

Easter Sunday - Fourth Memorial Church - Pastor Jay

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Preacher: Jayson Turner

[0 : 00] Let me pray. Amen. Amen. You can go ahead and grab a seat. You know, once in a while we look pretty good, church.

! Amen.

He is risen. And that's why we're here, to celebrate the fact that our Savior is alive. And because He lives, so will we.

And looking forward to sharing some thoughts with us this morning. As we looked at Palm Sunday a week ago in the Gospel of John, we're going to stay in that theme.

And if you guys have a copy of the Scriptures, you can go ahead and turn open to John chapter 20. We're going to look at the first 18 verses this morning. But I do want to welcome you. If it's your first time here, you're with friends, or you just found out about us, we'd love to meet you after service.

[1 : 13] I'll be up front. Pastor Scott will be up front. And Pastor Cole and some of the staff. And we'd love to welcome you. We have a gift for you. And just thank you that you're here this morning. So, let me pray.

And then we'll dive into the text together. Father, thank you for just the fact that it's Easter 2025. And Lord, we'd love to think about the churches across the planet today celebrating the resurrection.

Celebrating the fact that the one who created the world, who also died for the world, rose again. And offers any man or woman, boy or girl, new life, forgiveness of their sins, if they would but trust in your sacrifice, Jesus.

And so today we want to think about you. We want our affections to be stirred towards you, Lord Jesus. And pray that you would be glorified just in the way that we celebrate you and worship you this day.

We love you. It's in your name we pray, Lord Jesus. And all God's people said, amen. Amen. So today we do celebrate the most extraordinary event in human history.

[2 : 28] And this event, it's not just extraordinary in that it's a historical fact, but that it actually bears down upon our lives today.

That event 2,000 years ago bears down upon our life today and actually bears down upon our eternity if we have professed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in this life.

This morning what I'd like to do is just read an account of the resurrection as recorded by the beloved disciple. And so you're there in John chapter 20. John's narrative related to the resurrection, he really narrows the camera angle down and looks at one individual's experience in particular with the risen Jesus.

It's a woman by the name of Mary Magdalene. And I love that we get a personal story this morning because, church, the gospel is deeply personal.

Amen? Amen. We have been forgiven of real sins that we have committed. And so we get a chance to see the resurrection through the eyes of this woman, Mary Magdalene.

[3 : 39] So join me here as we begin looking at the first couple of verses. John writes, Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

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

Now as recorded in the same gospel, Jesus is buried on Friday late afternoon, just before Sabbath begins. It would have begun in the evening, Friday night.

And so he was actually buried by two men, two individuals that became his disciples, Joseph of Arimathea and a guy were introduced earlier in the Gospel of John to Nicodemus.

Both of these men are influential people. They are successful individuals. They both belong to the Sanhedrin. And this is the ruling body of Israel.

[4 : 48] Think of it as the Senate, the House combined. And they are wealthy. And these two individuals who became followers of Jesus risked their lives to associate with him. They risked their job security, even potentially their very lives, to serve Jesus.

Because they were standing against the leader of the Sanhedrin, the high priest. And they were willing to identify with Jesus. And so they prepared and buried Jesus in a tomb.

It actually belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. And they buried Jesus in a tomb outside the city near a garden. Three days have passed.

And for some of you are like, well that was Friday night and Sunday morning, and the Jews saw any portion of a day as a day. So hence Friday afternoon to Sunday morning would have equated to three days.

It's now, as it says in verse 1, the first day of the week. So it's Sunday morning. That's in fact why we worship on Sunday. Because it's when Jesus rose from the grave.

[5 : 54] So it's Sunday morning. Sabbath has been completed. And the burial process of Jesus can continue. See, now that it's Sunday, work can be done. The walk from the city to the garden can happen.

And actually the dead body can be handled. And so the first person on the scene is a woman. A woman by the name of Mary Magdalene. Mary from Magdala.

Magdala was a city on the Sea of Galilee. The west shore of the sea, right above Tiberias. There's not a lot written actually about Mary in the Bible.

In fact, there's actually more written about her in historical fiction and popular fiction than we actually know. But what the Bible tells us about her is that she was part of a small group of women that followed Jesus during his earthly ministry.

What we learn about her, she appears just to be pretty ordinary. Just very common. There's nothing in particular to demonstrate that she was anything special in the world as far as the world was concerned.

[7 : 05] But Mary, she has been with Jesus through his ministry. She was there in John 19 verse 25. We know that she's there at the execution. And now she's here at the graveside.

