

He is Risen - He is not Here

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Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

[0 : 00] I'm going to begin today with the singing of Psalm 23. Psalm 23, the Lord's my shepherd I'll not want, he makes me down to lie.

In pastures green he leadeth me the quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again, and me to walk doth make, within the paths of righteousness, even for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark veil, yet will I fear none, for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff may comfort still, and so on.

So the whole psalm to the praise of God. To lie in pastures green he leadeth me the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again, and me to walk away.

[1 : 33] In the path of righteousness, even for his own name's sake.

The whole psalm to the Lord's name is the king of the Lord's name. The whole psalm to the Lord's name is the king of the Lord's name. The whole psalm to the Lord's name is the king of the Lord's name.

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Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. worship j affordable somealiar minutes and these three- The good shepherd one to about with us. hunger's name is the king. Let us make business amendment is the king of the church to phone number one of the one savez it could be is "ish biggest fear", in the investor of the Greek holy Russia ,ae toennium ituooklynn among the king, there also means the united he combien for cub scheme particular citys TOP Youtube name of the world's name owli that type dig these words of himself, I am the good shepherd.

And that as the good shepherd, he not only declares an interest in his sheep, but cares for them in a way that no other shepherd could possibly follow.

No matter how caring they are, or how much they have an interest in their sheep, this good shepherd cares for them in a way that he came to be one with them and took their place, so that through him they might enjoy the blessings that are without end.

He speaks in these words of the psalmist of goodness and mercy all my life following him.

- [5 : 16] And in God's house forevermore, that that is where his dwelling place would be. We give thanks that that is true of your people, whoever they are, whatever may be true of them, even today when they think of themselves as being neglected or forgotten by their peers, by loved ones, family members, whoever they may be, that it is not true of those who are your people because of the one who has taken them to be his own.
- We pray that you would remind us this day, even a day that bears your name, that you are showing that interest in speaking to us through your word.
- A word that reminds us of what you have done on our behalf. We pray that you would bless your people with their varying needs on this Lord's day.
- There are some who are unwell and some who need to be remembered, especially. Some who have illnesses to contend with, physical illness, mental illness, spiritual illness even.
- Even though that may be difficult to pin down and identify. Perhaps a combination of all these, and they are difficult to diagnose and remedies are hard to come by.
- [6 : 44] But outside of Christ and without Christ in the equation, these things will be prolonged. And they will continue and bring their own sorrows and their sadnesses.
- We pray that you would encourage us to look unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith. We pray that you would remember those who are suffering because of the pandemic that is still leaving its mark upon our communities.
- We are indebted to you for remedies that have been discovered and applied. And we see improvements day by day.
- But we are in your hands in a way that no other can possibly say that of themselves. There are nurses and doctors, professors, consultants, the higher end of the spectrum as far as delivering care is concerned.
- Without them we would be suffering far greater than we are. But we still know that there is one who is above them. Who gives them the skills and who directs them to be able to minister to us.
- [8 : 01] So we pray that you would remember us this evening and thankful that we can come to you as we worship, as we wait upon you.
- Whether it is in the morning or at night, whatever time of the day it is, where we are. We know that we are in your presence and with your help we can discover truth that will be of great help to us.
- We remember you at this time as our God and pray that your blessing would be our portion. And ask that you would encourage us to wait upon you, even as you speak to us through your word.
- Bless our nation. Bless all the nations of the earth. Bless us, remembering those who govern us, those who rule over us. We pray that you would encourage them to look to the Lord.
- Even as we see ourselves coming up to the time of general election as a Scottish nation. We pray that you would open the blind eyes, that they might see what is true of those who are seeking election.
- [9 : 23] And that they would see the genuineness or otherwise of the claims that are being made. And where there are emphases put upon what man can do and what man is able to bring to fruition.
- To the exclusion of God, may that be seen for what it is. We pray that you would pour out your spirit upon us. That our cry might be one that is unanimous.
- What must I do to be saved? That it might be a cry, even before it becomes a cry, that cannot be answered. The day will come when all must answer to you.

And if we are found outside of Christ on that day, there is no prospect of deliverance from the eternal destiny that you have pronounced upon all such.

Remember the needy throughout the world. We are in a land of plenty. We are in a land of plenty. And we abuse our plenty. There are those who are living in poverty.

[10 : 35] And they have little of this world's goods. And yet they rejoice in the little that they have. When they are clothed, they are thankful. And when they are fed, they are equally so.

We pray that you would encourage us to look to yourself at all times. That we might even look to you to bless others through us.

Bless the preaching of the word. Bless those who go out with it, wherever they are called to do so. We give thanks for the opportunity to preach the word.

Bless those who go out with it, wherever they are called to do so.

And remembering that the blessing that comes from God is the blessing that enriches for time and for eternity. So watch over us the short time that we are together.

[11 : 54] With your word before us, may we recognise that it is a world under which we must sit in order to learn and gain from that opportunity afforded us.

That it may bless to us all. Hear us and go before us, we pray. Cleansing from sin in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm going to read from the scripture of the New Testament.

