

He Is Risen!

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[0:00] He is risen. All right, by show of hands, who woke up and found an Easter basket with their name on it? Show of hands. All right.

Who had candy? Candy in that vest? That's what I'm talking about. You know, yesterday, the Kenosha News had an article on the Easter egg hunt Library Square yesterday.

And I was here preparing. I saw the whole thing. It was a mob. I guess there was a thousand participants. It was a mob. But one thing I noticed as I was peeking out the window, every little kid had their own basket.

And they were putting all the eggs they could in their basket. All of their eggs were in one basket. If you're a believer here this morning, if you're a Christian, or if you're thinking about becoming a Christian, you've got to realize that Christians put all of their eggs in one basket.

This is amazing. As Christians, we base our entire lives on this one historic claim.

[1:21] That Jesus Christ was raised bodily from the dead. That's what we base our lives on. The tomb is empty. He's alive.

The amazing claim of the Christian faith is not just that the Messiah was crucified for sinners. The amazing claim is that He was raised from the dead and that He's alive today.

He is risen. And so this morning, I want to help you to see this historic claim of the Christian faith that Jesus is alive. He's reigning and He's going to return.

He's alive. So if you're new to this whole Christianity thing, or maybe you've been away for a while and you're coming back, you've got to understand that Christians are people of the book.

We live under the book. We believe this book to be God's Word. And so we submit to it. We trust it. The New Testament starts with four books of the Bible.

[2:27] They're called Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. And as Christians, we believe that they're trustworthy historical accounts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

So if you're new to the Christian faith, what you need to understand is that the Gospels are basically historical biographies of the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Now, each Gospel is written for a particular audience. And so each Gospel has its own kind of style and flavor and emphasis. It's like four members of a barbershop quartet singing the same Gospel story, all in perfect harmony.

And each Gospel closes with the same thing. He is risen. He is risen. He is risen. He is risen. He is risen. This morning, I want to turn to the book of Matthew.

As a church, we've been camping out in the book of Matthew. We've been looking at the Sermon on the Mountain. We're skipping ahead today to the end of the Gospel of Matthew. I want to kind of walk you through the days leading up to Jesus' resurrection.

[3:45] And I want to do it in sports center fashion. Beep, beep, beep. Beep, beep, beep. Beep. I want to hit the highlights. And so we're going to hit the highlights from the Sunday before.

We'll hit Thursday, Friday. We'll kind of wait through Saturday. And then Sunday hits. Beep, beep, beep. Beep, beep, beep.

The greatest highlight ever. In Matthew 21, the Sunday before the resurrection.

It's known as Palm Sunday. Jesus on a donkey enters into Jerusalem. And His disciples are laying cloaks down. They're putting palm leaves down.

And as He's riding this humble donkey into Jerusalem, His peeps are there saying things like, Hosanna to the Son of David.

[4:46] Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Which means, God saves. Salvation has come. So Jesus enters Jerusalem the Sunday before He's crucified.

He goes into Jerusalem being praised. People are saying, you're the Messiah. You're the long-awaited Christ, the Son of David, who's come to Jerusalem to deliver His people from oppression.

And so the mindset of the time, the Jews in Jerusalem, they were, Jerusalem was occupied by Rome. And so if you're a Jew living in Jerusalem and you saw Jesus coming in, you're thinking, is He the Messiah?

I hope so. I hope He delivers us from the oppression of Rome. Jerusalem was the city of David, the center of Jewish political and religious activity.

And Jerusalem was home to the Jewish temple where Jews believed God dwelt in their midst. And so that Sunday, Jesus did come to Jerusalem on a donkey.

[6:04] And He did come as the Messiah. He was the promised one. The long-awaited king, descendant of David. It's true. It was really Him.

He came to deliver His people, but in a most unexpected way. His deliverance was not from the oppression of Rome.

He came to deliver people from the oppression of sin. And His mighty act of deliverance was not an impressive flank from the south. His mighty act of deliverance was Him laying down His own life on the cross.

