

He Is Risen

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Date: 17 March 2024

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[0 : 00] Welcome to our service this morning as we join together in the worship of God we pray that he would bless us as we seek his face in our service.

We can begin by singing some verses from Psalm 71. Psalm 71 and we're going to sing the first four stanzas.

Psalm 71 verses 1 to 5. O Lord my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone then let thy servant never be put to confusion and let me in thy righteousness from thee deliverance have cause me escape incline thine ear to me and me save.

Be thou my dwelling rock to which I ever may resort. Thou gavest commandment me to save for thou art my rock and fort. Free me my God from wicked hands, hands cruel and unjust.

For thou O Lord God art my hope and from my youth my trust. Psalm 71 from the beginning to verse 5.

[1 : 30] O Lord my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone. O Lord my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone.

Then let thy servant never be put to confusion.

And let me in thy righteousness from thee.

Lord my hope and confidence is fixed in thee. Thou will minhai wherever and self cause me escape comende.

By thine ear and two and me save. Be thou my dwelling rock to which I ever may resort.

[3 : 04] Thou canst come and lead me to save for the earth, my rock and part.

Free me, my God, from with good hands and spirit and unjust.

For thou, O Lord God, art my hope and from my youth my trust.

Let us join together in prayer. Let us pray. Gracious God, as we call upon your holy name in prayer, help us to realise the privilege that we have, that by your own hand a way of access has been opened.

Something that we could not secure by any of our own devices. And we are assured that the way is open to us in and through the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[4 : 43] There are many who habitually perform acts of obeisance or some manner of conduct by which they would hope to secure the favour of God.

And yet the truth is that if that is all we have, then we will surely fail. Only by looking unto Jesus as the author and finisher of our faith can we be assured of that access into the presence of the Almighty.

One who sits surrounded by glory that is immeasurable. Glory that this world could not contain.

Glory that speaks of majesty without equal. Amen. We read in the scriptures how the saints of the Old Testament were constantly having to be reminded of the holiness of that God.

The God that was their God. The God that is our God. The God that remains the same. who has not in any way diminished or aged a God who has not increased or decreased a God who made himself known through your word and through the testimony of your people people that you made your own and your own cannot but speak of who you are this is what marks them out even in the days before sin entered into the world we were told that we were created for you and for your glory and by the activities that were given to our first parents they lived in the life of your countenance freely accessible to all the attributes that were divine denied none and yet the enemy of our soul so sought to disturb the peace that existed by presenting a lie and making out that they were in some way deprived such deprivation was unheard of in reality unlike the experience that we have today we are deprived of many of the things that would declare the glory of God to others and whatever reflexive glory that we possess in the path of obedience it is but a pale image of what is true help us to acknowledge that as we enter into your presence bless us we pray as a gathered congregation young and old our needs may be many they may differ according to circumstance yet not one of us is here without the eye of God being upon us and without the knowledge of God preparing the way for us into your presence so that as we sing your praises and read your word and reflect on what it says we can be persuaded that it has something to say to ourselves we pray for that blessing to be a portion to us according to the needs that we have remember those of your own believing people who may be assailed by experiences of doubt and questioning perhaps a shadow of death cast over them makes them feel that they are not as they ought to be or that there is something that others have that they do not possess so it seems in the times of trial that your people question to the possession that they have of God's grace if there are such we pray for them and ask that you would lighten the path before them that you would lift up your countenance to them that they would once again be refreshed in their soul and encouraged to rest upon Christ

[10:06] as he has freely offered in the gospel for those who have yet to experience the privileged position of being in faith may today be the day where they see him and marvel at him where they see him with the eye of faith where they hear of him and the hearing here is unlike anything that they ever experienced before so it has been in the experience of your own people one moment dead in trespasses and sin one moment whatever truth they possessed in whatever measure when the light of your own truth flooded into their hearts and minds they were so possessed by it that they could not believe how blind how blind they once were help us oh Lord to plead for those who are still in such a condition may your spirit be poured out upon us as a congregation as a community as an island as a nation we pray for the needs of our communities and ask Lord that you would visit the sick heal them we pray remember those who are in the grip of terminal illness comfort them even as they have to engage with the truth as it applies to them that this world will soon be something that they were once part of but are part of no more we pray for the grieving and the sorrowful and ask Lord that you would apply the truth to their circumstances also pour out your spirit upon the proclamation of truth so that those who go out in fear and trepidation not knowing what will prosper this or that but trusting that the word will not return to God void it will accomplish that which you have purposed for it this is our belief this is our our great comfort that it is not what any preacher can do or any voice of man can achieve but the voice of the almighty may it thunder out in our hearts and minds and minds today so that we know that it is the almighty that is speaking to us even as the voice of God spoke from the mountain on high where a mountain was clothed in smoke and fire and the God of heaven made his presence known so that none doubted and we pray