Mary is here with a small group of women. It's recorded in the other Gospels that they are present with her. John doesn't mention that. The only instance we have and know that she's not alone here is in verse 2 where she says, we do not know where they have laid him.

So she's referring to herself and others and the small group of women that were with her. And so Mary and this group of women, they head to the tomb to anoint the body with spice.

Mark 16 talks about that. And they get to the tomb and the tomb would have been like a cave, a hollowed out room and a rock, a small door carved out to get into the tomb.

Often the door was no higher than a yard off the ground. And then a large stone would have been rolled in front. And I love the fact that these women, they go to the tomb because they want to complete the burial process.

[8 : 09] They want to anoint the body with spices to deal with some of the stench. And they're going there, but they have no plan on how they're going to get into the tomb. In fact, they ask the question in Mark 16, 3, they say, who will roll away the stone for us?

Just love this, right? Not a lot of planning, but man, they got faith. And so they get to the tomb and I just want to consider something here for a moment because it says as soon as Sabbath is over, Mary goes.

Like, she's there. She can hardly wait. And in fact, it says here in verse 1 that Mary came to the tomb early while it was still dark.

So it's somewhere between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. Just think about that. Who gets up in the dark in our day? I mean, it was interesting.

When I lived on the west side, I remember there were folks that would actually get up in the dark. They would get up in the evening and sleep through the night because there was a sale going on the next day, Black Friday. And people would just, they would camp out because they're thinking, man, I'm going to save \$100 on a TV.

[9 : 23] So I'm going to be here all night. I recall we had a restaurant opening up on the west side, the first Krispy Kremes. And people, they just, they were there all night so they could get some processed sugar.

And it's like, man, that's what people get up for and think about, like, well, I know, like, if I'm going to go hunting or fishing, and, you know, maybe I'll get up early, go skiing.

And just think about that. Like, our culture wakes up early in order to shop and to play. And here we have this woman who's waking up early for a far more substantive reason.

And I think what we understand here is Mary's been affected by Jesus. Like, he has affected her life for good. She's like, I will lose sleep over this.

And we know that her life was affected because in the Gospel of Luke, it says in chapter 8, verse 2, that some women had been healed by Jesus. And then it says, Mary called Magdalene from whom seven demons had gone out.

[10 : 26] So this woman's life, it's been transformed by Jesus. Like, he rescued her from a life of heavy bondage.

Jesus loved Mary despite the sin that defined her life. And I would suggest that the sin defined her life because folks don't pick up demons unless they're opening doors through habitual sin.

And Jesus didn't condemn Mary. He offered her healing. I mean, when she looked in the eyes of Jesus, it wasn't condemnation that she received.

She received grace. Those kind eyes. Grace. Grace. Not contempt in those eyes.

And so Mary owed this new life that she had to Jesus. Grace was real. She got a second start. A new start.

[11 : 37] And it was real. So Mary loved Jesus. He offered her compassion and gave her a new life. And so she's making darn sure. You know what?

I can get up early. I can care for his body. It's the very least that I can do. And so she wakes up early. She arrives. But when she gets there, she sees the stone has been moved.

And she panics. You ever had an occasion like that where all of a sudden your heart drops and you're just like, what's going on? And she panics.

She's thinking the Roman authorities, they've removed the body. And at this point, it appears that she separates from the other women and she decides, I'm going to go and retrieve a couple of the close followers of Jesus and I want them to come and check out the scene as well.

So let's continue. Look at verse 3 to 10. So Peter went out with the other disciples and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb.

[12 : 47] And stooping to look inside, he saw the linen clothes lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came following him and went into the tomb. He saw the linen clothes lying there and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen clothes, but folded up in a place by itself.

Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead.

Then the disciples went back to their homes. Now I love the record here, church, of John beating Peter to the tomb.

We don't know Peter. He probably was. We know Peter was married. We know that Mark 8, 14 talks about his mother-in-law.

Peter is married. John worked with his brother. Scholars believe John was probably an adolescent. And so you have the older guy and the younger guy and maybe the older guy is a little out of shape. John gets there first.

[13 : 58] But then John hesitates. Right? He's a younger guy. He doesn't have the courage. But then Peter has the courage, goes into the tomb first to check it out.

And he's like, Jesus is gone. But the burial clothes, they're folded? This is strange.

This is a strange scene because this is not the scene of a crime. Right? Let's be honest. Okay? Men don't fold clothes. Generally speaking, I know there's a few out there making the rest of us look bad.

But my sock drawer is like a scene of a crime. Okay? This is not the scene of a crime here. Men don't generally fold clothes. I mean, especially thieves in a hurry.