Jesus entered Jerusalem to die on that Palm Sunday. Beep, beep, beep. Beep, beep, beep. We move to Thursday.

Thursday of Holy Week was the day of preparing the Passover. And after night fell, Jesus and His disciples observed the Passover.

[7:21] It was a highly symbolic meal, recalling the time in Israel's ancient history when God delivered His people from the oppression of Egypt. Do you remember this?

If you've seen the Prince of Egypt, Disney, maybe a little bit. What happened is that the people of God slaughtered lambs and wiped the blood of the lamb over the doorways of their homes so that the angel of death would pass over their homes.

The lamb's blood delivered God's people from death. Does that ring a bell? So, this particular Thursday, the night before Jesus was crucified, Jesus is with His disciples.

And by the way, He tells them at this point, one of you is going to betray me, the night before Judas had for 30 pieces of silver. Well, at this Passover meal, we see this in chapter 26, verses 26 and 27. During the Passover meal, Jesus institutes what's called the Lord's Supper. What He's doing is He's essentially saying this.

[8:37] It's a Passover meal. And He's saying this with all authority. Hey, from here on out, the Passover meal, it's going to point to me as the ultimate Passover lamb.

The ultimate and final sacrifice to deliver God's people from their sin. That week before Jesus is crucified and raised, a lot goes on.

Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper. And afterwards, His disciples sing a hymn. He tells them at this point, hey, you guys are going to get scattered tonight because of me.

Peter, of course, says, not me. No, I will never fall away. I'm dramatic like Peter was dramatic. But Jesus says, yeah, you will.

And He says something really interesting at this point. It's in chapter 26, 32. He's just told His disciples they're going to scatter. Then He says this, but after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.

[9:59] This isn't the first time Jesus spoke of His resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew. There are three other times before this. So they leave.

They make their way to Gethsemane, which is at the foot of the Mount of Olives. And it's in Gethsemane that Jesus prays and He wrestles. Ask God for this cup to pass, but not His will, but God's will be done.

And it was in Gethsemane after Jesus prays, a mob shows up. Led by Judas. A crowd of Jewish leaders.

Armed. I'm not sure if you remember this, but in order to indicate to the mob who it was they were to arrest, Judas approaches Jesus and gives Him a kiss.

Betrayed with a kiss. This is all according to God's plan, by the way. It's fulfilled everything, everything that God anticipated and set out.

[11:10] They arrest Jesus and it's here that Jesus is brought to the Sanhedrin to undergo His first trial. Now, if the word Sanhedrin seems foreign to your ears, it should.

We don't use that every day. And what it was, it was a group of Jewish authorities who would pass judgment on things. A group of 70 men. And so Jesus is brought before the Sanhedrin and they're looking to charge Him so that they could kill Him.

And so they actually got two of their own witnesses to try to make a case against Jesus, but their stories didn't corroborate. And so they're like, whatever, they can't trust them.

And so Caiaphas, the high priest, finally and directly says to Jesus, are you the Christ? Are you the Son of God? And in 2664, Jesus says to Caiaphas, you have said so.

And that would have been enough. He wouldn't have gotten charged. But then he goes on and says this, But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

[12:34] He's quoting Daniel chapter 7. A prophecy of the Son of Man who would be fully God to come. Jesus is saying, I am.

In chapter 2665, Caiaphas, upon hearing these, tears his robes. Blasphemer! Turns to the Sanhedrin.

What say you? You've heard it. You know what they say? He deserves death. He deserves death. Following that, Peter denies him three times.

Beep, beep, beep. Beep, beep. Chapter 27. We go from Thursday night to Friday morning. And now Jesus experiences his second trial.

Before the Roman governor, Pilate. You see, the Sanhedrin, though they had decided he deserved death, they did not have the authority to actually put him to death.

[13:51] Jerusalem was occupied by Rome. And Rome, in order to maintain ultimate control over the area, reserved judgment and death penalties for themselves.

