

The Resurrection of Jesus

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[0 : 01] Father, you know how easy it is for us to get distracted. You know how easy it is for me to get distracted. You know how easy it is for me to hear something and maybe get offended and then want to stop listening.

You know how easy it is for me, Father, to cling to my own fantasies and preconceptions and idols rather than face the real world.

We ask, Lord, that you would gently but deeply pour out the Holy Spirit upon us this morning, not just those who are here but those joining with us online and those who will be joining with us online downstream, not live but downstream.

We ask, Father, that you would gently but deeply pour out the Holy Spirit upon us, that you would form our minds and our wills and our imaginations and our affections and our desires.

So that we might seek to know that which is true and beautiful and good. This we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior.

[1 : 05] Amen. Please be seated. This could easily turn into a rant from an old guy about how the world has changed and not in good ways.

But I'm going to make my best effort to not do something like that. It's not becoming of a minister to ever do rants about how one time period was better than another. Only God knows that, actually, doesn't he?

But it is the case, I think, for many people in our culture today that they've lost a sense of honouring the dead.

And I don't mean ancestor worship. I just mean that the practice is around having a loved one or a neighbour die. That increasingly, there's no funerals. Increasingly, there's not really anything at all to mark the death of that particular person.

We pay some money for some professionals to dispose of the body. And we just sort of keep on with our very life. And so if you're here and that's sort of your attitude, or if you're watching online and that's sort of what you think, this next bit is going to be very weird to you.

[2 : 16] But it is a very deeply human thing to desire to honour a loved one who has died. It's, I think, deeply human to want to do this.

And the story that I've heard, and so I didn't hear this directly from the person who did it. I heard it one person removed. And it's this. When I, before this, I looked after four little rural churches in Killaloo, Eganville, Clontarf, and Tremor.

And three of those small churches had their own graveyards. They're way up the Ottawa Valley, just small little churches with graveyards. And I began my ministry there on June 1st, which is, of course, quite hot.

And when I went to the church in Killaloo for the first time, I noticed that there was this shed just off to the side, a very big shed, but a shed off to the side, very big shed with sort of in the trees.

And I just assumed that that was where they kept the yard maintenance stuff and ladders and all that type of stuff. I just assumed that was the case. But in January, I discovered that that actually wasn't the case.

[3 : 23] I discovered that that's where they stored the caskets of people who died in the winter. Because I did a funeral in January, and I went with the hearse, and I went and we put the body in there.

And I discovered that it was sort of like not just an Anglican body storage, but sort of for the community. That's where we stored the bodies over the winter. And this is a story that I was told that had happened about 30 years earlier, but it was still very much talked about.

And it's all about honoring the dead. There was a woman who had a, I guess we'd call it a phobia. She hated the idea that if she died in the winter, that her body would be in that shed, just with strangers, going down to minus 30.

And she hated the idea that that's what would happen to her body. And she talked about it a lot. And as she got older, and as she got closer to death, she asked her sons and her sons-in-law if they would promise her that if she died in the middle of winter, that they would bury her.

Now, some of us are city folks, and we don't know what the ground is like in the winter, but it's frozen. You can't just dig a hole. Well, lo and behold, she did. She died in mid-January, and so even as she died and her sons paid their respects, they left that place and began the preparation and planning to see that their mom would be buried in the hole.

[5 : 01] So they knew where the grave site was, and they had the others to make sure it was marked off, and then they cleared away the snow, and they made a very large fire to cover the area. And they let it burn for a little bit, and then they took the fire away, and they scraped off a little bit of dirt, and then they made another fire, took it away, scraped off a little bit of dirt, another fire, on and on and on.

A long, long day in very, very cold temperatures, standing there, taking away a tiny little inch of earth at a time, until they finally got past that which was frozen, was able to dig the rest of the hole relatively quickly, says George.

She's just standing there. I mean, now. And then that next day, they buried their mom. They buried their grandmother.

They buried their mother-in-law. They buried their aunt. Because it was a group of about six or seven men, and that's what they spent the whole day doing, sometimes going back to get warmed up and do all that other types of stuff.

But the women would bring food for them to eat during the day so that they did it. But that's how they honored their mom. And I think that's quite a remarkable story about honoring your mother. The story which we're about to read is a story about honoring the dead.

