

He's Really Alive!

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Preacher: Matt Cyr

[0:00] I invite you to open your Bibles to the book of Matthew. We'll be starting in verse 57 of chapter 27 and going through verse 15 of chapter 28.

As you're turning there, let me ask, are you familiar with the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth? Are you familiar with it? But before you might be tempted to start listing the facts around these events, like so-and-so saw them at such and such a point, or maybe you're tempted to start getting your apologetic checklist of here's how I can prove that this was a historical event that happened, let me ask it in a different way.

Is your familiarity with the resurrection of Jesus the type of familiarity that fuels your walk with the Lord?

Or is it a familiarity kind of caught up in Easter lilies and things like that that is actually sort of dusting over the glorious reality of this event?

[1:21] Does the resurrection kind of just sit at the back of your mind, sort of like your homeowner's insurance? You know, the Allstate ad, there when you need us.

Is that kind of how the resurrection is operating in your life as a Christian? Or is this event the ignition for your faith? Is it the thing that wakes you up in the morning excited to be with Jesus and to be on mission for Him and to lay your life down in service to Him?

Is it fresh and invigorating? When your hope seems lost? When sin seems overwhelming to you? When your life seems mundane? Or maybe when everything is just going exactly the way you want it? Then, in these moments, is your faith being deepened when you think of your risen King? Friends, God wants us to see this morning from His Word that the resurrection of Jesus changes everything.

[2:28] The resurrection of Jesus changes everything. So, as we read this together, let me just encourage you just to be asking God this morning.

As we're reading the text, as we're walking through it together, just be praying that God would give you a fresh sense of what this resurrection means for you as a Christian.

Just ask Him that He would make it fresh and invigorating and restorative no matter where you find yourself today. Because the resurrection changes everything about your life as a Christian.

Don't settle for a familiarity that kind of is like dusty books on a shelf. We haven't looked at in a while, but seek a familiarity that ignites your heart and love of Jesus.

That's what the resurrection should do for us. We're going to see that because it's what it did for the people who saw Him alive. So, let's dig in this morning.

[3:30] I'm going to read it in its entirety. It's a little bit long. I think it will be worth it because I'd rather you hear the Word of God than my voice. Matthew chapter 27 starting in verse 57.

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock.

And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. The next day, that is, after the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, Sir, we remember how that imposter said while he was still alive, after three days, I will rise.

Therefore, order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people he is risen from the dead.

[4:49] And the last rod will be worse than the first. Pilate said to them, you have a guard of soldiers. Go make it as secure as you can. So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Now, after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake.

For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him, the guards trembled and became like dead men.

But the angel said to the women, do not be afraid. For I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here. For he has risen.

As he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead. And behold. He is going before you to Galilee.

[5:59] There you will see him. See I have told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy.

And ran to tell his disciples. And behold. Jesus met them. And said. Greetings. Greetings. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him.

Then Jesus said to them. Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. And there they will see me. While they were going.

Behold. Some of the guard went into the city. And told the chief priests. All that had taken place.

And when they had assembled with the elders. And taken counsel.

They gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers. And said. Tell people. His disciples came by night. And stole him away. While we were asleep. And if this comes to the governor's ears.

[7:01] We will satisfy him. And keep you out of trouble. So they took the money. And did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

Well we are going to break this passage down. Into two parts. We are going to finish out chapter 27. Part 1. And then we will look at the 15 verses of chapter 28. For part 2. This first part. Matthew just simply wants us to see. That Jesus really died.

He is really dead. Let's look at it. Starting in verse 57. When it was evening. This guy named Joseph. Matthew tells us he is a rich man.

He is very wealthy. And he happens to be a disciple of Jesus. Other places in the gospels. We know that he was a member of the council. So a Sanhedrin member.

[7:59] A good and righteous upright Jew. Who was seeking the kingdom of God. And notice that he has enough social influence. And ability that he can go to Pilate.

