

He Saw And Believed

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Preacher: Rev James MacIver

[0 : 00] Well, it's good to be with you again, and we do keep you in mind, as well as all the other vacant congregations that the Lord will provide for you, not only meantime, but ultimately a pastor in his own time. So may the Lord bless you meantime as you wait upon him. We're going to begin our worship today, singing in Psalm 33, Psalm number 33, verses 1 to 7.

Ye righteous in the Lord rejoice, it comely is unright, that upright men with thankful voice should praise the Lord of might. Praise God with harp, and unto him sing with a psaltery.

Upon a ten-stringed instrument make ye sweet melody, a new song to him sing, and play with loud noise skilfully. For right is God's word, all his works are done in verity.

We'll sing on through to the end of verse 7. Ye righteous in the Lord rejoice, it comely is unright. If righteous in the Lord rejoice, it comely is unright, that the upright men with thankful voice should raise the Lord of might.

Praise God with harp, and unto him sing with a song to me.

[1 : 51] upon your sins, a new song to him sing, and play with a nice hill. upon your sins, a new song to him sing, and play with a nice hill.

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The pride in life has sold the Lord. The earth to have no fill.

The heavens by the word of God. It let me give Him day.

And by the grace in all His life. In all the courts voy.

[3 : 47] The water, the john, the sea, voy. to gather us on thee and in your verses as the rest in heaven and in heaven and in heaven Let's now call upon the Lord and pray and let's pray.

Our gracious and almighty God we give thanks as we come once again to worship you today with these great words that we have been singing that remind us of the greatness of God that remind us of your power and of your might and of your sovereignty over us in all aspects of our life.

We thank you today that we can come and worship you in these elements of praise and of prayer and of the expounding of your word. We give thanks, O Lord, that we have this privilege of calling upon you in prayer, this access to your throne of grace.

We give thanks for the way that you have opened it up for us through the Lord Jesus Christ, as your word tells us. And we give thanks today that in that access we truly have that privilege of coming to speak with God and the privilege of coming to hear what he has to say to us.

We pray, O Lord, that that avenue may constantly be precious to us, that we may come and avail ourselves frequently of it, as we know, Lord, that without a life of prayer, truly our life receives.

[5 : 37] And we thank you today for the way that you have answered our prayers in the past and for the way that that gives us such confidence, along with the promises of your word, that you will answer our prayers now and in the future too.

We pray too, O Lord, that you would make us thankful for the element of praise that we have in our worship, that we come to express our thanks through praise, that we can express our very grief through praise, as we follow the words of the Psalms.

And we give thanks, O Lord, that these words that you have given us to sing and praise encompass and embrace the many different facets of life that we experience, the many enjoyments and the many times of sorrow that we go through in this world, the times when we feel that we are at our lowest, but also the times we feel uplifted.

We give thanks that we can sing our heart out to God and the sure knowledge, Lord, that you accept us through the Lord Jesus Christ as we come to offer our praise to you through him.

And we thank you also for your word that we use in coming to, having it expounded to us and coming to read it for ourselves. We thank you, Lord, that it is the expression of your will, that it is the revelation of your will and purpose, and especially that revelation of your salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[7 : 07] We give thanks, Lord, today that we remember and read in your word of his coming into the world, of his life perfectly lived in this world, of his resistance totally to temptation and to the devil's wiles, and for the way that he overcame all aspects of challenge made against him.

Even though, Lord, everything that was an attempt to deflect him from that path on which he was sent. We give thanks today that he is risen from the dead and we come to reflect upon that glorious resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as we do so, we realise that your people have their victory in him and in his resurrection and exaltation to glory. We pray today, Lord, that our own faith may be fixed upon those eternal things, upon those verities that you have revealed for us in your word and that are true of heavenly things.

Help us to set affection, then, today on the things which are above, those things where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Help us to anticipate his return.

Enable us to do so, Lord, with that measure of excitement that would mark us as your people. We pray that, as we read in your word of the various aspects of preparation for it, that we may do so in the glad knowledge that he is our King and our God.

[8 : 36] We do so, Lord, against the darkness of the world in which we live. that darkness of waywardness and straying from God, darkness of resistance to your will, and that darkness of people overthrowing the claims of God through this Gospel.

Lord, we ask that you would enable us to be an alternative that is witness to in the world. Help us to hold forth the word of life in the way that we live and in the manner of our speech.

Grant that you would be pleased to bless the witness of your people wherever they are placed in the world in all the various circumstances and providences in which we find them placed.

