upon himself the sins of all those who would trust in him and hope in him and come to saving faith in him.

In our place condemned he stood. Today we celebrate not only the wonderful truth of our justification that our sins have been put in Christ. But today we celebrate the fact that the tomb is empty.

[8 : 09] That Jesus rose again to vindicate all his amazing claims. To prove that he is the Christ. To defeat the grave and put an end to death.

And so Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Today we are going to look at this very fascinating passage in John 11. It's a very famous passage.

And it's a passage which is full of intrigue and mystery. If you're paying attention while Bernard and Angie were reading, There's a whole lot of things in this passage that at first glance kind of make you think, Hang on, what's going on here?

And so there's a couple of surprising and interesting things in this passage. So let's dive in and then we're going to see how this applies to our lives today. The first thing I think we should notice is the surprising ministry of Jesus.

The surprising tenderness and care of Jesus. This passage is full of all the things that you and I experience in this world. The brokenness and the pain of this world.

[9 : 12] I don't know if you noticed in verse 8, Jesus says to his disciples, Let's go to Judea. And his disciples automatically say, Jesus, don't you remember just recently the religious leaders here in Judea were trying to kill you, trying to end your life.

Why would you go there? And yet Jesus goes straight there. He walks into, as dead trap as was, he walks into the brokenness of the world.

And of course, you notice the tears, right? The passage is full of tears. And Jesus joins Mary in her tears. He even weeps with her. And the surprising thing is that Jesus is going to raise Lazarus from the dead in a few minutes, maybe half an hour's time.

And yet, despite that, he joins Mary in her tears. You know, it's kind of like if you've got a young child or a child at home and something goes wrong.

Let's say they're building a Lego set and someone breaks down or they're making a drawing or craft and it gets crumbled, damaged, or they spill their juice and there's tears, right?

[10 : 17] Oh, no, the world has come to an end. As a parent, what do you do? And instinctively, I'll say, it's okay. Don't worry. Don't worry. We're going to sort it out. Look, I'll help you rebuild the Lego or I will help you with your craft or don't worry.

We'll wipe it up. We'll get you some more juice. We automatically run to the solution. But Jesus doesn't do that. Even though he's about to raise Lazarus from the dead, you might expect Jesus to say, Mary, Mary, don't worry.

Just come with me to the tomb. We'll raise him and it'll all be fine. But Jesus doesn't do that. He joins Mary in her tears. He weeps with her. He mourns with her.

Part of what the story wants to show us is that Jesus is not some pie-in-the-sky stoic, a mighty ruler from another world who just finds our pain and our tears unbearable and who wants to quickly solve our problems.

Do you remember Christine just shared that a few minutes ago? She said, I was brought up and tempted to bury my pain just to cover over it, to not expose it. But Jesus is not like that.

[11 : 22] Jesus' surprising tenderness in ministry as he moves towards the areas of our lives where we are most burdened. In fact, I don't know if you know, it's in verse 39.

There's this amazing little encounter where Martha, and Jesus says, now open up the tomb. And Martha says, Jesus, he's been in there for four days. That tomb is not going to smell nice at all.

And friends, all of us have areas of our lives that stink as badly as that dead man's tomb. All of us have areas in our life that we want to cover up, lock, and seal, and don't want to let anybody or anything in.

But Jesus wants to move into those areas of our lives. Jesus wants to bring his resurrection life and his redeeming power and his healing grace to the areas that we find most burdensome, the areas that we find most troubling, the areas that we find most disagreeable.

Christ wants to move in there. One of the things that commentators quickly point out in this passage, and you might have noticed it, is the way that Jesus responds to Mary and Martha in the exact same way.

[12 : 28] Look at verse 21. Martha comes to Jesus and says, Lord, if you'd been here, my brother would not have died. And Jesus says, your brother will rise again. And Mary, a few verses later, comes to Jesus with the exact same words.

She says, Lord, if you'd been here, my brother would not have died. And what does Jesus do? He weeps with her. To one, Jesus brings this theological truth.

He brings truth to Martha, and to Mary, he brings tears. Tim Keller says, why does he do this? Why does Jesus bring truth to one and tears to the other?

Why does he treat these two sisters differently? Why does he respond to one sister in one way, and another sister who brings the exact same problem in a completely different way? And Tim Keller's answer is, because Jesus is perfect.

Jesus is perfect. He knows each one of us. He knows what we need. See, some of us need truth. We need the truth that will set us free.