That decision was Roman jurisdiction. Which meant the Sanhedrin had to convince Pilate, the Roman governor, to agree with him that Jesus needed to be crucified.

So they bring Jesus before Pilate in chapter 27, 11 through 14. Pilate asks Jesus directly, Are you the king of the Jews?

Jesus says, You have said so. Then he's accused again by the chief priests and elders, to which Jesus says nothing, like a lamb before its shearers.

And Pilate is amazed that he wouldn't say anything. This point in chapter 27, we come across this custom.

[14:56] And it was just strictly to get political points. And so what would happen is that on this holiday, when everyone came to Jerusalem, Pilate would set a prisoner free to just get political points.

Keep everybody happy. And this time around, Pilate goes to the crowds with two options. He says, I'm going to set somebody free.

You pick. Either Barabbas, who is a known robber and murderer, an insurrectionist, or Jesus, this one you call the Christ.

Which one would you choose to release? Pilate didn't realize this, but the chief priests and elders had already persuaded the crowds to release Barabbas in order to destroy Jesus.

You see that in chapter 27, verse 20. So when Pilate asked the crowd, Who do you want me to release to you? The crowd says, Barabbas!

[16:05] To which Pilate asks, So what should I do with Jesus, the Christ? To which the crowd says, Crucify Him!

Less than a week earlier. Hosanna! Pilate responds by saying, What evil has He done? The crowd, Crucify Him!

In chapter 27, verse 24, Pilate seeing that this is a no-win political situation. He does that infamous act.

We all know it. Water, washing of his hands, and says, This man's blood is not on my head. I am innocent of this man's blood.

To which the crowd responds, His blood be on us and our children. They had no idea that this was the ultimate Passover lamb whose blood would take away the sin of the world.

[17:10] They did not know that. Tremendously ironic. In 27, 26, Pilate releases Barabbas and sends Jesus over to Roman soldiers to whom He would be scourged.

It's a device called a cat of nine tails, which is a whip with nine ends on it was used for scourging. And at the ends of the, at the very tail ends of the tips were pieces of bone and metal.

And so what you, the technique was you whip and you drag. And you fillet people's backs. It's brutal. Jesus went, was scourged, spit upon, struck, mocked by Roman soldiers, led out to Golgotha, the place of the skull outside Jerusalem.

And then there He was crucified, nailed to the cross. There was a sign over His head that read, this is Jesus, King of the Jews.

Verse 37 of chapter 27. We read that there are two thieves that were crucified on either side of Him and that they were mocking Him. There were passerbys walking by, wagging their heads, saying, come down from the cross, deriding Him.

[18:31] The chief priests, scribes, and elders were there mocking Him as well. In verse 41, He saved others. He cannot save Himself. Let Him come down from the cross and we will believe Him.

Let God deliver Him. Mockety, mockety, mock. They didn't think that He would or could. What they didn't realize was that what was happening here was all according to the glorious plan of the triune God who wanted to save sinners.

This was all according to plan. God and His great Son had sent His Son for sinners to save. God had sent this Passover lamb to deliver people from their sin through His death.

Beep, beep, beep. Beep, beep. In verse 45 of chapter 27, Jesus, it's noon, Jesus has been crucified, though He's not dead.

He's hanging on the cross. At noon, darkness surrounds the land. It's God's judgment gathering over Jesus. His just wrath.

[19:47] At 3 o'clock that afternoon is the cry of dereliction. Jesus cries out, Eli, Eli, lame, sebeckani, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It's at that moment, Isaiah 53, 6, God has laid on Jesus the sin of all who would believe in Him and He's pouring out His wrath on Him.

The Son of God is forsaken by God the Father. There's still the Son, still the Father, but He's enduring the wrath meant for those sinners that would one day believe.

In verse 50, Jesus yields up His Spirit. It's important to note, I made this point on Friday. He gave Himself. His life was not taken from Him.

He voluntarily laid His life down. He gave Himself for you and for me. He gave Himself for sinners. It was a voluntary sacrifice. He was a substitute for sinners.

