

What Jesus Has Done, Will Do, and Is Doing Now

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Date: 07 April 2024

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[0 : 0 0] It was really wonderful last week to celebrate together how Jesus rose from the dead, that the resurrection happened, that a new creation has started, that the world has changed.

Although you might be forgiven for wondering, well, how much did the world change? I mean, that morning, Easter morning, would anyone in Jerusalem know that a new creation has started?

How about the rest of the world? Would any of them know that the world had changed? I'm not sure. I think this is an issue that we sometimes wonder about, right? Why isn't the world different?

Why is the world still the same? Why is there still so much suffering? Maybe you feel that at the moment. Maybe your work is just really hard and you feel, okay, God, you know, now I'm back with you, but my life isn't any better.

Or maybe actually you're out of work or you've come out of some relationship and it really hurts or you're in a relationship that's not going well and you can't get out because you're married, right? All kinds of ways that we still suffer.

[1 : 0 4] Illness, health issues. Yeah. People, loved ones who die. And then we wonder, yeah, how, what kind of difference has the resurrection, the death and resurrection of Jesus made?

These big events that we say has changed history, but it seems like it hasn't. Maybe you're here, you're not a Christian and that's exactly the question you have, right? And you see us celebrating with joy.

Well, what's the big deal? What's the big deal that Jesus rose from the dead? Because we don't see much change. I guess we all sometimes have those questions. And that is exactly what we're going to talk about today.

So I hope that we'll, today will help you. Help us see that. Actually, you know, why is the world the way it is? And why isn't Jesus doing something about it?

Now, what we're doing, we're actually continuing our previous series, which was, which we did before Easter called The Wonderful Work of God. We've been kind of going through the storyline of the Bible, especially the story of the Old Testament.

[2 : 0 5] I've made a kind of, maybe in previous weeks, you've seen this kind of graph. This is basically the story of the Bible. So God started with making a perfect world, but then Adam and Eve sins and everything went wrong, right?

The world was cursed, broken, but God promised to make things better. He promised to the people of Israel, okay, you're going to be my people. And slowly he kind of built up this beautiful kingdom that came to a climax under David and Solomon.

And the line is kind of how good things are. But then, yeah, they turn away from the Lord. They sinned again, and they ended up back down at the bottom in exile, away from home as slaves in Babylon.

And that is, was very sad. That's kind of where we ended. But the wonderful thing is that's not the end of the story. God promised, no, I'm going to make things better. I'm not going to, not just back to Solomon.

I'm going to go, we're going to go all the way back to the Garden of Eden. I'm going to make everything right again. That's what God promised. That's wonderful. Well, that's where we kind of finished before Easter.

[3 : 13] What now? Well, first, there's a few more books in the Bible that we skipped over. In fact, they do come back from Babylon after like 70 years. But that's not really it yet.

They're still poor. They're still under foreign rule. No, the real change, of course, is like 500 years later when Jesus comes. Right? That here is Jesus and he dies and he rises.

And that's what we've just remembered over Easter. But now, okay, now we're in the New Testament. I think maybe you're new here. But for most of us, the story is relatively familiar.

Right? Well, what happens? Well, after Jesus' resurrection, we just read it. Jesus, he goes back to heaven. And he, chapter 2, he gives the Spirit. And then the church starts to spread in Judea, in Samaria, to the rest of the Roman Empire.

And actually, that's still happening today. The church is still spreading. And one day, Jesus will come back. In a way, the story is quite simple in the New Testament. It's quite short.

[4 : 18] So, as we continue the series, we're actually not just going through that week by week. Because most of us know it. Now, if you read the New Testament, what kind of books do you get?

You get a lot of letters. You get a lot of explanation. Because there are some things that are very different from before. If you come from the old to the new, there are some things that have changed.

God's people used to be this nation. And now, it's a church. And it's very different. How does that work? We're going to think about that next week. The law was such a big thing.