[13 : 33] Jesus, for some of us, will bring truth that confronts us, that challenges us, that confronts the sin in our lives, confronts the idols that we've been trusting in. Jesus will sometimes bring a truth that will even confront the unbelief in our hearts.

He will bring his truth to set us free. But for others of us, Jesus will just simply bring his tenderness, the ministry of tears. Jesus is perfect.

And for the areas of our lives where we are tempted to most cover up, Jesus brings his surprising ministry of grace. But notice, secondly, the surprising love of Jesus.

You probably would have picked this up in the very first verses. When Bernard read it again, even though I've read this passage hundreds of times, it always arrests me. Look at verses 2 to 6 with me.

Verse 2 says, Verse 5 says, Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

[14 : 41] So, therefore, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. In other words, he stayed where he was and let Lazarus die.

Now, that doesn't make sense to us, right? Because if Jesus, as Rebecca McLaughlin recently pointed out, if Jesus said, or if the passage said, you know, Jesus didn't care about Mary and Martha and Lazarus.

They meant nothing to him. So, he stayed where he was and let them die. Okay, that would make sense. Callous, maybe, uncaring, but it would make logical sense. If the passage said, Jesus cared them and loved them deeply, so he rushed to their side to come and help them in their time of need, well, that would make sense to us as well.

Here the passage says, Jesus loved them, so he stayed where he was and let Lazarus die. Why does he do that? One of the things that Jesus wants us to see is his surprising love for us means that he orchestrates things so that we will see our need for him.

Previously, the sisters call out to Jesus because Lazarus, their brother, needs him. They call on Jesus, much like one of you or I would call on a doctor or a nurse at the hospital if we were at the bedside of someone we loved.

[16 : 04] You call the doctor and say, please, I need you here because this person that I love is in need of you. Mary and Martha call on Jesus because Lazarus needs him. They need him to do something for them.

But later on, they run to Jesus because they need him. They don't just need Jesus to do something for them. They don't just need his miraculous power to solve their problems.

They call on Jesus because they need his tender ministry. Jesus' surprising love for us means that because he loves us, he won't always give us what we want, but he will give us what we need.

What do Mary and Martha need? Friends, what do you and I need? We don't just need a miracle to solve our problems. We need to encounter the sovereign, all-pervasive love of Christ himself, the risen Christ.

We need to encounter him in our lives. We need to see his love for us and run to him and encounter him. In verse 4, we skip this, it says this, Jesus says, this illness does not lead to death.

[17 : 15] It is for the glory of God so that the Son of God may be glorified through it. And at first you read that and you think, that sounds very egotistical. Jesus is saying, listen, I'm going to let Lazarus lie so that when I rise and raise him from the dead, all men will glorify me and worship me and tell me how wonderful I am.

I think that sounds very egotistical. But if you've been reading the book of John's Gospel with us through the month of, through Lent, one of the things you'll see is that Jesus is constantly avoiding the crowds.

Time and time again, the crowds want to take Jesus and make him king by force and Jesus slips out of their way. Jesus is constantly avoiding the praise and the glory of man.

So what does Jesus mean here? What he means is that Jesus reveals himself, not for the sake of his pride or his ego, but so that people like Mary and Martha, that people like you and I can be drawn to him and encounter him in our place of need.

Jesus says the same thing, actually, a couple of chapters later in John chapter 14. He says this, the person who loves me will be loved by my father. I will love him and reveal myself to him or make myself known to him.

[18 : 31] One of the ways that Jesus loves us is by revealing who he is and drawing us into himself so that we can encounter his grace. Jesus doesn't love us primarily by keeping us from suffering or pain or death.

He loves us by drawing us into himself, sometimes even allowing us to go through suffering. Because for those that have encountered Jesus and his grace, those who know how to find their rest in Jesus, suffering, though it feels like death, death always leads to life.

Because that is the cruciform life. That is the pattern of Easter, death, and then resurrection. And that leads us, thirdly, to the third thing, the surprising promise of Jesus.

The surprising ministry of Jesus is the fact that he moves into the very brokenness of our lives. The areas that we most want to keep hidden, Jesus moves in. The surprising love of Jesus is that he doesn't always give us exactly what we want, but because he loves us, he gives us what we need.

And sometimes that will feel like death, but actually it leads to life. But thirdly, the surprising promise of Jesus. And in this, we come to the heart of the passage.

[19 : 49] This passage reveals not only the wonderful attributes of Jesus and his amazing love for us, but it also reveals the heart of Christianity, the promise of resurrection hope.

