

The Resurrection of Jesus: Living Hope

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Preacher: James Ross

[0 : 0 0] well let me give a warm welcome to you all to our church family to family and friends who are gathering to tune in it's great to be able to gather our easter has changed i guess there's never been an easter weekend like this but our message our hope our joy and the risen jesus has not changed now let's read the message of the angels that first easter sunday here it is in matthew 28 the angel said to the women do not be afraid for i know that you're looking for jesus who was crucified he is not here he has risen just as he said come and see the place where he lay then go quickly and tell his disciples he has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into galilee there you will see him let's sing a hymn that reminds us of the victory of jesus and the hope in him let's sing kelvin's going to lead us in the hymn in christ alone in christ alone my hope is found he is my light my strength my song this cornerstone this solid ground firm through the fiercest drought and storm what heights of love what depths of peace when fears are still when striving cease my comforter my all in all here in the love of christ i stand in christ alone who took on flesh fullness of god in helpless pain this gift of love and righteousness scorned by the ones he came to save till on that cross as jesus died the wrath of god was satisfied for every sin for every sin on him was laid here in the death of christ i lay there in the ground his body lay there in the ground his body lay light of the world by darkness slain then bursting forth in glorious day up from the grave he rose again and as he stands in victory sin's curse has lost its grip on me for i am his and he is mine and as he is mine bought with the precious blood of christ

no guilt in life no fear in death this is the power of christ in me from life's first cry to the final breath jesus commands my destiny the power of hell the scheme of man can ever pluck me from his hand till he returns or calls me home here in the power of christ i'll stand and now let's pray together lord this easter sunday we thank you for the announcement of the angels that jesus who was crucified for our sins to give us the hope of forgiveness the promise of forgiveness when we trust in him that he is not dead that he has risen we recognize that in christ alone there is true hope not just for now but for all eternity lord we recognize as a world that we need hope right now that we as individuals that stand in need of hope and lord we thank you that that is found in the life of jesus we thank you for his perfect love and his obedience we thank you for the mercy and compassion and care that he showed to the helpless and the broken people that he met in his day and we thank you that he is unchanged in his love and kindness and lord we thank you for that death he died as our substitute taking our place and being that sacrifice who would remove sin who would remove the anger of god from us by taking it on himself so that if we put our trust in him trust in him we would have eternal life we thank you for the hope that is in the resurrection the promise of new life the promise of a restored world the hope of jesus returning and making all things new giving hope of a world free of sickness and sorrow and death itself lord we look to you recognizing that you are a god of power and you are a god of mercy and love we are dependent on you and we ask that you would bring help to those who need it we pray once more for our governments both here in edinburgh and down in london we remember especially boris johnson and we pray that you would be with him lord we ask that you would give them all the wisdom that our politicians and leaders need for ruling well in this crisis for making decisions lord we also pray for our nhs staff that we are so thankful for them and for the the sacrifices that they make for the love and care that they show in their different responsibilities and we pray that you would protect them lord we thank you for other key workers in various industries and for the way they are going above and beyond to help us to keep our country moving and functioning and again we pray protection and care lord we pray for the nations of the world and we recognize the struggles that some of the poorest countries in the world will be having with limited health care facilities and with limited budgets and infrastructure lord we pray for the poor and the needy and we ask that you would intervene lord above all and we recognize our

greatest need is to be right with you and to enjoy your love in our lives and so we pray that there would be many at this time who would be seeking answers and finding them in Jesus that for those who are seeking hope and love and security that they would recognize that that can be found ultimately only in knowing you and in Jesus you send so we pray that you'd be with us in the time that we get to spend listening to and thinking about the Bible help us to understand and apply what we hear to our lives this Easter Amen now we're going to read a passage of the Bible of the Bible this is from John's Gospel chapter 20 and it's the story of Mary Magdalene and her experience that first Easter Sunday so let's hear the first 18 verses of John chapter 20 early on the first day of the week while it was still dark Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance so she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple the one Jesus loved and said they have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they have put him so Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb both were running but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first he bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in then Simon Peter who was behind him arrived and went into the tomb he saw the strips of linen lying there as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus head the cloth was folded up by itself separate from the linen finally the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went inside he saw and believed and believed they still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead then the disciples went back to their homes but Mary stood outside the tomb crying as she wept she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white seated where Jesus body had been one at the head and the other at the foot they asked her woman why are you crying they have taken my Lord away she said and I don't know where they have put him at this she turned round and saw Jesus standing there but she did not realize that it was Jesus woman he said why are you crying who is it you are looking for thinking he was the gardener she said sir if you had carried him away tell me where you have put him and I will get him Jesus said to her Mary she turned towards him and cried out in Aramaic rabboni which means teacher Jesus said do not hold on to me for I have not yet returned to the Father go instead to my brothers and tell them I am returning to my Father and your Father to my God and your God