[6 : 16] It's a story about honoring the dead that goes sideways in a very remarkable way. So if you have your Bibles, we're going to begin reading at Mark chapter 15, verse 40.

Mark chapter 15, verse 40. And Mark, I mean, there's two ways that you could look at Mark. On one hand, you could be like a Christian and believe that it's God's word. But another way to look at it, which would be how scholars or whatever literary critics would look at it, is it's an ancient biography.

It's an eyewitness biography written while eyewitnesses were alive. And here's the story that they tell. And just immediately before this, we have the account of Jesus breathing his last.

And the centurion, seeing Jesus breathing his last, makes a comment about Jesus. And now here's where the story takes up at verse 40 of chapter 15. There were also women looking on from a distance.

Among them were whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger, and Joses, and Salome. When Jesus was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him.

[7 : 28] And there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem. And I just sort of pause here. The women had been observing the crucifixion from a distance.

They didn't want to be amongst the mockers, and they didn't want to be amongst the gamblers, and they didn't want to be amongst those who, in every culture, there are bloodthirsty. If we had a public crucifixion, there would be many people who would film it, because there's always people who like blood and gore.

It's something they enjoy. And they didn't want to be part of that, but they see him die. They see him breathe his last. The story continues.

And when evening had come, since it was the day of preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Now, once again, it's the body of Jesus. He's clearly dead. But just as an aside, why is it that it took courage to do this? Well, a moment's reflection will help us. Some of you know this, and some of you don't, but on the 16th of April, 2008, this congregation voted to separate from the Anglican Church of Canada and come under a different jurisdiction, still remaining Anglicans, but not at all connected to the Anglican Church of Canada.

[8 : 52] And when we did that, I, as a minister, had a lot of fears about it, anxieties. I had a peace about it, but I had anxiety, of course, because it's not unusual for people to say, yeah, we have your back, Pastor, but then when you take the step, they leave the pastor all alone.

And in fact, the way my former diocese talked about it was there was just this one kooky guy named George Sinclair who wanted it, but the congregation didn't want it. And they, in fact, sent messages to the congregation assuring them that after the vote, Jesus, we would just fire George and that we'd provide another priest for all the people who wanted to stay with the Diocese of Ottawa.

So that was the way that everybody in the diocese expected that it was going to happen. Maybe they'd know that there'd be two or three other weird people who would go with me, but fundamentally nobody would leave such a beautiful building and all of the resources in the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa.

But, of course, I became persona non grata. There were well over 100 clergy in the Diocese of Ottawa, so in the week after I left, how many of them called me up to say anything to me?

I'll give you the answer. Out of the 100, 120 active clergy and retired clergy, maybe 150, 180, how many called me? One.

[10 : 10] One minister called me and offered to bring me groceries because he didn't want to see me go hungry. To the rest, I was a leper. I mean, very truly, most of the diocese would have allowed a Wiccan to speak in church, but not allow me.

But we all know what it's like if you see somebody that they make a spectacular wrong move, and to associate with them is to be tainted by them.

And so it took Joseph great courage. Even though Joseph, Jesus, was now dead, the threat was over, they had won. It takes great courage to want to ask for the body of Jesus.

But you know what? Joseph wanted to honor the body of Jesus. Because if he hadn't have done it, what would have happened is what happened to the other thieves, which was the normal Roman custom.

The bodies would be taken down and they would be thrown in a dump. And Joseph wanted to honor Jesus. And so he took this big risk.

[11 : 21] Now, Pilate's a bit confused about this. Look what happens next, verse 44. Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus should have already died.

He would have seen Jesus as a strong guy, and normally people wouldn't have died so quickly, and he'd probably forgotten the Jewish custom and the fact that they would guarantee the death.

He'd just forgotten why would he remember Jewish superstitions. He was a great Roman. But he's surprised. Verse 44, Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus should have already died. And summoning the centurion, sort of like a captain or a major, he asked him whether Jesus was already dead.

And when he learned from the centurion that Jesus was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. Joseph. Now, once again, notice the text continually says dead, dead, body, corpse.

It continually emphasizes the, you know, if I had been doing the scene things for this, this whole scene would have been called Jesus is dead, dead, dead, dead. That's what I would have called the scene if I was doing that with scenes.