And so look with me at verses 23 to 27. Look at this conversation Jesus has with Martha. Martha says, Lord, if you'd been here, my brother would not have died.

But even now, I know whatever you ask, God will give you. Jesus says to her, your brother will rise again. Martha says, I know he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day, and I look forward to that.

And Jesus says, no, Martha, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

Why is this good news? Why do Christians all around the world celebrate the good news of the resurrection? Why is what Jesus is saying here good news for people like you and I?

[20 : 53] Well, there's a couple of things that I think we ought to see in this passage. The first one is, Jesus wants us to see that the good news of the resurrection is not just a concept or philosophy or a way of life.

It's a person. It's a person. It's Jesus himself. Now, notice how, when Jesus seeks to help Martha, if he doesn't help her just by giving her religious or trite religious sympathies, where, you know, when someone passes away, what do we typically say?

We typically say they've gone to a better place. And we say this in order to comfort ourselves, in order to make ourselves feel better. But what does that actually mean? I mean, that is so general, so vague, so trite.

They've gone to a better place. Well, how do you know that? And who's gone to a better place? And how do you know that that's actually a better place after all? And how do you know that they themselves have gone there?

Jesus, when he promises us resurrection hope, Jesus doesn't just give us vague, religious, trite answers. Jesus doesn't give us generalities like you've gone to a better place and don't worry, everything's going to work out fine.

[22 : 12] Jesus gives us something concrete, something solid, something that we can hold on to. Jesus gives us the rock solid assurance that the promise of the resurrection is not found in a vague concept or Jesus, let me put it this way, Jesus doesn't just give us a religious book.

He gives us himself, the historic, physical, human being, fully God, fully man, that walked on the earth, Jesus gives us himself.

Jesus says, I am the resurrection and the life. In, you know, in the first century, there was this form of kind of religion called Gnosticism, which, which said that everything material is kind of bad, it's all going to fade away and die anyway.

And the really spiritual people that don't really care about the physical world, spiritual people are those that have ascended to a higher ethereal and philosophical and spiritual realm.

And John, who wrote the Gospel of John, writes a bunch of letters to the Christian church to say, no, no, no, that's not true. True spiritual maturity isn't just measured in the ethereal realm, it's confidence in the physical, real person of Jesus.

[23 : 26] Listen to how John writes this in his letter. He says, that which was from the beginning, that which we've heard, that which we've seen with our eyes, that which we've looked upon and touched with our hands, the word of life, that which we've seen and heard, him we proclaim to you.

When John wants to write to these Christians that are suffering and struggling and encountering difficulty, he doesn't just say, oh, let's just philosophize, let me give you some vague, spiritual, trite answers.

He says, there is a person who walked on the earth that we felt and touched and looked upon and encountered. He's risen, he's alive, trust and bank in him. Jesus says, I am the resurrection and the life.

Do you remember when Jesus rises from the dead, one of his disciples, Thomas, he wasn't there when the disciples first encountered Jesus and the disciples run to him and say, Thomas, he's risen, he's risen. And Thomas says, unless I touch the scars in his hand and the mark and I put my hand in his side, I will not believe it.

We call Thomas doubting Thomas and we sometimes use that word disparaging me. But Thomas is on to something. Thomas is saying, don't just give me vague generalities. I want something concrete.

[24 : 39] I want something to bank my life and I want to know that if Jesus is risen, there's something real and concrete to that. Don't just give me an ethereal philosophy. And Jesus says, I am the resurrection.

The resurrection of hope is a person. It's concrete. It's real. You can bank your life for me. Two years ago, one of my heroes, Tim Keller, the pastor in New York, he had just written this book around about Easter and about hope in death.

And the book had been published for a month and he goes to the doctor. He said, they have some scans. He had some pain in the stomach and the doctor calls him up and says, I've got bad news.

You've got late stage pancreatic cancer and you're going to die from this. It may be a couple of months, maybe a year, maybe two years if you're lucky, but you're going to die from this.

And Tim Keller says that after 40 years of being a minister, all the theology and everything he had shared with others suddenly had to be real for him.

[25 : 41] And he wrote an article for the Atlantic Magazine a few months later and he says, before the cancer, the resurrection of Jesus had been mostly theoretical for me, but not now. And he says, he goes back and he looks at all his old sermons and his theology of the resurrection of Jesus and how that guarantees his own resurrection to glory.

And he says this, he says, Christ's resurrection and therefore my own resurrection became even more formidable. The theology gave my place a footing, but still I needed more.