Grant that their testimony to you might be blessed. We pray that today your kingdom will extend throughout the world, that in all places where your people gather and where your word is preached.

Lord, we pray that you would bless the message of the Gospel and we pray that Christ may be glorified and that the Father may be glorified too as the one who sent him into this world.

[9 : 43] And we ask, Lord, that your Holy Spirit will take today the things of Christ and show them to us. Make them clear to us, we pray, and give us a clear mind in regard to our own relationship to these things.

Help us, we pray, whatever our circumstances are today, to seek the Lord while he may be found, to call upon you while you are near, to depart from the ways of sin and to truly cleave to the ways of righteousness.

Gracious Lord, we ask your blessing today to be with every gathering of your people. We remember those belonging to our own denomination particularly. We ask that you would be in our midst to bless us.

We pray for all the congregations that are looking for ministers. We pray that you bless them in this presbytery itself. Let, Lord, them your guidance, your blessing meantime.

Continue to bless your people with that patient waiting and prayerfulness as they seek your will and as they seek your guidance. Lord, they may truly know that you are presently with them and that you will constantly go before them as you have promised.

[10 : 55] Remember, this congregation too amongst those that are vacant. We pray for them and we ask that your blessing meantime will continue to be with them. Bless those who have additional responsibilities in regard to the vacancies.

The office bale is here, the membership of the congregation, every home represented, Lord, throughout these districts. The interim moderator, all others who help at this time, those in the presbytery, Lord, as they seek to deal with the issues that your providence has brought to us.

We thank you that we can look back to times in the past when there were several vacancies in the presbytery and yet by your will and in your provision you gave us, Lord, these to be filled.

We pray that that will be the case again in our experience. Now we ask your blessing to be with those who are ill today, remember those belonging to this congregation itself who cannot be out with us as they used to be.

Remember them, Lord, at home. Remember them in hospital or in care homes. Remember those who are anticipating such in the days to come. We pray for them and ask for your peace to be with them.

[12 : 06] We pray for you to be in touch to be with those who are unwell. Especially any who are seriously ill, Lord, we commend them to you and pray for their families. Be with those who have believed, those who mourn the passing of loved ones.

We know that they are always in our district. We pray that these difficult times for them may be a means by which they reach out to you, O Lord, by which they come to know your comfort, by which they know that God himself is the great provider for them.

And we pray for them at this time. We ask your blessing to be with our children. Bless, we pray, all the young ones in our families and our congregations. We give thanks for them.

We pray that as they are taught in the ways of God, O Lord, help them to embrace these things by themselves. Enable them to develop in a way that will walk in your ways and that will be determined to be of people in the holidays of their life.

Continue, we pray, to watch over them, keep them safe from all the harm that the world would seek to do to them. Grant that as we remember them before you, so you would do for them more than we are able to ask and even think.

[13 : 21] Bless us now and continue throughout this service for us, pardoning out many sins and cleansing us. For Jesus' sake, Amen. Amen. Just a word to the young ones, the children today.

I know you don't have Sunday school today, but I'm just going to read a verse to you from Matthew chapter 13 and there are three things from that verse that I'd like you to remember.

Matthew chapter 13 and verse 45. Jesus is teaching here about the kingdom of heaven, that where Jesus and God himself rules and here is what he says.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls. And when he had found one when he had found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

How many know what pearls are? Take your hand if you know what pearls are. Yeah, what do they look like? What colour are they usually? Are they red?

[14 : 31] They're usually white, aren't they? Or you can get black ones as well. Pearls are actually quite expensive expensive. And some of the men folks here, if their wives like pearls, they'll know that they're quite expensive if they buy them for them.

But they're lovely. They're lovely when they're strung together or whether they're in a piece of jewellery. So pearls are very precious. They're precious jewels or objects like jewels and they're worn by many people.

But here's somebody, we're told that he was somebody whose business was pearls. He bought and sold pearls. That's what his life was about. That was his business.

That's what he did. A merchant. Somebody who sought good pearls and then he found this one pearl of great price. So what are the three things that I would like you to remember?

The first one is that he was seeking the best pearls. He was seeking the best pearls. Now this man would know, I mean, if you gave him something that was shaped like a pearl and let's say it was made of plastic.

[15 : 37] He wouldn't have plastic in those days but if he was living today, he would know that's not a pearl. That's a limitation. That's not valuable. That's not a real pearl.

And he knew what real pearls were like because that's what he dealt with every day. And so when he saw ones that he liked, he bought them and probably sold them on again. And that was how he made his living.

