

The Day of Resurrection

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[0 : 00] Now, in this country, we're not really used to earthquakes, are we? Don't usually happen up here, even though we're just about on top of a fault line on the Great Glen.

! But anyone who's maybe spent a little time in the Pacific Rim, and those countries that adjoin that will probably experience that earthquake.

Earthshaking, that is a tropical storm, or it could be an earthquake. Now, my daughter spent some time in New Zealand, and when she used to FaceTime us, the first time we heard that she was in an earthquake, myself and Yvonne, understandably, were getting a little bit concerned.

But as time went on, and the phone calls got, you know, through time more and more, and, you know, we used to ask her, have you been in an earthquake again, you know?

And she was getting quite blasé about this, and she used to just, don't worry about it, Dad. You'll be fine, you know? Don't worry. And earthquakes actually happen quite a lot out there, all in that area.

[1 : 30] And as I said to you, you know, first time we were quite worried, and she was a little bit worried as well. And if you remember the earthquake that happened about three or four years ago in Canterbury, where everything got a good shake, well, the Kiwis actually have christened that event the Wobble.

The Wobble. Okay, so that's what they've christened it. So anyway, as we know, earthquakes can also cause tsunamis.

Tsunamis. So how many of you can remember that big tsunami in 2004? Okay, can you remember that one?

Yeah, there's a lot of noddings ahead here. And, you know, we kind of forget how many lives that tsunami took as the result of an earthquake.

And I did some research into this. And do you know this? It was responsible for 230,000 deaths. That's something that wasn't communicated to us.

[2 : 48] 230,000 people died as a result of that earthquake in 2004. So maybe it isn't a surprise to us that with such an event as God overcoming death itself, the very earth is described as shaking.

Now imagine the power and the energy that's needed to bring someone back from the dead.

It'll be colossal. And in recent years, we've understood how our bodies keep score of traumatic events that happen in our lives.

Our brain and our nervous systems are changed. And traumatic reactions can be triggered years, years after event has taken place.

And I've got a bit of recollection of that. When I used to work for Hydro Electric as a way leave officer, I can remember being with a landowner and asking for permission to cross his land with a line, an electricity line, way up far down south of Inverness.

[4 : 21] Now this guy, he was an elderly gentleman, I'll be quite honest. You know, a traditional estate owner, I would say. But in his youth, he'd served in the special forces out in Burma, actually.

And he'd served there. And you know this, we were walking over a field, and I was trying to show him where the line was meant to be going. We were proposing, because he wanted to walk it and see it, you see.

So, as we were going, walking over the field, one of those scare guns, you might have had them in the fields around here, just went off all of a sudden.

And do you know this? I looked around and, where is the laird, you know? And he was on the floor. That was his automatic reaction to hearing a gunshot.

Bang, down he went. There was no question. He was there. So, if we think about that Easter story, the whole Easter story that we know, it's full of violence, isn't it?

[5 : 32] It's full of death. It's full of shaking, and it's full of lightning. And it reminds us.

It reminds us of our cosmic connection with all of creation. God is in all the elements of our world. He's in earth. He's in water. He's in wind. He's in fire. Body, spirit, life, and death. He's there. And that whole cycle. And that whole cycle. That whole cycle of life, death, rebirth, that we see every day.

Every day we see that in some form. In the progression of, say, seed to flower. Flower to fruit. Flower to fruit.

[6 : 34] Fruit to seed. Think about it. That could be seen just now in our fields around our town here. Our farmers are sowing their spring barley for what it's worth.

But this cycle of life is really played out on a cosmic scale in Jesus' death and resurrection. And through the Bible, we see the raw, the powerful, the destructive and creative forces of creation. Don't we? And that can be fierce. And it can also be absolutely terrifyingly beautiful at the same time.

All these powers combining. And that's an emotional journey for us as well. If we think about it.

[7 : 45] And that emotional journey mirrors this dramatic cycle of Easter in all its power, with all the emotions.

Think about it. In just three days, three days, we've gone from despair through to fear.

And now we're in joy. We've gone from abandonment to closeness.

From emptiness to presence. Think about the women that we heard about in Matthew's Gospel. Crying, crying with grief. Transfixed with fear. And finally, singing with joy as they clasped Jesus' feet.

[8 : 54] Think about it. The very earth was trembling with joy. And I ask you today, can we still feel that echo reverberating in our lives?

That connection. When we experience the love of God in the wild and extremes of creation and our humanity, can we feel the fear and the pain of the earth as maybe we pollute her seas, we destroy her forests as the whole of creation groans and shakes?

Can we bring the joy of love and rebirth again and again to a new generation?

A new generation of our world and her people. people. We've got to ask ourselves, can we be resurrection people?

Now, in the other Gospels of the Bible, the women, the women find the stone rolled back.

[10 : 27] But in Matthew, they see God's angel descending, rolling back the stone and sitting on that stone. It's a little bit of a difference.

And the resurrection shakes the world. And it is with both fear and joy that they run. Those women run with their news.

They run with their news. Now, in a medical journal that I was privy to read for the research here, on the subject of grief, the writer in that article states that when someone we love has died, our healing requires both accepting death's reality and finding a place for that person in our ongoing life.

So have a think about that. But I would like to say to you that that takes time, doesn't it? That really does take time. Even with an earthquake.

The first angel, and then Jesus himself, if you remember, said, do not be afraid. Do not be afraid.

And we need to hear that message, that divine message, again and again in our lives.

[12 : 13] Now, we are aware in certain societies around this world where there are religious police going around.

and they're there to suppress vice. Now, I can remember an incident, and you probably will as well, about three years ago where two women in Iran, funnily enough, had yogurt thrown over them for not for not covering their heads whilst out shopping.

I think some of you might remember that. The religious police at work. So the guards at Jesus' tomb, I would say, were such religious police.

men under the command of the chief priests! who had accompanied them when the stone was sealed.

And we've got to recognize that because it highlights the extraordinary contrast between those women running to tell other people and the men as they encountered the Lord's angel in that earthquake.

[13 : 49] So think about it. we're told that the guards shook and became like dead men. Like dead men.

That to me says it's almost like a rabbit caught in your headlights. Isn't it? If you think about it. But the two Marys, they were able to run with that life, that life giving news.

And I want to remind you today that God's God's kingdom cannot be shaken. It cannot be shaken.

And it is only faith and it's hope and it's love that abides. You need to remember that.

It's only those three that abide. and the readings, the readings I presented you today and was read to us today, they were a bit of a roller coaster, weren't they, if you think about it?

[15 : 04] From shaking to fear with prostate with joy. the guards appear to be traumatized.

As I said to you before, like rabbits in a spotlight or your headlights. And then we've got this angelic figure that if you were a non-Christian you could say it would be something out of a fantasy movie.

and the women, they don't know whether to laugh or to cry. And I would ask you today on Easter morning, have you got similar feelings about the Easter story?

how do we feel about a God that loves us so much that he sent his son to die for us?

And he even promises to forgive our sins. And he even promises to share eternal life with us.

[16 : 26] And how do we feel about that God this morning where death is not the end, it's just the beginning?

Amen. Amen.