He's saying, the theology was strong in my head. I believed it. I understood it. It was good. It was real. It gave me comfort, but it wasn't enough. I didn't just need theology.

And he goes on the article to write, what he needed was the heartwarming encounter with the living Christ. Because that's what Jesus says to Martha.

Martha says, I know in the last day he will rise and yes, that'll be wonderful. And Jesus says, don't you see, I am the resurrection. Martha, if you want hope from your tragedy, you've got to come to me. You've got to come to me.

[26 : 48] Friends, don't you long for something concrete and real? Friends, don't you long in all the tragedy of this world for something real? You don't just need theology. You don't just need a red book.

You don't just need a philosophy. You need to live in Christ. Jesus says, I am the resurrection life. Come to me. But notice, secondly, that Jesus says here that the resurrection of hope is not only a person, but the hope of the resurrection is the end of death.

Look what he says to Martha. He says, whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

Jesus is saying here that the great enemy of humanity, the one thing that all human beings have sought to evade, the great enemy of humanity has been defeated, has been destroyed.

Jesus says, the one thing in the world that we all seek to avoid, the things that we spend our entire lives trying to evade, has been transformed from a verdict, a sentence, into a servant.

[27 : 58] What once was our great enemy now gets turned into our servant that actually helps us and escorts us into fullness of life. What once brought judgment now takes us by the hand and walks us from one form of life into the fullness of life.

It's kind of like death gets transformed from a doorway into judgment, into an entrance hole, into fullness of life. I don't even remember the great poem by John Dunn called Death, Be Not Proud.

I remember reading this in high school and just being astounded by this poem. He writes this, I'll just quote a short section. He says, Death, be not proud. Though some have called thee mighty and dreadful, thou art not so.

One short sleep past, we wake eternally and death will be no more. Death, thou shalt die. Friends, Jesus says that for those who are in Christ, those who have come to save in faith in Him, because He has died and risen again, because the tomb is empty and the grave has opened, death has been transformed from a sentence, a verdict, into a servant that brings you into life.

Paul says the same thing in Corinthians. He says, Death, where is your sting? Death, where is your victory? Death has been swallowed up by life. I've got a friend of mine who's British and he says that when he used to live in England, he used to go and watch football games and you know, in the Premier League, the crowds can chant the enemy, the opposition side and they sing these rude songs, mocking their enemy.

[29 : 51] One no down, one no down, you're gonna lose, you're gonna lose. There was a story recently of one team that has gone bankrupt and so at their next game, the whole crowd, 50,000 people, start singing, you're going bankrupt, you're going bankrupt.

They're mocking their enemy. Paul's doing the same thing. Yeah, he's mocking death, he's saying death. So just point out to me, sorry, where is your sting again? So death, just remind me, where is your victory?

You're going down, you're going down. Paul is mocking the fact that death has been destroyed. Jesus says the same thing here. He says, whoever believes in me, even though he walks through the doorway that was meant to be a sentence, is being converted into a servant.

They will enter into fullness of life. But notice thirdly here, this is all well and good, it's, but Jesus makes these wonderful promises, wonderful assurances, but there's something else here.

If Jesus promises that those who die in Christ will rise to life, why does Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead? I mean, think about it, if Jesus' words, you know, his message is simply that those who believe in him will not feel the effects of death, they will pass from life to life.

[31 : 11] Why raise Lazarus from the dead? Why not just leave Mary and Martha with the comfort and the hope that Lazarus will pass to glory and all will be well again and you'll soon get to be with him? Why does Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead?

I think there's two reasons here. The first is, Jesus wants to show us that his words are not in vain. Do you remember in Matthew chapter 9, there's an account where some friends bring a paralytic to Jesus and he cannot walk and Jesus says, son, your sins are forgiven you.

What great news. And some people are around Jesus and they're scoffing, they're saying, who does this man think he is? How can he say, who gave him the authority to say your sins are forgiven?

And they are agitated and they are frustrated by Jesus' audacity to claim the forgiveness of sins. And Jesus says, which is easy to say, your sins are forgiven or pick up your mat and walk?

But that you may know that I have authority to forgive sins. He turns to the man and he says, pick up your mat and walk. And the man does.

[32 : 18] Jesus is doing the same thing here. He says, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will never die and those that do die will pass straight to life. And the people around could say, who's this man?

I mean, I know Jesus says some bold things, but really, Jesus claims to be the resurrection of the life. Who, what kind of audacity does he have to say that? Jesus says, what is easier to say?