And then there was an earthquake. Rock split. Verse 54, the centurion says, truly this was the Son of God. He's the Christ.

[21:06] He's the one. He is who He was claiming to be. So Jesus dies. Beep, beep, beep.

Beep, beep. Friday evening, Joseph of Arimathea, who Luke tells us was a member of the Sanhedrin, but he did not, he did not consent to Jesus' crucifixion.

Well, after Jesus dies, Joseph of Arimathea goes to Pilate and requests the body, the dead body of Jesus so he can bury Him. We see this in 27, 57 through 61.

Pilate gives him permission to take the dead body of Jesus, brings it down, Joseph brings the dead body of Jesus to a tomb that was hewn out of rock for Joseph.

And so, he puts Jesus' dead body in this tomb and that we read is that he rolled the stone in front of the tomb and the stone was a huge stone and it was moved by gravity and so the stone would sit up on a higher point in a little well and Joseph would have pushed it.

[22:26] I'm not sure if there's any other else to push it with him and then it would by gravity drop into another well in front of the tomb and it would close the tomb. Huge stone. Jesus' dead body has been placed inside the tomb, sealed, entrance, no way getting in, no way getting out.

And in verse 61 what we see is this. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there sitting opposite the tomb.

They saw where Jesus' body was laid. They were there. They were there on that Friday night. They saw where the tomb was. Jesus' body placed in the tomb. He's dead. Stone rolled in the way. Mary and Mary see it. Night falls. Friday is done. Beep, beep, beep. Beep, beep. Beep. We move on to the next highlight. Saturday morning chapter 27 verses 62 and forward.

[23:42] The chief priests aren't done. The chief priests aren't done. They and the Pharisees go before Pilate to request a guard to be placed out in front of the tomb.

A Roman guard. Why? Why would they do that? If you look at verse 63 you see why.

They request this guard saying sir we remember how that imposter said while he was still alive after three days I will rise.

They knew what Jesus had said. They knew that he had prophesied his own resurrection. If you want to see where in Matthew Matthew 16 21 Matthew 17 22 through 23 Matthew 20 17 through 19 and when we looked at Matthew 26 32 these are all places where Jesus says I'm going to rise again.

They knew it but you know what? They didn't think that he was going to rise again. They thought the disciples there was a possibility that the disciples would steal the body and propagate this rumor this untruth that he had been raised from the dead and it would be bad.

[25:13] Everyone thinks he's dead. Everyone thinks Jesus is dead. Pilate allows a Roman guard to be placed at the tomb.

They go. They secure the tomb which means they put a seal on the stone in the tomb and they set a guard. This was all because the Jewish authorities of the time were afraid that the disciples were going to come back steal the body and say that he was raised from the dead.

Beep, beep, beep. Beep, beep. Beep, beep. Chapter 28. The third day.

The first day of the week. Sunday morning. The day after the Sabbath. Jews observed Sabbath on Saturday. Now after the Sabbath toward the dawn of the first day of the week Mary and Mary went to see the tomb.

The same Mary and Mary that saw where the body of Jesus was laid. they go. Verse 2.

[26:32] There's a great earthquake. This is the second earthquake that has taken place in three days. Remember the first earthquake when Jesus gave up his spirit?

The curtain at that moment was torn in two. God had made a way through the death of Jesus for sinners to come into the presence of a holy God. Earthquake! It's epic!

And now the second earthquake. Empty tomb. Angel of Lord comes.

Rolls back the stone and then sits on it. He wasn't sweating. In verse 3. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow.

There was no mistaking who this being was. He was an angel of God. It makes your knees knock. And that's what we see happen with the Roman guards.

[27:36] They're trembling in verse 4. And became like dead men. I think they dropped. But this angel did not come to speak to these Roman guards.

angels. He came to speak to Mary and Mary. By the way, these same Roman guards we read later in 28, 11 through 15, they were paid off by the Jewish authorities to not say what happened, but to actually say the disciples came and stole the body.

