

Fulfillment: The Tomb

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[0 : 00] John chapter 20. And this is a great passage. Of course, my favorite gospel is the gospel of John.

If you're ever going to read one of the gospels and you say, well, you know, I just want to read one of them. Which one do I want to read? I always say the gospel of John. It is just my favorite.

But we're going to look at chapter 20 today and verses 1 through 18. And we're not going to cover everything that we could possibly cover here. We're just going to pull out a few things that I think are important to the process of where we are and a way of thinking.

And so with that in mind, let me just remind you of where we are in our study. We have talked about the creation. We've talked about sin, covenant, kingdom, and we're in fulfillment.

And the tomb or the resurrection of Christ is fulfillment of the things that have been promised. And we're going to see that as a part of today. And so why don't we read this and then we'll pray and then we will jump right into it.

[1 : 09] John chapter 20 verses 1 through 18. Hear the word of the Lord. Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb while it was still dark and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.

So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved and said to them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.

So Peter and the other disciple went forth and they were going to the tomb. The two were running together and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first.

And stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. And so Simon Peter also came following him and entered the tomb.

And he saw the linen wrappings lying there and the face cloth which had been on his head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered and he saw and believed.

[2 : 23] For as yet, they did not understand the scripture that he must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

But Mary, but Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping. And so as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been laying.

And they said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.

When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping?

Whom are you seeking? Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, Sir, if you've carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.

[3 : 26] Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned and said to him in Hebrew, Rabboni, which means teacher. Jesus said to her, Stop clinging to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God.

Mary Magdalene came announcing to the disciples, I have seen the Lord, and that he had said these things to her. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word, and it is our prayer that you would help us now as we look at your word to know the truth, to believe the truth, to love the truth, and to live by the truth.

And we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. So there's, I'm pretty sure there's something pretty fundamentally wrong with our world.

All you have to do is look at the news. You can read the news in a paper or look at it online. You can watch a YouTube video or you can see something happening in some of the social media. And the world is fundamentally messed up. The number of people who will shoot one another over idiotic arguments, or the 100,000 people who've died from fentanyl, or the increase in abortions over last year, or you could talk about the innocent bystanders who just get attacked by gangs up on the street as they just run by, or the number of carjackings.

[5 : 11] I mean, we could just go on and on and on of all the things that are happening in this world, things that are so messed up. We could get into the things related to all of the cultural sexual sin that is involved in our world.

And the thing is, is that as Christians, what we want to do is we don't want to be people who are shocked and surprised. I mean, we should not be shocked and surprised at what's going on in front of us.

I mean, we live in a world that is wrecked by sin. And so we ought not be surprised at the terrible things that we see happening around us.

But often we are very shocked. Often we're so shocked that we're a little bit like the two muffins. You know the two muffins? You've got two muffins sitting in an oven, and one muffin says, wow, it's so hot in here.

And the other muffin says, well, a talking muffin. The thing is, is that we have a tendency, we have a tendency to be shocked at the decay and the depravity that we see in the world around us.

[6 : 31] We see the news story, we watch the video, we hear the news from someone else, and we have a tendency to go, oh, I can't believe this is happening. But the fact of the matter is, is that we ought to absolutely know and expect these very things.

I mean, Jesus told us why these things are happening. Jesus told us, he says, what comes out of a person is what defiles him.

For from within, from the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

all these evil things come from within. When we look at the world around us and we see and hear the news stories of all the evil things that are going on, we should not be shocked because we know the heart of man, the heart of every human, is desperately wicked and no one can know it.

And from that heart comes all of these wicked things that we see. So as Christians, we ought to be those who are least surprised and least shocked.

[8 : 03] When we lived in Port Lavaca, we had an orange tree in our backyard. I don't know if you have ever tried to raise an orange tree, but that's a, that's an impossibility, particularly for our family.

You know, Michelle does what she can to keep plants alive and I do all I can to kill them. Our orange tree was terrible, though. I mean, it was super nasty and you would, you could pick an orange off of it and so a good orange is a kind of orange that when you, when you take it, it's plump all over and it's firm, you know, not too firm, but just enough, right?

it's not, our oranges had pockets of air. As you'd squeeze that skin and that skin was thin and you start to peel that back and some of those sections were just dried up little pucks.