To say, I am the resurrection of the life or to say, Lazarus, come out of the grave. But that you may know that I have the authority to raise the dead. He looks at Lazarus and he says, Lazarus, come forth.

Jesus is proving that he's not just some wild teacher that says outrageous things. He's not just coming to stir the crowd.

He actually backs it up with remarkable power and authority. But I think there's a second reason why Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. And that's because Jesus wants to demonstrate that the resurrection life and the hope of his own resurrection are not just something that are kept in on ice, kept in heaven for us that we just got to hold on to.

[33 : 27] But that the great reversal of the brokenness of our world, the reversal of the entropy of the world, the reversal of the effects of sin and the brokenness in the world has started to take place now in our lifetime.

Jesus is communicating that not just that one day when you die all will be better again. He's saying, even now I'm starting to bring the foretaste of that brokenness and hope into our world today.

Jesus raises Lazarus to give hope to the people of his day that the resurrection affects their lives here and now. Do you remember Martha's words to Jesus?

She says, I know that he will rise again at the resurrection on the last day. And what does Jesus say? Jesus says, you're right, Martha, he will rise again.

I wish there was something I could do about that now, but you know, my resurrection power, I only have jurisdiction on the last day. There's nothing I can do about it. I guess we better just hold on until we all die and get to glory, right?

[34 : 33] No, no, no. That's not what Jesus is. Jesus says, I am the resurrection. I am the life. And those who hope in me will never die. And you want to know my resurrection power now in your lifetime?

Lazarus, come forth. Jesus speaks the hope of the resurrection into their life there and then. And he does the same for us. One pastor says it like this, Jesus' resurrection means not merely that Christians have a hope for the future that they've just got to hold on to, but that they have a hope that comes from the future that begins now in our lifetime.

Friends, do you remember what happened in the Garden of Eden way back in the beginning? Genesis 3, Genesis 2 in fact, God says to Adam and Eve, on the day that you reject my word and reject me, you will surely die.

And Adam and Eve don't believe him. And so they reject God, they reject his word. And what happens? They don't die. Well, not physically, not initially, not at first, but if anybody has eyes to see, you'll know that death enters into our world and it creeps into every corner and crevice of our world.

I mean, what is death? Death is a loss of life, yeah, sure, but it's more than just physical. It's a loss of hope. It's a loss of vitality.

[36 : 05] It's a loss of relationships. It's a loss of peace. It's a loss of joy. It's a loss of meaning. Death creeps into our world as a result of sin and the fallenness and the brokenness of our world.

And you know what Jesus is doing? Jesus is saying that because the tomb is empty, because of my resurrection, I am reversing the effects of sin and death into this world even now.

Do you remember the Christmas carol Joy to the World? It says this, no more let sin and sorrows grow, nor death infect the earth. He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found.

Far as the curse is found. Jesus came not just to give us hope for the world to come as glorious and as amazing as that's going to be. Jesus came for those of us that are pilgrims and sojourners in this world to peel back to reverse the curse that entered into our lives.

When Jesus says I am the resurrection and the life and then raises Lazarus from the dead there and then, Jesus is demonstrating to Mary and Martha, to the whole world, to you and I, that he hasn't just come to pay the penalty for our sin.

[37 : 21] He hasn't just been a benevolent benefactor that pays up our penalty and our price. Jesus has come to push back darkness, to make his blessings flow as far as the curse is found in your life, in your family, in your heart today, to bring light and light to bear in the brokenness of this world.

On Friday, in our Good Friday service, we started watching the story of Dan and the brokenness of sin in his life and how darkness had crept into his life.

We're going to watch the rest of the story. We're going to watch the full thing from beginning to end and let's see how Jesus brought his resurrection, hope and life into Dan's life and correspondingly into all of ours.

Let's watch the story together. You know, I used to think people of religion and faith were very uncool, boring, progressive, just completely out of touch with reality.

I guess in hindsight, some people still are. So I grew up in a great home with loving parents who worked hard to give me every opportunity.

[38 : 40] I was encouraged to focus on getting a good education, going to a good university, getting a good job, getting ahead in life, etc, etc.

And I think I was definitely going down that path and it wasn't until probably a couple of years later that I was still at university and I met a couple of my mates who are still my best friends now and they were very similar to myself.

We enjoyed playing rugby, drinking beer, all those kind of things. But they just happened to be Christian as well. And so they invited me along to church and there was no kind of Hollywood moment, I guess, of a bolt of lightning coming down from the sky or beams of sunlight shooting down from between the clouds.

