

Is Jesus someone I can build my life on?

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[0:00] And imagine your life is like Jenga, a building, a Jenga tower. You want to get all the building blocks in place and you don't want to remove any of them! In case your life suddenly topples over.

Sorry, people at the front. Hopefully that's a helpful visual illustration if you've forgotten how Jenga works. So imagine life's like that.

You want to make sure you've got the right blocks in place so that that doesn't happen. So that things don't fall down. Let's remove them because we'll need these out of the way in a moment. Just going to drop them on the floor. Jesus tells us a story of two builders thinking about building blocks.

He tells us about one builder who built his house on the sand. It's nice. It's by the sea. It's an idyllic location.

[1:16] But when the storms come, when the rain falls down and the winds batter it, that house hasn't got much to stand on.

It's built on sand. It's built on sand. And so Jesus tells us about another builder, a wise builder, who instead of building his house on flimsy sand, builds his house on a rock.

So it's firm and strong. Because if our lives is like building a Jenga tower, we need to build the right blocks in.

We need to build firm rocks in. Especially in the foundation. So that the house doesn't fall down. And this morning our passage shows us that there are three big truths that we can build our lives upon.

And they're all about Jesus. So maybe for 30 seconds, a minute or so, have a look at verses three to four. What do you think the big three things are that we should build our lives on?

[2:30] You can chat with people around you if you want for a minute or so. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go.

Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. What do you reckon?

Anybody got some ideas? We've got one hand up here. Do you want to tell us one of the things?

Jesus was buried. Yeah, excellent. I'm just going to look further back before I come to people.

Oh, Sema. He died. So he died and he was buried. You know what? Got a few things to help us with that. Here we go. Does that say died?

That says died. Gid buried. So there's two building blocks for us. There's one more thing. Isaac.

[3:45] He rose again. That's what today's all about. Great. I didn't know that I... Cool. Wanted you to see it.

I'll take that down. We'll build it in the front. So Jesus died. He was buried.

And he rose again. Died, buried, and rose. Three blocks you can build your life upon.

Amazing. And that's a good question for us. Is Jesus really someone you can build your life upon?

Can you build your life upon these three truths? That's what we want to ask ourselves today as we look at this passage. It's a good question to ask ourselves. It's a good question to ask ourselves on this great day as Christians all over the place are celebrating Jesus has risen.

[4:51] Can we build our life on that truth? It's a good question to ask ourselves today as we've heard Lillia's testimony. She's saying, I believe this to be true. I'm standing up to declare it to you today.

Can we build our lives on these truths? Well, I want to try and show you from this passage that I think we can.

And the first thing I want to show us is we can hold firmly to the gospel. That's simply good news. We can hold firmly to these truths. That Jesus died, was buried, and rose again.

Look at verses 1 to 2 with me. Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, and on which you have taken your stand.

By this gospel you are saved. If you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you've believed in vain.

[5:53] But Paul says here, you can hold firmly to these building blocks. Jesus died, rose, and was buried. Earlier this year, some people in Surrey, in the Surrey town of Godston, woke up to the shock of finding the road that was there yesterday had a huge hole in it.

The day before, they drive on it, they walk on it. Quite happily, it held firmly together. But little did they know, the hole would appear.

And it strikes me that thinking about this, it's a bit like life. There's not many things we can hold firmly to which we think these things are going to last forever.

So relationships that we have with people, some of them come to an end. As people move on to different parts of the world, as people get sick, as people fall out, people die.

Or the homes that we thought we'd live in for a long, long time, they might fall apart and we need to do work to them. Or we need to move house for some reason. We think we're going to live in them forever, but we end up having to move.

[7:21] Or the good health that we have might be shaken by a blood test or a hospital trip. Things we thought we'd have going on for us, but forever come to an end.

Children with us this morning, maybe you think school will go on forever. Maybe that's good for you, maybe that's bad for you. But one day school will come to an end. And for all of us, whatever age we are, one day our lives will come to an end.

One day we will die. Perhaps something we don't like to think about and yet it's inevitable, it will happen. So what can we hold on to that is so firm that will help us even through death?

It's not found within us. It's not found in a relationship, in a career, in a school, in our health. It is found in the gospel. It's found in the good news.

It's found in these building blocks. Jesus died, was buried, and rose again. It's there in verses 3 to 4. This is a gospel message we're celebrating this weekend.

[8:39] On Good Friday, Jesus died for us. Some of us thought about how the cross was a swap. Jesus died in our place. He took the punishment that our sins deserve on himself.

And then he was buried. He really did die. He was placed in a tomb. The life that created life was dead.