Maybe you're doing our Bible reading plan. And you've been in Deuteronomy. And please, you know, keep all the commandments and laws and statutes. And you wonder, what is that like now for a Christian?

That's something that we want to talk about. But today, we're going to talk about, well, that thing that I just mentioned. What actually has Jesus done? You know, he died and rose.

[5 : 16] What has it actually done? And what is still to come? And what has Jesus done? And what is he still to do? As people call it, the already and the not yet. And basically, how do I write this graph?

You see this graph? No, sorry, previous one. We know that when Jesus returns, it's all up there. Then everything will be fulfilled. But in between, you know, is it down here?

Is it nearly up there? Is it in the middle? Is it a bit of both? What is the Christian life like now? What should we expect to see? What is the world like? That is what we're going to think about.

And we need to be clear on that. Because if you think that we're up here, and then you suffer, and you get hurt, and you think, well, what's wrong?

Is Christianity not true? Well, maybe your expectations are just wrong, right? We want to have the right expectations. We want to know what is going on, and what is Jesus doing now?

[6 : 14] So that's what we're going to talk about. And it's a bit of a complex issue, but it's really important. So we talk about the already and the not yet. Well, what has Jesus done, and what is he still to do?

I think a good way is just to go back a few weeks, and we saw all these promises that God made. Well, which ones has he fulfilled, and which ones not yet? So if we just make a list, here, look at a lot of things that actually have happened.

Right? So God promised he would send a king. Well, he's done that, right? Christmas, 2,000 years ago, the king is here. What would he do? He would die as a perfect sacrifice and bring atonement.

Well, that happened at the cross, right? We are fully forgiven. We're reconciled to God. What else? The new covenant. Again, that was started at the cross. Inaugurized by Jesus' death.

The spirit. New hearts. That happened in Acts 2. That happened 2,000 years ago. Right? What else? The nations are now free to come to Christ. Again, we see that happen.

[7 : 17] In the book of Acts, you see people no longer just Jews. People from all over the world coming. Satan, right? Satan, who were in Genesis 3. Things went wrong. Well, the New Testament says he was cast out and disarmed and defeated and bound all at the cross.

So there's a lot of things, actually, that the Bible says have happened. At the same time, there's other promises that clearly have not happened yet. Right? So the new creation.

Right? There were promises of, you know, the wolf shall lie down with the lamb. And the child will play with the cobra and that kind of stuff. Well, we have a garden with snakes.

We do not let our kids play with snakes. Right? That's clearly not here yet. I don't see that happening. How about no more death? No more perfect healing? Immortality?

Well, as most of us know, we grow old and we die. That's clearly not here yet. Great prosperity, right? The sower overtaking the reaper. There's a lot of poor Christians in the world.

[8 : 21] Clearly, it's not there yet. No more tears. No more sadness. It's not there yet. Right? Enemies. Oppressors. Right? That's what God said.

He said he would make the world safe again. We would have peace forever. Well, ask Christians in North Korea. They're still there. Right? And Satan, well, sin, they are present.

Satan has been defeated, but he's still active. He's still there. And so I hope you can see. I hope this is, I mean, I could give you Bible passages. But I hope you can see that actually, yeah, there were things that Jesus has done.

And things that he has not yet done. All right? We're not yet fully back in the Garden of Eden. And if you think everything's already here, you'll be disappointed. Now, this is a long list.

Is there an easy way to remember this? And we talk about, okay, the kingdom is here, but it's not fully here yet. That doesn't maybe help you. Now, if you've read some more, if you've been a Christian for a while, maybe you've heard of what people call the overlap of the ages.

[9 : 27] As some people explain it like this, that in the Old Testament, you know, there's the old age and then the king comes. And then you have got a new age. But then Jesus complicates things.

What does he say? He says, well, the old age continues. But the new age starts at the cross. But then the old age only ends at his return. That is one way of looking at it.

But I think that doesn't really help us very much because we don't know, okay, well, what does the new age and the old age mean? Instead, I think the easiest way to think about it, well, we've been talking about the cause of the fall and the consequences this week, right?