Now seeking is important for us spiritually as well. We're told in the Bible to seek the Lord while he may be found. And Jesus is the most precious person or thing you can find.

We come to church to seek after Jesus. Even if we've known Jesus, if we've known him for many years, we're still seeking him here today. But once again we would meet with him through his word and that he would come to show himself to us through his word and teach us more about himself.

So it's also important to seek the Lord just like this man seeking the best pearls. And the second word is success.

[16 : 50] He found one pearl, he came across one pearl of great price. And what that means is the most precious pearl you could get. The most precious pearl and he knew that it was this most precious pearl because he was an expert in pearls.

And when he found this one, he went and sold everything else so he could buy this one. And a lot of people speak about success in life.

And success can be in things like having a good job, having money, having close friends, having a good family, and all of the things that you find that are good in this word, you could say you can have success in all of that.

But the success that's best of all is when you know Jesus, when you know the Lord, when you've come to find salvation, when your sins are forgiven, when you've come to know how important Jesus is above every other person.

He found the pearl of great price. He met with success. He'd been looking all his life for the best pearls, and now he found the very best. And when you find Jesus, when you come to know him, when you give your life to him, when you come to trust in him, he is the very best.

[18 : 10] You can't find anything better than the knowledge of Jesus. You can't find anyone better than Jesus as a saviour. So they're seeking, their success, and the third word is selling.

He sold everything he had and bought it. Now that doesn't mean literally, in order to have Jesus, we've got to get rid of everything else and sell everything else off that we have, so we're left just with Jesus alone.

What this means really, what Matthew meant, or what Jesus meant here in Matthew was that just like this merchant man sold everything so he could get this one pearl of great price, what it means is that we have to make everything else less important than Jesus.

Everything else and everyone else must be less important than Jesus. I love my wife, everybody else loves their loved ones, but I can't say that she's more important to me than God or than Jesus because that wouldn't be true.

When Jesus comes into your life, when you come to know him, he becomes the most important person that you could have in your life. And for all you young ones as well, you have to make Jesus the most important person in your life.

[19 : 40] Whoever else you love, there are people that you love a lot, but you have to love Jesus more. He is the most important, the most valuable, the most precious one that you can get.

So if you remember those three words, I don't know when I'll be back again, God willing, hopefully, I'll be back with you sometime. Maybe I'll ask you next time if you remember these three words.

Seeking, success, and, what's the third one? Selling, making Jesus the most important person of all.

God bless these thoughts to us. We're going to sing again, and this time we're singing in Psalm 142. It's a prayer, a prayer of David.

He was, at this time we're told in the title, he was in the cave. We're not sure which one it was, but he was here in the cave. And, he actually could say that just like the cave protected him from his enemies, so he found the Lord as his protector and as his refuge.

[20 : 51] I, with my voice, cried to the Lord, with it made my request, poured out to him my complaint, to him my trouble I expressed. Let's sing through the whole psalm.

I, with my voice, cried to the Lord. I, with my voice, cried to the Lord, with my request, for I will live my strength to him, my child for the EST!

Let me walk the whole world myself, Then when I am away, When I did walk, God said for me, If ever we did wait.

I looked on my right hand and drew, A mountain only where, All where you did live in Oman, In the water my soul took care.

I cry to thee, I set the guard, My refuge Lord alone, And yet the angels have been, The heart my glory and, Because I am brought very low, And then left to my sky, Be from my heart and to the future's shame, Whose time get out the light.

[23 : 53] From prison break my soul the tide, Thy name is only light, But God shall not pass me when thou, With me, dear, I shall sleep.

We're going to read God's word now, As we find that in the Gospel of John, Gospel of John and chapter 19, And we'll begin reading at verse 38, Down to as far as verse 10 of chapter 20.

So that's John's Gospel, Chapter 19, And beginning reading at verse 38. And after this Joseph of Arimathea, Being a disciple of Jesus, But secretly for fear of the Jews, Besought Pilate that he might take away The body of Jesus, And Pilate gave him leave.

He came therefore, And took the body of Jesus. 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 pound weight.

Then they took the body of Jesus, And wound it in linen clothes, With the spices, As the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified, There was a garden, And in the garden a new sepulcher, Wherein was never man yet laid.

[25 : 42] There laid day Jesus, therefore, Because of the Jews' preparation day, For the sepulcher was nigh at hand. The first day of the week Cometh Mary Magdalene early, When it was yet dark unto the sepulcher, And seeth a stone taken away from the sepulcher.

