

Resurrection Long live the King

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[0 : 0 0] okay good morning everyone lovely to be part of Easter Sunday with you all even though remotely so we've seen again this week that death is very much a part of life now that's a cliché I know but it's a true cliché I googled it this week and apparently more than 157,000 people in our world die on average every day that's about 57 million people a year and when you put that in the context of 5,000 years of history and that gets to be an absolutely staggering figure a staggering death toll and of course the death toll is very personal thing isn't it because that includes countless unique people amazing people and people in who in their day were larger than life people whose influence in the world continues long after they died but in the end death got them all but this morning I want to talk to you about the person who defied the great equaliser that death the person who reversed the finality of death by coming back from the grave the person of whom we must say life was very much a part of his death so today we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is the person who so altered the course of history that we still talk about him 2,000 years later we still mark the event on our calendars 2,000 years later and most importantly we continue to be confronted by the consequences of his death and resurrection more than 2,000 years later we pick up the story in John chapter 20 and the first point if you're following through in the notes King Jesus is dead and you can't argue about the finality of death or can you well we all know that words of impact words are very very powerful Jesus had a rousing message that attracted so many over three years of his ministry but we all know that what people see impacts us far more than what we hear and so the issue we're confronting is dead means dead and here's the here's the problem for us Jesus said he was God that Jesus said he was God's Messiah God's King coming to the world to re-establish God's rule and establish a kingdom which would never ever end that

Jesus said he was God's long-awaited Savior come to rescue God's people by dealing with a sin giving them new hope for the future rising word rising message but if we pick up the story this morning the king is now dead beaten humiliated ridiculed crucified as a common criminal bayoneted or speared and finally taken down dragged away and buried David Butt took us through that awful story on Friday now surely that has to be the final criteria for evaluating everything Jesus said and did a rising message over three years but the king is dead and you can't argue with death can you it's not as if it's just a mistake because these Roman soldiers they dealt with death they had blood on their hands and these Roman soldiers knew Jesus was dead at the Roman governor pilot he was used to executing people he was satisfied that Jesus was dead and actually released his body for burial at two reputable Jews

Joseph and Nicodemus knew that Jesus was dead they actually embalmed his body and put it in a tomb and sealed it with a large rock that that final symbol of separating those who are dead from those who are living that large rock sealing off that tomb the tomb of the dead and even as most loyal disciples knew that Jesus was dead they just went home to grieve now whatever way you read that story you have to say what an anticlimax what an anticlimax a rising message over three years but the king is dead and you can't argue about the finality of death or can you well according to John the death and burial of Jesus was not the end of his story we pick up in verse one Mary Magdalene is at Jesus tomb before dawn in the darkness on what we would call Sunday morning three days after Jesus was crucified and she discovers the tomb open and Jesus body gone now understandably she's upset and confused and immediately reports back to Peter and John who in turn immediately went to the tomb to see for themselves and the question we have to ask and look at carefully carefully then is what did they see well traditionally and historically we've said talked about the empty tomb but of course that's not right because it wasn't quite empty so Peter and John see the not quite empty tomb yes the body of Jesus was gone but his grave clothes immediately

took their attention and actually become the focus of the story because they saw the grave clothes lying undisturbed and intact but in those days when a person died their body was wrapped from head to shoulders in from feet to shoulders rather in linen strips and the linen strips were soaked in a solution of aloe which was a powdered sweet smelling wood and another product called mirra and myrror and that was a sort of sweet smelling resin or gum which actually solidified when went hard then back in chapter 19 we're told that about 34 kilograms of this stuff was used to wrap the body of Jesus and essentially it made a cast around the body a bit like a modern plaster cast around a broken limb and then also the naked head was wrapped with a separate turban like a piece of cloth so what Peter and John saw was the empty cast and the head cloth neatly folded and put to one side just like you'd expect if someone took it off because they no longer needed it something really unusual had happened both John and Peter recognized that if thieves had stolen the body they would have taken the cast with them that would have been the quickest and easiest way to make an exit or if they wanted the body without the cast they would have had to cut all those wraps off and chances are left chunks of flesh or at least left the cast and the strips and pieces or again if Jesus had simply been unconscious and somehow or other come around after a period of time and got himself out even if that's possible then again the wrappings would have been broken anyway the point of the story is that the tomb was undisturbed except that Jesus body was gone and it's interesting the way John writes it because the significance of this is highlighted by John in the words he uses the different words he uses for saying so what did John and Peter say well verse 5 you look in there um stooping to look in John saw the linen cloths lying there the word there is to say or blepho that's the Greek verb and it means just to observe in other words he just roamed his eyes around and took in what his eyes could see he observed the grave clothes with no body and verse 6 Peter goes right into the tomb typical Peter he just rushes in John was a little bit hesitant a bit nervous maybe I don't know but Peter just rushes in no surprise there and he sees but the word there is the or oh oh in other words the same word as we use for theorizing Peter's looking around observes the intact tomb except the body's missing and he's trying to theorize or work out the significance of intact grave clothes but no body and then verse 8 finally John joins Peter in the tomb and sees and the word there is orato in other words it's a saying that reaches a conclusion an understanding so Peter and John see with understanding finally he concludes or they conclude that something really supernatural has happened Jesus had left his burial cast somehow or other come through the burial cast without damaging or disturbing it now verses 9 and 10 are also important um and it's it's a difficult verse to understand verse 9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead then the disciples went back to their homes so the immediate impact of the facts on Peter and John were that they believed they saw they theorized and they came to conclusion they believed the evidence for Peter and John was mind-blowing but compelling and it pointed to one conclusion Jesus was no longer dead Jesus somehow or other had come back to life and left his tomb in the most supernatural way not even disturbing the grave clothes now I think that the emphasis of verse 9 is that they didn't understand everything but they understood enough to know that the grave of Jesus was no longer their focus they didn't understand everything but they knew where he wasn't he was no longer in his grave and so verse 10 they did what you'd expect they went home to think further about the matter no longer was the grave the focus of their attention and I think the point that John's making is this that John's emphasis is that the disciples belief in the resurrection of Jesus came first based on the physical evidence before their eyes they didn't manufacture a resurrection story to agree with expectations they already had from