Lord that that would be so for us even today remember the congregations of our island we pray particularly for those that are remembering the death of Christ as they commemorate it in the sacrament be with them as they join together in worship may the symbols representative of the broken body and the shed blood be truly meaningful to all who would lay hold of them may the handling of it be holy of faith remember the nation that we form part of there is a kingdom within a kingdom your saints inhabit this kingdom but in our nation we fear that there is a decrease in the number of those who would hold your name dear you know these things while we cannot see these things but we can see the denilection of duty we can see the evidences of wayward believers we can see even those who were in the grip of unbelief to fearlessly proclaim all manner of wisdom but it is tainted if not polluted entirely with the pit of hell and it will for all who adhere to it and follow it will bring all who engage in it to the pit of hell your word tells us that that is how it must be you see only wise

God is the God who will not allow his name to be disparaged he will not allow his name to be trodden under foot and you have so declared Lord remember the nations of the earth especially those that are in the grip of war and all that encompasses these nations as they are embroiled in it those who have suffered loss of life and who grieve over the loved ones taken from them those who have suffered loss of property who are seeking to eat a living in the ruins of nations that are torn as under be merciful O God enable us to hear the voice that would speak peace directing us to

Christ alone alone saviour of sinners continue to watch over as we pray bless us in our gathering bless the children as they meet together remember those who are engaged in seeking to bring the truth that is yours to their attention forgive our transgressions cleanses in the Redeemer's name we ask all in him amen boys and girls before you go out today to Sunday school you're going to be hearing about a task that was given to Moses you remember the passion of Moses was very much a passion entrusted with a role where he would speak on behalf of the people to God and very often he had to do that and on this occasion we read that the children of

Israel were complaining against God complaining against Moses because they weren't happy that God had done them anything that was to their advantage and because they complained and because they wanted to bring their anger and directed against God God spoke against them he not only spoke against them he said because this people have raised up their voices against me he brought into the camp of Israel serpents fiery serpents that bit the people and whoever they bit they died they were poisonous serpents and we're told they were fiery

[18 : 28] I think that meant that the kind of colour their skin possessed made them to seem as if there was fire running through their whole body e but but they were either died and then the people took fight and they turned to Moses and they asked Moses speak to God so that he will save us from these serpents take them away and God spoke to Moses again and he told them what to do he told them to make an image of these snakes one snake and lift it up on a pole he told it was a brass or a brazen snake whatever that means it was made of some kind of metal like brass or something like that and it was shaped in the form of the serpent and it was lifted up in the camp on a pole and God told Moses tell them that if anyone is bitten by one of these snakes in order to be healed what they need to do is look at the snake on the pole and they will be cured as simple as that all they had to do was obey look at the snake and be cured now it seems a very strange thing but God is always looking forward

God is always looking to reveal his purposes for his own people and even though at that time the need that was greatest to them was the need that arose out of a bite of a snake which would kill them there was something greater than that than that at work in their lives and that was what caused them to rebel against God to question what God was doing to be ill at ease with the things that were in their life that God had ordained and God said well they needed to learn that the root cause of their predicament was really sin and sin was the cause of their being angry with God sin was the cause of their being rebellious in spirit so the snake lifted up reminded them of the curse that they were under because of sin and God by means of this very powerful symbol spoke to them of the way sin brings death it brought death into the experience of all men all women all children and there was only one remedy for it and that remedy

God said was to look to himself to trust in himself and in particular to look to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ the curse of the bite could only be removed if they looked if they were obedient if they did what God said it was an easy thing it was an easy thing faith is always an easy thing do you not think Jesus requires us to have faith in him that's all it's a very easy thing and yet if it's so easy why are so few people actually putting their trust in Jesus why are so few people not believing that Jesus is the remedy for the curse of sin well Jesus himself you will read in the gospel if you want to go to John chapter 3 and there