And if Jesus stayed dead, that wouldn't be something then to base our lives upon. It would be useless following him because all we'd be doing is remembering a man who lived a really interesting life and died a tragic death.

And stayed dead. And stayed dead. Where would the hope be in that? But this morning we're celebrating because he has beaten death.

He has done what nobody else could do. If he was still buried in the tomb, that wouldn't give you security forever. That's not going to help you on the hardest day.

[9:50] But because Jesus has risen. Because Jesus has risen. That gives us security now and in death and forever. That can help you to face the hardest day.

Because Jesus has risen. But can we trust these things to be true?

Can we trust these three things to be true? It's good for us to think about that today. Because I want to tell us secondly, the gospel is trustworthy.

This passage helps us to see that. It helps us to see that firstly because this is according to the scriptures. Have a look at verses three to four.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance. That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. That he was buried.

[10:56] That he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures. Verses three and four. They were known as a very early creed.

We said a creed, that statement of things that Christians believed. This was the earliest creed. Very simply telling us everything we need to know to build our lives upon.

And it repeats that phrase according to the scriptures. We know this is true. We know this is right because it's happened as the Bible has told us it would happen.

As people read through the Old Testament, they could see that in Jesus who died, was buried and rose again, he was the one come to fulfill what's happened.

And that's why as a church we'll read the Old Testament and the New Testament. Without the New Testament, without seeing Jesus, the Old Testament is like being in a dark room.

[12:03] You go in and you might be able to make sense of some things. You might be able to feel that some things are in your way. But when you turn the light on, you can really see.

You can really see what's going on. You can see the details in the room. You can see that thing that you're about to trip over. And that's what the New Testament is like.

As Jesus comes on the scene, it makes so much more sense of the Old Testament. So as people make sacrifices, animal sacrifices, we can see in the New Testament that Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice for sin.

As you read passages like Psalm 22 or Isaiah 53, you can see how they so clearly point us to the cross and even to the resurrection.

There's a wonderful verse in one of the Psalms, Psalm 16, where David writes, You will not let your Holy One see decay. David couldn't have been speaking about himself because he died.

[13:10] But the New Testament shows us he was speaking about Jesus. Jesus really did not see death in the way that we do because he rose again.

The scriptures speak hundreds, even thousands of years before the events of Easter, and we find them perfectly fulfilled in what Jesus has done over this weekend.

But perhaps you need more to convince you. Oh, I was going to say the scriptures, because the Old Testament is like going back into a time machine and seeing that these things are real.

Perhaps you need more, though, than just the scriptures. Perhaps you need some eyewitness evidence. If you're reading a newspaper article or hearing a court trial, you'll have eyewitnesses, people who have seen the events that have happened.

And Paul tells us here that Jesus, resurrected from the dead, has really been seen. Do you see that in this passage, verse 5?

[14:16] He appeared to Cephas, that's Peter, and then to the 12, that's the 12 disciples. After that, he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep.

Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all to me also, as one abnormally born. If Jesus just appeared to one person, it might be a bit mad that we are sitting here today.

If Jesus had been seen by two people, it would be a bit more substantial evidence. But Jesus has not just been seen by one or two people resurrected from the dead.

He's seen by hundreds of people. Paul says even 500 people or so have seen Jesus. Paul would be crazy if he wrote these words and they weren't true, because he'd be very quickly found out to be a liar.

That's a lot of people to go and ask. Some of them, he says, have died, but most of them are still alive. You can go and ask them. That's a lot of people saying, we really did see him.

[15:37] We've seen him. He is alive. We're willing to follow him. But perhaps that still doesn't quite convince you.

Something that I think is really compelling about the evidence for Jesus' resurrection is that the disciples, after Jesus died, they were in fear.

They were locked in a room because they were fearful of what the Jewish leaders may do to them. They've killed their Messiah. Will they kill them? But then on that Easter Sunday, Jesus stood in the room with them and he said, peace, I leave you.

He showed them his hands on his side, the wounds from the cross. And they then spent the rest of their lives following him.

And some, maybe most of them, gave up their lives. They died for the sake of knowing Jesus. They wouldn't have done that, surely, if Jesus hadn't risen from the dead.

[16:49] Jesus is risen. People have seen him. And so the resurrection, the gospel message that we at Calvary Church believe and preach is shown

to be reliably true.

You can go and do your own research if you want to beyond this. But we believe with great certainty this is true. And these three truths that Jesus died, rose, died, was buried and rose again.

And these three truths are why Lillia can stand up and give her testimony today and go under the waters of baptism. Because they're true.