Then she runneth and cometh to Simon Peter, And to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, And saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, And we know not where they have laid him.

Peter therefore went forth, And that other disciple, And came to the sepulcher. So they ran both together, And the other disciple did outrun Peter, And came first to the sepulcher.

And he, stooping down, And looking in, Saw the linen cloths lying, Yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, Following him, And went into the sepulcher, And seeth the linen cloths lie, And the napkin that was about his head, Not lying with the linen cloths, But wrapped together in a place by itself.

And went in also that other disciple, Which came first to the sepulcher, And he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the scripture, That he must rise again from the dead.

[27 : 00] Then the disciples went away again, And to their own home. And we pray that God will bless, A portion of his word to us.

We'll sing again in Psalm 22, Singing from verse 14, Words to speak about, The sufferings and death of Jesus, From verse 14, Down to verse 20.

Like water I'm poured out, My bones all out of joint do part, Amidst my bowels is the wax, So melted is my heart, My strength is like a potsherd, Dry'd, My tongue that cleaveth fast unto my jaws, And to the dust of death, Thou broughtst me hast.

Down as far as verse 18, I'm sorry, Verse 18, From verse 14, Like water I'm poured out, My bones all out of joint do part. Like water I'm poured out, My bones all out of joint do part, Harness my bowels is the wax, So melted is my heart, My strength is like a watcher guide, My tongue that cleaveth fast, And to my jaws, And to the dust of death,

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voy voy voy my arms and feet.

[29 : 39] I all my bones may tell they do upon me look and stare.

Upon my lecture, Lord, take us as hosts among the scale.

Well, let's turn briefly to the passage in John's Gospel that we read together. Looking especially at the first ten verses of chapter 20. John chapter 20, verses 1 to 10.

Especially as we come down towards the end of that passage in chapter 20 and verse 10. We find in verse 8, Then went in also that other disciple who came to the sepulcher first and he saw and believed.

But as yet they did not know the scripture that he must rise again from the dead. He saw and believed. As he looked into the sepulcher, what he saw was a convincing sight for him that Jesus had in fact risen from the dead and was no longer dead.

[31 : 08] The death of Jesus, of course, is important in many respects. And so too is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. And in between his actual dying on the cross and his resurrection from the dead is his burial, the burial of his body.

And that too is important. So important in fact that we find it mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15, verses 3 to 4, where Paul is setting out what effectively is the core of the gospel.

He tells us that this is what he delivered to the Corinthians, what he first received from the Lord. How that Jesus died for our sins, according to the scriptures.

That he was buried. That he rose again from the dead on the third day. Our shorter catechism, number 27, reminds us also, or mentions that also, speaking about the humiliation of Jesus, includes the fact that he was buried.

And why is that important? Well, it's important for one thing, because the separation of our soul and body, as it was for Jesus in his human nature, is an aspect of death.

[32 : 24] The death that he died on the cross led to his being buried, his body being buried in the sepulcher, which is, as the catechism says, being under the power of death for a time.

Jesus went through every aspect of human experience that his people needed to experience, or will experience. He didn't stop short of the very things that we ourselves need to go through.

And when we think of the grave, solemn though it is, necessary though it is, to think about the grave, our body, being buried in the ground, Jesus also was there.

And that's so comforting, so important for us to remember that he goes before us into every aspect of life. And in the four Gospels you find it mentioned that on the first day of the week, the first day of the week, this happened.

Why does it mention the first day of the week in the four Gospels? It's obviously important. Well, because they regarded this, rightly, as a new beginning. It's a new beginning for Jesus himself to rise from the dead.

[33 : 40] It's a new beginning in the scheme of God's salvation. It's a new chapter, if you like, all the way up to now that had been preparation made down through the Old Testament for his coming and for his death.

And now that he's risen from the dead, it's a new phase of Christ's own life, but also of the salvation of God. this is a new chapter being revealed.

Many times we ask or have the questions asked of us, what do you think is the greatest miracle recorded in the Bible? Well, there are various ways of answering that, but surely one of the ways you can answer this is that the greatest miracle recorded in the Bible is the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

You might say that his coming into the world the way he came was also miraculous, and of course that's true. But a good argument can be made for the fact that his resurrection from the dead is the most amazing event and the greatest miracle recorded.

And there are two things today that we can take out of this passage. First of all, here is a foundational fact for our faith. A foundational fact for our faith.