Jesus says I he says if I am lifted up will draw all men to me what is he doing when he is saying that well he is speaking about two things he is speaking about what happened when Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness and reminding them of what happened then but he is also teaching them this is what's going to happen to me I will be a curse I will bear the curse of sin and all who look to me will be saved all who believe all who trust there is the remedy for sin and everybody who believes that will know that for themselves and I hope that you will understand something of the truth of what this dealing of

God with his people teaches we are going to continue singing to God's praise as we go out from Psalm 71 we are going to sing from verse 14 Psalm 71 verse 14 but I with expectation will hope continually and yet with praises more and more I will thee magnify thy justice and salvation my mouth abroad will show even all the day for I thereof the numbers do not know and I will constantly go on in strength of God the Lord and thine own righteousness even thine alone I will record for even from my youth O God by thee I have been taught and hitherto I have declared the wonders thou hast dropped and now Lord leave me not when I old and grey headed grow till to this age thy strength and power to all to come

[25 : 24] I show thy most perfect righteousness O Lord is very high who has so great things done O God who is like unto thee verses 14 to 19 of Psalm 71 but I with expectation will hope continually but I with expectation will hope continually and yet with praises more and more I will thee magnify thy justice and salvation my mouth shall show even all the day part

I let off the numbers do still know and I will constantly come on in strength of God the Lord and thine unrighteous I just bless in thine alone I will record for for even from my peace oh God by thee

I have been taught taught and hither too I have declared a wondrous time has brought and now Lord leave me not when I hold angry head to throw to the sea it thy strength and power to all to come thy shore and thy most perfect righteousness

O Lord is there every high who has so great things can O God who is thy God to thee I'm going to hear God's notice we have it in the Gospel of Luke and we're going to read at the end of chapter 23 and reading into chapter 24 describing to us the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ Luke chapter 23 and verse 46 chapter chapter and when

Jesus had cried with that loud voice he said father into thy hands I commend my spirit and having said thus he gave up the ghost now when the centurion saw what was done he glorified God saying certainly this was a righteous man and all the people that came together to that side beholding the things which were done smoked their breasts and returned and all his acquaintance and the woman that followed him from Galilee stood afar of beholding these things and behold there was a man named Joseph our counsellor and he was a good man and a just the same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them he was of Arimathea a city of the Jews who also himself waited for the kingdom of

[31 : 06] God this man went to Pilate and beg the body of Jesus and he took it down and wrapped it in linen and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone where a never man before was laid and that day was a nation and the sabbath drew on and the woman also which came with him from Galilee followed after and beheld the sepulchre and how his body was laid and they returned and prepared spices and oint and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment now upon the first day of the week very early in the morning they came unto the sepulchre bringing the spices which they had prepared and certain others with them and they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre and they entered in and found not the body of the

Lord Jesus and it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout behold two men stood by them in shining garments and as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth they said unto them why seek ye the living among the dead he is not here but is risen remember how he spake unto you when he sings unto the apostles and their words seemed to them as idle tales and they believed them not then arose

Peter and ran unto the sepulchre and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes lying by themselves and departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass and so on with the Lord at his blessing to a reading of this word to his name be praise going to sing verses from psalm 16 verses which are commonly associated with the resurrection in particular of the Lord Jesus Christ we're going to sing from verse 6 to verse 11 verse 6 to the end unto me happily the lions in pleasant places fell yea the inheritance I got in beauty doth excel I bless the Lord because he doth by counsel me conduct and in the seasons of the night my rains to me instruct before me still the

Lord I said so it is so that he doth ever stand at my right hand I shall not move it be because of this my heart is glad and joy shall be expressed even by my glory and my flesh in confidence shall rest because my soul engraved to dwell shall not be left by thee nor wilt thou give thine holy one corruption to see thou wilt me show the path of life of joys there is full stored before thy face at thy right hand are pleasures ever more these verses psalm 16 from verse 6 unto me happily the lines in pleasant places you fell

God in spite and How can the seasons of the night my reins to me instruct?

[36 : 19] Before me still the Lord I said, if it is so like He that ever stand at my right hand, I shall not live with Thee.