Oh, let's steal the... Oh, wait a second. Wait a second. I mean, it's just... It doesn't happen that way. It's peculiar.

[15 : 08] And it says for John, he goes in and he sees and it says he saw and he believed. He's like, something happened here. Something miraculous occurred here.

And I think we have the first indication of faith taking root there in him. This is no crime scene. This scene is best explained by Jesus' resurrecting.

Right? The resurrection occurred. The resurrection is not a fabrication. And those with an anti-Christian agenda have been looking for a silver bullet for millennia to dismiss.

It's interesting because there's a guy, a Roman historian by the name of Tacitus in the early 2nd century. In his annals, the only way he could explain the spread of Christianity was to call it a fabrication.

He writes this, Christus, the founder of the name was put to death by Pontius Pilate. It was 2nd century A.D. Procreator of Judah in the reign of Tiberius.

[16 : 16] But the pernicious superstition, did you catch that? Repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judea where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also.

The skeptics have been looking for ways to dismiss the resurrection since the resurrection. And I'll just give us briefly three responses to the assertion that the resurrection is a fabrication.

And I would say the first response is this, if the disciples fabricated, they concocted this story, they are fools. They are dim bulbs. They are not very bright.

bright. Because they chose a story and they decided, you know what, we're going to make the first witness a woman. Women were undervalued in the first century, unfortunately.

And this was a woman of ill repute. That's your story? You're trying to fabricate this thing?

[17 : 30] You're trying to convince people that this occurred? You wouldn't have made a woman the first witness. I mean, in this day, in a Jewish court of law, a woman's testimony, it actually meant nothing.

An apologist out of California down at Biola, William Lane Craig, he says this, when you understand the role of women in the first century Jewish society, what's really extraordinary is that this empty tomb story should feature women as the discoverers of the empty tomb in the first place.

They would have never written the story this way. And yet, that is the narrative. The first response. Secondly, if this is a fabricated story by the disciples, not only are they fools for the story that they concocted, but they're fools for the very lives that they ended up living.

Think about this. Jesus' family initially didn't believe that he was the Messiah. James did not believe.

His half-brother in John 7, it says his brothers did not believe Jesus' claim. In Mark 3, his family was saying he's out of his mind. And yet, James, his half-brother, who began life as a skeptic with a front-row seat, he grew up with Jesus, and all of a sudden, he decides to do what with his life?

[19 : 03] Oh, I'm going to become a pastor that proclaims the gospel of Jesus. And he ends up being the pastor of the Jerusalem church.

That's insane if this is just a fabrication. And then you think about not only his family, but his followers, because history records the disciples, they actually die for something that they eyewitnessed.

A lot of people willing to die for what they believe to be true. It doesn't necessitate, though, that the events are true, only that they sincerely believed it.

Eyewitnesses, the disciples, the apostles, they could assess the data firsthand. So something occurred between the Friday night when they scattered, and they say, we're out, and then the lives that followed.

A majority of the disciples were martyred for their belief in Jesus as God's Son, as the one that died to forgive sins, while most of them fled the night of his execution.

[20 : 15] So something occurred. That's profound. Peter, the apostle Peter in Luke 22, he denied Jesus. This woman, I don't know him.

And then the 4th century historian Eusebius records just before they crucified, identifying with Jesus later in life, that the Romans forced him to watch his wife be crucified, and he turns to me and he says, hey, my dear, remember the Lord.

So at the most crucial moment of Peter's life, he's still all in on Jesus. the fabrication, the apostles, man, they lived very strange lives because they were willing to then die for a lie that they could assess.

They knew if it was truth or fiction. And then lastly, I would just say the data for the resurrection that we possess, and where do we find it? Primarily, in this book, the Bible.

It's early, it's eyewitness. And I would just say there is great inequity in what the world deems truthful on Jesus versus all other historical figures.

[21 : 29] Jesus is always held to a higher standard in terms of the writings. We want extra proof, different proof, more proof. Oh, but we'll believe in Alexander the Great.

who died in 323 B.C. The earliest biographical information we have of Alexander the Great is 300 years after his death. Oldest material on Alexander the Great is by a guy named Diodorus.

And he wrote a historical library in about 30 to 20 B.C. and references. That's the earliest information we have on Alexander the Great.

The oldest existing manuscript of Diodorus is actually located in Florence, Italy. A century A.D. That's 1300 years after Alexander's death.

That's a huge gap. But we don't question Alexander the Great. 1300 year gap. But then we come to Jesus. Scholars date the Gospel of John which we're reading from this morning to around 95 A.D.