[34 : 56] Because you notice as they went to the sepulch of Simon, and we take it the other disciple was John, the beloved disciple. While Simon went to the sepulchre, he didn't, John rather, went to the sepulchre, he stooped in and he saw the clothes that had been on Christ's body.

But he didn't go in. In those days, the sepulchre was like a small cave. You could actually enter into it. But he didn't go in. John didn't go in. But when Jesus caught up with him and came to the sepulchre, he actually went in.

And when he went in, what he saw there was something that led him to believe that Christ had risen from the dead. What was it about these clothes?

That's the only thing in the grave. There was nothing else there but the grave clothes that Jesus had had on his body. Why did that lead to Peter and to John indeed also believing?

what was significant about the clothes that he saw there? Not just the fact that they had been on Christ's dead body but the way they were now set in the sepulchre.

[36 : 06] We're told there very specifically that the linen clothes were lying there and the napkin that was round the head of Jesus, it wasn't lying with the linen clothes, the clothes that had been on the rest of his body, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

Now the words wrapped together doesn't mean somebody came in and folded it up. Sometimes the word folded is used in some translations but this wrapped together is a good translation of the words in the original Greek text of the New Testament because what it means literally is they were in a rounded shape separate from the other clothes.

In other words, what they saw was that Jesus had risen from the dead, left the clothes behind as they were on his body so that what was on his head remained there and what was on the rest of his body remained there.

He rose up through them and left them behind just as they had been on his body. In other words, they saw this and they were convinced nothing else could have actually left the clothes the way they were but the fact that he rose out of them triumphantly over death and that's what led to them believing this to be a fact that this in fact had taken place.

This indeed is the explanation for why the clothes were the way they were. Now that means that your faith rests on the likes of that faith in Christ is not faith in theories.

[37 : 47] Faith in the risen Christ the Christ who rose from the dead who died on the cross is not faith in an idea. It's not faith in a theory. It's not faith in an invention that the church made up.

Some people will tell you that Christ didn't actually physically arise from the dead. People don't actually rise from the dead. But then we're talking about God.

We're talking about salvation. We're talking about the Bible's reliability. And when the Bible tells you something it tells you something that's true. You can trust that word. You can take that word with you against all the opinions of human beings that exist in the world even throughout history.

However, people will reject the idea that Christ physically did not rise from the dead. Sorry, that they would reject the fact that Christ did rise physically from the dead.

Here's the passage that tells you that's exactly what took place. That's what convinced these disciples that he was indeed risen from the dead. As yet, they did not know the scripture.

[38 : 54] They hadn't actually realized on Old Testament scriptures which did prophesy of this but not in such a clear way as now they were seeing with their eyes. Now they believe as they see.

And the trustworthiness of the Bible is important to you. You believe this written word to be the word of God. And because you believe it to be the word of God you carry it with you against all other ideas that may be contrary to it or may challenge it.

And you always have to say I may not understand everything the Bible tells me. I may not understand how Jesus rose from the dead. How he could actually come one moment to be dead and his body then risen from the dead.

I can't understand that. I can't explain that. But I have to believe the fact of it happening. Because that's what the Bible is telling me. That's what this word of God sets out for me.

And indeed it's important that we actually know that our faith is based upon actual facts. Historical facts.

[40 : 09] Verifiable facts. Facts that were proved to be true. You know people will tell you how can you prove there's such a thing as resurrection? How can you prove to me today that Jesus rose from the dead?

Well not only because the Bible tells me but because the Bible also tells me in 1 Corinthians 15 that he met with many people after he rose from the dead. And that he met even with hundreds at one time.

Five hundred all at once. Now people could have checked in those days when the gospel was being preached and when the disciples went out to preach about the resurrection.

They could check with people then living whether what the disciples were saying, what the apostles were saying was true when they said that Jesus had risen from the dead. They could go to people and say, did you see him?

And they would say, yes I saw him. I saw him as somebody who has risen from the dead. I can tell that for myself. So it's a verifiable fact. It's something that was verified even in the days of the apostles.

[41 : 18] It's also verified by your own faith. faith. By your own faith. Because don't accept the idea that what you believe, what you have by faith in Christ, what your faith in Christ is in substance.

Don't get the idea that that's contrary to scientific analysis and therefore it can't be true. Faith is a gift that God gives his people.

faith in Jesus is something created by the Holy Spirit of God. That's what the Bible tells you. And when you come to have something that's created by the Spirit of God, the faith that places your trust then in Jesus verifies his resurrection.