Because of this my heart is glad and joy shall be expressed in Thy my glory and my flesh and confidence shall rest.

Because my soul engraved to dwell shall not be left by Thee.

Nor wilt thou give thine holy one for nations to see.

Thou wilt be sure the path of life, of joy is led is, O God, before thy face at Thy right hand, our pleasures evermore.

[38 : 45] We can turn to the passage that we were reading together. Luke's Gospel, chapter 24.

And we can read at verse 5. And the third day rise again.

And they remembered his words. When Lazarus rose from the dead, he did so because of a supernatural power at work.

Jesus called him forth from the grave. The passage before us describes the fact of the resurrection of Jesus.

This is also a supernatural occurrence. Lazarus. But it is quite different to Lazarus being taken from the grip of death to experience life once again.

[40 : 25] There's a number of differences that we can speak about. And I would like to do that with you today.

As you can see from the context, we know for certain that Jesus was dead. And that certainty comes from a, when we can read the Bible and we believe the truth that the Bible brings to our attention.

If you are a Christian and you believe the word that is in the Bible to be God's word, there's never a doubt in your mind that the truth is what you're reading.

But I think that's part of what God has enabled you to do. to believe his word as the truth. And his word is truth.

But if you're not a believer and you're uncertain about some of the things that the Bible says to you, then what it does is present you with certain evidences that are contained as historical evidences.

[41 : 46] The truth, and even though you might not consider them to be true, they clearly are able to be identified as processes or experiences that are recorded as historical facts.

And we have a selection of evidences descended by witnesses and recorded as historical facts.

And while you're believing these to be true will not necessarily result in you coming to faith.

what it does is that those who have faith are encouraged by the possession of these facts. They don't they don't in any way make you think less of the truth.

It adds to the knowledge that you have that is part of the truth that is part of the faith that is used as a Christian. But I want us to think about some of the things that we can read about in this world.

[43 : 16] First of all the evidence that is given to us of those who were present when Jesus died or immediately after him dying.

we can easily identify from the word of God who these people are. Secondly there are those who not only witnessed his death and witnessed the result of him dying that is his burial there were those who encountered him after the resurrection so that they were persuaded in their own mind and in their heart and even that behaviour is evidence of what they believed.

They believed him to be dead but then they met him as a living being once again. They met the Lord Jesus Christ as alive as you are today and they knew him to be alive.

They didn't believe him to be like the angel that met with some of them. they didn't believe him to be a specter or a ghost. They knew him to be the Lord Jesus risen from the dead.

And the third thing is what significance should we give to that? I think that's an important question to ask.

[44 : 48] What significance should we give to the evidences that are given to us of the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus that are relevant to the way you live your life today?

Why should it mean anything to you? I think we need to ask that question and understand that just because this was something that happened 2,000 years plus ago this is something that has a relevance to you today for your present experience and also for the future that awaits you one way or the other.

So what certainty does this word give to us that Jesus died? Well there are a number of witnesses that are spoken of and they are quite convinced that the person before them was dead.

There was a crowd gathered at the cross. You can read back again to those who were standing there around the cross and who saw the brutality that was carried out not just to Jesus but those who had been crucified alongside him.

But there were many there and they were in close proximity to him and amongst them we know were his friends and followers.

[46 : 35] There are some mentioned there in this chapter but there's a clearer picture given to us in Mark's gospel of who they were. In chapter 15 we are told the following There were also women looking on afar off among whom was Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James the less son of Joseph and Salome who also was in Galilee followed him and ministered to him and many other women which came up with him to Jerusalem.

they followed him all the way to the cross and they weren't far away when he gave up the ghost. There are also soldiers.

These are official witnesses to the death of Christ. That was their duty. They had to ensure that the crucifixion of Christ was carried out according to the law.

The law of Rome which had put him to death which had been responsible for bringing him to judgment and it was their duty to be there when it was carried out to the point at which death removed him from this world as far as they were concerned.

And again the scripture tells us with some detail what that meant for some. John chapter 19 the brutality of the event is recorded for us there.

[48 : 25] how Jesus after death the command was given for them to break his legs along with the others to hasten the death as it were.

But for Jesus his death had already taken place. But there the command was given to them to ensure that he died.

And this was a Jewish command. This was something the Jews required in order to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath as they saw it. Preeminent amongst the soldiers who were there was the centurion.