Everything went wrong when Adam and Eve turned away from God through sin, through our broken relationship with God. Instead, but then what was the result?

The result was this broken world, the curse, right? That's the effects. And if you line up these lists, actually, it's all the cause things that have been done and all the effects things that are still to go.

[10 : 33] Does that make sense? That's a good way to think about it. So God promised, I'm going to deal with sin and then everything will be all right. And he's dealt with sin when Jesus came, when he died and rose.

But the effects are still to come. And the curse still needs to be lifted. Now, I think that's a helpful way of thinking about it. I mean, one very big thing for me, I think for us, what does it mean?

It means that the right side is fully 100% guaranteed. Right? Because we're talking about, you know, we're talking about cause and effect. Right? If the cause is dealt with, the effects will follow.

You have a virus and then you've got certain symptoms like a rash or a fever. Well, once your body has beaten the virus, you know the rash will disappear. Right? It's guaranteed. It's the same here.

Right? Why is the world broken? Because of sin. Well, if sin has been dealt with, then the world will be unbroken one day. Right? We know that.

[11 : 36] And so that gives us great assurance. Right? The big problem behind everything. Death has been dealt with. Sin. Our broken relationship with God. Jesus solved that. And so we know the rest will follow.

That's wonderful. However, you may, when I say this, this sounds very simple. I need to nuance it a little bit. So, what, first of all, I guess I talk about sin has been dealt with.

Well, I looked at myself this morning and it feels like sin hasn't been dealt with. Right? You will probably have the same. In what sense has sin actually been dealt with? Well, the thing is, sin is a bit of a complicated thing.

Because there's two things. One, there is kind of our hearts and how we turned away from God. But the thing is, that led to a consequence. That led to us being corrupted. It led to us having a sinful nature.

So, sin is kind of its cause and effect. It's both. And the cause is our hearts and the effect is our sinful nature. And, you know, he's dealt with the cause. We have new hearts by the Holy Spirit.

[12 : 42] But deep down at the root, if you're a Christian, I mean, you trust in Jesus. He gives you the Spirit. You're changed. But that new heart is still in an old body full of sin.

And so, what we experience is a kind of battle between old and new. And so, yeah, it's a kind of halfway. Because, yeah, it's kind of there's the new heart but the old body.

And they kind of fight and hopefully there's progress. Hopefully, things get better. Sometimes there are seasons where it gets worse. But, you know, that's, I think, why we still sin.

It's partly cause and partly effect. I think that that explains it. Right? But basically, the big thing has been done. At the root, sin has been cut. Our relationship with God has been fully restored.

And that's wonderful. Now, when I say this, I know there's different Christian traditions. They emphasize different things. Right? So, some Christians, they really emphasize the already.

[13 : 41] And others emphasize the not yet. Now, when I say this, I know what some people will say. Hey, isn't there more to life now than just this? So, I just want to say three things.

First of all, some people think, well, that means we don't have you very much now. Actually, what dealing with sin, our relationship with God is huge. Right?

What has Jesus done? He's reconciled you to God. Right? He's provided full forgiveness. You're now a child of God. You know his care and his delight.

You can face eternity with full confidence because of what Jesus has done. You have God himself living inside you by the Spirit, changing you so that you know God more and more each day.

And you're changing to become like Christ. There is so much that he has done. Right? Okay, you still get sick. But think about all the other things. Right? There's so much that he has done.

[14 : 37] Right? The spiritual blessings of being a Christian are wonderful. And we shouldn't minimize that. Right? And I'm also not just when I say, okay, healing is still future.

I'm not saying that God can't do miracles. He can do miracles. Yes. He can be kind and heal you if you're sick. But it's just not really the same as like forgiveness.

Right? Forgiveness, you are, if you trust in Jesus, you are 100% forgiven. Fully, finally, forever. Nothing ever changes that. If Jesus heals you from being sick, you know, it's only temporary.

