

AM Mark 16:1-8

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Preacher: Rev Douglas Cranston

[0 : 00] Well, good morning, friends. It's lovely to be back with you. I haven't been here for a number of weeks, but it's a joy to be back.

And particularly on this Easter morning, what a glorious celebration it is that we can declare that the Lord is risen. He is risen indeed.

And it is with that tone that we come together to worship God. So a warm welcome. I don't know how many of you are visitors, how many of you are local here, but we do welcome one and all.

And it's nice to see the wee ones that I have met, and that's lovely and nice to see that they're well. Good morning. Welcome.

Just to go over the intimations. First of all, the evening service. I'll have the privilege of conducting that, God willing, this evening at the usual time of 6 o'clock.

[1 : 06] Wednesday, the midweek, prayer meeting, Bible study led by William Kenyon. It will be in the lower hall with entrance from the car park. And it is a missionary prayer meeting.

Donations from the congregation towards the cost of the eradication of dry rot have amounted to £810. Additionally, we've received last week a most generous and unexpected donation of £1,500 from Notbain Free Church of Scotland in the Black Isle.

And total external gifts now amounted to £2,500 plus grants of £10,000 that we have been promised. Following the recent acceptance of an estimate, we are awaiting redecoration to start.

So I'm sure you'd want to give thanks to God for his provision there. Services of Nick's Law's Day are going to be conducted by Tom McKenzie from Downvale Free Church.

And we'll be at the usual time of 6 and 11. This is well, well in advance notice. I've left some leaflets at the door.

[2 : 22] Myself and the Reverend Ian Watson are going to be conducting a biblical journey to the Holy Land. A year come November.

So don't hold your breath till then. But these things take a huge amount of organising. This will be my fifth trip out there. And they do take a great deal of organising and saving up for.

So to that end, there is an information day up in Blackwood and Kipmure Hill Free Church. On Saturday the 2nd of October at 11 o'clock.

If you are going to come from that, I appreciate your travelling a distance. Give us a wee phone and we can arrange for you to come to our place if we're allowed to do that by that time.

And hopefully we will be. You can come for some lunch as well. My wife's just hearing that for the first time. But I'm sure we can manage to make sure you've got some kind of watering hole anyway.

[3 : 29] So if you've never been, it's a glorious opportunity to see the land where all these events that we've been thinking about over this last week and building up to.

It's an amazing experience to see Jerusalem and to see Galilee. But the big stress is it's a spiritual, biblical tour that we are going on.

So it will be something, I hope, that will be of an honest spiritual blessing to you. As well as the history and the geography of the place.

Okay, enough of this. What a great thrill it is. As Christians, I don't know if you've been following us in Blackwood and Kipmure Hill on YouTube. We've been conducting services all this week.

They're still available. If you want to avail yourself of that, we've been having an amazing time.

Some 200 people gathering to worship with us every evening.

[4 : 36] And on Friday night, we had the privilege of being together live at Blackwood and Kipmure Hill. And as I said, these services are available. We go from Genesis right through to the crucifixion in one week.

We miss one or two bits out. But we have had a great time. And now we come, of course, to the most glorious time for Christians. The celebration that the cross was not the end. He rose from the dead. And he is alive. And he reigns. And we worship him. In Psalm 96, verses 1-5.

To God's praise. O sing a new song to the Lord.

Sing all the earth to God. To God sing. Bless his name. Show still with saving.

[5 : 43] Help our hearts. Among the heavenly nations. His glory to declare.

And unto all the people show his works at wondrous heart.

For grace the Lord. And grace the Lord. And grace the Lord. He is to be magnified.

Yea, worthy to be fear is he. Above all gods beside.

For all the gods are idols. Come with blinded nations.

[6 : 44] Fear. But our God is the Lord. By whom God has created.

Work. How important is Easter?

Paul can be clearer. If Christ has not been raised. Your faith is futile. And you are still in your sins.

Those also who have fallen asleep in Christ. Have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only.

We are of all people. Most to be pitied. Christ has been raised from the dead.

[7 : 55] The first fruits. Of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death. By a man has come also.

The resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die. So also in Christ. Shall all be made alive.

Let us unite our hearts in prayer. Let us pray. Almighty God.

You have gone through. The darkness. Of Calvary. And the pain. And the torture. Of Gethsemane.

