

# Easter Sunday

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 20 April 2025

Preacher: Richard Brown

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Today is Easter Day. We've been through Good Friday. We've not had an early morning service as some churches do.
- ! So we are still between Good Friday and the resurrection.! And the women who were not as afraid as the men who had run away and had hidden and had clustered themselves in an upper room.
- But the women knew that there was work to be done still and an honour to be paid to the teacher. So they set out, no doubt with quite heavy hearts, on that first Easter morning, thinking, why did it have to happen this way?
- Why did our leader die? We've seen him raise people from the dead, and yet he himself was killed on a cross and now buried. But at least we can go and honour his memory by anointing him in the appropriate way.
- And they set out and they headed towards the tomb, expecting to see a dead body wrapped in linen cloths that they would anoint with the appropriate oils and spices, as was their custom.
- [ 1 : 2 3 ]     When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?
- Peter said, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Jesus said, feed my lambs. Again, Jesus said, Simon, son of John, do you love me?
- He answered, yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Jesus said, take care of my sheep. The third time he said, Simon, son of John, do you love me?
- Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, do you love me? He said, Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you.
- Jesus said, feed my sheep. And I reckon if anyone could have been relieved that Jesus came back from the dead, it would have been Peter who had denied him three times before his death.
- [ 2 : 2 7 ]     And here was Jesus standing in front of him, challenging him, but also giving him responsibility. And Peter has that opportunity in front of the risen Christ to do his repentance and apology and commit his life to Jesus.
- He is risen. Lovely. As you all know, who come here regularly when I do these, it wouldn't be a family service of mine without some sort of quiz.
- There are no deliberate trick questions this time, but when I looked through the answers from where I got the quiz, I thought, actually, some of the answers aren't that obvious. So let's see how people get on with these.
- Okay, so don't shout out. Stick up your hand so I know where the noise is coming from. And then I'll point to you. And if you're wrong, I'll say, I'm sorry, someone else.
- Okay. Okay. At Christ's crucifixion, and we will start with younger people first, if they want to answer this. The soldiers put something on Jesus' head.
- [ 3 : 4 3 ]     Was it a crown of metals? A crown of thorns? A crown of jewels? Or a crown of thistles?

Not the gentleman in the Czech shirt, the girl in the red and white spots next to him. Yes. Crown of thorns?

Yes. Risky business in this service this morning. It's probably going to go near Elijah's head. Oh!

Or maybe not. Yes, a crown of thorns. Next question. For what reward did Judas betray Christ?

Okay. So again, younger people to start with. Was it for £10? For £20? For 30 pieces of silver?

[ 4 : 39 ] Or for 40 euros? I've got someone who's starting their hand up very quickly at the back. Yes? 30 pieces of silver. Very good. Yes. Don't think this has got the weight to travel the whole distance.

Oh, nearly. Okay. Christ was led away to which high priest first? He got arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.

And the soldiers that arrested him took him away. Which high priest first? Judas priest? Annas? Caiaphas?

Or Josephus? This is probably the first slightly tricky question. In a younger person. Yes. Caiaphas? It was Caiaphas. Very good. That could be considered a slightly trick question, because he was taken to Annas first, but Annas was the father-in-law of the high priest, not high priest himself.

Okay. What was inscribed above the cross? What did the Romans write above the cross? This is the prince of the Jews, the king of the Jews, the saviour of the Jews, the president of the Jews.

[ 6 : 02 ] Yes, the gentleman in the check shirt. Yes. King of the Jews. Yes. Very good. Great. Yay! Next question. Who was first on the scene after the resurrection of Christ? Simon Peter? Cleopas? Judas Iscariot? Or Mary Magdalene? Someone who's not answered before. I don't want to...

Yes? Mary Magdalene. Very good. Did you read that yourself or have it read to you?

Okay, next question. Pilate, who was the Roman governor, authority, civil authority in Israel at the time, found no guilt in Christ.

[ 7 : 09 ] He found no crime to punish. But why did the Jews say that Jesus should die? And this possibly is the slightly most tricky question. Not sure you count as a young person still, shall we?

We might come to you in a minute. He claimed to be an alien passing by. He said he would destroy the temple. He claimed to be their king.