[11:08] Old Testament scriptures I think that's the point of verse 9 it wasn't as if they already knew and had clear understanding from the Old Testament that Jesus would rise from the dead no they didn't understand that that was that only came later with prompting for Jesus from Jesus only then did they understand that various Old Testament scriptures which they had read previously without understanding now became clear and added to what they'd seen physically with their own eyes the evidence that Jesus had come back from the dead Jesus had risen from the grave so that's the story at this point but the story continues and we switch focus to a very incredibly personal experience for Mary and the experience builds around the point King Jesus is alive and she says I've seen the Lord King Jesus is alive I've seen the Lord and this changes everything now when you look at verse 11 it's just sad isn't it Mary stood weeping outside the tomb remember it's it's pre-dawn it's in the darkness no lights you can just imagine the scene Mary was a deeply troubled woman now we know from other parts of the record of John that she was known she was a woman with

history she was known for her sexual sin she was one of the ladies about time to use a sort of modern term she was a woman who therefore was condemned by her fellow Jewish citizens condemned and rejected by the Jewish religious leaders condemned by God's law Mary had only a bleak future of hopelessness to look forward to but Mary had found new hope of salvation and belonging in the teaching of

Jesus it's interesting that you might recall only a few days earlier the extent of the hope that Mary had now placed in Jesus was expressed in her pouring a super expensive oil on him we're told in the text that it cost about a year's worth of wages to buy the stuff and there was Mary just pouring all over Jesus it was a demonstration of her total commitment to Jesus and her total trust in Jesus in Jesus she saw something that gave her hope when the Jewish religious system when her own religion left her hopeless and despairing but Mary before us again this morning in this story here she is standing in the darkness weeping bitterly her hopes had died and were buried with Jesus that's an incredible statement in her hopes had died and were buried with Jesus and she's left weeping despairing engulfed by both physical and spiritual darkness as she recognizes that with Jesus body gone she can't even grieve probably not only is the hope that she had in Jesus cause gone but the body's gone she can't even grieve she can't touch him she can't do that process that we all know to be such an important part of of relational things even at the end of a relationship well at that very point

Mary's Mary's darkness and despair is dispelled first two angels appear to her and then Jesus himself appears and speaks directly so that she knows he is alive and it's just a very very moving story that John records here's this woman and you wonder why she's even there because if any woman was going to be there and that's quite countercultural for a Jewish story to record a woman as a as a focus but if any woman was going to be there you might expect a Jesus mother to be there but no this woman with history with dubious character this woman who had put so much hope in Jesus is here in despair and weeping and yet when Jesus speaks to her we can just sense the renewed hope and joy surging through our body and becomes a confident statement to the disciples

I have seen the Lord so what Peter and John had derived from physical evidence Jesus Mary learned directly both as revealed truth and experiential truth used both those terms last week when they speak Jesus engages Mary relationally Mary he speaks to her he calls her by her name and her troubled dark heart is filled with truth and light and life not only is Jesus not in the grave anymore but he's alive he's out there he's on the loose and he's engaging Mary and replacing dispelling darkness and despair with hope and light and life look at verse 17 a wonderful verse in there

Jesus said to her do not cling to me I guess she must have thrown herself at his feet or something like that do not cling to me for I have not yet ascended to the Father but go to my brothers and say to them I am ascending to my Father and your Father to my God and your God now that's a that's a chock-a-block full of wonderful things type verse go to my brothers says Jesus tell them go to my I am ascending to my Father and your Father your Father Mary your God Mary the significance of this verse well so many things can be said about it Jesus is confirming that he has done what he said he would do as God's King and Saviour just a week earlier remember back to chapter 14 and that was only a few days earlier five or six days earlier chapter 14