[12 : 28] He's dead, dead, dead, dead. Now, sometimes people, when they're downstream trying to explain why the grave is empty, the tomb is empty, they'll talk about how Jesus maybe didn't die.

And they'll say things like, Lazarus wasn't a doctor. Maybe he didn't really die. And that sounds very convincing. But we forget that there's two types of people who are experts in being able to make this determination.

One, of course, is doctors. And we do know that, in fact, if a doctor makes a mistake and issues, says somebody's dead when they're alive, there's, I mean, lots of people will make fun of them for a long time, and there may be some questions of their judgment.

But there's a whole other category of person who's expert in knowing when somebody's dead, and that's professional killers. I'm not being funny. Professional killers are experts.

And the fact of the matter is, if a professional killer makes the mistake, people don't just make fun of them. Something far worse could happen to that guy, because they're paid to make sure the person's dead.

[13 : 38] And the centurions and the duty officers connected with the bearer, and they would have potentially, this same group of guys would have done dozens, scores of crucifixions, I think they estimated that when it came time a few years later, when the Jewish people started to revolt against Roman rule, they'd crucify a thousand at a time, a thousand at a time, crucified.

So Jesus was dead. Verse 46, And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and he took Jesus down, and he wrapped Jesus in the linen shroud, and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock.

And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joseph, saw where Jesus was laid. Once again, you notice the language, the tomb, the laid, the body, this continuing hammering away at this continuing thing, which, as I said, if I had done the Netflix things, it would have been called, Jesus is dead, dead, dead, dead, dead, like he's dead.

Now, here's the thing which is going on in the text. If you could put up my first point, Claire, that would be very helpful. On Friday afternoon, April the 3rd, 33 AD, Jesus died.

On Friday afternoon, April the 3rd, 33 AD, Jesus died. I was talking to somebody the other day who's sort of friendly towards Christianity.

[15 : 12] I'm not sure where they are with their Christian faith, but they're friendly to them, and we were talking a little bit about it. And he assumed, he was actually completely floored that, first of all, the things like the Gospel of Mark go back to being eyewitness accounts.

He had never dawned on him that there are ancient Christian letters that talk about the death and resurrection of Jesus that go way back. The first letter, Christian letter, which we have, which is an undisputed letter from that time period, is from 15 years after this, 15 or 16 years after this.

And he was floored that they actually know the date that Jesus died. And the scholars debate whether it was the 7th of April, 30 AD, or the 3rd of April, 33 AD.

But there's enough historical references in these ancient biographies connected to Roman emperors and other historical characters that they can sort of figure out that there's only two possible dates while Pontius Pilate was in that area where you had the combination by solar calendar of a Friday, you know, the Thursday, Friday, Saturday, when the Passover and the Sabbath would happen.

And I think the evidence is best for it being April 3rd, 33 AD. But the point is that what's being recorded here is history. That's why I can say, you could say, on Friday afternoon, April the 3rd, 33 AD, Jesus died.

[16 : 43] Now, the next part of the story, you know, this is part of the thing about, and why you might like want to have a little journal like this to reflect upon the text.

The next part is deeply human. At least it's human in my experience. Maybe it's not yours. But, you know, every one of us probably knows people, and hopefully we aren't that person, who sort of says, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, you know, the family members or my friends, they can sort of do those arrangements, but, you know, at the end of the day, they don't really get it quite right.

They need somebody like me there just to make things better, just to make them really proper. They do their best. They mean well. But really, unless I sort of come and, you know, fix up whatever, it's not quite done well.

And that's what's going on here. Look how it goes. It's chapter 16, verse 1. When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices so that they might go and anoint Jesus.

Now, what's going on here? Actually, if you could put up the point, that would be very helpful. On Saturday evening, April the 4th, 33 AD, some women bought spices to cover the stench of Jesus' decomposing body.

[18 : 02] That's what's being communicated here. On the evening, Saturday evening, April the 4th, 33 AD, some women bought spices to cover the stench of Jesus' decomposing body. You see, Jewish people didn't embalm.

And so what they did is they would put spices on the body, if they could afford it, to help cover up the stench of decomposition. And so what would have happened, it's not mentioned in Joseph's case, is that Joseph, in another account, knows that he had at least one person helping him and maybe servants.

And when they had the linen shroud, they would have put the spices down on the shroud. They would have put some spices on the part of Jesus that was probably, you know, he's probably on his back facing up. And then they wrapped it all up.