He claimed to be the son of God. Yes. He claimed to be the son of God. That was the particular...

That was a particular one, the son of God. He did actually, within interrogation, all three of the final three came up, not the first one, but it was specifically that he claimed to be the son of God that upset them.

Okay. Possibly slightly easier one again. Which disciple wanted to see the imprint of the nails before he would believe? Andrew, Thomas, James or Bartholomew?

[ 8 : 19 ] Thomas, yes. Doubting Thomas. Close.

Hold in your hand. Okay. Okay. So, Jesus was sent to another authority figure after he was being interrogated.

So, who interrogated him next? Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, or Fiona Bruce? Anyone not answered, slightly younger generation?

I can go to a slightly older... Yes? Not to Annas, no. Herod, yes.

This might need to be the biggest throw. Mind the glass behind you. Treasurer will have my guts for garters. I need some extra weight on some of these.

[ 9 : 28 ] We're at the final question. No, we're not at the final question yet. How long did Jesus remain after his resurrection on earth before he ascended into heaven? Seven days, 14 days, 40 days, or 49 days?

Anyone who's not answered yet will go... Yes? 40 days, yes. Oh, right, still more biblical ones.

How did Jesus betray Christ? How did he point Jesus out to the soldiers that came to arrest Jesus? By pointing at him, using facial recognition, with a kiss, or with a high five?

Anyone who's not answered yet? Sherwin, you had your hand up very quickly. How did you recognize? Not primarily. Joe?

With a kiss, yes. He did, of course, have to recognize his face first. Oh, people ducking there.

[ 10 : 50 ] All right, here's the non-biblical one. Where did the Easter bunny originate? Okay. The American White House on April the 22nd, 1878, because of an association with the spring goddess, the Ostra, whom a bunny or a hare was, if you like, a spirit animal type thing.

Some strange German-Lutheran folk tale back in the late Middle Ages. Or, was it originally a chocolate company advertising gimmick?

Right, we'll do this in sections. Okay? So, hands up if you think it originated in the American White House on April the 22nd, 1878.

Anybody think that? Okay? We've got a few takers for that. Okay? Who thinks it's because it was associated with the spring goddess, Eustra, from which we take the word Easter?

Okay, a few, possibly a few more. Okay? Who thinks it is some strange German Lutheran folk tale?

[ 12 : 15 ] Not as many again, but they were all quite confident. And who thinks it was a chocolate company advertising gimmick?

Some of you haven't stuck your hands up yet. Okay, all those who said a German Lutheran folk tale are correct.

And at the end of the service, you may come up and collect your reward because I'm not throwing out handfuls at a time. And the story is that the Lutherans had this strange Easter, well it was a hare originally, not a bunny, someone's nodding their head, they also know the story better than I do even.

And this Easter hare would judge the children through Lent as to whether they had been good enough to receive gifts at Easter or not.

So if you like, a very much an Easter version of Father Christmas. Christmas. Now this may or may not work, well it always may or may not work, this may not work very well.

[ 13 : 29 ] I need those who found the paper eggs to come up to the platform please, with your egg.

Now if you've already delivered your egg and don't want to come up to the platform, that's fine, I can find someone to substitute for you. If you stand on the platform with your egg please, there should be seven in total.

Oh, did you find both of those? One in each hand, do you have it to stand on the platform or not? If you don't, you find someone else to hold the other one. Find a substitute, one, two, three, four, five, six.

Oh, I'm missing one. All right, okay. You better come up here for her then and wait until she comes back. Thank you.

All right, so two more volunteers please. Two more volunteers. Thank you, Marina. It doesn't matter who volunteers you, even if you don't volunteer yourself, as long as you're willing.

[ 14 : 52 ] Right, so one, two, three, thank you, four, five, six, seven. Thank you for the blue touch. If you don't want to do more, that's lovely. Mark will be very happy to get it back in his office later.

So the younger ones may have trouble reading this. So we've got seven appearances of Jesus after the resurrection, before his ascension.

So who can remember the first person that Jesus appeared to after the resurrection?

Mary Magdalene. How many got Mary Magdalene written on the back? Lovely. So you're in the right place. Okay, who were the second person or people to see Jesus after the resurrection?