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news I have seen the Lord and she told them that he had said these things to her so this Easter Sunday this is what we're going to think about we're going to think about Jesus resurrection and the rising of hope but we need to begin with the day hope died that was the title of a BBC documentary on Robert Kennedy back in 2018 marking the 50th anniversary of his assassination that's a very striking title it seems like national hope had been pinned on a single person the hope that in Bobby Kennedy there was hope for unity the end to racism for America I wonder as you look back over your own life have you been there on occasions when hope died perhaps it was the loss of an opportunity perhaps it was the loss of a job perhaps it was the loss of a family member that you loved deeply maybe today I imagine there will be some of us who are feeling fearful feeling hopeless due to COVID 19 maybe this is the day when you feel hope is dying if we were to ask Mary Magdalene and to ask the first disciples when was the day hope died for you they would point to the first Good Friday the day when Jesus died on the cross did you recognize that as we began our reading for Mary as she first approaches the empty tomb she sees no hope the message she brings back to the disciples is they've taken the Lord out of the tomb and we don't know where they have put him for Mary and those disciples death had won there was no prospect in her mind of resurrection she saw the empty tomb and she thought this was the work of grave robbers she was not naive they were not expecting a resurrected Messiah nobody saw this coming which in many ways points towards its truth this is not something anybody made up before we go any further let's think who was Mary the subject of our story here in Luke chapter 8 another one of the Gospel writers Luke records that Mary had been possessed by seven demons and that Jesus had delivered her so Jesus has given Mary new hope a new life further than that Mary is an important eyewitness she was there when Jesus died she was there as Jesus was buried and now she is an eyewitness to the empty tomb but the question now is where will her hope come from now that her teacher is dead how can she have hope beyond death how can the Kingdom of God come now perhaps Mary was asking now that the King has died that first Easter Sunday everything for Mary in terms of hope rests on one fact everything for you and for me rests on one fact if we want true hope that will not disappoint the fact resurrection there's a Bible writer called David Helm and he says the resurrection is hope's burden of proof

in other words if hope was in a law court the only way it could claim to be speaking the truth would be if it could present as evidence the reality of a risen Lord Jesus this Easter Sunday as we spend

time in our homes do you want hope that god is stronger stronger than fear that you face stronger than the virus that's taken hold on our world stronger even than death do you want good news despite all the bad news that surrounds us do you want forgiveness from sin do you want peace of conscience peace with the god who made you this week i came across this from an indian christian by the name of bakit singh he was asked the question what do you preach to those of other faiths so in india many faiths and this christian preacher he said i preach the forgiveness of sins that is what all of us deep down inside are looking for if that list of things is you today if that's what you look for then you need the resurrection to be true not simply i wish it was true because it sounds wonderful it must actually really be true now let's move on and let's see how in mary's story she is prepared for hope i guess many of us know the phrase the green shoots of recovery and we find ourselves looking for them we go to the media looking for them so and we see what's happening in china and wuhan opening up and reports of no new cases or we see in italy the death rate dropping and they stand for us as beacons of hope that we cling to perhaps what are the green shoots of recovery for mary and her hope and so the story of mary so far she's run in grief from the empty tomb to share her news with peter and john peter and john have now run to the empty tomb and they've returned home but then in verses 10 and 11 and we find that while they go home mary returns mary stood outside the tomb crying grief is still there but what does she do as she went she bent over to look into the tomb she examines for herself the empty tomb and let me just ask have you ever done that this is a claim about christianity that is so huge that it cannot be ignored on our website our church website you can go to the online services section and you will find a list of resources good books to read videos and articles to access on the internet that that might help you as you explore because this is something again that is too important to ignore or to brush to one side but having said that let's look with mary and see what these two green shoots of recovery are signs to prepare her for living hope for resurrection hope first of all who's present in the empty tomb angels are present she saw two angels in white one at the head one at the foot and they asked her why are you crying who are angels angels are God's messengers so they deliver messages from God they also interpret God's activity in the world angels are at times sent [20 : 05] to make sense of out of the ordinary events so we can think about another christian season we can think about christmas think about another mary mary the mother of jesus and the angels that came to her to tell her that though she was a virgin she would conceive by the power of the holy spirit and she would give birth to a child and he would be called jesus and he would save people from their sins that was no ordinary event that was God's activity in the world in the world in a remarkable way for our salvation and hope and angels come to interpret that and here the angels are saying to mary by their presence the empty tomb is God's work not the work of grave robbers God's power has invaded the tomb not grave robbers their question woman why are you crying is challenging mary's interpretation of events are you right about jesus they're asking are you right to believe that hope is dead now for you and for me it is most unlikely that we will have an announcement from angels angels coming to interpret God's activity for us but what we have is we have the bible the bible reveals and interprets