I mean, just nasty oranges. Nobody wanted to eat that. And you know, I could have tried to fix it this way. I could have cut all of the oranges off, gone to the store, bought oranges and then brought them back and hung them on the tree.

It would have at least looked good, you know, for a, for a season. But the problem, the problem with the fruit out there is a problem with the root down here.

[9 : 29] So I eventually cut the tree down in order to get the tree started over. Like when I say cut it down, I cut it down. It came back. Like I was really surprised. I mean, I cut it down about the first year that we were there and before we left, that thing was taller than I was.

I was just like, that's crazy. How can this, they grow so fast? But the problem with the fruit out here is the root here. If you want the fruit to be fixed, you've got to fix the root.

And when Jesus says that from the heart flow all of these things, he is describing the same thing that there is the fruit of sin and the root of sin.

And every one of us have the root of sin. The root of sin is our hearts. Now, in American language, the heart is the center of emotions.

We've talked about this before. In the Jewish mindset, the seed of emotions were the kidneys. So, you would not say, I love you with all my heart. You would say, I love you with both of my kidneys.

[10:37] Right? But for the Jewish person, the heart is the central part of the person. It would be akin to saying the mind for us.

It's that place of intersection of our emotions, our values, our priorities, our thoughts, our reasoning abilities. It's that center core of the person out of which they live.

Jesus says out of the center part of the person, the core out of which they live. That's where evil resides. That's the root of sin.

And the reason, the reason the world is in chaos around us, the reason everything looks so awful is because we have a bunch of people out there with no good hearts.

because there is not a single good heart on the planet. I know oftentimes we will be talking about somebody that we know and we'll be, you know, explaining this person to another person.

[11:43] It's like, oh, you ought to meet so-and-so. You know, they've got a good heart. The number of times I hear that, and I understand what we generally mean by that. We're not really trying to say something about what Jesus is talking about with righteousness and unrighteousness.

We're just trying to say, I like this person. But there is something about that that really needs to be confronted and that is this. No one has a good heart.

I don't. And you don't either. The only hope we have is that Christ has saved us and is transforming our hearts now.

And so oftentimes what happens, though, is that we get so fixated on the fruit of sin out here that we forget about the root of sin here.

The reason the world is in the chaos that it is in is because there are evil hearts everywhere.

Because all have sinned.

[12:53] We're all sinners. sinners. And we have the root and the fruit of sin. And maybe you would like to think to yourself, because I know I would like to think to myself, that my root of sin is not nearly as bad as somebody else's root of sin.

But the truth of the matter is, is that I have the same evil heart. I don't know if I've told you this before. I think I probably have, but I'll just, it's confession time again, my primary issue is my anger. That's my primary issue. I struggle with anger. I want things my way, and when they don't go my way, I am so easily tempted with anger. When I was a kid, it was really bad.

I mean, I feel like I've grown and God has worked on me over the years, but when I was a kid, it was really bad, because if my parents at all said to me, no, about anything, I would spend hours sulking and visualizing in my mind the death of my parents because I was so angry with them.

I know, I know, you're sitting to yourself, thinking to yourself, what is wrong with you? I would just say the same thing that's wrong with you. Because you might not struggle with anger, and you might not sit there and visualize somebody's death, but you still have a wicked heart.

[14:19] And unless we can, unless we can admit that, and be okay and say, okay, then we're never going to have a solution to that. You see, Jesus came and died for people with wicked hearts.

He didn't come to die for people who need no physician. So unless you can admit, yes, I have an evil, wicked heart, then you have nothing to do with Jesus.

We, we have these wicked hearts. James tells us that if we break one commandment, we become law breakers. The reason for that is because the one who told us do not murder is the same one who told us not to commit adultery.

So if we do murder, then we've broken the law. It doesn't matter if we've never done the other one. We are law breakers. And God is a holy God.

See, I think two things that we just don't get in the American church is how wicked sin is, how holy God is.

[15:26] These two basic things that we would all confess and say we believe, we just don't see just how much so they are true. The scriptures describe God's throne as being founded on justice and righteousness.

His holiness means that he is other than us. It means that he is separated from. It means he is set apart from. Because he has a moral perfection that pulls him so far away from us.