I'll come back to that in a second. Well, this angel turns to the Marys and he says to them, don't be afraid for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here for he has risen. Just as he said, come see the place where he lies.

Look for yourself, it's empty. Come on in, check it out. He's not here, he's been raised. My mind goes like this, what's going on in heaven at this point?

[28:49] What's going on? What is going on? I think there's already trumpets blazing and great rejoicing because Jesus has risen from the

dead.

The angel says go tell disciples that he's risen from the dead and behold he's going before you to Galilee like he said in 26:32. There you will see him.

so these ladies quickly go from the tomb in verse 8 and they have this mixture of fear and great joy. I think we all know what that is.

And behold Jesus meets them on the way and says greetings they drop at his feet and worship him. Eyewitness presence of the risen Christ and they drop at his feet and Jesus says them do not be afraid go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee and there they will see me.

Eyewitnesses. These women are the first eyewitnesses to see the risen Christ. And then what we see in the rest of the New Testament Luke 24 John 20 and 21 1 Corinthians 15 Acts chapter 9 we see account after account of eyewitnesses to the resurrected Jesus.

[30:13] Do you know what the New Testament says about Jesus? From Matthew to Revelation without reservation without apology the New Testament proclaims that the Messiah Jesus was not only crucified not only was he buried but he was raised from the dead.

That's the overwhelming witness of the New Testament. He's alive. He's risen. He's alive today. He's alive now. And this is what I want to impress upon you. I want to ask you a question. Do you believe that he's been raised from the dead?

Do you believe that the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the linchpin of the Christian faith.

No resurrection, no Christianity, no resurrection, no salvation. Now there are those people who say that the historic bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ didn't happen.

[31:31] They'll say things like this. Jesus wasn't quite dead on the cross. He was taken down. He was put into the tomb of Joseph. And in that cool place, he revived.

Possible, but it's hard to fathom, given that Jesus has probably gone through shock, lost a ton of blood through the scourging, nails of crown of thorns, nails in his arms, in his wrists, in his feet, piercing on his side.

The guy's got to have gone through shock. And so you're telling me that he's going to be placed in the tomb, revive, and then find a way within his strength to move the tomb and then somehow sneak by the Roman guard without being detected.

I don't think so either. There's a better explanation. Some would say the disciples hallucinated, that they wanted to believe that Jesus was alive so much that they actually thought that they saw him. It was a group hallucination. Interesting that they all had the same one. Tough to believe. There's another theory that says the disciples went to the wrong tomb.

[32:52] They just got the wrong address. You just need to produce a body at that point. Oh, you went to the wrong tomb. Here's the dead body. Here's the right tomb. And Mary and Mary being at the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea beforehand, that discounts that.

But what about the disciples stealing his body? The very thing that the Jewish authorities were fearful of.

Could they have done that? The best explanation for the empty tomb is that Jesus was miraculously raised from the dead.

here's how you counter the claim about the disciple stealing his body. Did you know that ten of the eleven disciples, after Jesus' death and resurrection, they were radically changed people?

Remember what happened in Gethsemane? They scattered. They split on them like cowards. And after the resurrection, they proclaim him like courageous lions.

[34:11] And ten of eleven go to martyrs' deaths, not only proclaiming Messiah crucified, but Messiah raised from the dead.

They had seen him. Now let me ask you this. If they had stolen his body from the grave, from the tomb, how could they die for that?

How could someone die for something that they know is a lie? You know what the better explanation is? He was raised from the dead. And they saw him with their own eyes.

And it changed them forever. And they went proclaiming the Messiah crucified, raised from the dead, and I don't care what you do to me. I don't care what you do to me.

I don't care what you do to do to the best explanation for the empty tomb is that Jesus was actually raised from the dead.

[35:11] Do you believe that Jesus was raised from the dead? Do you believe it was a historic event in space and time? Do you believe it really happened? The resurrection validates who Jesus claimed to be.