And the women probably thought, well, you know, those guys, they're guys. They meant well. But, you know, I bet they didn't get enough spices and I bet it's not tucked in right and I bet it's just not done right.

You know people like that? That's what they were thinking. And so, so they went and bought extra spices and they weren't buying spices to make cookies to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

[19 : 12] They were buying spices to put on the decomposing body of Jesus so it wouldn't smell. That's what they were doing. That's what they were doing. And they were doing it at night after the Sabbath is over, the stalls and the business is open and they felt comfortable doing that.

And those of you who are women, know what this is like, you feel comfortable doing that because there's lots of people around and you feel safe but the idea of walking way out to a tomb in the middle of the night all by yourself, just a couple of women and it's going to be dark and you can't really do it, well that's a very, very different proposition.

So they go home, they go to bed and the next morning they wake up and here's what they do. It's verse 2 and 3. And very early on the first day of the week when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb and they were, notice again the death, right?

And they were saying to one another, who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb? Now if you could just put up my next point that would be handy. With the first faint light of dawn, April 5th, 33 AD, some women left for the tomb of Jesus to put additional spices on his body to cover up the stench of decomposition.

They went to honour him. They went to honour him. I mean for us it sounds pretty gross that you'd want to unwrap the body and touch the body after it had been dead for that many hours and that sounds very gross to us, some of us more than others.

[20 : 49] But for others of us you understand that great desire to have that one time to make sure that you can, they didn't have time on Friday to really see him dead and just to be with him, to be with his body.

They didn't have that time because there's soldiers around and people screaming and yelling and the hustle and bustle and then it's taken away and all they can do is look at a distance.

They don't have that time and they want that time. They love Jesus. They're deeply sad that he's dead. And yes, it's gross.

They would have been familiar with those type of grossnesses back then because you can't just, it was harder just to pay a professional to go and do it and you don't have to be bothered and they wanted to unwrap his body.

They wanted to put the spices down. They wanted to wrap him back up. They wanted to make sure it was done well and they wanted a quiet time alone with him in the tomb. It's deeply human.

[21 : 47] It's deeply human. And the text doesn't tell us. It might have even been that some others who couldn't handle the gross aspect were planning to come and do their respects later as well, privately, quietly, just to see him.

See, all of these are stories of people who love Jesus who wanted to honor him in his death. And then the story takes a weird turn.

And by now, I hope you've gathered that what they're making is a claim that it goes really, really, really weird and completely and utterly against what they had expected and what they were preparing for and how they were preparing to live for the rest of their lives.

Look what happens. Look at verses four to seven. And looking up, they must have been coming from the bottom and the cave slash tomb has been cut in the side.

And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back and it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side dressed in a white robe and they were alarmed.

[23 : 00] And just sort of pause here before I read any further. It's clear from the original language and it's clear from the other accounts that this is a way of describing an angel.

They're seeing an angel. Verse six, And he said to them, Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified.

He is risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee.

There you will see him just as he told you. If you could put up the point.

On the morning of April 5th, 33 AD, some women found the stone rolled away from Jesus' tomb and his body was gone. Now up until now, you could go to the religion faculty at Ottawa U.

[24 : 02] You could go to the ultra-liberal religion faculty at St. Paul University. You could go to the religion faculty at Carleton. You could go to just about any school. And they would not disagree with a single thing of my points that I've set up until now.

They might, you know, my explanation, they might have different nuances. That's fine. But the four points that I've put up right now, that would be just, that's part of the bedrock thing that nobody would disagree with. Some of them might disagree with 33 and 30, but, you know, at the end of the day, all of this stuff, I've completely and utterly, they all agree.

But in that text, in particular, in verse 5 and 6, this is where they lose it. Okay, George, you're saying an angel talked to the women.

Like, seriously? An angel talked to the women? George, and you say it's history? You say it's biography?

And you have an angel talking? George, that's completely and utterly ridiculous. Now, they might say it with more scorn and not affection.

[25 : 24] And we might get deeply red in the face and uncomfortable and not know what to say. And I'm not going to give you a whole account of what they, of what to say.

But I am, if you could put up the fifth point, I am going to maintain that this sentence makes complete sense as an historical account of what actually happened.