It was nothing like that. It was a pretty slow transition actually over many months from Jesus being, to me, a nice guy but most definitely a fictional character to the real Lord and my personal Savior.

And my definition of success was really turned on its head when I came to that realization. It went from those things that I had mentioned before, which are not necessarily bad in and of themselves, but the focus became my relationships and love and how I was displaying the love that God had showered on me through Jesus to those around me through my relationships with my family, my friends, my colleagues and especially back to God himself.

[40 : 21] So, yeah, that's it. End of story. We all live happily ever after, right? If only that were so. So, fast forward a few years later, I was transferred to Hong Kong on a work secondment.

I had a really solid community structure around me. I thought I was at a point in my life where I could move to a new city by myself and I had it all covered.

But, in hindsight, there was definitely one major thing missing there. That was my heart. I think in my heart I was still really restless.

Although I had all those things that I'd mentioned earlier and it probably looked like success, I think in my heart I was still not at peace and I was still really afraid of missing out on what was going on around me.

As a result, I just completely went off the rails. It all came to a head one morning after a few weeks of pretty consistent partying, I had woke up and was covered in my own vomit.

[41 : 36] There was so much mess everywhere that I tried to salvage my mattress and my pillows, but I couldn't. I had to throw them all out. I guess it was quite symbolic in hindsight.

God had literally brought me to my knees in that moment. Around that time there was also another guy who was associated with our rugby club who had died after choking after he passed out one night and that was a huge tragedy for us and a huge wake up call for myself as well.

I remember just helplessly crying out to God that morning and man is he gracious. He ever so slowly brought me out of that pit.

He showered me with grace upon grace. He ever increasingly brought joy back into my life through his word, through prayer and through the Christian community around me.

I realise that so many of the things in our life that we hope or we trust in may not actually come to fruition.

[42 : 56] They may prove themselves even to be less reliable or trustworthy than we had first thought. But God has really taught me a deeper truth in all of this.

That he is trustworthy, he alone, and that the way up is down. by surrendering your dreams and your ambition and your goals and your life to God and allowing him to shape that.

It may look like it's not success to the world, but truly there is not a wiser thing that you can do that will bring you a greater return on investment in your life.

Trust in Jesus. He will not let you down. Hey Dan, I love that story and I love seeing God at work in your life.

Thank you for sharing that story. As we come to close our service today, I want us to notice just one other thing in this passage, and this will be quick. At the very end of John's gospel, the second last chapter, chapter 20, John actually tells us the reason why he writes his gospel.

[44 : 11] He says these things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. That's the reason why I've written this.

As you read John's gospel, you'll see he's constantly pushing us to say, will you believe? Will you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God? In verse 28 of our passage, Martha has this conversation with Jesus.

Jesus says, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, will live, etc. And he says, do you believe this? She says, yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Do you see what John is saying here? John is telling us, he's showing us that Martha, like Dan, like the disciples, like millions of others around the world, have come to experience life in his name.

I've written these things that you may see that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and by believing, have life in his name. Friends, what about you? Have you come to believe in Jesus?

[45 : 17] Not just in theory, not just historically. Have you come to believe that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who died but rose again, and doing so has brought light and life to bear?

The one who is raised in glory and offering life to you today? Have you come to believe in him? Maybe Jesus, for the very first time today, is calling you to surrender your life.

As Dan said, often the way up is actually the way down. The way to life is to die to ourselves and to surrender to him, and that by believing in him, we may have life in his name.

Friends, maybe you are a Christian this morning. You did that many, many years ago, but if you're honest, the last few years have been pretty dry. You've kind of looked for yourself. You've been seduced by the things of this world.

Will you freshly come and believe that life, life to the full, is found in him, the one who died and rose again? This morning, Jesus invites all of us, those for the very first time and those for the 100th time, to come and freshly surrender and to declare that we believe that he is Christ, the son of the living God and by doing so, experience life in his name.

[46 : 34] Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, thank you that we get to pray to you today. We know that you hear our prayers because you are alive and you're real, seated in glory. God, you are not just a man of history, a figment of our imagination or a principle of philosophy from the history books.

Christ, you, Christ, are the living God, the real one that is alive and glory and the one bringing hope to our lives today. Lord, I pray for all of my brothers and sisters. I pray for us as a church that we, God, as a church, will believe evermore, that more and more, God, we will believe in you, trust in you, hope in you, and experience resurrection life in your name.

Christ, come and do that today we pray. Amen.