You're going to get sick again. You're going to get old. You're going to get die. You're going to die. It is not the same. Right? Now, the full, complete healing that we see in the Bible, that we see promised in the Old Testament, that's only when Jesus returns.

So, it's not really the same. Yes, God can do miracles. I mean, why do we call it a miracle? Because it's unusual. Right? And we pray, God, if it's your will. Because we know it's not guaranteed.

[15 : 40] Forgiveness, you don't have to say, if it is your will, please forgive me. Jesus has one forgiveness. He's paid for it. You are fully forgiven if you trust in Jesus. And so, that's different.

And thirdly, just to say, actually, if you think about it, life is better. The world has changed. Because sin is such a big problem.

I mean, even if you still get sick, think about some of the difference that Jesus can make. Imagine a woman who is just, she idolizes relationships.

And so, she has this series of abusive boyfriends who hurt her physically and emotionally. She's a wreck. And then she hears about Jesus and believes.

And now she finds her treasure in Jesus. And so, she doesn't need those guys anymore. And then she joins the church. She gets meaningful friendships. At some point, she gets married to a wonderful, godly husband.

[16 : 39] Her life is so much better, right? And just because of turning back to God and finding, you know, her joy in Jesus. It can make a huge difference.

And not just for yourself. For others, right? Here's a family. Here's a family. And the husband, he's a bad-tempered, drunkard, a lazy, selfish pig. And then, you know what?

He becomes a Christian. And he becomes gentle and kind and hardworking and sacrificial. That family, you know, things will completely change. Just because of the gospel. Or even bigger, right?

Imagine a whole country where millions and millions and millions of people become Christians. And they start loving their neighbor. What do you see? Well, they will abolish the slave trade.

And they will abolish child labor. And they will start charities for the poor. And they will start schools and hospitals. And those kind of things. That's what happened in the Great Awakening in England.

[17 : 38] That country was really changed. Because so many people were saved. And under, like, John Wesley and George Whitefield. And, you know, there was a wonderful revival that led to so much social change.

Right? The gospel does change things. No, the curse is still there. But there's kind of the direct effects of sin. You know? Just because sin makes your life, you know, bad.

And that has changed. So the gospel, it really does change the world in some ways. We don't think about that, right? We often just think about, okay, you know, my life is still hard.

Actually, if you think about it, the gospel has made such a difference. I don't know what the world would be like if Jesus hadn't come. And we didn't have 2,000 years of gospel progress in the world.

But the curse is still there. And the world is still broken. It's still fallen. And we still feel that. Often.

[18 : 34] When work is hard. When relationships are hard. When you struggle with your sin. When you face death. And so you're probably wondering, okay, yes, I understand that this is the case.

But why? Why does it have to be like that? Why can't Jesus, why didn't he just do everything in one go? Why not solve it all and, you know, make paradise here on earth?

Why not? Well, the answer is quite simple. Right? We see that in this Bible passage. Yeah, so it's more of a theological talk rather than looking at this Bible passage.

But the disciples, yeah, they were confused about it. Right? So Jesus, he's risen from the dead. He talks to them. And then 1 verse 6.

So when they'd come together, they asked him, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Right? Hey, are you going to do everything now? Are you going to restore the kingdom? And Jesus says, no.

[19 : 33] He said to them, it's not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. So basically he says, not yet. That will come and you don't know when.

But there is something to do. And what is that? Well, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem. And in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth, to all the nations.

Actually, between the first two comings, there's a time of mission. And when you think about it, that is why the two comings are separated.

Because let's think about foreign nations. Where do the foreign nations fit into those promises? Well, there are twice on the chart. Right?

But if we, I think we're a few slides behind. Yeah. A few more. Foreign nations.

[20 : 39] We have that brown bar underneath the title. Yes. So basically, the foreign nations, they've shown up twice in the table. On one hand, you know, if you read the Old Testament, God makes two promises.