When you pray to God, when you pray to Christ, you're not praying to a dead person. You're not praying to an idol. You're not praying to an image. You're not praying to an idea. You're not praying to a creed.

Or a belief system that somebody has written down. We pray today to the living Christ, to the living God. We believe in him.

[42 : 31] We believe in his death. We believe in his perfect life. We believe in his resurrection from the dead. It's a fact. And your faith is based on facts.

All the facts the Bible records, the fact of your creation, the fact of God leading his people out of Egypt, the fact of all that happened during these years of the Old Testament, the fact of all of these prophecies about Jesus, the fact of his coming into the world, the fact of his birth, the fact of his overcoming temptation, the fact of his death, a real death, the fact of his resurrection.

Your faith is based on facts. otherwise, in regard to the resurrection, as 1 Corinthians says, as Paul said to the Corinthians there, if Christ be not risen, actually risen from the dead, our faith is futile.

You are yet in your sins. There can't be such a thing as redemption from sin if Christ is not living, risen from the dead.

And we're thankful today that, like Peter wrote in his first epistle, very near the beginning of his first letter, where he gave thanks to God, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, has begotten us again to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

[44 : 08] The faith that you exercise in Christ is in the risen Jesus. Aren't you thankful today as you look at your own life, that it's not in your own hands if you're trusting in Christ?

Aren't you thankful today as you place your trust in God and pray to him, you pray to one who is now risen from the dead, the Jesus who died on the cross, who was buried, who rose on the third day?

Where would your life be? Where would my life be without the fact of Christ's resurrection? There would be no such thing as victory over death. It would be futile to believe in that.

But Jesus is risen from the dead. They saw him. They saw the crows. They saw the arrangement of them. They were convinced nothing else could explain that but that he had risen up and left them behind.

That's the first thing then. A foundational fact for faith. Secondly, here is something that involves comforting facts for living by faith.

[45 : 20] It's a foundational fact for faith itself, but there are comforting facts here for our living by faith. sometimes we often refer to the empty tomb and that's very true from one perspective, empty because Jesus' body was no longer there, but as you read in this passage it wasn't actually completely empty.

And what they saw there convinced them that he was alive. The clothes he left behind were the clothes that related to death. They were no longer relevant. They were no longer appropriate to one who was risen from the dead.

So they were left behind. And that means we have facts for our present life of faith. First of all, for our present needs. You go to verse 16, you'll find Mary coming there to the sepulcher to weep.

And Jesus comes to meet her. Why are you weeping? Who are you seeking? She's supposing him to be the gardener, said, Sir, if you have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned herself and said to him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master, or my master. Here we are in a world filled with grief.

[46 : 48] Here we are ourselves human beings, acquainted with grief, familiar with grief, grief, the loss of loved ones, the tragedies that exist in this life, in this world, the things perhaps in your own life that you've already met with, the loss of loved ones, the challenges and the difficulties relating to all the sources of grief that you have.

Where do you take your grief? Where do you find something as an antidote for your grief? You find it in him, don't you? You find it in the risen Christ, the Jesus who met with Mary in her grief, who calmed her and said, don't weep, who came to her and showed here is the answer to your grief, Mary, it's myself, which is why she said, my master, my Lord.

Who's looking after your grief today? Who's looking after your disappointment? Where do you go with your hurts? The times your soul is crying out, the pains of your life, do you not take them to Jesus?

Do you not say where else can I actually find an antidote, an answer, a comfort, a provision for my grieving soul, but in Jesus himself?

It's there for our present needs, there for our fears as well. When you go to verse 20, again you'll find something that's significant for our own circumstances as well.

[48 : 29] Here they were, assembled for fear of the Jews in verse 19, trembling, afraid, intimidated, and so Jesus showed them his hands on his side.

He came into their midst, the doors were shut, but he came, showed himself to them. What did he say? Well, he first of all said, Peace be unto you, assuring them, I'm here for your peace, for your comfort.

When he said so, he showed them his hands on the side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. See, they saw not only that he had suffered for them, but was now victorious over death.

And here we are sometimes ourselves with all our fears. what's going to happen to my life? What's going to happen tomorrow? What's going to be in the rest of my life?

How am I going to face challenges greater perhaps than I've got? How am I going to face death itself? Same thing as for your grief as well.

[49 : 33] Where do you draw your strength from? Surely you draw it from Jesus, but Jesus, the risen one, Jesus risen from the dead. Jesus, who showed them his hands and his feet.