God's actions in the world it announces God's plan God's way of salvation in and through the sending of his own son Jesus to become one of us to live perfectly in our place to then die for our sins and then to rise in victory for our salvation so let me encourage you to read and listen to your bible and to be asking the question am I right about jesus in the way that I think about him the second green shoot of recovery is enormous while the angels are present in the tomb Jesus body his body is absent so the angels in verse 12 are seated where Jesus body had been now we said earlier that the miracle of the resurrection is crucial it's of vital significance it's too big to ignore it is actually the miracle that is the standing or falling of Christianity Paul understood this Paul the apostle in 1 Corinthians 15 he wrote very clearly to say as a Christian he's saying if the resurrection is not true then the message of Christianity is a lie plain and simple more than that God is a liar because God said he would raise his son from the dead if Jesus is still dead then we are lost in our sin there is no hope of us having a way back to God Christian faith is useless and of all people in all the world we are most to be pitied and that shows us just how important the resurrection is to the Christian faith so it is crucial for us to think about this reality why is the tomb of Jesus empty so every group at the time of Jesus knew the tomb was empty so there were the Jewish leaders and they hated Jesus and they arranged for Jesus to be handed over to the Romans to be killed they knew the tomb was empty and they paid off the Roman guards and

they began to spread the lie that the disciples had stolen Jesus' body away so they knew the tomb was empty so they knew the tomb was empty the Romans who had killed Jesus they had set guards at the tomb so they also knew that the tomb was empty and the first followers of Jesus knew that the tomb was empty particularly when Jesus appeared to them in a real physical glorified body so we need to think that the empty tomb is a fact even the most skeptical non-Christian historians recognize the empty tomb is a fact what makes the best sense of that?

if his body was stolen why did no enemies produce that stolen body with all the power at their disposal knowing that they could halt Christianity dead in its tracks why did they not produce the body?

and it's fascinating to look at the development of the church and to think how do you explain for example the transformation of Mary blinded by grief and sorrow and tears then full of joy how do we explain the transformation of the disciples fearful in hiding having run away from Jesus when he was arrested because they thought it was the end of their hope how do we then explain them preaching powerfully and boldly and being willing to die for Jesus how do we account for the transformation of a man like Paul who spent some of his adult life as a great opponent of Jesus hated Jesus, hated the church spent his life trying to kill Christians imprison Christians and end the Christian church how do we account for him then speaking for Jesus and establishing churches he said he met Jesus on the road to Damascus and that changed everything for him how do we account for the empty tomb?

[26 : 04] well the empty tomb and the angels are preparing Mary for hope that first Easter Sunday so let's see together hope rising hope rises because Jesus is alive we're still not quite there yet verse 14 having spoken to the angels Mary turned round and saw Jesus standing there but she didn't realise that it was Jesus she thought he was a gardener perhaps because it was still dark perhaps because she was blinded by tears perhaps because she had no prospect of ever seeing Jesus again she fails to recognise him but note the compassion of Jesus even before he's recognised woman he said why are you crying?

who is it you're looking for? here is Jesus and he has come to help her in her grief and her pain and her confusion the risen Jesus there to help and to transform now already before Jesus died he had used the reality of resurrection to speak comfort to his disciples he said to them don't be troubled I'm going and returning to my father to my father's house I'm going to prepare a place for you I'm going to come back and I'll take you to be with me where I am and he said I won't leave you on your own I won't leave you as orphans I'll send the Holy Spirit so I'll come to live in your heart because he would rise from the dead so Mary initially hope doesn't come from seeing Jesus because she can't recognise his identity how does hope come to life in Mary?

we need to go to verse 16 Jesus said to her Mary and she turned and cried out teacher she hears his voice here is where hope comes from she hears his voice Jesus had described himself earlier as the good shepherd the good shepherd who calls his sheep by name they know him they know his voice and they listen to him Jesus has died for his sheep and risen again and so here is how hope rises for Mary and listen to these wonderful words of hope for grieving and fearful disciples she says to Mary don't hold on to me for I've not yet returned to the Father you don't need to hang on to me you won't lose me this is part of my journey returning to glory go instead to my brothers and tell them I'm returning to my Father and your Father to my God and your God ascending to the glory of heaven ascending to his Father