I mean, the Grand Canyon, being on two sides of it, is not as far as it needs to be to visualize God's distance from us because of his holiness. holiness. And when we sin, when we break God's law, we are violating God's very nature.

If we tell a lie, we're not just not telling the truth, we're not just breaking a law. God's very nature is truth.

So when we tell a lie, we are violating God's nature. If we murder someone, even if it's the anger, right? Not just the action, but the heart.

[16:48] The reason that's wrong is because God's very nature, His very holiness is that of life. I mean, He breathed into man the breath of life. And so when we murder, we are violating God's very nature.

anger, it's as though we walk up to God, slap Him in the face, and say, now what are you going to do about it?

Theologians have a word for what God's going to do about it. It's the word wrath. It's the word wrath. The word wrath, you know, also carries with it the connotation of anger and rage.

But we've got to separate something out for just a second because when we think of God and any kind of emotion like wrath or anger, we have a tendency to think from ourselves back to God.

And I think about when I was a kid and I would really, man, I've done some really dumb things and I've done some things towards like even my mom and my dad would get really angry, right?

[18:08] And to watch my dad get angry is the eyes getting all hot and bothered, the face turning red, the veins popping out. I mean, he could get very angry.

You know what I'm talking about. That sort of rage type thing, like Hulk without the green. That's not God. And we can't look at what happens with us and our human relationships and the anger and the way that it becomes an uncontrollable force, usually an uncontrollable force for bad.

We can't take and extrapolate to God and say, oh, God's wrath must be something like that. No, no, no. God is not like us at all. And whatever experience it is for God, for His wrath to be there, we cannot even understand it.

Because He is a good, righteous, holy God, and He is never led around by the nose from His emotions. His emotions do not control Him.

So whatever His wrath is, it is legal. It's a legal thing that happens. It's a just punishment punishment from a good God.

[19:34] And so that's why one day He's coming, and when He does, wrath is coming with Him. So that brings us to John chapter 20 today.

because hopefully by now you feel a little bit hopeless and depressed and like, oh my goodness, God is not to be trifled with.

I really hope that's the way you feel because what we see, what we see in John 20 ought to then produce an immense amount of hope.

hope. Because even though this world is the way it is, and even though our hearts are the way it is, there is hope for people like us.

And I just want to point out three things in this story that help us to see that hope. The first is that He defeated death. He defeated death.

[20:37] We know the story. She goes to the tomb, Mary does, and she gets there first. She sees that the stones rolled away. She's concerned that the body's been stolen. So she runs back.

She tells the disciples. They run. I love the detail of the story and how John is the disciple not named in the passage. And we could talk about how to prove that, but I don't want to do that today. But that's John the apostle who wrote John's gospel. And he gets there first, probably because he's younger than Peter. But he stops short and Peter blasts through and gets right on into the tomb because, well, that's Peter's personality to jump right in.

And it's interesting to me that once John goes in, you've got two things that are in there. You've got the linen wrappings that wrap the body, and then you have the face cloth.

The linen wrappings, that's that part that they would wrap, almost like, you could think of it like a gauze or an ace bandage, something that's sort of wrapped, and in each fold of that around, they would stuff the spices and things to keep the body from stinking, right?

[21:45] And so, that's there, but also there's this face cloth, and it's interesting that in verse 7, that the face cloth, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen wrappings, so it's almost like the linen wrappings come off, I don't know how this happened, we're not told how he gets the linen wrappings off, but if you go back to John chapter 11, and Lazarus, he's wrapped up the same way, and he comes hopping out of the tomb, right?

I say hopping because that's the only way I can imagine this, he's all wrapped up and just hopping out of the tomb, I often like to say that's where the Easter bunny comes from, but that's a different story, and so he's wrapped up, so how does Jesus get out of that?

I don't know, we're not told, but he's not in that anymore, and there it is, maybe it's in a pile, maybe he unwrapped himself, maybe he dematerialized out of it and sitting there now, we don't know, but it's interesting because the way they talk about the face cloth is different, the face cloth is not with the linen wrappings, it's almost like it's down here by the head and that's down there by the foot, but it says that it's rolled up in a place by itself, rolled up, that's taking it, you know, if you've ever had any bandage on you and you've taken it off, you take it off and you roll it up so you can throw it away, you roll it up because you're done with it, you're through with it, you don't need it anymore, Jesus sitting there on that little shelf of a stone alive taking the face cloth rolling it up, setting it aside because he's alive and he has defeated death.