[22 : 37] That's 60 years after the resurrection. Granted, we don't have the original autograph but we have actually a fragment of the Gospel of John that the scholars date to about 125 A.D.

Just about 30 years after John wrote the Gospel. This little fragment the John Ryland's Codex. It's a series of verses from John chapter 18.

You can actually see this little piece of parchment papyrus. Today, it's located at the Research Library at the University of Manchester in England.

We actually also possess almost a complete copy of John dated from the late 2nd century. The Bodmere papyri discovered in Egypt in 1952.

About 100 to 150 years after the original. Think about that. Compared to 1300 years for Alexander the Great. Within historical forensics church that's considered empirical evidence.

[23 : 44] So, when people say no, no your book man the Bible is just a telephone game you don't know what should be in there you don't know what's true. Church, I have a copy of the scriptures hanging on my wall in my office here.

A Geneva Bible from the 16th century. It uses the same source documents as the compilers of the ESV translation this 21st translation I have in my hand.

It's the same. It's not the telephone game. The historical record for the resurrection church is astounding.

It's actually quite, it's astounding. Alright, back to Mary. Look at verse 11 to the end here. It says here, but Mary stood weeping outside the tomb and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had laid one at the head and one at the feet.

They said to her woman, why are you weeping? And she said to them they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him. Having said this she turned around and saw Jesus standing but she did not know that it was Jesus.

[25 : 00] 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 have carried him away tell me where you've laid him and I will take him away.

Mary, and Jesus said to her Mary. She turned and said to him in Aramaic Rabboni which means teacher. And Jesus said to her do not cling to me for I have yet not I have not yet ascended to the Father but go to my brothers and say to them I'm ascending to my Father and to your Father to my God and to your God.

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples I have seen the Lord and that he had said these things to her. So Mary returns to the grave site sometime behind Peter and John she is distraught it says here the record is that she's weeping she's weeping why?

Because Jesus has changed her life and she sees the stone rolled away and thinks someone's stolen his body this time she looks into the tomb she's a little braver kind of peeks in and she sees two angels that are now present.

Now I don't know about you but that would freak me out I'm a little bit of a baby I was reminded of it yesterday I was here going over my notes and then who shows up?

[26 : 42] Melissa she's outside but she was nice she only yelled at me from a distance she didn't bang on the window but it was still enough to go oh don't do that to my heart right? and I just think about like Mary on that day looking in and seeing these two angels and just I mean to take your breath away and that's the scene that we have here and they ask her like what appears to be maybe a dumb question like woman why are you weeping?

kind of at first like the pieces like don't make sense here I think Jesus has been stolen his body and so she explains herself and then she gets the question a second time but from someone behind her woman why are you weeping?

I want us to note something here what do these questions reveal? what do they indicate to us? what they indicate to us is this is not a time for weeping that's what the questions tell us this time actually the question comes from Jesus only she doesn't recognize him at first is he the gardener?

I don't know she's crying maybe she can't see she's in shock just you know doesn't know who he just wasn't expecting him to be alive you ever had that occasion you go somewhere and then somebody like today everybody's dressed up who are you?

I don't know what's my I don't know who your name is like we're not used to this right? we're not in our natural habitat right? nobody's got Carhartts on this morning so I don't know who you are it's a strange church this morning but it's like she doesn't it's just out of context like he's alive and then he speaks her name Mary what's her response?

[28 : 36] teacher and then what do you have? you have this massive hug and church I think Mary was not letting go which is why Jesus said Mary time to release right?

but I think this is that scene from Narnia children this is Lucy right? this is Susan just locked on to Aslan the stone table is cracked and they're like we're not letting go and that's Mary on this first Easter morning I'm not letting go and then Jesus says Mary don't cling to me time to let go I have work to do and so now do you right and we talked about that this morning at our sunrise right share with us from Matthew 28 we have work to do we get to now tell people about the risen Jesus we get to go make disciples friends meeting Jesus was the best event in Mary's life the very best and it just got better on this day because it wasn't just new life in the present I get to live life without the bondage the guilt of sin

I'm forgiven for real but now because of the resurrection I get new life forever heaven's gates are open to me and church I just want to tell us this morning that offer is still good today we call it the gospel and if you're here this morning like Jay what's the gospel well let me tell you it's simply this God has a plan for all of mankind he made man in his image to enjoy friendship relationship with the maker of the universe actually wants to know us to walk in in communion with us fellowship with us friendship and God wants to give us a new life purposeful life life forever in his presence there's a problem however it's that we have this thing called sin that we have fallen short of God's holiness in our lives right the prophet

