

He Is Risen: See And Believe!

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[0:00] Father in heaven, we would come before you now and that we would ask that your name would be hallowed and that your will would be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Father, would you now pour out your spirit upon us, your people, in this congregation and would you give us eyes to see the risen Jesus through this eyewitness account of John.

It's in your name we pray. Amen. Amen. Well, a week ago I had my vision tested and as part of having my vision tested, I knew that there was going to be a particular test in that big test that is a point of challenge for me.

The colorblind test. I was seated in front of 12 circles, four rows of three. Each circle was comprised of smaller circles of varying colors and shades and apparently there are numbers you can see in those circles.

So the aid helping me starts circle one. Well, what do you see? I don't see anything. Oh, what do you see there? I don't see anything. Next circle, nothing. Next circle, nope. Nope. Nope.

[1:15] I think I see a six. Nope, nope, nope, nope. Three, seven, nope. So I turned to her and I said, would you just tell me? I can't see.

I'm colorblind. I can't see. Tell me the numbers. So she walked me through. Four, 14, 27, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I believed. I believed.

I couldn't see it. I turned to my eyewitness friend and she said, there they are. And I believed without seeing. My eyes didn't need to see the numbers to believe that they were there.

This morning, we're not gathered to talk about a colorblind test. This morning, we've gathered together to see and believe the risen Jesus.

He is risen. He's risen indeed. And I doubt that any of us in this room have actually laid physical eyes upon the risen Christ. But does that mean that Jesus is not alive?

[2:31] If there's anything that my vision test shows, it's you don't have to see something with your own eyes to know it's real. This morning, I'm going to show you a eyewitness account from the Gospel of John.

And if you want to start turning your Bibles there, please feel free. You've got Bibles before you in the pews. John is the fourth book of the New Testament. It's the fourth Gospel. When it comes to seeing and believing in the resurrection of Jesus, we're actually dependent on someone else's eyewitness.

Someone else who saw Jesus after he was crucified and raised from the dead. And the eyewitness account that we're going to look at is the account of John, one of his longtime followers.

Now, you know what an eyewitness account is, right? It's like when there's an accident on 60th and Sheridan, and you're there, you see it, the police officer come, then they take a police report of your eyewitness account of what took place.

You were there, you saw it. And this morning, we're going to look at the eyewitness account of the Gospel of John, John's account. He was there, he saw it. And he shares it with us so that we can believe that Jesus is raised from the dead.

[3:48] And so my aim this morning is not to convince you that the Gospel of John is a reliable account of the resurrection of Jesus. My aim this morning is to show you what John shows us so that you would believe that Jesus is risen.

That's my goal this morning. And here's how he's going to do it. In John chapter 20, he starts in verses 1 through 10, and he shows us the empty tomb. And then for the rest of the chapter, he's going to show us three transformational events.

People who encounter the risen Jesus, and their lives are changed. And so what John shows us is the tomb is empty because Jesus is alive, and Jesus changes people's lives.

Here's what's riding on all this. What you believe about Jesus is really important. And what you believe about his resurrection is very important.

If Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, he is not who he claimed to be, and the work that he did on the cross, what we just kind of brought to mind, how is that supposed to have accomplished anything if he wasn't raised from the dead?

[5:06] Let alone the fact that we have no hope of life after death. But if Jesus was raised from the dead, it actually proves that he was God in the flesh, that his payment for sin was effectual, it accomplished what he sought to do with it, and that he is alive today.

So let's look at this empty tomb in verses 1 through 10. I'll just read it for you. Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early while it was still dark and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple. The other disciple is John, the writer of the gospel. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and John, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.

So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were both going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple, John, outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen clothes lying there, cloths lying there, but he did not go in.

Then Simon Peter came following him and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded up in a place by itself.

[6:30] Then the other disciple, John, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed. For as yet, they did not understand the scripture, that he, Jesus, must rise from the dead.

Then the disciples went back to their homes. Here's John's eyewitness account of what happened that first Easter Sunday.

Before dawn, this would have been most likely Sunday, April 5th, 33 A.D. A real time, a real day.