This is not a waste of time, what she's doing this morning. It's not just an excuse to go in a little pool of water. This is solid truths that she's building her lives upon.

And so many of us in this room are. Thirdly and finally, the gospel transforms lives. Jesus died.

[18:00] Nobody ever expects dead people to come back to life. But Jesus really did. This is the greatest comeback in history. This changes everything.

And so for those who come to find the gospel message that Jesus died, was buried and rose again, and who come to find that they are true, that they are building blocks to build their lives upon.

This transforms lives. The Bible says, but before we come to Jesus, we had no real certain hope.

We had no security for what was going to come after death. We were heading for the grave and for God's judgment eternally.

But now we know Jesus is alive. We can know our sins, our cleanse. We have life forever with the Son in heaven. This transforms our lives.

[19:01] Paul. And this is shown in the writer of these verses. Paul. We've heard Lillia's testimony. Paul gives a little bit of his testimony to us in verse 9.

He says, I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. Paul hated anybody who followed Jesus.

So much so that he was killing Christians. And on the day that Jesus began to change his life, he was heading on a road to Damascus with the intent of killing God's people.

People who follow the Lord Jesus. But amazingly, on that road, the Lord Jesus came to him.

He was surrounded with a bright light and Jesus called his name, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And that began to turn his life upside down.

[20:11] The once persecutor of Christians became someone who was willing to preach the gospel. Who was persecuted himself for following Jesus.

This wasn't true. Paul would be mad. He'd have stayed doing the same things he'd done before. And that truly is life transforming.

Paul is an example to us of what grace is. Grace is something we don't deserve. And yet that's what God gives us because of Jesus who died, was buried and rose again.

Look at what Paul says in verse 10. But by the grace of God, I am what I am. And his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them. Yeah, not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

Paul knows the amazing grace to him. He doesn't deserve it. He was killing God's people. He hated Jesus. And he's had his life transformed.

[21:25] And so do all those who know Jesus as their savior. And this morning we're going to see in baptism a picture of transformation.

A picture of what happens when someone comes to know Jesus for themselves. So as Lillia goes under the water, that's a picture of her joining Jesus who has died for her and was buried for her.

A picture of her going under the water and knowing her sins washed away because of what Jesus did on the cross. And then as she comes back up out of the water, it's a picture of resurrection, raised with Christ.

That's a picture of what happens in everyone who comes to know the Lord Jesus as savior. That's a picture of what happens in everyone who comes to know the Lord Jesus as savior.

That tomorrow's going to be a rainy day. And you choose to ignore that news. And live like it's going to be sunny all day.

[22:57] But you're told, no, it's going to rain all day. And you don't put your coat on. You go outside in shorts and t-shirts. And you go outside and you just get wet.

That's going to inconvenience you for a little bit. But by the end of the day, you'll dry off. You will be okay if you ignore that sort of news.

But with the gospel, Jesus died, was buried and rose again. It's more serious. It is like going to the doctor and receiving news that you've got a disease.

Here's the scans. Here's the tests. They've come back and you've got a life-threatening disease. If you choose to ignore that news, then you're going to face the consequences.

Death. And that's the same with this news. Please do take it seriously this morning. This really is life and death matters.

[24:08] The gospel transforms lives so much so that towards the end of this great chapter, and we're going to be looking at it over the next few Sunday evenings as well. We read these words in verse 54.

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true. Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting? Think of wasps. I don't like wasps. I can't imagine many of us like wasps.

We don't like them because they sting. They're a threat to us, aren't they? But if the wasp had the sting removed, we'd happily sort of just play around with the wasp.

It would be okay. They wouldn't be such a threat to us. Even more seriously with death. Death has a sting.

[25:09] Death is something we're not looking forward to unless we've had our lives transformed by the Lord Jesus, who has done something about death. Who has been risen again from the dead.

And so, for Christians this morning, who know Jesus as Savior, we know great certainty.

Death for us is, it's how Paul describes it in this chapter, like falling asleep. Taking a little nap. And we'll be awake and with our Savior for eternity.

And it's only by trusting in Jesus, who died, was buried, and rose again. It's not something we want to ignore.

It gives us eternal security. And so that's why we Christians rejoice today. That's why we sing today.

[26:14] We sing in great celebration, because it's a day of rejoicing.

It's a day of victory. Don't be like the foolish man who decides to build his house on the sand.

And when the waves and winds come, when the troubles of life come, when you have no real security, be like the wise man. Build your life on these solid truths.

Jesus died. He was buried. And he rose again. We're going to pray. I'll just move these boxes out of the way.