You know, next week you'll have, God willing, your communion. And a communion service, and especially the sacrament itself, along with the word, is for the comfort and strengthening of God's believing people.

And in a sense, when you take the bread and the cup that signify the Lord's death, something's happening there that's quite similar to what happened there when Jesus came in and showed them his hands and his side.

Jesus is showing you spiritually, in these elements of bread and wine, his hands and his side, the wounds, the death, shedding of blood that he experienced for you.

And if he is yours, that's where your place should be, that's where your place is, at the place of remembrance, at the Lord's Supper, power, so that he can show you again, his hands and his side.

[50 : 43] Nothing is more precious than Jesus coming to show himself to us through the gospel, through the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It's there glance at our fears, to provide for us against our fears, and also thirdly, our doubts.

Here's Thomas in verse 27, find Thomas known as the Doubting Thomas, actually he should be known as the Confessing Thomas, more than the Doubting Thomas, because he came to have this wonderful confession, and he came to realize himself that Jesus was risen from the dead.

Jesus said, which hither your finger behold my hands, which your hand and thrust it into my side, be not faithless. But believing, Thomas answered and said to my Lord and my God, Jesus said, Thomas, because you have seen me, you have believed.

Blessed are those who have not seen, yet have believed. You can bury your doubts today in the grave of Christ. You can leave them behind there, because he rose to give you comfort, to give you assurance, to strengthen your faith, and all of that is tied up with this resurrection from the dead, comforting facts for our living by faith, against our grief, against our fears, but also even against our failures.

You go to chapter 21, and you look at Peter there, this man who had failed the Lord so much, he denied him three times, here he comes again to meet with Jesus, or Jesus brings him to meet with himself, and in that wonderful exchange you find in chapter 21 there, from verse 15, so Peter is asked, Simon son of Jonas, do you love me more than these?

[52 : 32] Three times he asked him if he loved him, but he was grieved that he asked him three times, and he said to him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.

What wonderful words are, or someone who had failed so drastically in the service of the Lord, Jesus didn't write him off.

Jesus didn't say, I expect more of an apostle, so therefore you're now disqualified. Jesus brought him back, he interviewed him, he restored him, he set him again in the way of believing, in the way of serving.

That's why Peter could say, I hold up my hands, Lord, you know all things, everything about my lapse is known to you, everything that's in my heart is known to you, and despite all that I've done, Lord, you know that I love you.

And that's the Jesus that you and I need today, the Jesus who restores the broken, who resets what has actually come to to be at times a failure and brokenness.

[53 : 56] He's there as the risen Christ, against our grief and against our fears, against our doubts, against our failures, for all our present needs.

But he's also the risen Jesus, a comforting fact, in his resurrection, for our death, as well as our present needs. we have to give prior thought to our death, not just at times of funerals.

Now, some people would say, most of the world out there would say, that's been pretty morbid, isn't it? If you're dwelling your mind on the fact of death, the death you and I must die, surely you can actually just leave that for the moment, surely you can leave that until you're actually in the process of dying.

Well, of course, we never know when that's going to be. And we may not have a process of dying, we might go just like that. We have to think about death, because it's the way our life in this world ends.

It's the way by which we step from time into eternity. There's no in-between. And that's why we have to consider it so carefully. And what does faith do?

[55 : 11] What does faith in Jesus do in contemplating death, in thinking about death, not thinking about it necessarily all the time, but thinking about it seriously, thinking about it frequently, what does faith do?

How does faith act? What are the properties of faith in Christ as you anticipate and as you think about death? Well, you look into that sepulchre, you see the clothes in that sepulchre, and as you see, you believe, and as you believe that you yourself will die, that your body will be laid, unless Jesus comes first that your body will be laid somewhere to rest in the ground.

As a believer in Christ, you can today look into that grave and say, the marks of Christ's footsteps are here before me. He's been there already. Why should I fear my body being laid into the dust when my Lord has been there to prepare the way for me?

me? It's a fact, a comforting fact, against our own death as well. When Jesus says that he will be with us, with his people, through to the end of the age, Jesus doesn't accompany you just to the graveside or to the time of your death and say, well, that's it, you're on your own now.

I have been with you all the way through this life. I've helped you through so many circumstances and here you are just about to die. Your soul and body are going to be separate. You're going to step into eternity.

[56 : 46] I can't go with you there. He's not going to say that. Remember in the case of Jacob, Genesis chapter 46, Jacob was commanded by God to go to Egypt, go down to Egypt.