Before dawn, it's still dark.

Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus' female followers, she arrives at the tomb to finish preparing Jesus' body for burial. So there's a little backstory right there. Two days earlier, Jesus had been crucified on a Roman cross outside of Jerusalem.

And while Jesus, his last words that he said there, it is finished, he was speaking about the work that he had done on the cross. Mary Magdalene was there.

[7:39] She witnessed his crucifixion, his death, and his burial. Because she followed Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus to Joseph's newly hewn-out tomb in the limestone outside of Jerusalem.

And she followed them there and watched them put Jesus' linen-shrouded body into that tomb and then roll this huge stone in front of the tomb entrance. She saw it.

She had the tomb address, you could say. And so it's on the first day of the week. It's Sunday.

Three days following that first Good Friday.

And when Mary arrives in the dark, she notices right away that this huge stone had been taken away, verse 1. She must have looked in.

Because when she runs and tells Simon, Peter, and John that the body has been taken away, she must have looked in to know that it had been removed. And she tells them that someone must have taken his body and placed him somewhere else unknown to them.

[8:42] And right there, what you see is that she's not thinking resurrection. She's not thinking that he's been raised from the dead. She's thinking that his body's been misplaced.

So upon hearing Mary's report, Peter and John, foot race to the tomb, verses 3 and 4. John arrives first because he's younger than Peter. And when John arrives, he stoops in the tomb and he looks down into the tomb.

It's like looking down into a shallow cellar of a basement. He looks down and sees the linen burial cloths that had enshrouded Jesus' body lying there.

And they're missing something. I'm not naming any names, but sometimes in our family, there's this towel that shows up in the middle of our bathroom with no body in it.

It's this empty towel and you touch it and it's a little damp. What's going on? Not naming any names.

[9:55] But when John looks in and sees these burial linens, something's out of place. We've got a missing body. These burial linens were missing the very person that had been enshrouded by them two days earlier.

And it gives John pause. So much so, he doesn't go into the tomb. He's just looking in. And here's what I want to put into your brain. Something's going on in John at this moment.

Something is being brought to his mind at this moment. He arrived at the tomb and his heart was pumping and his heart starts going, the heart rate starts going down and then he sees these burial linens and his heart rate is starting to go up because something is going on in his mind.

Something related to the Old Testament. But we'll come back to that in a second because Peter arrives. He arrives huffing and puffing that old man and in classic Peter style, he just goes right into the tomb.

Right in. And he too sees the burial linen lying there. But what John tells us, he also sees the linen face cloth that was over Jesus' dead head.

[11:17] It was separate from the linen cloths that covered his body. And what Joseph, what John is very clear in pointing out is that this linen face cloth was not thrown on the floor.

It was folded up. You know, after you wash your face with a washcloth, you kind of fold it up and put it on your sink. Very intentional. It's folded up.

Someone left the burial linens. Someone folded up this face cloth. And if you were going to be stealing Jesus' body, I'm guessing you're not going to take the time to fold up his face cloth.

You're going to throw it on the floor or keep it on his head. So, at this point, John in verse 8 now enters the tomb. He sees the empty tomb.

He sees the empty burial linens. He sees the folded up face cloth. And at the end of verse 8, we see these words, John saw and believed.

[12:23] And we have a very important question we need to answer right now. What did he believe? What was he believing? Well, in verse 9, we're told, for as yet, they did not understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead.

He believes that Jesus has been raised from the dead. Because what has come to his mind is the Old Testament scripture in new, pronounced, powerful way.

If you flip in your Bible back to Psalm 16, verse 10, this may have been the scripture that had come to his mind and that stirred his belief that Jesus has been raised from the dead.

This verse, I'm going to read you, this verse was proclaimed by Peter and the apostle Paul when they would preach and that they would give an Old Testament basis for the resurrection of Jesus. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol or let your holy ones see corruption. And of course, the holy one of all, the greatest of all holy ones is Jesus. You will not see corruption.