He promises on one hand their enemies will be gone. Their oppressors will be gone. And so the foreign nations will be gone. That's not a foreign, a kind of racist thing or a nationalist thing.

These are the people who invade your country and kidnap your kids and plunder your goods. Right? They make your life terrible. And God says they'll be gone.

You'll have peace. Right? I mean, if you live in Ukraine and God says, I'm going to deal with Russia, that's good news. Right? So foreign nations, good news, God will deal with them.

But at the same time, he says, they are going to come to Jerusalem. Right? The foreign nations, they're going to come to God. They're going to come back to Jerusalem and worship him. Now, those two promises, are they kind of compatible?

[21 : 40] It's hard, right? How can you do two at the same time? Okay, I'm going to destroy them and I'm going to bring them to Jerusalem. You can't. Right? But they have to happen in sequence.

When God says, okay, I'm going to get rid of all the foreign nations, but then also bring them to Jerusalem, that's impossible. No, they need to happen in order. First, the nations will come to Jerusalem, those who respond, those who turn back to God.

And then those who are not, who don't want to, well, God will get rid of them to make the world safe again. And that's the idea. And that's why, yeah, the cause needs to be dealt with.

First, people turn back to God. But the effect, dealing with persecution and oppression, will come later. Because if Jesus deals with it now, then people can't be saved.

Basically, Jesus will make the world perfect. And to make the world perfect, he has to get rid of everyone who's imperfect. But if everyone who's imperfect is gone, people can't be saved.

[22 : 43] No one can have a chance to turn back to God. And sometimes you feel that. I don't know. Maybe you're at work and your colleagues make your life really hard.

You kind of wish they were gone sometimes. Right? But at the same time, if they're gone, how can they hear the gospel? How can they be saved? They can't. And so that's why Jesus is waiting.

Here is a great verse. Yeah? Why is Jesus not here yet? 2 Peter chapter 3 verse 9. This is a chapter about the coming of Jesus. And people wonder why, what happened to this promise of his coming?

Why isn't he here yet? And the answer, well, the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise. Some count slowness. But he is patient with you. Not wanting anyone to perish, but all to reach repentance.

Why is Jesus not here yet? He's patient. He wants people to reach, not to perish, but to reach repentance. And Jesus, one day he will come back.

[23 : 46] And then that will be the final judgment. Everyone who's ever lived will be judged. And then it's really an eternity with him or an eternity away from him. But then it's too late.

And so that's why, yeah, his two comings are separated. So that mission can take place. Yeah? And surely you want to wait for that, right? Maybe, yeah, you think, okay, man, I wish my call.

Jesus, please come back now. My life is hard. But then you've been witnessing to your friends. And maybe tomorrow they would come to Christ. Tomorrow they would give their life to Jesus. But what if Jesus answers your prayer and he comes back today already?

Well, then your friends will be on the wrong side of the final judgment, right? I guess if you think about it like that, okay, I'll wait for another day, right? I think for most of you, right?

Imagine if Jesus came back before you knew him, before you were saved. In my case, you know, remember the year 2000 and the world was going to end?

[24 : 49] Remember if Jesus came back? What if Jesus came back in the year 2000? Well, then I would be in hell now because I became a Christian 2001. I'm so thankful that he didn't come back yet, that Jesus was patient, that he waited to save me, that he waited to save so many of you.

Actually, around the world, I think about 50,000 people become Christians each day. 50,000 people turning away from Islam and Hinduism and, you know, empty idols to the real God.

Isn't that wonderful? Well, Jesus just wants to save more people. That's why he's delaying his judgment. He's delaying the full fulfillment. I hope you see the point, right?

There's a reason for the delay. There's a reason. And maybe you're here, by the way, if you're not a Christian and you may wonder, why is the world like this? Well, because Jesus is waiting for you.

You know, he has died to make forgiveness possible and he's extending his hand to you. Come back to me. I made you. I love you. But you've turned away. Come back to me and find new life and eternity with me later.