From the Gospel of Mark. And we're going to read some verses from chapter 15. Which describes to us the burial of Jesus Christ following his death on the cross.

Verse 42, reading into the following chapter, some verses there. And now when the evening was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus.

And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead. And calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

[13 : 19] And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he brought fine linen, and took him down and wrapped him in the linen. And laid him in a sepulcher, which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone onto the door of the sepulcher.

And Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Joseph, beheld where he was laid. And when the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had brought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulcher, at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?

And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great. And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were affrighted.

And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted. We seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified. He is risen, he is not here.

[14 : 35] Behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples, and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee. There shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

So they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher, for they trembled, and were amazed. Neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid.

And so on. May the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word unto his name be the praise. Now, as you know, for many today, the Christian calendar marks Easter Sunday.

It is a day that is identified as a day that celebrates the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead.

Christ, having been crucified on the cross, was buried, and he rose again on the third day. We can find no biblical warrant for many of the services and the liturgies that preoccupy many churches.

[15 : 58] But there is a clear biblical warrant for recognising the true significance of the rising from the dead of the Lord Jesus, and having such a truth before our mind's eye constantly.

Paul the Apostle draws attention to this in the 15th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians. I'm sure you're familiar with the words of the Apostle.

1 Corinthians chapter 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. You can read a verse 3. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve.

Not only does he declare it to be a fact, but a fact upon which the New Testament Church depends. Further on in the same chapter he writes, Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain.

[17 : 27] And your faith is also vain. Yea, and we be found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ whom he raised up, if so be that the dead rise not.

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised. And so on. Today I want to take you to the experience of the followers of Christ, as they moved from the devastation of his death, to the triumph of his resurrection.

In the words of our text, He is risen, he is not here. Behold the place where they layton. And all the Gospels show us that there was a faithful group of Jesus' followers who remained loyal to their Master.

While we are not told who they all were, there was a group of mostly women who followed Jesus from Galilee. We are told in Matthew 27, verse 55, many women were there at the cross, beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him.

It is only in the Gospel of Luke that we find the Apostle speaking of all his acquaintance and the woman, as if there were more.

[19 : 07] But without exception, all the Gospel writers speak of the woman in particular. For example, John, as you would expect, makes mention of Mary, the mother of Jesus, standing by the cross.

Mary, the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene. The way the women are named create confusion because it is possible to read the lists in the Gospels as being sometimes two or three or four different women.

The truth is, only one name appears in all the Gospels at this point, and that is the name of Mary Magdalene. How many others there were over and above this is unclear, but what is certain is that they were all devoted to their Lord.

Not only can you believe that there was a discernible spiritual darkness surrounding the occasion, you cannot overlook the hours of unnatural darkness that preceded his death, nor can you ignore the extreme brutality demonstrated and the attendant hostility of the gathered spectators, as well as his executioners who would have a low tolerance of those who loved their victim.

They were brave, fearless even, but truly devastated by what they were witnessing. And they are with Christ to the bitter end.

[20 : 46] When Joseph of Arimathea comes to Pilate to crave his body and he takes him for burial, we read that Mary Magdalene and Jesus' mother beheld where Jesus was laid.

They remained in close proximity wherever he was. Jesus was dead, but their love to him was very much alive.

Do you know such a love today? Do you know such a love that no matter what, that love will endure? A love for a saviour, a love for a God, a love for someone who loved you and gave himself for you.

The second thing that I'd like us to notice is that they believed that Jesus was dead and their response to that was very practical.

First, they observed that he was buried, including the nature of the burial as well as its location. They took note of it because their love for Christ had to find expression.

[21 : 58] they had ministered to him in life and now they wanted to minister to him in death. There is no reason to suspect that the woman would not have been aware of all the customs regarding the dead having been fulfilled by Joseph.

We read that Joseph wrapped the body in a clean linen cloth. Mark calls it fine linen because clearly Joseph was a wealthy man.

But John adds the details of the burial ceremony and he includes mention of Nicodemus and we find that they prepared the body for burial. And there came also Nicodemus which at the first came to Jesus by night and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes about a hundred weight.

Then took the body of Jesus and wound it in linen cloths with the spices as the manner of the Jews is to bury. If nothing else it tells us that Jesus was truly dead and not unconscious as some would allege to prove or rather disprove a resurrection.

They also displayed publicly their affection for the Lord which would not be forgotten by some of the onlookers. But what did they care?

[23 : 27] Joseph became bold in that hour as indeed did Nicodemus. But the woman did not want to be denied this opportunity. When the Sabbath was over they made their way to the garden to the very place they knew him to have been placed.

They brought sweet spices but they knew there was an obstacle before them. who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre.

This confirms to us that they had followed Jesus to the cross and to the grave. Matthew tells us they were sitting over against the sepulchre when the stone was rolled over the entrance.

It is difficult for us to imagine what the sepulchre was like. If you are like me you will have seen over the years various pictures drawn by famous artists depicting the scene but perhaps they allowed their imagination to guide their artist's fingers.

A sepulchre can mean many things but this one was cut or hewn in the rock according to Matthew. A large stone was rolled over the entrance.