Isaiah in Isaiah 64:6 says you know what even our righteous deeds are like filthy rags like we can't do enough good things in this life to balance the scales and be able to have friendship with a holy God we can't get to God based upon the good things that we do we're stuck we don't get to enjoy this friendship we don't get to enjoy eternity with our maker because of our sin we can't earn it but here is the good news here's the gospel God provided a remedy for us himself Romans 5:8 says but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us Christ died to be the perfect sacrifice this was God's plan from the very beginning foreshadowed throughout the entire Old Testament that God's ancient people they sacrificed bulls and lambs and goats and it was a continual thing they had to continue to do that day of atonement the high priest would go into the holy of holies to shed blood of a sacrificed animal to cover the sins it was a temporary fixed and that occurred throughout the Old

Testament pointing us to Jesus on that day of atonement once a year the high priest went in to the holy of holies in the tabernacle sprinkled the blood of an animal sacrifice on behalf of God's people and they did it on the ark of the covenant this box that God asked Israel to build and it represented God's presence and the lid of this box it's actually called the mercy seat which is a strange name for the lid of a box but it's called the mercy seat and in Exodus 25 it's described to us on this mercy seat there's two cherubim of gold two angels of gold hammered work shall you make them on the two ends of the mercy seat facing one another and that's what the high priest had to do on the day of atonement every year it was a temporary fix church this is the day this is the actual place where sacrifice is made do you see the picture this is powerful church this is what the whole old testament was pointing towards because

[33 : 24] Mary on this day saw something that looked like the mercy seat she's looking in the tomb and what does she see she sees the real mercy seat because it says in verse 12 and she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain one at the head and one at the feet do you see it just like the mercy seat described in the old testament but here it is we're left with this image of the mercy seat some 1500 years later only the cherubim aren't made of gold and God wasn't in the form of a cloud but rather of a man praise God church amen that's why we celebrate Easter because Jesus has become our mercy seat if you will Jesus the very lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world and here's the really good news no one is too dirty for Jesus amen and I think that's why Mary grabbed on and wouldn't let go because she knew what she was once but church no longer that's her story and if you're in Christ that's our story and so the question for everyone how do we respond how will you respond to the offer of new life many of you here have right

Paul says in Acts 16 believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved believe place your faith in the person of Jesus and his work on the cross to be your payment trust that believe that believe is trust I'm going to trust what does it mean to trust back on the west side I used to work in downtown and downtown Bellevue and there were large buildings all around me and on occasion there would be window washers hanging off some of these high rises and these guys would be washing windows and they're just on a little bench two ropes maybe three these men were trusting in what those ropes to hold them it's not just intellectual ascent it's like I'm believing that this is going to hold me up in the middle in midair and that's what we talk about when we trust Jesus we're going Jesus I trust I believe that your sacrifice it's enough to forgive me of my sins

I believe that you rose from the grave which means if you live so can I that's what trust is it's it's it's believe it's faith I'm in church Jesus is the only one who can forgive sins he's the only one Jesus is the only one who can get you to heaven he's it don't trust your life to the good deeds you think you can do to appease a holy God I mean not if we're talking about holy God people are not generally good people as we like to believe trust your life your forever to the one who died in your place and then actually rose from the grave and Jesus says this in John 14 as he's preparing to participate in the last supper and leave his apostles he says hey because I live you also will live church that's what

I'm banking on for my forever and I know there's a many of you in here that are believing the same thing and if you came here this morning and you have never trusted in Jesus as your personal savior his eyes are kind he loves to forgive sinners and he would love to be your savior and it's just a simple prayer and it goes something like this pray with me father thank you for time together this morning thank you that you rose from the grave if I've never prayed and don't even know how to pray I just simply cry out to you Jesus and say Jesus I trust that you are God you're God's son you lived a sinless life you were murdered 2,000 years ago through crucifixion and you died in my place to make payment for all my sins past present future and then you rose from the grave you conquered sin and death and I trust and I trust that that's enough for me to get a new heart to be made new and to have all my sins forgiven forever would you be my savior just a simple prayer like that and Lord

I want to pray for those that are here they've never heard the gospel that they would pray that today maybe they'd have courage to talk with a friend maybe talk with one of us pastors and we'd love to share more but Jesus we're so thankful that you're a God that delights to forgive sinners that we are very different people today because of your sacrifice and the resurrection and Lord we love the fact that because you live so will we it's in your name we pray Jesus and all God's people said amen amen thank you Jay as we respond now