There I will make you a great nation. Of course, Jacob was afraid. Egypt was intimidating. It wasn't the place for God's people to live. But what did God say?

Don't be afraid to go down to Egypt. I myself will go with you and I will take you up again. What wonderful words for Jacob to hear against his fears, against his fear of possibly impending death for all he knew.

I will go down with you and I will take you back again. And when you think about your death as a believer in Christ, that's exactly what God is saying to you, isn't it? These words are so appropriate, so relevant to that situation too.

God is saying to you today as a believer, when you think of your own death, when you come to that point where you die, I will not leave you. I will go down with you. I will be your portion through death and on to the other side into eternity, and I will take you back up again.

[58 : 07] You'll be resurrected, you'll be raised again at the last day when Christ comes, back to life. Your body will be back to life, to be joined again, your soul.

What comforting facts from what they saw in this sepulcher, for our present needs, for our death, and for our resurrection as well. We're going to leave our clothes in this world behind.

We're going to leave also our grave clothes behind. It won't be like Lazarus coming out of the tomb, where Jesus had to give instructions to others to release him and let him go.

He was still tied with the grave clothes in contrast to Jesus. He wasn't because Lazarus didn't rise from the dead back to no longer dying anymore.

He was taken back by Jesus to this side of death. He had to die a second time. But the words of Revelation chapter 7 are important for us there, aren't they?

[59 : 24] In terms of whatever we leave in this world behind, we're going to be given better clothes to wear in heaven, spiritual clothes, clothes that will reflect the glory of Christ himself.

You remember that great passage in Revelation chapter 7 where you find John given this great account, this vision of those who are with God.

He beheld a great multitude which no man could number. They stood before the Lamb, before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their hands.

They were victorious. Clothed with white robes, the robes of heaven, the robes of eternal life, the robes of likeness to Christ, the robes of purity, unstained righteousness.

And the passage goes on because the worship that he heard, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving to God. And then he was told, you know, he said, these are those who have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

[60 : 35] Therefore, they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple. And he that sits on the throne shall dwell among them. And they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne, who is he? He's the risen Jesus. The Jesus arose from the dead and was exalted to glory.

He shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of water and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Now, what does that say to us? It's saying that the Jesus we know in this world as a pastor shepherd continues to be that for us in the world to come.

Because that's literally what these words mean. The Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall shepherd them. The shepherding doesn't end when we come to the end of our life in this world.

Eternity for God's people in heaven is going to be an everlasting shepherding under the care of the risen Jesus, the Lamb of God, who will lead them to living fountains of water.

[61 : 49] In other words, an unending source of comfort and supply forevermore. And God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes.

It's difficult to think about it. Not difficult to believe in it, but difficult to think about it, that there is a world in which there are no tears, no disappointments, no losses, no grief, no death.

Where is it? It's where the Lamb is. It's where the risen Jesus is. It's where heaven is. And our faith in Christ today is the faith that these two men exercised when they believed that he was risen from the dead.

And surely that too is your faith today in this Christ, the one you cannot surely live or die without.

Let's pray. Lord of God, we give thanks today that there is a great victory over death that you have accomplished. We give thanks today that we anticipate the resurrection of your people as united to yourself.

[63 : 15] We thank you today, O Lord, that the Lord Jesus Christ himself is risen from the dead and is at this moment at the right hand of God directing all things to the end of the world.

O bless us, we pray today, by the blessing of your spirit, give us further insight, we pray, into the importance of that resurrection upon which the life of your people is based.

Go before us into the remainder of the day, we pray, and continue with us to bless us freely for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to sing in Psalm 16 in conclusion.

These are words which are quoted in the book of Acts in relation to the resurrection of Christ himself. They're also appropriate for us to sing at times of funerals of believers, of course, but today we think about the resurrection of Christ as we've sung in Psalm 22 about his death.

So we're singing here about his resurrection too. From verse 8 to 11, Before me still the Lord I said, said it is so that he doth ever stand at my right hand. I shall not move it be.

[64 : 24] Because of this my heart is glad and joy shall be expressed even by my glory and my flesh in confidence shall rest.

And so on to the end of the Psalm. Before me still the Lord I said. Before me still the Lord I said tis it is so that he doth ever stand!

love and shall heard I because of!

Oh so blessed is my heart in time A joy shall be expressed in thine glory and my faithful and rest rest because my soul is made to man shall not be left by thee a will to give thine holy one for love can to see a world he showed the path of life of

Christ the Christ who storm before thy days at night I can a bless you ever more Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore Amen the voy