This is a really tricky quiz. I couldn't have done this without a lot of help from the Bible. Anyone want to hazard a guess? Not Peter.

[ 15 : 56 ] Sorry, louder. No. The other ladies. Yes. So the other ladies were, can you remember one of their names?

There was another Mary. Someone should have Mary Salome. That's all. You move to there then, second position. Lovely. Okay, who's the third person? Women, women, and at last, Peter.

Who's got Simon Peter written on the back? Lovely. Third position. Who was the fourth person or people that Jesus appeared to? not John, I hear whisperings of John.

He mentioned already the road to Emmaus. Yes, so who's got Clopas and companion on the road to Emmaus? So you're in fourth position. One, two, three, four, five.

One, two, three, four, five. Okay, fifth appearance. fifth appearance. Larger group.

[ 17 : 10 ] Okay, someone said the disciples in the upper room quite loudly. Is that correct? No? Correct, it is not correct because all except Thomas, thank you, all except Thomas.

So the eleven disciples minus Thomas. Yeah, we've got someone moved into position. Lovely. So number six, who is next? I'll give you a big clue.

It's very closely allied to the one we've just said. All the disciples plus Thomas. Yes, we've got that. And the one person at the end, anyone know who the person at the end has got written on the back of their piece of paper?

Peter. This is a very tricky one. Not Peter, well, Peter might have been included. Think breakfast possibly.

Okay, there were seven disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. Okay, at the bottom of your piece of paper on the back, you should have something written. Can you read what it says? Matthew.

[ 18 : 28 ] Chapter 16, verses 30, 20. And Sam will now come and read that to us.

Thank you very much. You may take from the lucky dip as you go. Thank you. Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah.

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, who do people say the son of man is?

They replied, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and still others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. But what about you, he asked, who do you say I am?

Simon Peter answered, you are the Messiah, the son of the living God. Jesus replied, blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my father in heaven.

[ 20 : 10 ] And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you lose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

And now if we can get technology to work, there might still be a small pause if we can, a short video before hopefully what will still be a short talk.

Apparently that is 17 years old. It's very similar to the story that someone told about a dream they'd had that encouraged me to faith. When they said they were standing in front of the judgment throne at heaven, and were asked, well, what have you got to say for yourself?

And before they could even open their mouth, they said I had a vision of Jesus stepping into the picture and saying, it's all right, I'll speak for him. And at that moment I knew I couldn't expect Jesus to speak for me.

[ 21 : 38 ] As some of those people found Jesus speaking for you is important. Let's have a quick run through some of the ways other people or different people think about finding salvation.

Another first slide from the Easter Day talk please. Oh, no previous. Okay, so we need to go backwards and backwards and backwards.

Lovely, thank you. Easter Day. Hinduism. Anyone know who the founder of Hinduism was? not surprising because nobody knows.

Sacred scripture. Anyone know about sacred scripture for the Hindus? Any particular book? Again, no, there's no single one book that you have to read or believe or to follow.

how do they obtain salvation? Anyone want to make suggestions? Okay. Salvation for Hindus is obtained when an enlightened human being is freed from the endless cycle of death and reincarnation and comes into a state of completeness of being at one with Brahman, the universal divine ground of all being.

[ 23 : 11 ] You never know whether you've reached that point or not. Okay, for the Jews, who was the founder, if you like, of the Jewish faith?

Abraham, yeah. What is their sacred scripture? The Torah, just the Torah? The Old Testament, yeah.

We've got experts to my left here. The Torah is the first five books, what we call the Pentateuch, and then they have also what we call the prophets, the Nevim, and the other writings, so Psalms, Song of Solomon, Proverbs, that sort of thing, are called the Ketuvim or the Writings.

How about salvation for the Jews? What is salvation for the Jews? How is that obtained? Through works, essentially. salvation for the Jews is viewed as much as for the Israelites as a people group as it is for individuals.

Essentially, it is obtained, as Helen says, by your good deeds out balancing your bad, alongside a life which is consistent with the religious devotion and the practice of following those what we call Old Testament teachings and scriptures.

[ 24 : 33 ] Muslims, founder of the Islamic faith, Mohammed. Their holy book is the Quran.