[25 : 57] And maybe that's why Jesus isn't here yet, because of you. So why don't you turn to him today? But, of course, for us who are Christians, we've done that.

What should we be doing? We want Jesus to come back. Well, Peter says a few verses later, he says this really interesting thing, right?

He says, since all these things are just to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in all holiness and godliness? Waiting for and hastening the day of God. He says, make it come more.

Why don't you make it come more quickly? Which seems kind of weird, right? Surely Jesus decides when he's going to come back. How can we make it come more quickly? Well, because there's a job to be done, right?

That's Acts 1 verse 8, right? What is the job? Well, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

[27 : 00] That first finished the job. And then Jesus comes. That's basically it, right? Like my kids. They want to see the newest episode of some series that we're following, like Loki or something.

Well, first finish your homework and then you can watch, right? First finish your job. That's the thing. Jesus wants to come back. But there's a job to be done, right?

There's people to be saved. And so if we want Jesus to come back, let's get on with the job, basically. I mean, not that we, you know, why do we share the gospel?

Well, we want my life to be easier. That's not the, you know, there's love for people and the glory of God. But basically that's it, right? That is what Jesus is doing now. He is saving people. Jesus is, I mean, he's doing lots of things.

He's ruling the universe. He's interceding for us. But also he is in the world active saving his people. And what are we going to do? Are we just going to stand there? Okay, Jesus, come on.

[27 : 56] Hurry up. No, right? You roll up your sleeves and we get involved. That is what Jesus wants us to do. To witness to him. To share the gospel. To, you know, help the world know Jesus.

So that, yeah, all the people Jesus wants to save are saved. Yeah. So, you know, and we can do that, right? You will receive power when the Spirit comes upon you.

Yeah, the Spirit does lots of things. Yeah, helps us know God. It changes our hearts. One big thing. We see it in Acts 2. He gives us the power to share the gospel, right?

He fills us so that we, you know, he helps us speak. He gives us courage. The Spirit will do that. And he's been given. So, yeah, let's get on. So, you know, we have Explore in a few weeks.

Are there people who you can invite to explore? We'll have an afternoon service starting, especially evangelistic. Come and bring people, right? Talk to your colleagues. Try to share the gospel, right?

[28 : 55] That is what Jesus wants us to do. Take part in what he's doing now. And not just around you, of course. You may wonder, well, is there a certain number of people that Jesus wants to save?

I don't think we know that. One thing we do know, well, he says here, to the ends of the earth. And make disciples of all nations. And so one thing he does want to do is reach every single people group around the world.

That is not finished yet, definitely, right? There's about 17,000 people groups. Maybe 7,000 of them are unreached. 3,000 are not engaged.

So here's a nice map. These are all the people groups that kind of, you know, where there's hardly any Christians, hardly any churches, where it's really hard, sometimes not even a missionary working there.

They're mainly, people call that a 10-40 window, between 10 degrees and 40 degrees latitude. That's half the world's population. But they, yeah, it's really hard to get to know Jesus.

[30 : 00] So why don't we pray for the gospel to go there? Why don't we pray whether God wants to send us there? And I know that sounds really hard, going on mission work. But as you heard, you know, life's going to be hard anyway, right?

The curse hasn't been lifted yet. This is not the time to enjoy. This is the time to work. So maybe, you know, you know what it's like to work in your office versus being a missionary.

Both of them are not easy. So, yeah. I hope you see this is what God is doing now. This is what Jesus is doing. So let's take part in it.

Let's join him. If you love him, if you're so thankful that Jesus waited for you, that Jesus reached out to you and saved you, why don't we join him in what he's doing, how he's saving people?

And isn't it such an encouragement that we know there will be success? You know, we will see Jesus saving people. He will not let us suffer for nothing. He isn't here yet because he wants to save more people.

[31 : 00] We know there's a purpose why we're still here. Isn't that encouraging? So let's be active. Let's share the gospel. Let's preach the gospel till your work on earth is done as we've been singing.