Jesus promises that's the same journey that his disciples will make his followers will have access to God they can call God we can call God Father through faith in Jesus we can know our identity as part of God's family through faith in the risen Jesus because death has been defeated in the resurrection Jesus victory power of sin has been broken Jesus has shown that death could not hold him it had no claim on him because he is sinless he came to deal with our sin to take our sin so now by trusting in Jesus we have all these privileges the privilege of access the privilege of God's love and God's joy and God's hope so what a different message Mary now brings to Peter, John and the other disciples verse 18 she comes running in this time I have seen the Lord so church begins on Easter Sunday because now their saviour is alive for you and for me where does lasting hope come from?

maybe this virus has been showing to us it doesn't come in your well it doesn't come in your hell lasting hope is not found in your work or in your leisure we can't root all our hope and security in our politicians in our medical officers or vaccines rather it's the resurrection of Jesus alone that gives

true and lasting hope both for your life now and for your eternal future because through the whole message of Easter the cross of Jesus and his resurrection there is forgiveness of sin there is peace with God there is life with God promised when our faith is in him access to God's perfect love to that always and forever love that we long for and we're so sad when we lose love here is one love that will never be taken from him in the cross and the resurrection we have this path to enjoying life with God

[30 : 56] Jesus said the life of one of his followers one of his followers will be suffering now and we know that but by faith it is promise of glorious resurrection life there is promise of life in the new heaven and the new earth when everything is made new even us so as we finish why does the resurrection give hope it gives hope because one our great enemy has been defeated C.S. Lewis in his book Miracles said this Jesus has forced open a door that has been locked since the death of the first man he has met, fought and beaten the king of death everything is different because he has done so this is the beginning of the new creation the resurrection gives hope too because God's purpose has been fulfilled John in a few verses after writes this these things that he has written and recorded are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ God's chosen anointed saviour the son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name believing in the risen Lord Jesus is the pathway to eternal life is the demonstration that God's saving plan has been fulfilled and you can be part of that by trusting in Jesus and the resurrection also gives hope because it says to us God is with us and with us always if you feel today hope dying trust in Jesus if you are facing fear and struggling with loneliness then understand that by faith in Christ though you are lonely you are never alone what hope is there for a suffering world there is hope in the resurrection that Jesus the son of God he has entered into our broken world he's entered into our suffering he's gone into death itself and he's come through the other side promising that where he goes his people will follow perfect love and love and life and joy and will be ours so trust in him today make him your living hope he will not disappoint and now we're going to sing another couple of songs continuing the theme of hope because of the resurrection first of all we're going to sing from Psalm 16 and then we're going to sing the power of the cross and again we're very grateful to Cailin for leading us in this the Lord my God

I'll praise the Lord my God whose counsel guides my choice and even in the night my heart recalls instructions voice before me I'll praise the Lord my God I'll praise the Lord my God whose counsel guides my choice and even in the night my heart recalls instructions voice before me constantly I set the Lord alone because he is at my right hand I'll not be overthrown therefore my heart is glad my tongue with joy will sing my body too will rest secure in hope unwavering for you will not allow my soul in death to stay nor will you leave your Holy One to see the tombs decay you have made known to me the path of life divine bliss shall I know at your right hand joy from your face will shine the Lord my God

O to see the dawn of the darkest day Christ on the road to Calvary by sinful men torn and beaten then nailed to a cross of wood this the power of the cross This the power of the cross Christ became sin for us To the blame

O'er the wrath we stand forgiven at the cross O to see the pain written on your face Bearing the awesome weight of sin Every bitter thought Every evil deed Crowning your blood-stained brow This the power of the cross Christ became sin for us

Took the blame Bore the wrath We stand forgiven at the cross Now the daylight flees Now the ground beneath Quakes as its maker Bows his head Curtain torn in two Dead are raised to life Finish the victory cry This the power of the cross

[39 : 05] Christ became sin for us Took the blame Bore the wrath We stand forgiven at the cross Oh to see my name Written in the wood For through your suffering I am free Death is crushed to death Life is mine to live One through your selfless love

This the power of the cross Son of God Slave for us What a love What a cost We stand forgiven at the cross What a love What a cost We stand forgiven at the cross Now let me close in prayer May the grace Of the Lord Jesus Christ And the love of God And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit Be with us all Amen May God bless you Bless you richly this Easter Sunday to do