He was in command. He was in charge and his testimony is a very clear testimony. Not only is he able to speak if he were asked the question were you there when he died?

Yes he was there when he gasped his last breath. When he breathed his last when he gave up the ghost he was there. And what he saw and what he witnessed caused him to say that this person was unlike any other.

[49 : 50] Remember his words. He spoke of him certainly this was a righteous man.

I wonder how he concluded that. Standing there hearing the last breath of this person knowing that this person was going into eternity eternity.

And at that moment he was persuaded that Jesus was a righteous man. But the point for this occasion is this whatever he knew about him whatever he concluded about him as far as his spirituality was concerned he knew that Jesus had died he had expired whatever he concluded from that.

And then following on from his death we have the inevitable steps that accompany death and these are carried out by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.

and I don't know which one of the commentators was saying you know these two men they're considered to be secret disciples they were followers of Jesus but they did it without letting anybody know that they did.

[51 : 19] But the nature of the crucifixion was that for a person to die on a cross it meant that they were considered to be the offscourings of society they were outside the city and ordinarily nobody would want anything to do with them the Jews especially they would not touch the dead body of a person and it's so strange that it is these two people that stood out and they didn't do it they weren't allowed to do it to go to the cross by themselves they had to seek permission from the Roman authorities it wasn't something they could any longer hide from view there there would be an inevitable publicity about the request that they made to beg the body of Jesus for burial these two men came and did that so they knew Jesus was dead they knew it because they physically handled his dead body they dressed the body in funeral clothes they dressed it in the mode of that generation they wrapped them in grave clothes and put the spices that would keep the pollution of the grave at bay for a time they did that they did it to a dead body they did that to somebody that they loved and yet the person that they loved they knew to be dead because they carried the dead body of

Jesus and laid him in a grave where nobody had ever laid before it was a grave that was dug out of rock and they put him in a grave and somebody else came and rolled a rock over the grave not to keep the person in the grave in the grave but to keep those outside the grave from getting in and taking the body away don't think for a moment that people were afraid that Jesus wasn't dead that that was the reason for the rock to be put there it wasn't their great fear was that the words that Jesus had predicted that they would come to pass because others would take it upon themselves to remove the body and pretend that he was alive when he wasn't but then we have the resurrection itself all of these are witnesses and there are many more I suppose you could isolate them and enumerate them and say surely there's enough evidence there to suggest to you that this man indeed died this Jesus the son of

God was indeed dead as we are expected to believe but just as surely there are also witnesses that speak to a risen Christ first of all we have those women again who saw him die who knew he was dead who came to the grave because they expected the dead Christ to be in the grave but they wanted to do their own thing in binding up this body that was his and that they loved so much in spices and they had taken the spices with them you know it wasn't a pretense that they were going through if they wanted to go through the motions all they had to do was turn up but they didn't just turn up they took with them the very things that they thought that they would do to do their own part in binding up this dead body but when they get there what did they find an empty grave not just sorry not an empty grave they find a grave where the body of

Christ is not to be found it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout behold two men stood by them in shining garments I'm not sure if that means that these two were inside the grave because you can't just picture our experience of a grave some say it's like a cave or something like a deep recess into the rock which would allow the two men to sit inside or whether they were just alongside but these two stood by them in shining garments and again they knew that something very unnatural was happening something quite different these created a fear in their heart and they said he is not here they told them that again in

Mark's account there is some information that you might want to consider entering into the sepulcher they saw a young man sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment and they were affracted be not affracted you see Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified he is risen he is not here behold the place where they later go your way and tell the disciples rather than believe that because of the differences in the account I think suggest to you that it can't be true it's more the other way because there are discrepancy in the telling of the story that makes it more genuine that makes it more believable because they haven't just rehearsed their answers they haven't just rehearsed their testimony so that it will be exactly every chot and the same but they recounted in the way you would expect a person to recount

[58 : 25] I think if you read court reports or if you read the accounts that are given by individuals of any event that has of major consequence very often there are discrepancies in the accounts that are given even of the most the witnesses that were most involved in the events they don't they don't have all the detail exactly as it was because the event itself creates that fear or creates that distortion in their memory that makes it like that but it was an encounter not just with an empty grave that's important but an encounter with the person who was in the grave that's important because it was the risen