Paul in Romans 1 says the resurrection declares that he's the son of God. King of kings, Lord of lords, overall, all authority. The crucified and risen Messiah, God in the flesh, raised, risen, reigning. It also goes to Maun. If he said he was going to die in the hands of these people and then be raised three days later, and if it was true, then I wonder what else he said.

And whether that's true, like what he said about himself, like what he said about our nature as human beings, that we need a savior, and what about is going to happen in the future. It adds validity to it all.

The resurrection validates who Jesus claimed to be and what he said. The second thing coming out of this, the resurrection verifies that the payment that Jesus made for sin on Friday, cleared on Sunday.

[36:34] You ever make a purchase and you're looking at your kind of bank app and you see something's pending? Saturday was like pending payment, and Sunday it cleared.

the payment that Jesus made for sin, he bore God's wrath on Friday when he was raised from the dead on Sunday. It's the declaration, paid in full, and it cleared.

It cleared for you, it cleared for me. Those who trust in Christ are confident that Christ's payment for their sin paid for their sin in full.

No more wrath. The resurrection is a stamp that verifies that. Payment accepted. The resurrection also provides power for Christians over sin.

Just really brief, when a sinner believes in Jesus for the first time, Romans 6 tells us they're united to Christ in his death and resurrection. They're dead, they're dead to the penalty of sin, and that they're alive to God with resurrection power.

[37:50] So you know what this means for us? Brother and sister in Christ. Okay, when I was in high school, I worked for a guy, we built decks, and we would work all day, and then we would go back to his house, single guy, and then I would like walk in, and he would like tackle me, and we would like wrestle all through his house, going over all sorts of furniture, and we would get each other in these submission holds, waiting for one of us to tap out.

it happened like every day. I got tough, sort of, but Christian, you might be sitting here, and there's some sin that's got this submission hold over your life.

Do you know what you say to it? Christ was raised from the dead. The next time you are tempted, you know what you say? Jesus was raised from the dead, and I've been placed into Christ, I've been placed into that power, so I can say no.

The resurrection of Christ provides sin-breaking power for Christians, and if you're a non-Christian here, and you want to be set free from the power of sin, you go to Jesus.

He paid the penalty and broke the power, but the last, the last piece of this resurrection of Christ that makes a difference in our life, it gives us hope beyond the grave.

[39:16] Jesus' resurrection from the dead was his decisive victory over death. Not only did he conquer sin, he conquered death. And so for those of us who believe in Jesus, we have this confidence that we too will be raised as he has been raised.

In John 11, Jesus says this thing to Martha, the sister of Lazarus, who was a bit of a pit bull. he says to her, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever, though he die, yet shall he live. Whoever believes me, though he die, yet shall he live. Do you believe this? You see, Jesus' own death and resurrection is the grounds for our confidence that we too will be raised from the dead. So you know what that means? When you think about your own death, and I know you do, when you think about your own death, here's how you need to think about it. Your own death is like a short, dark hallway that leads to this bright place where your resurrected king awaits you.

That's all that it is. That's all that it is. In closing, I want to ask you two questions this morning. Thank you. First one is simple.

[40:38] Did the resurrection of Jesus Christ really happen? Did it? If you're saying no, eat, drink, and be merry, for there's nothing else.

But are you saying no because you don't actually want to deal with the information? Don't say no because of that. But if you say yes, yes, I believe it.

I believe it happened. Then you need to go on to the second question. And the second question is this. If the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave actually happened and it declares him to be the son of God, Lord of lords, king of kings, he's got authority over all things, then the question becomes have you submitted yourself to him?

Have you bowed your knee to the risen king? Have you put all of your eggs in his basket?

He is risen. He is reigning. And one day he's going to return. And we rejoice in it all.

[41:56] Let's pray. Lord Jesus, there is no one like you. You are our risen king and we gladly declare it and proclaim it.

And so we're going to sing to you now and we know that you hear us. You are the risen one. You are the king and we will crown you with many crowns.

It's in your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.