Amongst other things, because I'm not going into it, the person who is, well, no, I'll make the point first. On the morning of April 5th, 33 AD, an angel told the women that Jesus had been resurrected from death, from the dead.

Now, angels, you know, that's completely impossible. It's completely implausible. Well, amongst other things, that only makes sense, of course, if angels don't actually exist.

If they do exist, then there's nothing wrong with this. Now, here's what, here's what's going on, you know, and that's why, by the way, this is one of the reasons I've made all of my points by giving the actual date of the resurrection and the claim that's being made.

[26 : 41] That you can't read the Gospels and not realize, you know, if you want to think, if you think that they may be trying to just be symbolic, well, the Bible has an account of Christian truth which is symbolic.

It's called the Book of Revelation and nobody can read the Book of Revelation and read one of the Gospels and think that they're the same genres. Like, early Christians, just, they weren't dummies.

They're writing an ancient biography and they're making these claims. They're claiming that that's what happened. Now, here's the issue with it and this is why on one level, and I think increasingly in our culture there's maybe going to begin a new openness to it and I want to park here just for a couple of minutes.

I see the time. I want to park here. I have, I know somebody who, I know several people now who might have been a bit far from the Christian faith for a while and I don't know if they're definitely, at least a couple of them that I'm thinking of, they're definitely not Christians but they have a respect for Christians that they didn't have before and that's because on a very fundamental level they're starting to realize and recognize something which has always been true that Christian truth, the Christian faith has been a bastion, has been a bastion of truth and of evidence and of reason and of what is real.

like I talk to people and once they start to realize what I think about things they come to realize that there's people in our, like there's actually people in our educational institution that think that two plus two equals four isn't a statement of something which is true but is a patriarchal construct.

[28 : 32] That there are people in our culture who think that you should have different ways of knowing taught alongside science because they're both equally valid that something that you get from a dream or a legend is going to be equally as good at treating people or handling things as evidence-based, scientific-based medicine and that's just completely ridiculous.

And the next bit, this isn't a political rant and I know normally I try to make a whole pile of covering for it and I don't want to offend and I'm going to offend and I'll take you out for coffee and I'll give you lots of nuances around it but I know people who sit through and these are people who are scientists with graduate level degrees in biology and they sit through a workshop where they say that you can't refer to women breastfeeding, you have to refer what's the word to milking agents like, you know, chest feeding?

And they sit through things where, you know, you might have seen an viral clip that you couldn't tell in an autopsy whether the corpse was a male or female and they go, like, what?

And I know several people who, you know, ten years earlier or five years earlier they would have been very dismissive of Christians but all of a sudden they just look at Christians and they realize that Christians have had this long tradition deeply formed that we're concerned with evidence, that we're concerned with the truth, that we're concerned with reason and they see our culture getting unmoored and all of a sudden they realize that if they're going to go and have some people they can at least have conversations with and maybe have, start to realize that there's something grounding, just actually what's real, that that's where you go, that's where Christians inhabit.

and for some of them it's a very shocking realization that that's sort of that they're on the same side of the playing field with guys like me and you folks.

[30 : 45] You see, I mean, you just look at this story. Christians say that they didn't roll the stone away so Jesus could get out. They rolled the stone away so that people could go in and verify that the body was gone.

Kathy Keller has a wonderful line. She says, it's always been part of the Christian tradition to trust and verify. Trust and verify. That that's part of the Christian tradition.

Even the angel says, look, the body's gone. Christianity would be a radically, radically, radically different religion. In fact, it would be like the religions of most of the world if we were to say, yeah, Jesus rose from the dead.

Oh, did he rise from the dead? How do you know? Well, you know, we know that the body's gone. Can I go? No, no, you know, it happened right here in this tomb. Well, can we go and look? No, no, you know, maybe it's ancient myths and ancient stories and I'm not, I'm not putting them down at all and ancient practices, you have stories, you have myths, you have practices, you have legends, you have, you know, poetry, you have all of these types of things and the person who follows them has to follow those things.

You follow the myths and you meditate upon the myths and you make them your own and you do the practices and that makes you acceptable to God. But at the very, very heart of the Christian faith and this is something that Protestant and Catholics and Eastern Orthodox we all agree on.

[32 : 31] At the very heart of the Christian faith is, I mean, it's obviously important to us what Jesus taught and it's important to us that we do what Jesus told us to do but at the very heart of it is that God in his son does something in history, that he accomplishes something.