How do they obtain salvation? Essentially through works again, yep. you must believe in one God, you must practice the five pillars of Islam and do good deeds.

They do have mercy and forgiveness from God in their religious practices, and you must live a life of submission to his will. But salvation is still ultimately the gift of God based on how he judges your actions and deeds throughout life with no final guarantee.

Buddhism. Who's the founder of Buddhism? Buddha, yes. Not a trick question, honest. What about their sacred scriptures? Even Helen's puzzled for this one.

No single collection of sacred texts is given priority over any other. There are different selections. Probably the most well known is the Bhagavad Gita, I can't remember how it's pronounced.

[ 25 : 59 ] But beyond that, you have to understand the four noble truths, follow the noble eightfold path. It's beginning to sound like an American self-help book.

And then through meditation and ethical living, the aim is to achieve nirvana, love. It's the liberation from the cycle of death and rebirth and the ending of craving and attachment.

What about Christians? Don't answer this, please, because I'm going to run through some scriptures. How do we say you can achieve salvation? Well, in chapter 3 of John, there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council.

He came to Jesus at night and said, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him. Jesus replied, very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.

So something specific has to happen. How can someone be born again when they are old? Nicodemus asked. Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born. Jesus answered, very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the spirit.

[ 27 : 29 ] and by water it's generally considered the water of baptism, not the water of birth. In Corinthians, Paul writes, if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, are our preaching and this service is useless, and so is your and my faith.

More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God. For we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead.

But he didn't raise him if the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile.

You are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

[ 28 : 50 ] But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. Hallelujah. And then Peter's famous sermon on the day of Pentecost finishes with Therefore let all Israel be assured of this.

God has made Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Messiah. Messiah. When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?

Peter replied, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call.

Our faith is not in our own works and deeds. Our faith is in the risen Jesus Christ and putting our trust in him.

[ 30 : 08 ] Now you may have seen something come up briefly that said the trolley problem. You can put that title slide up.

Thank you. So many of you will know that the trolley problem is a philosophical problem about do you switch the points on a tram track to kill one person or lots of people.

This trolley problem is nothing to do with that. So that's a picture of a trolley, a shopping trolley. I don't know which supermarket it's from.

It is in a I'm not sure it's even a river or a stream. It's in a water channel that goes into the North Sea just outside Ingold Mells which is just north of Skeg Nest.

I took that picture back in 2016. It was nine years ago. It wasn't the first time I'd taken a picture of that trolley. It's been there even longer. I go back every year on a walk to see what's happening.

[ 31 : 12 ] This year, trolley outside Ingold Mells near Skeg Nest, just north of Skeg Nest. Same trolley, taken this year, nine years on.

You can tell that it is even more battered and old and decrepit. Now, I hope this doesn't stretch the illustration too much.

That trolley cannot save itself and clearly has not been able to save itself. If we were that trolley, we would need to cry out to someone to come and save us.

And that is what Christ does. If you cry out to him, he will come and save you from a life that ends up wasted and rusting. I don't want to stretch the illustration a bit further because some of us have been Christian Christians for quite a while or even coming to church and maybe don't think or aren't sure we're Christians yet for quite a while.

And we've been sitting in the presence of God for nine years or longer. And the tide's gone out and the tides come in. And people have walked past and people have walked back.

[ 32 : 27 ] And nothing has changed us at all. have we cried out to God to say help us I need rescuing.

And if we have are we daily crying out to God saying help me to know what I need to do to be obedient to your love.

I'm going to stand and sing our final song. You're the Lion of Judah. I just wanted to bring the service to an end with something that reminds us that although we are saved individually Jesus is the king of the whole world.

He's the king of glory. He's going to come back as a saviour of the whole world. Those who know him will celebrate. Those who do not know him will have everlasting shame and anguish.

as the king of all kings, the lord of all lords, the lamb who was slain for us as individuals, but the world needs to know it for them too, that they also may be able to put their confidence not in themselves, but in the Christ who has overcome death and sin for us.

[ 33 : 48 ] Please stay for fellowship over tea and coffee when you have to leave the building, where you go, knowing the love of Christ and knowing that you have a message of love and hope to share with a world that doesn't yet know Christ.

Amen.