Christ that met with Mary Magdalene it was the risen Christ that spoke to the disciples in the upper room it was the risen Christ that spoke with Thomas and said to Thomas put your fingers into the pins of the nails put your fist into the hole made by the spear in my side it was the risen Christ that walked with the disciples read on in this chapter as they made their way to Emmaus it was the risen Christ that presented themselves again and again and again to the disciples sat with them ate with them discussed with them it was the risen Christ that they saw ascending to heaven not a specter not a ghost but someone that they knew to be who he was so can you see with certainty because you compare or contrast the timorous terrified fearful body of people who were his disciples who cowered in the upper room fearful for their very life after the death of

Christ that when he departed from this world he breathed on them and we are told when they went away from him they went forth and preached everywhere empowered equipped fearless because they knew the Christ that they saw ascending into heaven to be the very Christ that they knew personally witnesses not just to a dying Christ a dead Christ but a living Christ he spoke recently and continued to speak about the experiences of the apostle Paul the apostle Paul considered himself to be an apostle born out of due time but somebody who met the risen Christ somebody who knew the risen

Christ somebody empowered by the risen Christ somebody who enabled him to say regardless of who it was that met with him that he would preach this Christ anywhere and everywhere to whosoever and he didn't care whether it would cost him his life for me to live he said is Christ to die is gain what would create that in a heart what would create that kind of behaviour in the lives of people who were just going on clutching at straws in the hope that something would come of what once was true to them thanks witnesses it is with you what does it mean for you what does it mean for me we live in a of cynical society who find it so hard to believe anything but at the same time they believe anything which sounds a bit of a contradiction but the unbelieving society that we're in are almost defiantly refusing to believe any truth that concerns a deity or the son of the most high God who is himself divine and yet present them with all kinds of of weird and wonderful supposed events that are ready to believe these things whether it is

Martians that are going to invade or whatever it is what we need to remind ourselves of is this that the resurrection of Jesus was a supernatural occurrence in the same way that the resurrection or the rising or the raising from the dead of Lazarus was a supernatural event but there are differences to that unlike Lazarus Jesus will not die again unlike Lazarus Jesus will not die again we don't know when Lazarus died but we know that he's not alive whenever he died the Bible didn't record it but he is not alive

[65 : 33] Jesus is the apostle Paul you will remember preaches on the resurrection in 1 Corinthians chapter 15 but he also preaches on the life of Christ Romans chapter 6 for example he is telling the church telling the believers in Christ this if we be dead with Christ we believe that we shall also live with him knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more death hath no more dominion over him for in that he died he died unto sin once but in that he liveth he liveth unto God Paul is teaching some truth there but one thing that is certain amongst all that he has to say is that

Jesus is a living saviour Jesus is alive today he's alive in every sense that you can discuss life and we're studying systematic theology in college Principal Donald MacLeod used to insist upon the need that there is for the believer not just to look to the evidences that we've considered there but also to be aware of the life of Christ Christ in the believer today derived from the life that Christ himself is or possesses let me quote to you some of what he says time he says is devoted to the resurrection not simply to prove the resurrection itself but to use it to point to something even greater the existence of a living loving intelligent and powerful

God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ who can make the dead live and who as the great guarantor of moral order will one day put everything right further he says the empty tomb declared God's vindication of his disgraced son and proclaimed in the most unmistakable terms that behind the natural sequence of cause and effect there lies a living loving and powerful intelligence who can interrupt and even reverse the sequence at will we know that Jesus spoke of his death but he also spoke of his resurrection and he spoke of his resurrection as something that was relevant to those who were to live by faith putting their trust in him now often we on the day of our funeral we would refer to the words of John 14 where Jesus promises to those who are putting their trust in him

I go he says to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am there you may be also either he is speaking the truth or he is speaking nonsense it is nonsense if what he is saying there is not the truth of taking those who are his to be with him where he is not their spirit but them not their bodies in dust in a jar to be presented in a mantelpiece in heaven without wanting to speak ill of what is being done there but it is a physical resurrection of the bodies of those who have been interred to the dust people that were once known as people bodies and souls united as one present with him in a place prepared for them by him to be with him to be like him now as don't but cloud said dear yes we need to believe that the resurrection the glorification of the son of