That's the heart of the Christian faith. That on April 5th, 33 AD, the tomb was empty because Jesus rose. That's the heart of the Christian faith.

It's the heart of the Christian faith that I'm not made right with God because I'm really good at keeping the teachings. You're not made right with God because you suck at keeping the teachings and you suck and I'm way better at it and so I'm acceptable to God.

No, that's not what the Christian faith is. The Christian faith is that I'm an unworthy person and Jesus did something for me that I cannot do for myself and I receive it by grace and so right in the very, very center of Christianity is a concern not just with stories and myths and allegories and symbolism and metaphors but of something actually happening in the real world which is why Christianity has miracles and the others don't.

It's all about what happens in the real world and it's a very different way of living but at the same time and this is what makes Christianity so weird to people on the outside.

[33 : 55] I had a fellow, maybe he's watching this today or downstream and he's an engineer. He was from a communist country, raised an atheist.

He fled the Iron Curtain, came to the West and I've had quite a few conversations with him and I got him all wrong for the first three or four months.

I just assumed he was an atheist and it finally dawned on me that by his own thinking he had rejected atheism and come to believe that there were beings like angels.

And you see, the other thing which is just so weird about Christianity is we have this concern for truth, for evidence, for reason, for thinking, for being careful, for being clear but at the other hand, we believe there's a soul, we believe there's angels, we believe there's meaning, we believe there's beauty, we believe there's goodness, we believe there's right and wrong, we believe that there's these transcendent truths, we believe that because the creator God, the triune God has created all things, that different things in creation just aren't mere things or mere stuff or mere collections of atoms but that they communicate in some ways, that they point to things, that they're metaphors of things, that the body has a type of a significance to it and you can't discover that from science, from cutting it up and dissecting it, that there's this whole world of meaning, of beauty, of goodness, of dance, of poetry, of laughter and Christianity is not just the bastion of truth, it's also the bastion of that which believes that there is more and the two are held together with no contradiction whatsoever, hence if that statement is up there, why that statement makes all the sense in the world that on the morning that April 5th, 33 AD, an angel told the woman that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead and no Christian has to blush at that and we say, yeah, that's exactly what it is.

Don't you believe in minds and souls and beauty and goodness and love and truth and justice? Don't you believe there's something more than what you can just consume or push around?

[36 : 15] Don't you believe there's something more? And don't you believe that in a, don't you wish there was a world where there's both something more and something that, and you can think about it and there's no contradiction?

There's a coherence and doesn't that sound beautiful and attractive? And if you think that's beautiful and attractive then what you are being attracted to is only Christianity and nothing else.

If you were, wish that there was a world where you could do science and do art, where you could analyze things very carefully and think really hard and at the same time recognize beauty and awe and mystery and you wish there was a way that both of those things could coexist in one, perhaps one way, what you are wishing for is that Christianity was true, is true.

And I want to tell you, friends, I want to tell you, brothers and sisters, it's true. Go listen to some of Mike Lacona's tapes and many others.

There is no better explanation for the historical facts around the death of Jesus than that he is resurrected from the dead. There is no better rational, reasonable explanation for the facts than what that angel just said.

[37 : 36] Amen. Amen. Amen. I have to wrap things up. My voice is going.

April showers bring May flowers and they also bring allergies. Could you put up the next point just briefly?

Excuse me. On Friday afternoon, April 3rd, 33 AD, death appeared to swallow Jesus. I just say it appeared not because he didn't die, but it appeared that death had swallowed Jesus and death had won.

On Sunday, April 5th, 33 AD, people began to learn that Jesus had swallowed death. This tiny little man probably wasn't much taller than five foot tall, scrawny and not very good looking.

scrawny because he was lower working class, not good looking because that's what the Bible tells us. He died on the cross amidst blood and gore and jeers on Friday, April 3rd, and on Sunday, April 5th.

[38 : 58] We began to learn that he had swallowed death. Now, I'm going to go through these things a little bit quick.

You know, for Christians, this is why for Christians, the grave is a bed of hope for those in Christ. the sweetest lie that Canadians tell themselves is that they will never die.

And the second sweetest lie that Canadians tell themselves is that even if they die, it will all work out. We know from the teachings of Jesus that those things are not true.