Now why is it important that he defeats death? Why is this a hopeful thing? Because death comes from sin.

[24 : 06] That's what God says in the beginning in Genesis that in the day that you eat of the fruit you will surely die. And the literal rendering of that Hebrew is that dying you shall die.

Dying you shall die. So when you eat of the tree you will dying you shall die. You will enter into a state of death and in that state of death you will die.

Adam and Eve sinned against God eating from the tree and in doing so death came. Death is a wage. Death is a punishment. Death is a reward for sin.

And we know that sin is still a problem in this world because death is still rampant. And so here you have Jesus who had no sin.

He's our high priest. He's tempted in all parts as we are yet he's without sin. God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us. He had no sin of his own and yet he died because he took our sin upon himself.

[25 : 22] he took our sin as though it was his sin and he faced the punishment the wage the reward for sin himself and was then victorious over the death victorious over the punishment victorious over the reward over the wage and if he defeated death then he has also defeated sin that root system that makes us sinners that condemns us because of our sin he defeated death so that we do not have to be enslaved to that any longer if he had not risen from the dead then we would still be in our sins and hopeless so when we face

God on judgment day we do not have to face wrath at all because Christ defeated death and sin and if you're not a Christian then one of the things that you need to reckon with in your own life is this Christ who's powerful enough to defeat death and sin can save you no matter what you've done or where you've been well that's the first thing then about this story I want to tell you the second thing about this story and that is that he fulfilled promises he fulfilled promises it's interesting that the very next verse verse 8 it says so the other disciple who had come to the tomb first then also entered and saw and believed what did he believe Jesus has been telling them hey listen I'm going to die on the third day I'm going to rise again so he's trusting that

Jesus is telling the truth so he's seeing this he sees there's no Jesus there's nobody so he believes that Jesus has risen from the dead but the very next verse says something almost like counter of that right because it says for as yet they did not understand the scriptures so he believed but didn't understand it he saw it he remembered what Jesus said he believed it but he didn't understand it he didn't understand the scriptures that he must rise again from the dead how is it that Christ is to rise from the dead what do the scriptures have to say about this this is this is sort of my sort of take on this kind of taking a little tour through the Old Testament just real quick it starts in Genesis chapter 3 15 right I will put enmity between you and the woman between your seed and her seed he! shall bruise you on the and Christ who is going to with his heel crush the head of the serpent there's images all through the Old Testament that every time a king is defeated one of the things that they do to those kings is they put them on the ground and they put their foot on their head it's a sign of defeat it's a sign that

I'm the victor and you're the loser! And in doing so his heel would be bruised and a bruise is not a fatal wound and you get a hint of the resurrection right there but then that promise gets woven through the course of the Old Testament till you get to Genesis 12 verse 3 where he says to Abraham in you all the families of the earth will be blessed and Paul tells us in Galatians 3 8 that that's a preaching of the gospel in that moment so you have there in this promise of a blessing to all families a promise of resurrection or you get a contemporary of Abraham named Job whose life was torn apart by suffering predicted in the middle of his sufferings these words when he says as for me I know that my redeemer lives and at the last he will take his stand on the earth the resurrections

promised there and you move on from there from

[30 : 38] Abraham to his children as they go into Egypt they are enslaved and now God sends Moses to him and when he finds Moses he describes to Moses who he is he says Moses I am the God of Abraham and Isaac and of Jacob and Jesus tells us that that's proof of the resurrection that promise then as they come out of Egypt they go into the promised land eventually one of their kings a king named king David writes a psalm in which we see these words I will bless I will bless the Lord who has counseled me indeed my mind instructs me in the night I have set the Lord continually before me because he is at my right hand I will not be shaken therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices my flesh also will dwell securely why for you will not abandon my soul to shield nor will you allow your holy one to undergo decay and we see all through the book of acts how that is told to us as being a prophecy of the resurrection of

Jesus Christ and one final passage that I would show you in Isaiah chapter 53 but the Lord was pleased to crush him putting him to grief if he would render himself as a guilt offering now all of that right there that's crucifixion he goes on to say he will see his offspring he will prolong his days and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in his hand you see here's here's the truth of the matter the truth of the matter is that Christ in his resurrection fulfills all the prophecies of the Old Testament and this is why I think this is so important because you have a lot of people who want to say that they're going to just take their chances with God one day that when they die!