God is proof positive of the acceptance of God of the sacrifice offered by Christ of his own body on the tree God was pleased with what he gave he gave himself and the resurrection is proof positive of that both the offering and the sacrifice were one holy harmless undefiled separate from sinners Christ is spoken of like that we quote to you the words of Richard Baxter in a hymn that he composed Christ he says leads me through no darker rooms than he went through before he that into God's kingdom comes must enter by this door

[72 : 06] Christ entered into the glories of heaven the very heaven that he possessed of right by right and which he which he entered into this world in our forum to occupy once again but as you remember I'm sure you've heard it quoted more than once as was said by Rabbi Duncan the wonder of wonders that there is sat upon the throne of God in heaven the dust of the earth the dust of the earth Jesus became man and is now in glory as God and man to distinct natures one person glorified whatever that means but in full possession of the humanity that he took possession of in the world are we not persuaded of his power over death when he tells us that his father has given him such power his father has given him authority over death and he tells us that so plainly he tells us that as someone who experienced death and who knew death was going to be his his portion and yet he believed himself to be the one that would experience it on behalf of his own as the father knoweth me even so know

I the father and I lay down my life for the sheep he goes on to say therefore doth my father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again no man takes it from me but I lay it down of myself I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again this commandment I received of my father Jesus speaking of the power that is divine by which he entered into the experience of death and emerged on the other side there's a debate I suppose in the minds of some how did Jesus come from the grave was the voice of God the voice that Jesus in the grave needed to hear well by his own power he rose from the dead that is what the resurrection of

Jesus means Jesus received the power from his father and that is what the resurrection enables us to believe that is what the resurrection enables us to trust that is the resurrection that enables us to understand that the same power that Christ possesses today is the power that he visits upon his people by the spirit that enables them to live with resurrection power even before they've experienced the death that he speaks of do you not believe that the church already possesses resurrection power is there a different kind of power that is different to the resurrection power of Christ there isn't we are to live by this power we are to believe that this power has been granted to us through the spirit ministration if we are believers but

I would say this to you if you today are still in the grave the natural condition of man is that they are interred in the grave that is that is the embodiment if you like of spiritual death you will not come out of that grave by your own devices you need to hear the voice of Christ commanding you to come and as you come you are not there to ask how can I come when I don't possess life did Lazarus lie in the grave when he heard Jesus say to him come forth did he say to himself I'm dead how can I respond to this voice that saying to me come I'm dead and that's what we are by nature dead incapable of responding but you're commanded to respond and if what's keeping you back is

I don't understand it it's an impossibility I can't respond and you're right you can't respond because it's an impossibility without God enabling you to respond if the question that's holding you back is how never mind your how never mind your house just do as Christ says and come the father of our Lord Jesus Christ can make the dead live and he can make you live if you are still dead in trespasses and sin well we pray that the resurrection is something that reminds you that the gospel speaks of a risen saviour a living saviour a saviour that the church rejoices in because he ever lives to make intercession for them there's one person here who's delighted that these words are written that he ever lives to make intercession as the great high priest of his people pleads the cause of his people in my room and my place he died but he continues to remember the kind of passion he died for that he needs to be remembered he needs to be pleaded for he needs to be helped in every way possible and that's true of every child of

[79 : 29] God may you be one of them let us pray Lord O God help us to believe that you are indeed God and there is no God but you the God who is Father Son and Holy Spirit the God who is the one who quickens into life even that which is dead help us to look for that life from the only source that can possibly come cleanse us in the Redeemer's name Amen Our closing Psalm is Psalm 68 Psalm 68 at verse 18 Thou hast O Lord most glorious ascended upon high and in time victorious led captivity Thou hast received gifts for men for such as did rebel even for them that

God the Lord in midst of them might dwell blessed be the Lord who is to us of our salvation God who daily with his benefits as plenteously doth load he of salvation is the God who is our God most strong and unto God the Lord from death the issues do belong thou hast O Lord most glorious ascended up on high to hast O Lord most glorious ascended on high and in triumph victorious men captive captivity thou hast received gifts for men for such as did prevail yea in for them that thought the

Lord and which of them might dwell blessed be the Lord who is to us of our salvation God who deal with his benefits as plenteously the Lord he of salvation is the God who is the God most strong and to

God the Lord from death he is just to belong may grace mercy and peace from God the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all love and always Amen