[24 : 44] Now it could have been a deep shelf but from the gospels we gather that it was possible for them to enter into the sepulchre. It could have been a cave with the graves carved in rock inside.

It is difficult to tell from the accounts that we have in the gospels. Matthew says an angel sat on the rock at the door. Now what is plain is that the woman expected to find a dead Jesus.

What they had seen before had confirmed them in their belief and made them believe the worse. Yet the same woman would have heard repeatedly the claims of Christ and the truth concerning his relationship with death.

He spoke I am the way, the truth and the life. I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me shall never die. Like Martha, they would say amen to that.

Yes, Lord, we believe. I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God. In a sense it is easy to believe that when he is there. But when all your senses say otherwise, it is not so easy.

[26 : 04] But the third thing I want us to notice is this, how faith and sight coalesce to bring unspeakable joy. They wanted to believe.

They needed to believe what their eyes were telling them and what common sense and experience was crying out could not be possible. The angel made them afraid, but the truth that the angel spoke filled them with amazement.

Jesus was not to be found where they expected to find him. Instead, the words he is risen. But these words are not uttered into a vacuum.

The word of God was in their possession. Jesus had spoken to them often about his death. Later on in the account we have in Luke's Gospel, we have Jesus speaking to the two going to Emmaus.

But before then, the angels have asked, why do you seek the living among the dead? They are reminded of the words of Jesus, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.

[27 : 22] And they remembered his words to the two on the road to Emmaus, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophet has spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory.

He expounds the scripture, and these women, despite the head-on encounter with the sorrows of the cross, we cannot underestimate the destructive force of that.

But the empty grave alone was not sufficient to overcome it. It needed the power of the Spirit in the word to allow light to penetrate that darkness.

But where that light comes, no matter how dark, it makes the greatest difference. The preacher James Montgomery Boyce remembers a story told by D.L.

Moody about a young girl mother, who was just 15 years of age, she was a believer, and that was what made the difference, because at that age she was afflicted by some neurological disease that paralysed her down one side and left her almost blind.

[28 : 48] One day when the family doctor was visiting her home, he stood by her bedside and spoke to her parents concerning her future well-being, and he said to them, sadly, he said, she has seen her best days, the poor child.

But the child who was on the bed spoke, no doctor, she said, my best days are still to come, when I shall see the king in his beauty.

Her hope was in the risen Christ, and a Christ that she would see, just like Job of old. I know my redeemer liveth, said Job, and it shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another.

Such faith, such a conviction, such a belief in the truth of the word of God.

Is that today what the resurrection of Jesus Christ means to you? There are many today, and all Easter means is the story of the resurrection, but what it actually means to them is little more than another excuse for days away from their work, days to think of other things other than the usual mundane things.

[30 : 33] things. But in reality, the scripture tells us the importance of Christ rising from the dead. It tells us the importance of a living Saviour.

when the angels spoke to these women, as they trembled in their presence, He is written, they said, Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified, you seek him, but he is risen.

He is not here. There is the evidence. Behold the place where they laid him. There are many today, and perhaps that is what they have.

They have graves, they have tombs, they have places marked where the dust contains the dust of their heroes and those that they worship.

There is no such place in this world of ours. Today, as one of old said, the throne at the right hand of God contains the dust of this earth.

[31 : 48] In the sense that at the right hand of God is the second Adam, one who was created in our image to be the sin-bearer.

He experienced the penalties of the cross. He experienced the pain and the grief and the extreme sorrow of one who was rejected by his fellows and who bore that death as one who did it for his own people, knowing that his people would be beneficiaries of it.

Are you thankful today that it is not a dead Christ that you are thinking of, but a living saviour, one who has risen from the dead, one who appeared to others before he ascended up into glory and who gave to the church a mission.

As we see at the end of the chapter here, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. The gospel of a risen saviour, the gospel of our Christ who has triumphed and gained the victory over death and the grave.

In the book of Psalms, we find the psalmist there in Psalm 68 speaking of the triumph of Christ, speaking of the awesome wonder that is the vision of his glory and the vision of his victory for the church that bears his name.

[33 : 44] Thou hast ascended on high and led captive, captive, captivity, captive, you have received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

We give thanks that this is true of Christ who is waiting to come, ready to come, willing to come at the last to bring his own to be with him, whether they are alive at his coming or in the dust, awaiting his trumpet call.

Let us pray. be merciful to us, O God. You are a God who speaks into every situation that is before you in this world at this time, and we pray that we would be attentive to what you say to us, even at a time in the season when some would talk of things pertaining to the risen Christ.

May the truth of it impress itself upon them, so that they would be like the woman of old who had heard the words of Christ himself, and yet when these words came to fruition, when they came to speak of the reality of what death was for Christ.

It impacted upon them so much that they were, like so many, unable to grasp the true significance of it, and only by your grace can any one of us do that very thing.

[35 : 34] So be near to us that as we read your word and as we reflect on what it says to us, that by your spirit we might see the wonder of the glory of our son Christ.

Pardon sin, go before us now. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all now and always. Amen.