[13:49] Was this the verse that God had used in John's mind to stir belief when he sees the empty tomb? It could have been. It could have been Isaiah 53, 10 where the suffering servant is buried in a grave of a rich man and then afterwards he lives, goes on living, raised from the dead.

These are different passages that the Old Testament points to not just the Messiah dying but the Messiah necessarily being raised from the dead. So here's what we see happening.

Here's this eyewitness account of an empty tomb and what John is telling us is that this tomb is not empty on accident. It's purposefully empty.

It's the fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures. That's one reason why it was empty. It had to be to fulfill the Old Testament.

Another reason is that the resurrection had to happen in order to demonstrate that Christ's one time payment for sin was accepted and received by God a holy God.

[15:06] This past week I ordered a book from Amazon. Anybody ever order a book from Amazon? It was a book on the gospel, the life of Jesus and how

that's essential to every Christian and as soon as I ordered it I clicked that little button that place order bing three seconds later my emails dinged from Amazon the confirmation email payment received what happens on Good Friday is payment made what happens on Easter Sunday is payment received Christ's payment for sin was accepted by a holy God and that opens wide the door for all sinners to come and receive forgiveness of sins through what Jesus has accomplished he is a living savior and sins are washed clean this is an empty tomb but it's speaking loud and so upon seeing the empty tomb

John believed that Jesus had been raised from the dead because his bible is making sense in a new way and I just want to point out the obvious he's not looking at the resurrected Jesus right now he's standing in an empty tomb believing that Jesus has been raised because he's thinking about his bible in a new way if John is any indicator someone does not have to visibly see the risen Jesus in order to believe that he's been raised from the dead you just need to know your bible it's a supernatural revelation okay we've seen the empty tomb John's making an eyewitness case now he's going to move us to some very interesting encounters and what these encounters demonstrate is why the empty tomb is empty the empty tomb is empty because

Jesus is alive and he's changing people's lives so the first transformational risen Jesus sighting it's almost like if you were in the northwest and you're like okay bigfoot sighting I saw him we don't know it's true or not John provides us with some risen Jesus sightings of people real people who had a real encounter with the risen Christ and they were really changed so the first story first account is with Mary Mary Magdalene and I'm just going to breeze through these this is in verses 11 through 18 what we see happen here is that Mary's weeping outside the tomb where Jesus was laid she stoops down she looks in the tomb there are two angels there and the angels are like woman why are you weeping he's not here it doesn't even strike her that two angels are in this tomb because she turns around and when she turns around there is

Jesus standing before her but she doesn't recognize him in fact he then asks her woman why are you weeping and then in great irony he asks her in verse 15 whom are you seeking so don't miss that Mary is distraught the one that she had been living for for the last three years she just witnessed crucified her the guy that he was she was living for is gone and now she just wants to finish preparing his body and now his body is gone it's gone from bad to worse she just wants to know where the body is and so she's seeking the body of Jesus she turns around and there's the risen Christ who she doesn't recognize asking her who are you looking for and she thinks he's the gardener sir if you have carried him away tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away verse 15 and then

Jesus says he says to her Mary Mary and instantly she has eyes to see and she exclaims in verse 60 in Aramaic Rabboni which is a term of affection for a teacher Rabboni and so she must have reached out to cling to him because in verse 17 he's like whoa whoa whoa don't cling to me yet I've not yet ascended to my father but what we see happening in this account is this we have a distraught weeping Mary that once she sees and recognizes the risen Jesus she is profoundly changed her weeping turns to worship do you see it she encounters the risen Jesus and she's changed and what John is helping us to see is the tomb is empty because

[20:32] Jesus is alive and he's changing people she see she saw she believed and she was transformed now some of you may have come into this building this morning and you have a very similar cry of your heart when it comes to Jesus someone stole Jesus from you maybe it was when you were a child growing up in a church and another Christian did something and you were like I'm done I'm done with this take I'm done I'm walking away and you grieve the loss of your Jesus or maybe you're a college student you showed up freshman year to this big class with a really smart professor and this really smart professor just totally annihilates any argument for Jesus and his resurrection and it's like he you lost your Jesus at that point well the good news is this despite what other people have done despite best arguments John is very clear