they feel like they've done a pretty decent job of living an honest life of living a life of integrity you know I pay my taxes I treat my wife well I'm a good pillar of this community and you've got this sort of mindset that says you know I think I'll take my chances because you know I'm just as good as any of those people who go down there at church and what's amazing to me is the arrogance of such a statement in light of the fact that the holy son of God is the fulfillment of all the old testament and who rose from the dead because this was the plan of God and so let me just ask you this and you think about this for your life you think about this for the life of the people that you know you're my heaven and you mean to tell me that it's going to be okay for some people to say well Lord I treated my wife well I paid my taxes and

I was a good American do you think that God the father is going to be at all pleased with that when he gave up his only begotten son who died and rose and defeated death you think he wants that over so many people in this culture of the south that believe that is how you get there by being good people our hope of heaven rests in the promises of the Old Testament that my redeemer lives at the last I will see him standing upon the earth God is faithful to his promises Christians let me just talk to you for a second because sometimes

I find there are some Christians that are struggling with some things there are some of you you love the Lord you have trusted the Lord you are trying to do all you can but you find yourself beset you know what the word beset means it's a King James word I have no idea but the idea is something you find yourself just put upon and pressed down by your own sin and you find yourself going back to the Lord and saying Lord please forgive me again this thing I've done please forgive me again and I have found sometimes some Christians who in going to God again and again like that begin to have this sort of self deprecation this self hatred this self loathing in which they say there's no way I can be saved look what I keep doing there's no way that God would want me look what I keep doing there's no way that

[36 : 04] I'm saved I just can't be saved look look at what I keep doing and for you my Christian friend let me say to you the death of Jesus the resurrection of Jesus is so powerful so glorious so wonderful it is not upon you to keep yourself sinless that makes it so that God accepts you it's what Christ has done that Christ accepts you don't remember the faithful of God comes into this that if you are in Christ there is therefore now no condemnation for you you've sinned yeah sure go to the Lord ask him to forgive you but in that moment remember and reckon you are wiped clean if you ask him

Lord is it okay if I ask you to forgive! me again he's going to look at you and like the old song he's going to say what sins are you talking about the third thing that we see in this passage it's interesting to me that he transforms people because you see Mary Mary Magdalene she's one that he's cast demons out of she's one who's supported his ministry she's gotten to the tomb early she's asked by both the angels and Jesus an important question why are you weeping that seems a little out of place I mean Jesus is alive why are you weeping this is time for celebration this is a time for joy time for a party Jesus is alive and she's weeping why do you think she's weeping

I think it comes out when Jesus asked her his second question verse 15 he says whom are you seeking see that's the problem right there because for Mary she's looking for a what she's looking for Jesus dead body and Jesus says you need to be looking for a who she's looking for a what she doesn't think Jesus has risen from the dead she thinks the body has been snatched she thinks the body has been taken away and so she's looking for a particular kind of Jesus she's looking for a dead Jesus that she can show honor to and Jesus is standing there saying listen I'm not going to give you the Jesus you're looking for but I am the Jesus you need whom are you looking for and she doesn't understand any of this until he calls her name and he says

Mary now what happens in that moment what happened in her heart we're not told but we're just told that he calls her name and everything changes he transforms her by calling her name and that's how he transforms people he calls their name and they come to him so my question for you today is this have you been transformed has Christ called you by name if not then today is your day turn from being the boss of your own life and turn to Christ as your master and if he has called your name then this is where I want to end with today and that is this that if he's called your name he's transformed you then the challenge is is that what the world needs out there is transformed people the world needs us to be transformed people with a message of transformation being willing to take that message out to all those that we meet be a transformed person who cares about others who loves the unlovely and who is fully satisfied with

Christ don't don't share with people how great your church is don't share with people how awesome your pastor is I know he is it's okay don't say that because you know what let me tell you what that's going to get somebody you tell somebody you have an awesome pastor okay that's it that's all I get that's it you tell them you tell them about Jesus and you tell them what Jesus has done and you tell them what Jesus can do for them that's what they need more than anything else in the world let's pray