But now as we come to. Easter morning. We thank you for the glorious truth. He is not here. He has risen.

[8 : 58] And we thank you that that grave was empty. We thank you that the body had not simply been removed. But you had risen victorious over death and sin.

Amen. On the cross you cried out. It is finished. And now the Father says. Amen to that. As death could not hold you.

And you now have risen victorious from the grave. And so as we gather here this morning. We gather here. Not to revere your memory. Not to simply celebrate a figure of past history.

That has inspired us. And motivated us. And given us some moral code to live by. But we come today to celebrate your living presence with us.

Through your Holy Spirit. As you rose from the dead. You met with your disciples. You walked with them. And talked with them.

[10 : 04] And ate with them. They saw the wounds in your hand. And in your side. And they went from being depressed.

And downhearted. And disappointed. To being the great evangelist. And mission that took. That good news of the gospel. Not simply into.

The city of Jerusalem. But beyond. To the very ends of the earth. And we do not miss this day.

Heavenly Father. In praising you. The great truth. That we would not be here. Today. In this place.

Worshipping together. Studying your words.

Praying to you. If that gospel. Had not gone out. To all the nations. and that gospel would not have got out to all the nations if you had simply died on the cross a martyr's death and so we rejoice we celebrate we proclaim loudly and boldly the Lord is risen he is risen indeed and we thank you for

that great and glorious truth Father some of us in our services and perhaps even in our private devotions have been reading over these past few days about the trials and the agony of

Gethsemane the darkness of Calvary of a Christ hanging on a cross the sin bearer bearing shame and scoffing rude we confess that it was in our place condemned he stood that he sealed our pardon with his blood and as we come to you in repentance and saving faith we cry out hallelujah what a saviour precisely the saviour that we need the saviour who brought a gospel of redemption and salvation to us full and free to him bearing the cost for us all upon a life I did not lead upon a death

[12 : 42] I did not die on another's life on another's death we stake our whole eternity and even on this resurrection morning heavenly father we look back to your cross and your crucified saviour you did not spare him he was afflicted for us all and we confess this day before your throne of grace and

mercy our need of such a saviour heavenly father as we reflect this morning on these great truths as we have the privilege of sharing with these children and as we encourage one another and proclaim Christ's death to one another we pray that it might bring glory and honour and praise to you and we ask this along with the forgiveness of our sins through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen Now boys and girls it's really lovely to see you all with your new babies and it's great two wee sisters isn't it yes it's two wee sisters that's terrific absolutely terrific and they're both beautiful I'm trying to make up my mind which one's the prettiest but they're both beautiful now tell me boys and girls this is a very very very special Sunday for all of us as we gather here in church in fact I think I would probably say it's the most special Sunday in the whole year and do you know why that is what's special about today it's Sunday well actually that's a very very good answer because the reason we're here on Sunday is because of what happened on the first

Sunday and what happened on that very first Sunday was that Jesus rose from the dead on Friday the Bible tells us that a terrible terrible thing happened that our Lord Jesus Christ who was God's only son the saviour was crucified on the cross that is a terrible way to die people had put nails into his hands and into his feet and it was absolutely horrible what happened to him and on that cross the Bible tells us Jesus died yeah he was dead absolutely dead and some people today you know doubt

I wonder if Jesus was really dead but he was dead and the people that testified to the fact that he was dead some of them were Roman soldiers they knew when somebody was dead and you know I always think sometimes the gospel story is very simple how do we know that Jesus was dead they buried him that's really simple isn't it but it's really true we don't bury people who are alive we only bury people who are dead so there was absolutely no doubt that he was dead and they put him into the tomb now as I said earlier I'm going to be going to Jerusalem and there we go and visit a place called the garden tomb and that lets us know that I don't know if any of you have been at a funeral probably not you're maybe too young to have gone to funerals but at funerals we put people into the ground here that's not what they did in

Jesus' time what they did was they put them into big tombs that were cut out of the rock and they would put a great big stone across and there would be a kind of trussle there in the front of it and they would use that to roll the stone a kind of ditch and they would roll the stone in the ditch and then they would seal it off to make sure that nobody went into the tomb because they didn't need to worry about anybody coming out because they were dead they were dead but the bible tells us that two of Jesus' friends had gone to the grave to look after it and to tend to the body and they were wondering I wonder how we'll get this big stone away so that we can go in and attend to the dead body you'll never believe what happened because that morning when they came the first thing that they saw was that the stone had been rolled away and they realised that the tomb was empty now that in itself was an amazing thing but what they eventually realised was that it wasn't empty because anybody had stolen the body some people tried to pretend that's what had happened but it was empty because