Jesus is alive and he calls you by name in John 10 Jesus says the good shepherd calls his sheep by name and they know his voice when Mary hears Jesus calling her name lights on she sees and

she believes and she's transformed her weeping turns to worship and she's just looking to hold on to her savior her risen savior if you've lost your Jesus along the way he's calling you by name how do you know he's calling you do you believe he's alive do you believe he died for you on the cross do you believe that there is life in him and no one else do you want to live your life for him he's calling you so what you do is this you by faith like Mary you just cling to him so we see the tomb is empty because Jesus is alive and he's changing people not just in 33

AD April but he's changing people in April 2018 AD because he's still alive the next encounter we see is with his disciples in verses 19 through 23 the disciples are holed up in the upper room locked door and they have basically kind of isolated themselves in fear of the Jews these guys that killed Jesus what does that mean for us so they're hiding they're fearful circle the wagons call a holy huddle let's step back who knows what's going to happen some of us in this room followers of Jesus we're seeing where our culture is going and we're asking questions like what does this mean for us where's this thing going well verse the second part of 19 Jesus comes and stands among them and he says peace with you he speaks peace to his fearful disciples they're like who what is going on he shows them his hands he shows them his side and then we read that verse 20 the disciples are glad they move from fear hear words of peace

Jesus is present and they're glad but it doesn't stop there verse 21 Jesus then tells them hey I'm glad that you're gathered together but I'm sending you out and he's going to send them out with power from the Holy Spirit he breathes the spirit upon him with the authority to proclaim the forgiveness of sins that Christ accomplished on the cross it is finished he says it's time to go now see what's going on here Jesus disciples are fearful they isolate themselves they hole up in a holy huddle Jesus steps into the midst of them pronounces peace empowers them with his Holy Spirit and sends them out that's a transformation Jesus is seen he's believed and there's a transformation you see what John is doing

John is helping us to see that the tomb is empty because Jesus is alive and Jesus is changing people back then and now and so if you're a Christian and you're fearful of what can happen to you because you're associated with Jesus Jesus says I'm here and I'm here with power from the Holy Spirit to send you out we've seen Jesus now interact with Mary we've seen him interact with his disciples and now verses 24 through 29 Thomas aka doubting Thomas in verse 24 we read that Thomas wasn't there when Jesus appeared to him and he had appeared to him Jesus appeared to his disciples that first night

[26:09] Easter night Thomas wasn't there we're not told why and they tell Thomas they had seen Jesus and in verse 25 Thomas responds with a degree of skepticism he says unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails but then he goes further she's not seeing it and place my finger into the mark of the nails and place my hand into his side unless I see it I will never believe unless I put my finger in the holes in his body I will never believe it's quite a statement he's saying unless I have physical tangible verifiable proof I'm not buying this business that Jesus is alive I mean he's got a point normally speaking under normal conditions people who are dead three days don't come back to life there's a doctor do people who are dead three days come back to life no medical testimony typically not normally doesn't happen it's like

Thomas is saying I'll believe it when I see it but more than that it's like he's saying I'll believe it when I can put my finger in it when there's tangible proof now I'm guessing that some of you here this morning have real questions about the historical reality of the resurrection and you have a scientific mind and that is a good thing and you're like I just want to know how do I know how can I figure this out did it really happen and how can you verify it let me just say this and I hope this helps you I hope this moves you in a particular direction the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is a supernatural event it's not a natural event it's a supernatural event it's a miracle and it's true under normal circumstances people who are dead three days don't come back to life science is a good thing the research over the decades and years that men and women have put into finding cures that is a good thing discovery natural revelation we all benefit from that all of us have benefited from health treatments that have come from the hard research of people using science to that end but one of the things one of the limits of science is that it's incapable of really explaining supernatural events so do you know what will happen if someone tries to apply the scientific method to the

resurrection of Jesus

Christ that person is going to get frustrated because it's like two different languages speaking the scientific method depends on naturalistic explanation of natural events and realities but what happens what happens if a supernatural reality is being asked about supernatural literally means beyond the natural here's what I think happens here's the culture I think we're in some people in our culture see science and they're like yeah that is really helpful it's really helpful for explaining naturalistic events science as a discipline but there's other of us who start seeing science not just as a discipline but as a worldview science explains everything and when science is unable to explain something it can then be labeled unscientific which can subtly mean it's not true think about it this way science is like this map a map that explains and describes those things in natural events and encourages and it's really helpful it's very clear but what happens when there's something that happens beyond the map that goes beyond the scope of what science is defined to do what are other ways to know realities how do you know supernatural truth if it's supernatural revelation supernatural revelation and that's exactly what happens to

Thomas Jesus reveals himself to Thomas look with me Jesus eight days later verse 26 his disciples are inside again Thomas is with them this time and Jesus once again stands among them and speaks peace and then he turns right to Thomas and he says to Thomas Thomas put your finger here see my hands and then he says and put out your hand and place it in my side do not disbelieve but believe and you know what I find very interesting John does not record him doing that he doesn't record that he doesn't show Thomas putting his finger in his hand or putting his hand in his side what we see happening here is

Jesus reveals himself to Thomas and in such a way it satisfies Thomas and he says my Lord and my God remember what Thomas said earlier I will never believe unless this happens I will never believe Jesus shows up he doesn't touch him and he believes my Lord and my God when Thomas says my Lord and my God he's saying two things Jesus is preeminent over all Lord of Lords and he's his Lord and he also says my God talking about Jesus true nature God in the flesh and notice the my's I belong to him now he's my Lord and my God Thomas knew at once as he's standing in the presence of the risen incarnate God

[33:21] Lord of Lords that he is alive so here's what John is doing John is showing this account of Thomas coming face to face with the risen Jesus his disbelief turned to belief and it shows us why the tomb is empty because Jesus is alive and Jesus responds by saying hey have you believed because you've seen me blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed that's us that's where we're living most likely none of us are going to lay physical eyes on the risen Christ but there are other ways to see him we're able to believe in Jesus now by seeing him in the revelation of this book of John's eyewitness to the resurrected savior it's a faithful testimony of a true event when doubting

Thomas encounters the risen Jesus he sees he believes and he's transformed I will never believe he's turned to my Lord and my God so this morning if you have doubts about the resurrection of Jesus because you have a healthy scientific mind of inquiry we're not asking you to reject that what I just like to ask you is this maybe you're trying to make science do something it's incapable of doing so here's what I would recommend would you take a little step of faith and if Jesus is in fact alive you call out to him and ask him to reveal himself to you ask Jesus to show himself to you we've got these little gospel of

John's on the back tables for you to have and that's where I would start this morning we've covered a lot of ground John has shown us the tomb is empty John walked in he saw he believed and there was hope in his heart and then John shows us the tomb is empty because Jesus is alive Mary saw believed transformed the disciples saw believed transformed Thomas saw believed transformed salvation depends upon what you believe about Jesus if Jesus was not raised from the dead it casts major doubts on who he was and major doubts on what he sought to do on the cross but if Jesus was raised from the dead my lord and my god if he was raised from the dead his payment for sin is accepted the resurrection demonstrates that we started this sermon together with this story of my color blindness and this aid asking me do you see do you see do you see this morning having looked at this eyewitness account of

Jesus do you see and if you see do you believe do you believe the historical account that Jesus is alive he is alive in April 33 he is alive in April 2018 and if you put your faith in him everything changes you go from death to life you go from hopelessness to hope and you go from one who is apart from God to one who has been reconciled to God this morning if you have never confessed with your mouth to Jesus my lord and my God let this April 1st be that date he is alive he is risen let's pray

God in heaven we thank you so much for this testimony in our Bibles thank you that it is reliable thank you that it speaks to a truth and a reality that is life transforming implications Lord Jesus we praise you and worship you because not only did you die for us you've been risen from the dead and right now you're reigning on high and we delight in being your citizens of your kingdom in Jesus name amen to peace of eman b infinite ■ ci en central alStart as an ■