[17 : 49] Jesus said to his people do not be troubled in heart I'm going away in death to prepare a place in heaven for you and then verse 6 of that same chapter over that meal that night only six days earlier Jesus also said I am the way the truth and the life no person comes to the Father but through me now in the words of a Colby Cannon song what Mary the lost and despairing needs most is to find the way back to God what Mary the confused and deceived needs most is the truth that will set her free from sin and death what Mary the dead in her sins needs most is life eternal abundant life and verse 17 here tells us that Mary had all her needs met in Jesus' death and resurrection all her needs were confirmed as being met in this one encounter

Jesus' resurrection had changed everything for Mary and the first disciples Jesus in speaking to her in being there confirmed that he is God who else has power and authority to come and go in his world as he needs to death could not hold him and now he says he will go back to his father and to his throne in heaven having completed his salvation task powerful irrefutable compelling evidence that Jesus is God and Jesus confirms that Mary was right to put her confidence and hope in him both she and the disciples are now in new relationship with the fathers through Jesus they have

new family with Jesus my brothers says Jesus they have new family with Jesus your father your God he speaks to Mary she who was distant and cut off from God because of our sin is now in new relationship with the father personal relationship with the father through Jesus new family new security which guarantees they will go to be with the father as Jesus will as he ascends so they will ascend and enjoy a resurrection with Jesus now friends there's the evidence compelling evidence and the evidence that King Jesus has risen and is alive and is on the loose still demands a verdict from you in 2020 that's John purpose in writing the biography we'll see that next week

John's purpose in writing this biography of the life of Jesus is to present the evidence that he believes will cause people to believe that Jesus is God and Savior and as a result find eternal life John's convinced that if people will only give the evidence a chance then they will be brought they will theorize like Peter and they'll be brought to a position of understanding that conclusion that Jesus is alive Jesus is God Jesus is God's Savior and that therefore everything is changed now here's a problem the evidence is compelling yet so many refuse to believe why is that do you think well it's very common to blame a lack of belief on a lack of evidence but that's just not right the evidence is compelling more likely in reality they don't believe because they don't like the implications of the evidence they don't like the implications of belief see here's how it works because if you believe in Jesus if you believe that Jesus is God that he really did beat death that he really came back that he's now alive and on the loose and at large in his own world ruling as God's King and Savior then that must force an admission from you the admission must be that I am not a good person that I of my own character my own nature I'm entitled to heaven and that I can sort of do some sort of bargain with God saying well of course I'm not as good as I could be but I'm not as bad as I could be either and so I'm entitled to heaven now belief in the resurrection of Jesus forces us to admit that that's not the case Jesus died to bring people like you and me into heaven and then this belief in Jesus forces the recognition that if Jesus is King and Savior then I must live all of life under his authority and that means and this is the really hard bit for most people that means giving up my autonomy there can't be two kings

I can't be king of my life and be autonomous and at the same time claim to live under the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ and that is so hard for us we don't want to give up our autonomy and the irony of the Easter story is in the words of Jesus in verse 15 he says who are you seeking whom are you seeking and here's the problem for us we long to be accepted with God we are seeking someone who will make us acceptable with God who will take us home to heaven we long to have security and hope given that we're so fragile and given that death is a certain part of life but we'd rather miss out on the way the truth and the life rather than give up our autonomy rather than totally commit to Jesus as Mary did so often people turn and walk away from

[24 : 37] Jesus even though he's the one that they've been seeking all their lifetime so friends Jesus' resurrection changes and it demands we change how we think about him how we think about ourselves I started by saying that death is very much a part of our life well I end by saying that Jesus backs the trend and offers us the life that is very much a part of his death this is why Easter is so offensive because there's not room for King me and King Jesus but there's also why Easter is so wonderful at the same time Jesus says to Mary why are you weeping in despair Mary there is no nothing so out of place as weeping in despair in the presence of the resurrected

Jesus who brings life and light and hope and security so Easter is it something that will be offensive to you or something that will be wonderful to you hopefully it's something that begins as an offence to you and challenges you and then reshapes you so it becomes wonderful to you but the question remains a very simple bland but profound question what will the Jesus who came back from the dead be to you thank you very much for listening I'm going to pray and hopefully you'll join me in prayer and then we'll throw back to Rob Lord we echo your words to Mary why are you weeping we identify with Mary

Lord caught up in sometimes the despair of life sometimes Lord we're just reduced by our fragility to sadness and weeping we thank you Lord at that very point of need you spoke into Mary's life dispelled her despair and made hope new hope and confidence and security and life surge through her body and I pray Lord that you might do that for each one of us listening in today that you might re-energize us for those of us who are ready committed to serving you fill us again Lord with the admiration of your love for us and the desire to serve you better and for those Lord who might be listening this morning who still want to be king in their own lives Lord confront and break down that opposition so they might seek you the living

Lord and know life life eternal life abundant pray this in Jesus name Amen Amen Amen Amen drum
up ■■■■ Holy beams through march health amenzh