Like we can't walk into the White House. And meet with the president. Probably can't do so with the governor of Wisconsin. Joseph can go straight to Pilate. And make this request.

And what's amazing about his request. Is Joseph leverages. His extravagant wealth. In order to bury. A crucified criminal. As if he was royalty.

See in doing this. Joseph is essentially committing social suicide. He's risking everything he has. All of his influence. His family ties. His faith as a Jew.

So that he can identify himself. With Jesus. This is in stark contrast. To his disciples. Who before Jesus was even put on the cross.

[9:02] Had fled. They're absent from this scene. And yet here's Joseph. Showing us what it means. To be a disciple of Jesus. To give up everything.

To identify with him. It's beautiful. It's not just Joseph here. You know he does all these arrangements. He takes the body. And he puts it in a tomb. He knows that Jesus is dead.

Matthew even in the text. Wants us to see that he's dead. There's five references. To the body of Jesus. Starting in verse 58. Joseph went to Pilate. Asked for the body.

Of Jesus. And Pilate ordered it. To be given to him. 59. Joseph took the body. And wrapped it. In a clean linen. Verse 60. And laid it. In his own new tomb.

This isn't a. Almost dead person. Who needs a little resuscitation. This is a dead body. And Joseph is preparing. The body of Jesus. For burial. He really died.

[10:00] The two Marys. Mary Magdalene. And the other Mary. They're also by the tomb. So they see the body. Brought. Placed. Into this tomb. They see the stone. Rolled in front of the mouth of it.

Pilate himself knows that. Jesus is dead. Right? He's in charge of the executions. There's no way that he would let a living criminal.

Come off of a cross. And chance of escape. Pilate knows he's dead too. And what's amazing about this event. Is the clock's ticking.

Right? Jesus died about three in the afternoon. At six o'clock at sundown. The Sabbath would start. Which means that Joseph. Has about a three hour window.

To go to Pilate. To prepare the body. To get it in the tomb. Make all these arrangements. So the clock's really ticking. It's important. Because Joseph. Is doing this work. To ensure that he will keep the Sabbath.

[10:56] At sundown. Joseph will cease. To work. Why is that important? You might ask. Look at verse 62. The next day.

That is. After the day of preparation. Matthew wants us to see something. By not explicitly saying. On the Sabbath.

We should. We should sort of pause over these words. And go. Okay. Well what's the day after preparation? It's the day you prepare for. It's the Sabbath. And look who's working. It's not Joseph. It's not the people. Burying Jesus. It's not the ladies. Sort of. You know. Putting flowers by the tomb. Or anything like that. It's. The chief priests. The Pharisees. The people who are supposed to be. The protectors of the Sabbath. They're the ones still working. On this day. Of rest. To keep holy. And precious to God. Matthew wants to see.

[11:53] They're not about the things of God here. But notice that. They. Also. Believe that Jesus is dead. Verse 63.

Sir. We remember how that imposter said. While he was still alive. Right. They. They know that Jesus is dead. And. What's amazing is. When they say in verse 63.

We remember. It's quite ironic. That the enemies. Of Jesus. Are the ones who remember. His words. That he would be raised. They're the ones.

Who take Jesus literally. They don't believe. He's going to be raised. But they at least. Take his words. Literally. And so. They're going to ensure. That. They. Squelch.

This. Message. Their assessment. Of Jesus. And his claims. About himself. Are plain. They call him. An imposter. And then. In verse 64.

[12:50] They go on. To. Speak of. The last fraud. Being. Worse. Than the first. What you need to realize. About these. Frauds. The first fraud. Is that Jesus.

Claimed to be the Christ. Son of God. The Messiah. Second fraud. Is that he claimed. He was going to be raised. From the dead. Well they. They think they took care. Of the first fraud. Because they. They had him killed. And they think. Well we can. We can. Take care of the second fraud. Easy enough. By securing this tomb. And making sure. That his disciples. Don't try any funny business. All of this. Is taking place. On the Sabbath day. When Jesus. His disciples. Are resting. They're nowhere near the tomb. Notice their plan. Of action. And ironically.

It's a plan. That works. Absolutely. Against them. And their purposes. But. They. They go to Pilate. And say. Sir. We want to put. We need you. To give us some soldiers.

[13:46] So that we can. Put a guard. At this tomb. So that. We can ensure. That three days pass. Without any sort of. Tomfoolery. We think his disciples.

Might try something funny. And come and steal this body. And then go. Hey he's alive. He's alive. Everybody amazing. That fraud. Would be worse. Than the first. So Pilate.

Give us some. Some troops. And Pilate sort of. I think. Seems to just dismiss him. Kind of like. When he washed his hands. Of the innocent man's blood. At the trial. And they say.

The blood be on us. He goes. You've got a troop. You take care of it. Go use your own guards. And so notice. Verse 66. They went.

And made the tomb. Not sort of secure. Not. You know. They kind of put some duct tape. And made it as good as possible. No. They made the tomb secure. By sealing the stone.

[14:41] And. Setting a guard. So they've got. Armed soldiers. Trained professionals. To watch this. Tomb. And they've sort of. Sealed it. Sort of like. A youth group.

Chaperone. Right. Who goes by. Everybody's at curfew. And they get them. In the hotel rooms. And then they go by. And they put tape. On all the doors. In the morning. You wake up. And the tape's been.

You know. Tampered with. You know that. The youth were up to something. It's kind of like that. They seal the tomb. Nobody's going to get by. No way.

Any human efforts. No way. Any human efforts. Will succeed. In breaking through. This security. Set up by the chief priests. And the scribes.

Their plan is foolproof. At least as far as human beings are concerned. But notice. They agree. He's really dead.

[15:37] So we're going to make sure that. His body doesn't go anywhere. That brings us to the second half. Of our passage. And. It's pretty exciting.

We'll look at it. Similarly. The. Friends of Jesus. They go to the tomb. Verse. One of. Twenty-eight. Now. After the Sabbath.

Again. Matthew's just. Sort of saying. Look. Look who's working on the Sabbath. Look who's keeping the Sabbath. Like a faithful. Child of God. After the Sabbath. Towards the dawn of the first day of the week.

Mary Magdalene. And the other Mary. Went to see the tomb. It's very nondescript. Right? We see other places in the gospels. They. They brought with them all these perfumes. And spices. And things. To. To further prepare the body.

We have none of that. Matthew. Because. He. He wants our attention. On verse two. And behold. There was an earthquake. Great one. Notice.

[16:39] This isn't some. Tectonic plates. Sort of shifting. Under the San Andreas fault. In California. This is a supernatural shakeup. You see that.

Right in verse two. There was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord. Descended from heaven. And came and rolled back the stone. And sat on it.

This earthquake doesn't bubble up. From underneath the ground. It comes down from heaven. The supernatural event. The power of God. Notice this angel.

He's very impressive in appearance. He looks like lightning. He's got white as snow. Clothing on. Super impressive strength.

He just. Single handedly rolls the stone aside. And then he. Kind of sits on it. The guards.

[17:38] We'll come back to them a little bit. Later. But. See the guards in verse four. They. They tremble. Essentially they faint. They're so afraid. They just. Drop over as. Kind of like dead men. And the angel.

Completely ignoring them. He doesn't run up. And start splashing water. On their face. He just. Turns to. Mary. And Mary. And says. Do not be afraid. For I know that you seek Jesus.

Who was crucified. Verse five. If we could. Travel back in time. What do you think.

It would have been like. To hear the words. Of verse six. With these two ladies. I imagine. It would just. Have to be this. Soul quaking.

Kind of event. That would just. Topple any towers of fear. And any. Sense of doubt. Or. Or.

Uncertainty. About anything. Look what this angel.

[18:36] Says. He is. Not here. For he. Has risen. As he said. He's not here.

For he is risen. As he said. The tomb's empty. And the angel says. You want to know why? Jesus is alive. That's why the tomb's empty. And then.

Immediately. The angel. Gives them. Some instructions. Some marching orders. First thing. Come. Verify for me. Please. That this tomb. Is in fact empty.

Look in there. Stoop down. See any bodies? No? Okay. Good. Now go. And tell his disciples.

What's taken place. That he is. Risen. From the dead. And behold.

Verse seven. Halfway through it. The angel says. He's going to go. Before you. To Galilee. And when you get there. You're going to see him. Amazing.

[19:37] So still shaken up. They run from the tomb. They book it out of there. Going to tell his eleven. Deserting disciples. About what has taken place.

And notice. There's still fear. And great joy. Just the emotional overload. I mean this is. Blowing circuits here. There's just no way to fathom. How amazing this would have been.

For them. Just think a little bit. More. About that. They've followed Jesus. For. Two.

Three years. Of their lives now. They have. Ministered to his needs. They've kind of been. The logistical. Detail. That. That. Sets up. The. The dinner parties.

And make sure. That Jesus has. All things. That he needs. To be strong. For his mission. To. To proclaim. The kingdom of God. And they've. They've seen him. He'll. Paralyzed people.

[20:34] They've seen him. Feed multitudes. With a few fish. They've. Likely. At least. Minimally. Heard about him. Walking on water. They've seen him. Give sight. To blind men.

Raise the dead. Cast out demons. And preach. As someone. Who has authority. And now. This. Angel. Who looks like.

A lightning bolt. Shows up. And says. He's not here. He's risen. Imagine. Imagine. What must be going. Through their minds. As they run. From that tomb. I'm not sure. I could put one foot.

In front of the other. But they do. And then. Look at verse nine. And behold. Jesus met them.

And said. Greetings. Greetings. And they did. The only thing. That would make any sense. In this situation. They come up to him.

[21:29] They throw themselves. Down on the ground. They grab his nail. Pierced feet. And they worship. Their risen. King. Jesus gives them.

Essentially. The same message. As the angel. Do not be afraid. Go. And tell my brothers. To go to Galilee. And there. They will see me.

Well. Lest we miss it. After Jesus. Reassures them. Don't be afraid. It's really me. Nothing to fear. Now. Or ever again. Look what he calls. The people. He wants them. To go tell. Go and tell.

My. Brothers. Brothers. We see. We see. At the end. That the people. Who gather in Galilee. Are the eleven. Disciples. These guys. Have left. Jesus.

[22:32] With their tail. Between their legs. And their tail. Between their legs. In his hour. Of greatest need. And look. What he calls them. My brothers.

Those two words. Are so full of compassion. It's hard. To. Elaborate. He still loves them. And when he appears. To them in Galilee. He will say.

I'll be with you. Always. To the end of the age. I ain't going. Nowhere. You're my family. He brings them back.

Into the fold. These guys. Who like Peter. Just go out. And weep. Bitterly. Over denying him. Three times. The one who they adamantly. Said one after the other. We will never. Leave your side.

They've gone. And Jesus says. Tell my brothers. They'll see me soon. It's amazing. See how gracious. Jesus is. He's awesome.

[23:32] But lest we forget. These guards. Are still over there. In this. Pile of armor. And metal boots. Got to deal with these guys. So while.

Verse 11. While the ladies. Are going to. Tell the disciples. Behold. Some of the guard. Went into the city. And told the chief priests. All.

That had taken place. All. That had taken place. Now minimally. They would. Have said four things. Sirs.

We felt this earthquake. We saw this. Angel. Look like lightning. We. We saw the stone.

Rolled away. From the. Mouth of the tomb. And most importantly. Sir. The tomb's empty. Body's not here.

[24:27] I don't know what happened. But all this stuff happened. Just wanted you to know about it. Can you imagine the career implications. For these guys. They failed.

They had one job. And they failed. Their one job was to guard a dead body. In a tomb. Secured. By all human measures.

To be impenetrable. And they failed. Punishment's very likely here. Not sort of a dock in pay. But likely some kind of physical beating. For being bad guards. It's certainly embarrassment too. Right? So you can imagine.

These emotions of the guard. Going to bring this news. To the chief priests. Unfortunately. I don't think the chief priests. Are going to end up. As a reference. On their next job application.

[25:26] They failed. They couldn't guard. A dead body. Maybe they need a new line of work. Notice. Now the chief priests.

They hear this information. They don't start praising God. They don't start spreading this news. As good. They gather their cohorts. The elders.

And the rest of the council. And. They put their brains together. To figure out. What they should do. These are the brightest.

Religious minds. In. Jerusalem. And. Here's what they come up with. They bribe the guards. The large sum of money. Should be thinking.

Kind of Judas. And how he received money. For betraying Jesus. Chief priests. They've got all this. Excess money. So they bribe the guards. And then. In verse 13. They craft.

[26:23] A lie. They've heard. The facts of the matter. There's an angel there. The supernatural thing happened. The tomb's empty. And they. Bribe.

And lie. Say. Guards tell the people. His disciples came by night. And stole him away. While we were asleep. Wait.

If we're. If we're. Remembering. Back in chapter 27. This is the very thing. They've secured the tomb. To ensure doesn't happen.

And now. Because the facts of the matter. Give them no alternative. They use it. For their story. It's amazing.

They don't care. At all. About the facts. They hate Jesus. They want his message. And his. Authority. They want it squashed.

[27:22] They don't care. You see that. Because. Their story isn't just. Implausible. Like. Maybe. It's not just. Irrational. It's impossible. Sleeping guards.

Cannot. Identify. Disciples. In the dark. Through their eyelids. The chief priests know. The facts mean.

Their version of the story. Isn't even. Possible. The guards were awake. Not asleep. The disciples were long gone. Cowards. Matthew's.

Got them nowhere. In this story. The two Marys. As faithful as they are. Probably aren't going to. Turn into the incredible Hulk. And roll this stone away. Oh yeah. And there's that.

Angel guy. But money talks. For these guards. They're embarrassed. They're afraid.

[28:20] They're likely out of work. So they'll take the bribe. And the chief priest promising. We'll take care of the governor. We'll take care of Pilate. If he hears anything about this. Promise of cash and safety.

Is enough. For these guards. To lie. And to take the chief priest. Lie. And spread it. Around town. To all of the Jewish people.

Matthew says. This story. Is the one that's being spread. To the day. That he is writing this letter. It's amazing. The story that. Goes out to the people.

There's one of. He's not. In the tomb. He's risen. And the other is. He's not. In the tomb. Because his disciples. Duped our guards.

Crashed through our security. And they swiped his body. We don't know where the body is. But we know they did it. Even though that angel guy's there.

[29:18] And we're liars. See where the burden of proof is. Friends. Friends. It's not with the Christians. In this story. Burden of proof is with the liars.

The real imposters. The frauds. Who will take the message of Jesus. And suppress it at all costs. Because their problem is not with. Whether or not. The resurrection can happen. Their problem is with Jesus.

They hate him. They don't want anything to do with him. The tomb is empty. They say. Because the disciples stole the body. That's. An impossible story.

Crafted by men. Who hate Jesus. Facts are irrelevant to them. And it only supports. The truthfulness and validity. Of the eyewitness accounts. That Matthew has put before us. It's brilliant writing. It's a brilliant argument. That Matthew has here. But. More than that. The truth wins.

[30:17] Doesn't it? Jesus really died. The tomb is really empty. Because he is risen. As he said. That's what the text.

Tells us. So let me try and wrap this up. And apply this a little bit for us. If you're not a Christian. You need to contend with the fact that. The Matthew who wrote this book. Was. Was himself. Purposing to write. History.

He wanted to encode the facts. What really happened. Here. Jesus is alive. He was crucified. Died. Buried. And then three days. Raised. That's the truth of the matter. And you need to reckon with him. Please do so.

[31:16] If you have any questions about what that looks like. Let's talk. But then. Christians in the room. I hope this is being refreshing to you. That the resurrection is not just something that we talk about on Easter now.

But you're starting to see that this lays claim over our whole lives. It reformats our thinking. And our living. Our decision making. How we spend our time. Because Jesus is alive.

His work on the cross. It's validated. It's effective. Christ Jesus died for our sins. He gave his life as a ransom for many.

His blood has washed away our sin. Jesus. Thank you. This means he's worthy of our worship. That we would take all of our heart. And all of our mind. Our mental energy. And all of our strength. And we would aim it at delighting in him. Forever. He died for our sins.

[32:25] It's legit. He means for us to know that. Because he's alive. And not just his work on the cross. His words. How many red letters are in your Bible.

In this gospel of Matthew. And his words are true for you today. He wants you to just bundle them all up. And just embrace them. And love them. His promises.

Are true for you today. I'll just give you three right from Matthew's gospel. Because Jesus is alive. When he says these things.

You can bank on them being true. Behold I am with you always. To the end of the age. To present. Come to me all who are weary.

And heavy laden. And I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. And learn from me. For I'm gentle. And lowly in heart. And you will find rest for your souls. He will help you.

[33:32] When the son of man comes. In all his glory. And all his angels with him. Then he will sit on his glorious throne. He's coming back. To reign as king.

This should give us great hope. In this interim period. Is anybody in the room suffering? Has it been a hard week for anybody? Has it been a hard life for anybody?

Anybody? You're in the midst of a relationship. That's just crumbling. You don't know what to do about it. Maybe you just have this nagging physical impairment.

That's just not going away. And you know that it may very well not go away. Maybe you're depressed. Maybe you're. There's just this mental illness.

And you're like. Gosh. Gosh. If I could just get rid of this thing. I would be so much better off. I can't promise relief from any of those things.

[34:30] But Jesus is alive. He's present. He will help you. And he's coming back. That third one should be. Particularly.

Good for you. For enduring. Hard things. Because that means. There's an end point. His return will blot it all out. And obliterate all suffering.

And tear. And pain. There will only be joy. Forevermore. Because Jesus is alive. He conquered the grave. That's your hope. We can entrust ourselves to him fully.

Because he's alive today. And every day. He's the same yesterday. Today. And forever. He is your living king. There's great compassion.

For you. One last thing. Since we're talking about Jesus' words. It means that his commands.

[35:29] Are life. For us. His people. When Jesus says. I have all authority on heaven and on earth. And in the same. Breath.

Can say. If anyone would come after me. Let him deny himself. Take up his cross. And follow me. He means for us to obey him. Friends. In everything. To purpose.

To continue. To greater and greater degrees. Of godliness. And faithfulness. And following him. And being about his mission. Around the world. Like Joseph of Arimathea.

In our passage. We're to just risk it all. So we can identify with him. Because it's going to be worth it. That store and treasure in heaven. And there is. No fading.

Or moth. Or thieves. In heaven. We can bank on this. So friends. By faith. Let the resurrection.

[36:22] Be fresh. Today. Let it invigorate you. Let it propel you out of the doors of this building. Be on mission for him. And to love him more.

If you're not there.

If it's. If it's just. Seems kind of dusty. Just. Let me just encourage you. Be alone with God. Do some heart work. Reflect on the reality of this resurrection. And. Ask God to meet you in that.

That. He will. Bring fire down. Onto the. Bare logs. Of our sacrifice. If we ask him to do that. He.

He will meet us. When we seek. This. To mean. Something for us. As his people. So let's pray together. Heavenly Father.

I just pray that. The resurrection. Would be fresh for us. Holy Spirit. This would invigorate. And ignite our faith. Jesus.

[37:20] You are the crucified one. Behold. You are alive. Forevermore. We worship you. Give you thanks for your word. Pray you would bless it.

In Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.