[18 : 55] Jesus was alive so how do we know that Jesus was dead simple answer they put him into a tomb how do we know that Jesus was alive again do you know simple answers what do alive people do they talk to people people can see them they eat all these things don't you I mean it's the kind of things that you do because you're alive and when we read our Bibles the Bible is really quite simple Jesus appeared to people and there was one lady that he appeared to he actually knew her name so it was obviously

Jesus and there's another story that we're told that the disciples were out fishing and Jesus was standing on the shore and he called them over and he had lit a fire and he had prepared a meal and he ate with them and there's another story told that they were in a room together and Jesus came right into the midst of their room and they recognised him from the wounds in his hand and his side so was the real Jesus he was alive and you know the Bible tells us again a very straightforward thing it says if you don't believe that Jesus is alive there's lots and lots of people who are living in the village who have seen him so in one sense boys and girls this is the most amazing thing that somebody who was dead and had died that saving death on the cross becomes alive an amazing thing a wonderful thing but in amongst it being so amazing it's actually so simple he was dead and now he is alive but there's one more thing we need to know boys and girls that when Jesus eventually left this earth and went back to the father he left us and this is how he described it a gift and the gift he left us was the Holy Spirit and he says when I go to be with the father I will

send the Holy Spirit and he will come and one of the main things that the Holy Spirit does is he assures us in our heart that Jesus is alive and one of the greatest things that the Holy Spirit does is he assures us that when we gather together like this on Easter day Jesus is with us and he says that when two or three people are gathered together in my name

I am with them the living Jesus is actually in the midst so when you and I hope you do this and I'm sure you do do this when you sit down as a family and you pray together maybe before meals or maybe you have a family prayer time or maybe that family prayer time is when you're going to bed at night and mum and dad or mum or dad or whoever sit down and they maybe read to you from the Bible and they maybe pray Jesus is there he's with you and he's with you because he is alive and that's what we celebrate now we're going to do something that Christians have been doing for over 2000 years in all the churches throughout the world they've done this the person who stands in the pulpit says the Lord has risen and people reply back he is risen indeed do you think you could do that

I'm sure all the grown ups could help us do that as well so we've been thinking about how true that is and so I'm going to say it now the Lord is risen he is risen indeed let's pray boys and girls father we thank you that Jesus died that saving death on the cross and we thank you that even at a young age we can believe in him and trust in him for our salvation and the forgiveness of our sins that we can give our lives to Jesus but we especially thank you this morning heavenly father that he has risen from the dead that people saw him that he walked with them and he talked with them and he ate with them and that's an amazing thing and quite a difficult thing for us to understand heavenly father but we thank you for that gift that you sent of your holy spirit so that we can know that as we gather here this morning

[25 : 07] Jesus is here in our midst he's alive he's with us and we praise you and we thank you heavenly father for that great truth and so we cry out this morning the lord is risen he has risen indeed so bless us heavenly father help us to grow in our knowledge and understanding of you and of the bible help us to trust in the lord Jesus Christ and bless us heavenly father through Jesus Christ the lord we ask this amen we're going to sing now the head that once was crowned with thorns to god's praise shout after 2022 ogre let Bae onboard to God's vast significance helt saatt a xt o Lord o Padre

O Padre The highest grace in the temple falls, this is, this is my light.

The King of kings and Lord of gods, and heaven is our light.

The joy of all who dwell around, the joy of all belong.

To whom He benefits His love, and God saves Him to love.

[27 : 09] To them the cross with all His shame, with all His grace is here.

Their name and everlasting name, their joy the joy of all.

They suffer with their Lord below, they reign with Him above.

Their prophet and their joy to know the history of His love. The cross is in all this time and hell, no shame and death to Him.

His people's home, His people's home, with all His love. The cross is in all this time and hell, no shame and death to Him.

[28 : 30] The cross is in all this time and death to Him. The cross is in all this time and death to Him. The cross is in all this time and death to Him. Well friends, if you turn with me in your Bibles, first of all to the Gospel of Mark and chapter 16.

Mark chapter 16. And we read God's Word from the beginning of the chapter.

Mark chapter 16. Mark chapter 16. Mark chapter 16. When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome brought spices so that they might go and anoint Him.

And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?

And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back. 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.

[29 : 40] And he said to them, do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He has 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. 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. And turn with me to the Acts of the Apostles. To the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. To verse 14. We continue to read the word of God.

[30 : 46] But Peter standing with the eleven lifted up his voice and addressed them. Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem. Let this be known to you and give ear to my words.

For these people are not drunk as you suppose since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel. And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. And your young men shall see visions. And your old men shall dream dreams. Even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my spirit.

And they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above. And signs on the earth below. Blood and fire and vaporous smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness.

And the moon to dust and blood. Before the day of the Lord comes. The great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

[31 : 54] Men of Israel. Hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth. A man attested to you by God. With mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst.

And you yourselves know. This Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. You crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

God raised him up. Loosing the pangs of death. Because it was not possible for him to be held by it. For David said concerning him I saw the Lord always before me. For he is at my right hand that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart was glad and my tongue rejoiced.

My flesh also will dwell in hope. For you will not abandon my soul to Hades. Or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the path of life.

[33 : 03] You will make me full of gladness with your presence. Brothers. I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David. That he both died and was buried and his tomb is with us to this day.

Being there for a prophet and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him. That he would set one of his descendants on his throne. He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ. That he was not abandoned to Hades. Nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up. And of that we all are witnesses.

Being there for exalted at the right hand of God. And having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit. He has poured out this.

That you yourselves are seeing and hearing. Amen and may God bless to us this reading of his Holy Word.

[34 : 06] And to his name be all praise and glory given. Let's again unite our hearts in prayer. Let us pray. Father we thank you for a biblical unity that is shared by believing people throughout the world today.

This is Easter morning. What a joy. What a celebration. But it is an even deeper joy to be able to in these difficult times come together with each other.

And worship together and celebrate together the joy that this morning is for believing people. And to know that although we are separated by distance and time zones.

That all believing people throughout the world. Will come together around these great truths of your word.

And proclaim that the Lord is risen. He is risen indeed. Indeed. And we come together in great song and in great voice and in great unity this day. To be the church triumphant.

[35 : 29] That raises up our voices in praise and in adoration. You are God. There is no one like you. Thank you. This is to the eyes of the fallen unbelievable.

Unimaginable. Unimaginable. But as your Holy Spirit works its sovereign work in our lives. You give us eyes to see and the gift of faith.

And we believe. And we know. We believe. And we know. That he lives. Father we pray for the gospel opportunity that this Easter week brings.

Father it is a sad reflection of years past. When even our televisions would be full of telling the Easter story. And yet they are absent from our world.

And how that world needs what is so obviously absent. The clear voice of the gospel.

[36 : 42] The historical facts that Jesus came and that he died. That he was buried. That he rose again and he lives and reigns. And seeks to engage with us as the living Christ in our lives.

We pray for our dying world. We pray for our neighbors. We perhaps pray for members of our family. Who do not know the Lord as Savior and Lord.

We pray that they might seek and by your grace they might find. God. And we pray for our church here to be built up.

Not so that we can be a bigger church. But so that we can be more effective witnesses to your grace and your goodness and your gospel. That people will have a hunger to gather round the preaching of the word.

And the praising of his name. Father we pray for our sovereign queen. For the members of our family at this time.

[37 : 56] And we thank you for her faith. And we pray for her faith. And we pray that she might continue in her age to grow in that faith. And grow in our understanding.

Give her spiritual advisors that will point her to Christ alone. Through faith alone. By grace alone. And give her the courage to proclaim that boldly and clearly.

We pray for our prime minister and our first minister. Very obviously far from God and far from grace.

And we just pray heavenly father for a day when we will once again be led by people of truth. Of honesty.

Of integrity. People who will seek your will and your purpose. Who will seek not power but service.

[39 : 01] And father we do pray for the salvation of our leaders. Millions and millions and millions of pounds and dollars that are spent throughout the world.

Trying to bring peace. And trying to improve men and women. And trying to bring attitudes where one life does not matter any more than another.

And yet what they don't realize is that they are dealing with the wickedness of the human heart. And that they could spend all the money in the world.

And that heart will remain untransformed and unmoved and unchanged. Until they know Jesus.

And until they embrace the gospel. And so as we gather as a church here. We pray that we will have a passion for world evangelism.

[40 : 11] We thank you for our missionaries that we support here in this church and in this fellowship. We pray for them. We thank you for their service. For their willingness to go in response to the call of God.

And we pray heavenly father your blessing on them. This day as you bless us here. As we gather now around your word through Jesus Christ the Lord we ask this.

Amen. Well before we turn to God's word we sing again from St. Sam's. Psalm 118. Singing verses 25 to 29 to God's praise.

Sing us, O Lord we humbly pray.

O Lord we make that a success. He's blessed to come to God's name. He's blessed to come to God's name.

[41 : 14] He's blessed to come to God's name. He's blessed to come to God's name. From the Lord's house we will bless. The Lord is God and He has made his glorious light.

Light upon us all. Let us approach the altar's doors.

And celebrate the festival. You are my God and I'll give you thanks.

You are my God and I'll give you grace. All that the Lord for His true.

His steadfastness endures always.

[42 : 39] Amen. Amen. Well before we turn to consider God's word let's just pray for a moment. Father we pray that your word will speak to us. We pray that you will show us yourself.

That you will show us our self. And that you will show us the Saviour. And that your word will speak to us. Oh Lord. Amen.

Well I think I've reached an age as I was reflecting coming down in the car listening to the radio.

I think I've reached an age. Indeed this is my birthday today. When I'm allowed to get irritated by some of the things that I hear on the television and the radio.

And I've been watching and listening to TV and radio over this weekend. And when Easter comes up there seems to be a prevailing theme going around.

[43 : 44] That somehow we have to find some new angle with which to tackle Easter. And some new insight.

And I was listening to something on Radio Scotland. Which to be fair is normally pretty good with these kind of things. But it was just awful this morning. They were talking about how you know many people are now making films.

That just gives an alternative perspective on you know the Good Friday story. And on the Easter story. And how this was captivating.

And I would say titillating people. And it reminded me of my old friend. He went to be with the Lord many many years ago.

Dr Robert McGee. Bob McGee to his friends. Bob was a great senior minister when I began ministry in Falkirk. He was minister at Falkirk St Andrews.

[44 : 48] And if Bob was known for anything. He was known for his long sermons. And you know I remember at one time I had gone to listen to him at an evening service.

When I had a Sunday off. And he began his sermon with the 23rd Psalm. And he says now this tells us 28 things about God.

And we're going to reflect on them all tonight. And so Bob was really well known for his long and superb I have to say sermons that he preached.

But Robert famously one Easter morning stood up in the pulpit. And I'm going to tell you his whole sermon.

He said the Lord is risen. The Lord is risen.

[45 : 55] The Lord is risen. And the Lord is risen. And then he said Amen.

Let us pray. And you know in a very very real way. That's pretty much all that there is to be said about Easter.

It's not about finding something new or trendy or difficult to say about Easter.

Easter is about proclamation. It's about doing exactly what I've tried to do with the children this morning.

It's about telling them that what we do on Easter morning is that we encounter the reality that the Bible is unique in literature.

[47 : 05] In that it is indeed unique in religious literature for that matter. In that it deals with facts. With facts that are set in space and in time.

And that in any kind of historical analysis are actually verified more and clearer than practically any other historical fact in the world.

And we don't need to read very far into the Easter accounts. To realize that there is something of that basic raw simplicity.

About how the Gospels present Easter morning. And what we call the Easter narrative. Even when we look at the early church.

And we just glimpsed at it by looking at that sermon of Peter. There is a simplicity and a directness about it.

[48 : 17] What is it that he says at the beginning? Men, listen. Give ear to my words.

Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him. Here in your midst he was delivered up according to the plan.

You crucified him by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up. And behind that is where the story really is.

Behind that are the things that made Peter so brash and so bold in his proclamation of the Gospel. If we know anything about our Bibles.

We will know that the very fact that this man Peter is saying what he is preaching. In itself is the most remarkable evidence of the transformation that a simple historical truth has brought about.

[49 : 29] Only a few weeks before, this man had made a most disastrous attempt imaginable of being a follower of Jesus Christ.

He had denied him. Abandoned him. I don't even know this guy that you are talking about here.

And he shrinks away in fear and trembling. Yet, as a direct result of the truth and of the historical reality of the resurrection.

He is restored and affirmed by Jesus. And he now stands to proclaim the central reality of our faith. That the Lord is risen. He is risen indeed. Fact. Not a set of religious ideas.

[50 : 39] Not a description of some spiritual experience that the disciples have had. But a fact.

A fact in history. A fact that is attested by any historical testing that you would want to imagine.

That is why. And you see it on numerous occasions. In these latter chapters of the gospels. And in the initial chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. Where the greatest historical proof.

There are people living. Down in the marketplace. At your local shops. In your hotels and restaurants.

Who have actually witnessed the fact that Jesus is alive. If you don't believe me. Go and ask them. Why? Because it is a fact.

[51 : 39] I think in one of the children's talks I did at the end of my last time here. I talked about Thomas.

How he was referred to. And I think unfairly as doubting Thomas. I think he should actually be referred to as believing Thomas. Because you remember what happened to him.

He was absent from the upper room when Jesus appeared to the disciples. Thomas came in and the disciples said to him. You have missed Jesus. He was here.

And Thomas said. Unless I see the marks on his hand and in his side. I will not believe.

And actually. When you think about it. If any of the disciples had been absent. It is almost certain that they would have said the same thing.

[52 : 42] If we had been. Coming into that room. And folks said that. You know Jesus has been here. We would have said. Unless I see.

And you see. What Thomas was getting at there. Is of crucial importance. Thomas you see knew that. If all this was.

Was some kind of spooky feeling. That they had had. That somehow. Jesus was in their midst. I mean I was speaking to a lady. A couple of weeks ago.

Who told me that. That. That. Her husband who had died six or seven years ago. She still has his ashes on an arm. On the mantelpiece. And.

When she's got a big decision to make. She. She speaks to him. And. She feels that. He's there.

[53 : 40] No. I think Thomas realized that. if that's all this is that really doesn't amount to a hill of beans really.

And it's certainly not going to transform the world. No. No. What Thomas wanted was facts.

Evidence. Really Jesus. Coming into their midst. And you see that reminds us how crucially important both those aspects of the Christian faith are.

Yes. It requires faith. Blessed are those who believe and who have not seen. And that's us. That's us.

We believe but we have not seen the risen Christ in our midst. And so there's that spiritual aspect to it.

[55 : 01] But it cannot ever simply be that. It cannot be devoid of the historical reality. One of the things that really irritates me was that I was listening to the radio a couple of days ago and somebody was saying what does Easter morning mean for you?

And it was an Anglican minister who was saying you know it's all about the experience and the feeling that Jesus is alive.

And he went on to say the most extraordinary nonsense. And what he said is he said you know if I heard in the news headlines on Easter morning that a tomb had been found had been opened up and lying there were the bones of Jesus it wouldn't make the slightest bit of difference to me and to my faith.

Well friends the only conclusion that you can come to is it probably wouldn't have made any difference to him and his faith but that wasn't Christian faith.

not one iota of it was Christian faith. And you know don't take my word for it the Bible makes it very clear that passage that we opened with today from Corinthians.

[56 : 42] If Christ has not been raised from the dead fact historical he was dead and now is alive stuff our faith is in vain.

If the headlines this morning had been that a tomb had been opened and for some reason they had managed to prove that the person whose bones were lying there was Jesus of Nazareth I can tell you friends I would have turned the car round and gone back home to my bed.

Robert you would be the same you would you would never enter this pulpit again why? Because we would be liars we would be deceivers or we might get together and decide that let's start up some new cult or something like that that's about just feelings and we can do whatever we like and as long as we have that warm feeling that Jesus is alive but we would be frauds and you would be crazy to sit there and listen to us because if Jesus hasn't risen from the dead we have no hope we're done for finished it's over not only am I a liar but this book is full of lies and in that reality the Bible emphasizes that Christianity is historical real people real events and real people and real events that focus directly on the person of Jesus on what he did on Good Friday and what he did and accomplished on Easter morning

Buddhism doesn't need Buddha Islam doesn't need Mohammed just as well because they're dead and gone and all that's left is some kind of moral system or outlook on ideology in life but Christianity needs Jesus they need a Jesus hanging on a cross they need a Jesus hanging on a cross taking the sins of the world upon him they need a Jesus dead and buried and they need a Jesus who rises from the dead and that becomes the transforming motivation for the New Testament church it's fact it's also rational

Dawkins the leader of the New Atheist movement covers the resurrection of Jesus Christ in a sentence one of the many flaws he says in the Bible how can you intellectually interact with Christianity and ignore the claim that is at its very core Dawkins said Jesus probably existed but the idea that he can pack back from the dead is absurd says Professor Dawkins and you know in ways that he doesn't mean or understand he is of course right it's the most absurd thing that anybody could ever come up with but of course that's the point if you look at the responses of the community of Jesus if you want to call them the women and the disciples if you look at their response from the crucifixion to just immediately before they come to the tomb it's anything but upbeat they're depressed they're downhearted they're disappointed we had hoped that he would be the one to redeem

[62 : 01] Israel their hopes and their dreams had been shattered and yet they were transformed what transformed them the only thing that transformed them was the actual reality of Jesus rising from the dead they would never have been transformed by sitting around a table and saying let's come up with some kind of idea that's going to establish our position for the next 20 or 30 years as the leader of some organisation right what can we do oh let's start a rumour that Jesus rose from the dead and if I had been round that table I would have said no chance no chance why no chance because nobody's ever going to believe that unless it actually happened

Christianity is rational the only reason it became the foundation for the New Testament church the only rational explanation why something as Dawkins foolishly says but actually has a grain of truth in it is the most ridiculous idea in the world because men don't die and then come back to life let's find something that's going to be just a little more plausible and you see that's the wonder and amazement of the truth of the resurrection it's transforming power could a lie for over 2000 years bring bring about such dramatic transformation in people here's another thing and I've engaged in prison ministry for a number of years and I've seen terrible terrible people wondrously transformed by the gospel just before

I left prison ministry a few years ago I had the pleasure of baptizing two girls in prison they were liars they were cheats they were thieves one of them had taken another's life could a lie turn a liar into someone who told the truth could a lie have the power turn someone who had taken another person's life into someone who became the most lovely gracious Christian witness in a prison that she was pretty much doomed to spend the rest of her life in and yet she shone like a light in that place Christianity is historical

Christianity is rational and Christianity is very briefly transforming here's the great question that really should almost be the question at the end of every sermon how then shall we live how then shall we live you see friends we can sit in the comfort of this lovely sanctuary here and what a joy it is to be back with each other and back here in the church we can sit here and we can nod our heads at whatever minor blots of wisdom happen to come from this pulpit from time to time from those of us who stand in it the big question is what difference does that make and you see if there is anything that the

Bible makes clear about the resurrection as we've just seen it transforms lives and that is the test brothers and sisters in Christ does it make a difference to your life today do you live not only for Christ but in the peace and surety that he has triumphed over sin and death and the grave and he lives he lives Christ Jesus lives today how then shall we live it turned dead men into men and women who would never die it turned sinful men into men and women who know no condemnation it brought men and women who had nobody to turn to into the greatest intimacy of their life what a friend we have in

[68 : 24] Jesus let's pray together father help us as we just remember on Easter morning what we must never forget that the gospel is true it's not true because it works it works because it's true and an encounter with the living Christ brings about such a transformation that whatever it does it can never leave us the way we were and we pray this day heavenly father that every believer here might be in a special way on Easter morning open to the impact that the living Christ will make in their lives today and tomorrow and for the rest of their life until we see him one day in glory in the lamb's wedding feast and if there are some here today who do not know you as saviour and lord we pray that they will have encountered the reality the fact of the risen Christ he is not here he is risen he is risen indeed so bless your ministry this day heavenly father to your glory and to the advancement of your kingdom we pray in Jesus name amen let's close by singing together or listening together from psalm 31 and sing psalms verse 6 verses of psalm 31 to God's praise k

I can promise Ch Jordan hosts weddings ■■■ ma'u saviour t aschio riind I saviour child Save me in your righteousness.

Lord, turn you here to me in my cry. Come, pray, till we never meet.

I need my rock and earth defense. My son, O Lamb, Savior, is he.

You are my fortress and my rock.

[71 : 34] For you in saving my short night. Reserve me from the trap of set.

You are the register in my night.

Free me, Lord, O Lord, don't be. My sins, I call them to you.

I pay for those who trust all souls. I trust the Lord, for he is true.

The blessing of God Almighty, the one true and living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rest and abide with each and every one of us this day and forevermore.

[72 : 51] Amen.