Of course, it's just biologically the case that we're all going to die. And for many people, as their death becomes, their upcoming death becomes a reality, they face terror.

But for Christians, for those who are in Christ, in his finished work, in his arms, where he has come into them to be their savior, and they are in him, the grave becomes a bed of hope.

[40 : 18] If Jesus tarries, there will be a time when my eyes close, and I don't know what I will see as my eyes close. Maybe I will be in a coma. Maybe I'll see the ceiling. Maybe I'll see the loved ones around me, and my eyes will close.

And the moment my eyes close on my loved ones, my eyes open in glory. And that is the Christian hope. hope. That is the Christian hope.

Why did they go without fear? Why did they go with fear? Look at, if you could put up verse 8, and they went out and fled from the tomb for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

I put this, I had not talked about this all the way through Mark's gospel. If you go, I'm going to make this little point. If you go back and you read Mark's gospel on your own, one of the things you're going to find is his disciples kept getting it wrong.

They kept not doing what he wanted them to do. They kept getting it wrong, like all the time, like his mom thinks he's insane. I'm not making that up. Like his sisters and brothers think Jesus is insane.

[41 : 29] Like, you know, just after Jesus says he's going to die on the cross, the disciples get in an argument about who's going to sit at Jesus' throne when he rules the world. Like they keep getting it wrong.

And so the gospel of Mark ends in the most brilliant way. How do I believe that Jesus died? I couldn't go see the empty tomb. I believe it because the tomb is empty, and I've been told that Jesus rose from the dead.

That's how all of us believe. And the question ends in a bit of an ironic type of way, like an odd type of way, because it's a challenge to you and me. Am I going to be like the woman and be afraid?

Like, I'll be honest, when I made that comment about chest feeding units, I wondered whether I should say something like that in Canada in 2022. And you all know. You all know that that's the case.

Because we can be afraid to speak and bear witness to the truth. And the text is calling you, it's calling me, to listen to what the angel said, to listen to what Jesus promised, to trust that it's true, and to not live out of fear.

[42 : 35] Not be like those women who obviously changed their mind later on, and, you know, there's all that other stuff, but not to be like that. To walk with a confidence not based in my flesh, not based on my accomplishment, but based on Christ, to not live in fear.

Jesus doesn't want us to live in fear. He doesn't want us to live by fear, live by fear of death, live by lies, live by injustice, live by hatred.

He wants us to live by the truth. He wants us to live by goodness. He wants us to live by beauty. He wants us to live by justice. He doesn't want us to live by fear. That's what he wants us, that's how he wants us to live, brothers and sisters.

so the last two points very briefly if you put up number seven Jesus confers grace triune God-given life-giving grace to the unworthy his grace to the unworthy disciples his grace to the unworthy Peter the grace to the unworthy women his grace to unworthy George his ungrace his grace to unworthy Adam I mean Andrew his grace to the unworthy Joe his grace to unworthy Ken and unworthy Uzo and and and Amy and Deborah and and Diane and Louise grace to the unworthy George proclaimed and then the final point your only hope my only hope in life and death is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that is my hope in life and death that is the only hope and he wants us to live as people of hope and we are people of hope when the life and death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ become the story that we live by when we are in him because we trust him as our Christ our savior our Lord and that is a life of hope your only hope in life and death is the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ invite you to stand please stand let's bow our heads in prayer father you know how frail we are you know how many fears we have and you know better than even we do how unworthy we are time and time and time again so father we thank you for grace we thank you for the grace that comes to us through Jesus we thank you for what he did for us on the cross we thank you for his defeat of death we thank you that he made sure that people understood that not only was the body gone but that it was gone because he was alive we give you thanks and praise that even now he is in heaven and that he intercedes for us that when he's he walks with us and intercedes for us that he is with us that he still is Emmanuel God with us and that one day he will come visibly powerfully in glory to bring this created world to its end to to knit together that which should be knit and and and to put to death that which should be put to death and to bring in the new heaven and the new earth and that he has died and risen from the dead to fit us for heaven father we thank you for what Christ has done we thank you for what he will continue to do in our lives and we ask Lord that you help the gospel to be real to our hearts so that we will not live by fear but that we will live by hope and we ask this in the name of Jesus your son and our savior and all God's people said amen

Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen