

The Empty Tomb & Rising Faith

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[0 : 0 0] Well, thank you, Tim and the worship team. It's always great to be led into the presence of the Lord through singing,! Through the ministry of the word that comes through our singing together! And reminding ourselves what the word says, who Jesus Christ is, what he's accomplished for us, and what it means for us as a result of those truths.

Those truths aren't truths in and of themselves. They're meant to have a connection to your life. They're meant to lead to change in your heart. And this morning, we will come to John chapter 20.

So turn with me to John chapter 20, if you will. If you're a guest with us this morning in the Pew Bible, in front of you, it's on page 906. We're moving now into the resurrection narrative.

And any of you who are paying attention through the songs that we were singing would realize that the songs had very much to do about our resurrected Savior and what the resurrected Savior does for us.

What the reality of Christ and the new life that he had, the resurrected life of Christ, what it does for you. And through the next several weeks, as we look at the resurrection narrative, I want to be able to make a connection for each of us as we look into the word to know that the resurrection isn't just a truth that stands on its own without having some sort of effect in your life.

[1 : 3 5] I want you to recognize this morning, as we maybe show the first slide here, that the resurrection life, the empty tomb, will result in rising faith for those people who are truly followers of him.

Now, this morning, we may or may not be able to see all those slides, but you do have in your bulletins and inserts, so you can follow along one of two ways. You can either follow along here as a result of the bulletin insert, and hopefully we'll be able to follow along on the board too, but that may or may not actually take place.

So, yesterday as I was looking at the passage, my daughter was sitting next to me and she says, Daddy, it's not Easter yet. What are we doing looking at the resurrection?

I want you to know the reality of the resurrection, whether it's in Easter or it's on this day, should connect with our hearts, should lead us to resurrection life, and should lead us to rising faith, as we'll see in our passage before us.

Several years ago, as I had just graduated from college and moved to Southern California, I was working full-time at a company there, but also thought I would make some income on the side.

[3 : 0 7] So, seeing some friends who were growing up in my hometown of Cedarville, thousands of miles away, and they were beginning the process of building this business, if you remember, it was about the time when all the utilities, the monopolies were beginning to be deregulated and broken apart, and so communication was one of those things that the phone company, AT&T; in particular, they were being broken up, and now other people could be part of the game of selling communication.

Well, this being at the very beginning of the process, many people in building a business, in selling their communication service, and this kind of pyramid scheme of getting customers, and benefiting from their calls, and making revenue on the people that they signed up, it was really attractive, at least at first, and for people who were go-getters, it was a great investment of time.

But as more companies came into play, and as cell phone service began to rise, and now long distance was no longer an issue, the people who had invested so much time in building this communication business were left with something that no one really needed or wanted anymore.

So all of that investment left them feeling a bit depleted, a little discouraged, that anyone who had set their hopes on this being a future moneymaker, this was going to be their retirement down the road, now we're left with the reality, the fact that what they were putting their hope in was really not going to play out the way they had anticipated.

They were left, probably many of them, with some feelings of hurt, a little betrayal perhaps, a little discouraged about all of the hard work that they had put into this company wasn't going to pay the dividends that they had hoped for.

[5 : 13] Now, maybe you have had a similar experience, where you've put your hope and confidence in a product, or in a person, and through the course of life, the promises that you were given about that product, or the hope that you had in that individual as being able to deliver for you.

Over time, there was this reality check, this gut check, that they really weren't going to, they weren't going to follow through the way you had anticipated.

And maybe there was a sense in your own heart of betrayal, a sense of discouragement. How could I have been so foolish to put so much hope in this product, or so much hope in this individual?

What was I thinking? How could I have been so silly? I explain this to you because I wonder if maybe that's where the disciples were at this point in the journey.

As far as Jesus was concerned, and as far as their discipleship was concerned, they were all in.

[6 : 29] They had made a significant investment in this ministry. They had left family, and friends, and income, and property, and inheritance, so that they could follow after this one, Jesus Christ, who made the claim that He was the Messiah, that He was the one to follow.

Imagine, for a moment, the shock that they experienced, the feelings of betrayal, when after this amazing week of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem, it ends in tragedy.

It ends abruptly. It ends in public humiliation for the person that they were following. So much so that every pilgrim in all of Israel had come to Jerusalem for this important festival.

The Passover. This was the high point of the Jewish calendar. When all the pilgrims had come, and so Jesus, in ministering to people in Galilee, and people in Judea, and people in Perea, on the other side of the Jordan, and people in Jerusalem, they came, and they knew Jesus.

He had taught them personally in their hometown. But here He was, hanging on a cross. Huh. It's a good thing I didn't follow that guy.

[8 : 02] Look at where His life ended. Look at the tragedy of His life. And the feelings, perhaps, of shame and embarrassment, and being a bit perplexed.

How could they have put all of their hope in this one, Jesus? Jesus. But here they are, and we find them in John chapter 20. They show up here at the tomb.

And although in their future, as they look down the road, there is no place that is safe for them, not only in terms of potential persecution because of following after Jesus, but also the humiliation of everyone and all the surrounding regions knowing just who they were, through feelings of personal loss and the nagging feeling that the last three years had been wasted, they're still here.

They're still here at the tomb. We find them experiencing the benefits of the resurrection as we look at this passage this morning.

The empty tomb would make all things new for them. It would make all things new. And this morning as we look at this, I want you to understand that the resurrection leads to rising faith.

[9 : 29] It leads to rising faith. First, I want you to see that faith is a personal journey. Faith is a personal journey.

We find that here in verse 1 and 2. Let me read this for us. It says, 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.

Period. Now, for any of you who have grown up in church, and for any of you who are familiar with the resurrection accounts, recognize the spotty detail that John gives to us in this moment.

One verse to essentially summarize the entire events that are taking place for Mary at the tomb. Keep your finger here in John chapter 20, and turn with me, if you would, over to Luke 24.

I want to fill this out for you a little bit so you can see for yourself what is taking place, and so we can ask ourselves the question, what in the world does John have in mind?

[10 : 45] What is the point of this passage for us? In Luke chapter 24, beginning at verse 1.

And we could look at Matthew, we could look at Mark, I have those passages noted for you in your handout, but this morning we only have time to look at one of these three other accounts.

It says, But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. Now, who is the they? Jump down just for a second to verse 10, and you'll see who the they was.

Now, it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. So how many women are we talking about?

At least four, and probably many others. That's who shows up to the tomb. Verse 2. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

[11 : 49] But when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel.

And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but he is risen.

Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise?

And they remembered his words in returning from the tomb. They told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. That's verse 1 of John, chapter 20, verse 1.

So, you might ask yourself the question, Where are all of the other women? What about the earthquake that we find in Matthew?

[12 : 53] What about the soldiers that they seem to have stepped around in order to get to the tomb? What about the angels that show up in radiant splendor?

And what about the message that the angels deliver to these women? And what about the faith that we seem to find in this group of women in returning to tell the apostles about the news?

Why is John seem to be so fascinated with Mary? Why her story? Why is it just Mary that we find here in John's account?

Was John uninformed about what had happened? Is John confused in some way? Or does John have a special objective, a focus that he desires to communicate?

Well, there's some truths we need to remember when we look at passages like this. We need to understand, first of all, that Scripture is true, not just in concept, but in content.

[14 : 04] not just in the ideas that it shares, but in the actual words that it uses. Scripture is true. And because it's true that the details of the word can be harmonized.

They work together. They don't contradict each other. So the accounts that we find in Matthew and Mark and Luke fill out for us a deeper, fuller view of the events that take place here at the tomb.

But John has a reason. What is John's purpose for focusing on Mary? I believe we can find the purpose as we think about his purpose statement we find here in this chapter.

We're finally getting to the end. We're finally getting to this purpose statement that John shares with us in John 20, 31. These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

John wants us, the readers, to come to faith. And he wants you to realize that coming to faith is a personal journey.

[15 : 21] No one can believe for you. It is something you must believe for yourself. And all throughout the Gospel of John, John brings this point to bear in our hearts.

We read several accounts through all of the Gospel that focus on individuals. John is interested in the unique stories of individual people.

We find specific stories only in the Gospel of John that concentrate on individuals. In chapter 1, the story of Andrew. In chapter 1, the story of Philip and Nathaniel.

In chapter 3, the story of Nicodemus. In chapter 4, the story of the Samaritan woman. Towards the end of chapter 4, the story of the nobleman's son.

And then the lame man by the pool of Bethesda. Remember, Jesus walks by all of these sick people, picks out one, and ministers to the one. The woman caught in adultery in chapter 8.

[16 : 28] The man born blind in chapter 9. The raising of Lazarus in chapter 11. And then this concentration of ministry we find from chapters 13 to chapter 17 where Jesus focuses in on his disciples.

Ministry specifically to them. And here, his focus on Mary Magdalene. John is interested in reinforcing the message.

Faith is a personal journey. It can be reinforced by a faith community. But it must be embraced by you personally.

So how does Mary respond? Where is Mary in this narrative? What is her conclusion? What does she walk away with? What is Mary's initial conclusion?

That is point number two. Let's look at it here in verse 2 and see. It says, So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple and the one whom Jesus loved.

[17 : 33] And she said to them, They have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him. That's her conclusion.

There are so many positive things about Mary Magdalene. We'll look at her story a little bit more in depth next week. So please come back so we can see the rest of the story from Mary Magdalene.

It is an exciting story. Here we find she comes up. She shows up immediately after the Passover. The morning after the Passover.

She is there when? Look at the text. When does she show up in verse 1? The sun hadn't even come up yet. She is ready to go to minister to her Lord.

She has a plan we find from the other gospel records. She comes prepared with her friends to tend to the body to anoint it with spices.

[18 : 37] You may ask yourself the question what is the point of Mary anointing Jesus' body when it had already been done as we saw last week by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea? Well if you remember the urgency of the moment that the Roman soldiers had to break the legs of those criminals hanging on the cross because the Sabbath was coming quickly you realize that there was a condensed window of time in which to get the body down to get permission from Pilate to run the body to the tomb to put it in the right place to anoint and prepare it the right way wrapping it the way it was supposed to be wrapped get all of that done get back home before Sabbath begins.

And Mary Magdalene the other Mary and several other women with her only ones to observe this from a distance recognize that the preparation of the body had not quite been to their satisfaction.

So they make a personal investment they go out and buy the right spices so they can come ready to do it the right way to prepare the body the way devotion demanded.

These were women who had been devoted to Jesus not only here in the final moments but they had been devoted to Jesus throughout his entire ministry. We find again from the other gospel records these are women who followed him from Galilee.

That's significant. Have you missed that in the past? Do you realize that Mary came with an entourage of individuals along with the rest of the pilgrims and disciples with Jesus to Jerusalem?

[20 : 36] Jerusalem? They were there ministering to him in Jerusalem but they had ministered to him throughout his earthly ministry.

We find from Luke chapter 8 that Mary had made a personal investment she was essentially a financier of Jesus' ministry not only vested in the process of being a part of his ministry but vested in contributing to the ministry so that it could continue.

They were among the only loyal disciples at the cross. They were the only ones to show up at the tomb when the body was being prepared.

And now here they are the first to show up now the tomb is empty. But what screams through this text and what you walk away from in reading verse 2 says what about her faith at this point?

Go ahead read it for yourself. What does verse 2 say about Mary's faith in light of her incredible devotion? Her faith was still inadequate.

[21 : 53] They have taken the Lord out of the tomb. We don't know where they have laid him. For all of Mary's devotion it could not lead her to faith.

For all of Mary's previous faith it could not endure the test of time when hardship hit at this point.

She had been a woman of faith but now faith was fleeting for her. But she becomes a catalyst for Peter in John.

And again we'll follow her narrative next week where Jesus reinforces faith in her and leads her to true genuine enduring faith.

Come back next week for that. The rest of the story. But John wants to draw our attention this morning to this personal journey of faith.

[22 : 51] Wherever you are this morning you are a person of faith. Whether you believe in Jesus or you choose not to believe. You're believing in this world.

You're believing in the satisfactions of this life. Where do you stand on the spectrum of faith today? You can't put your confidence in a faith that happened sometime in the past.

It must be a faith that endures, that lives, that continues. I'm reminded of Ephesians chapter 3 where the apostle Paul is praying for the church of Ephesus.

He prays that Christ may dwell in their hearts through faith. Is faith flourishing in your life? Faith in Christ and what he's accomplished?

Does it spill out in affection for him, in trusting him for what he says? Guiding your decisions by the things that God has said are right and true?

[23 : 55] guiding your affections by your own personal cravings and desires? Do you realize this morning that devotion, however strong in your life, can never lead you to true faith?

No matter how disciplined you might be, no matter how dedicated you think you are, your devotion to God is inadequate to lead you to faith.

Coming to church, reading your Bible, loving your spouse, being a good student, giving your money to the poor, being a good neighbor, loving the people around you, having a happy spirit, being generally positive in your dealings with individuals, being a model citizen, showing up to all the events, even being a part of ministry, your devotion cannot lead you to genuine faith.

And Mary is coming face to face with that reality. Faith is a personal journey.

Are you living by faith today? But faith is also reinforced by evidence. Praise the Lord that faith can be reinforced by evidence.

[25 : 20] And that's our next point this morning. We find that in verses 3 to 7. Let me read that for us. It says this, So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going towards the tomb.

Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw that 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 cloths, 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. I want you to understand this morning that Jesus gives us confirming witnesses.

He is not afraid of evidence to reinforce his truth claims. witness. The first witness that we see is the witness of the empty tomb.

[26 : 37] That was a confirming work of Christ to state categorically, the promises that I have made in the past are promises that you can count on.

They have been fulfilled. Something that strikes my attention is that Jesus could have risen and left the tomb shut. He could have passed through that rock just as he passed through the door of the upper room.

But Jesus gives an open invitation to anyone who would come and observe. Look in the tomb. It is empty. I have risen from the dead.

The evidence is there. Come see for yourself. He's happy to put the evidence on display. He's happy to give witness to the truth that he has proclaimed.

He's not afraid to give us that confirming witness, the witness of the empty tomb. Jesus had stated on at least three occasions to his disciples and to the public, I will go to trial by the Jews.

[27 : 47] I will be handed over to the Gentiles. I will be crucified. And on the third day I will rise. And if that had not happened, you would say that Jesus' truth claims were a sham.

But he gives clear and sufficient evidence, even in this moment, to the truth that he had proclaimed. The stone is removed.

John, who is that other disciple that he refers to, apparently is quicker than Peter, makes it to the tomb. He's looking inside. And he sees the linen clothes that are lying there.

Peter, who eventually catches up, does what we would expect Peter to do. He runs right in without giving a second thought. He sees the scene. He checks out the linen clothes lying on that stone table.

He sees the face cloth that is not where it should be, where the head would normally be placed. He sees it in a different spot, folded.

[28 : 52] Jesus is gone. The clothes are not strewn out over the floor. They're not torn or cut. The body had not been manhandled in any way.

It should have been obvious what had happened. They, of all people, should have known, I know what this means. Jesus is risen.

But they're not there. They're not there. It does give some indication that there is rising faith in the heart of John. There seems to be a glimmer of hope for him.

It does indicate that he saw and believed. We'll look at that in a moment. But not only is there the evidence or the witness of the empty tomb, there is also the witness of confirming works.

The witness of confirming works. These disciples are not rookies when it comes to time with Jesus.

[30 : 01] They had spent three and a half years in ministry seeing the power of God flowing through the person of Christ. They saw his power over the wind, wind, in the waves.

They had experienced it for themselves. There they were on the Sea of Galilee rowing for all they were worth for hours in the dark, wondering if they would survive the journey.

And here comes this figure across the lake, this shadowy figure that looked like a specter. And they know it is Jesus.

Jesus. And Jesus with a word in a moment brings peace and calm to the wind and waves. They see his power. The power to trump any of their human energy.

Power over wind and waves. Power over the elements. They saw his power over the demons. How many times had Jesus encountered men and women who had been in bondage to the supernatural for the duration of their life.

[31 : 12] Communities who had tried to remove this menace from among them had shackled them in chains, had driven them out of their community and yet the menace still existed for all of the energy that they had to try to confine and constrain this individual.

And Jesus shows up and with a word commands the demons to flee. In a moment he exercises his superior authority over the supernatural.

They had seen the witness of his power over illness. People who had been gripped by illness for their entire lives. I think of the woman who had been hunched over for 15 years had tried to access all of the resources that were at her disposal, all of the physicians, all of the help she could get.

Actually she had an issue of blood. So remembering the story. And Jesus comes and she touches the hem of his garment and in a moment she's healed. Others who were blind or lame or deaf for their entire lives.

And Jesus in a moment with a word demonstrates his authority over their illness. And of course his power over death. Jairus' daughter, the widow's son, and recently in their recent history the resurrection of Lazarus.

[32 : 50] Who when Jesus raises him says to his disciples, I am glad we were not there so that I could lead you to believe. It would be the moment that they would look back on and remember eventually.

But they were not there in this moment. Still fresh in the people's minds, the resurrection of Lazarus as the triumphal entry took place and all of the people who remembered Lazarus were parading in with that company and Jesus into Jerusalem.

with the triumphal entry. And even the night before Jesus was crucified, he points to his works in John 14. He says, believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me or else believe on the account of the works themselves.

Jesus had given them a witness. Jesus' confirming power was undeniable proof of his divinity.

proof of his authority. God does that for us as well. He gives us confirming witnesses.

[34 : 10] The witness of creation to testify to his splendor and glory. The proof of his intervention especially with the people of Israel throughout history.

The proof of a changed life. proof. The proof of answered prayer. The proof of fulfilled promises. The proof of abounding joy.

The proof of enduring peace. Jesus is not afraid of the evidence. Jesus is not afraid to help us understand that the truth claims that he makes will be things that he will follow through on.

He can be trusted. And as we see in verse 8, there seems to be evidence that faith is beginning to rise in John's heart. But what kind of faith does John have at this point?

What does John believe? What is going on in his mind? Is this saving faith? Or is this something else?

[35 : 17] And as a side note, I just want to take a quick detour for a moment. And I want to encourage you not only in relationship to the message today, but I want to encourage you that these are the kinds of questions you should be asking yourself in your own Bible study.

Why is this here? Why does John leave out certain details? Why is he focused on Mary? What does it mean that he talks about his faith?

What is he really believing? And so for this last point, I want to kind of walk you through briefly some of the steps that you can take for yourself in arriving at some of the answers to big questions in the scripture.

Because my premise now, this point number three, is faith is incomplete without the scripture. Faith is incomplete without the scripture.

You say, now, wait a second, that's not what I see here. That's not what it seems to indicate in verse eight. It seems to indicate that John shows up, he sees the tomb, and he believes.

[36 : 36] But what does verse nine say? for as yet, they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Why does John put that there? Because he wants to qualify the kind of faith that he actually had at this point. And it was not a faith necessarily in the resurrection, but a faith in the fact that Jesus was just gone.

commentators are mixed on this, and I am going to shake probably dangerously all of the things that the commentators are saying, because as I study through the gospel, I think there's a different conclusion to draw here.

So bear with me as I walk this through with you, and I'm going to put it in your hands to decide whether or not you're going to agree with me or agree with the commentators. It's probably safer to agree with the commentators.

Faith is incomplete without the scripture. Why do I say that? What is believing here? I want you to understand the use of the word believing throughout the gospel of John is not necessarily believing to faith in salvation, but believing in the moment.

[37 : 57] Why do I say that? Let me show you some examples. Keep your finger in John chapter 20, I want to try to walk through this quickly, so bear with me. If you need my notes, I'm happy to give it to you.

Look with me at the beginning of the book, John chapter 2, verse 11. I want you to see this for yourself and even circle them as we go through. John chapter 2, verse 11.

verse 11. It says this, this, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee and manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him.

This is the wedding at Cana. This is turning the water to wine. And it says that his disciples believed. And yet, if you know anything about the gospels, you hear Jesus in the background saying time and time and time again, oh you of little faith.

Does that sound like saving faith to you? They were believing in something. They were believing that Jesus did actually what he did here, but there was something missing, something superficial about their faith.

[39 : 14] Jump down to verse 23 of chapter 2. Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover feast, many believed in his name.

What happened? Many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing, but Jesus, on his part, did not entrust himself to them because he knew all people.

Basically, Jesus knew their hearts. Jesus knew how bankrupt their faith really was. It was faith for the moment. It wasn't faith that was enduring.

Turn a page over with me to John chapter 4, verse 50. John 4, 50. It says this.

This is Jesus healing the official's son. It says, Jesus said to him, go, your son will live. The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and went on his way.

[40 : 19] But then if you drop down to verse 53, you see something else. the father knew that was the hour when Jesus had said to him, your son will live, and he himself believed in all his household.

What in the world is going on here? I thought he was already believing. So there is examples here of progressing faith. That's my point. And as you look through the gospel of John, you'll see progressing faith that's taking shape in the hearts of people as they're responding to the moment.

They're responding to the stimuli that they have right in front of them, whether it's the words of Jesus or the works of Jesus. But it's not the testimony of enduring faith.

There's also examples in the gospel of John of defective faith. Examples of defective faith. Turn with me to John chapter 7 for one of those examples.

John chapter 7 verse 31. John 7 31. Yet, many of the people believed in him.

[41 : 29] They said, when the Christ appears, will he do more signs than this man has done? Are you kidding me? Is he the Christ or not?

Are you believing in him as the Messiah or what? What a confused group of individuals. How about in John chapter 8 verse 30? Turn a page.

John chapter 8 verse 30. As he was saying these things, many believed in him. Well, that's good. But what do we find?

As you work your way through the narrative, you find that Jesus actually calls them son of the devil. And he reinforces to them in verse 45 that what they thought was faith was not actually faith at all.

Look at John 8 45. But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe me. Defective faith. Misplaced faith.

[42 : 30] It was not genuine. Okay. So John believes. He believes in the evidence immediately in front of him.

But I want you to understand that it is not necessarily saving faith. It is faith in the moment. faith for the present. In seeing the events and knowing that something quite extraordinary was taking place but not quite knowing what.

And now we find John's emphasis on the scripture in verse 9. That's our final point this morning. John's emphasis on the scripture. And we could look at myriads of passages this morning in the gospel of John to point out that very fact.

But I just want to point to a couple that you should be familiar with. The first is John 1.1. In the beginning was the word. The word was with God.

The word was God. We know that word is Jesus. Jesus throughout his ministry points to faith in the father that comes through him.

[43 : 38] And thus comes through the word. You cannot have faith in God apart from Jesus. And thus you cannot have faith in God apart from the word.

Just jot down John chapter 2 verses 20 to 23. Again, John points to this fact. Jesus is telling them about the temple.

He says that it's going to what took 46 years to build. He's going to be able to destroy it and raise it up in three days. They're like, huh? How is that going to work? And it says he's speaking about his body.

But then this in verse 22. It says, When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this and they believed the scripture. That is faith.

Believing the scripture. scripture. That's why John gives so much attention to the scripture in the upper room narrative, in our crucifixion narrative.

[44 : 47] More than any other gospel record keeper, John gives attention to the scripture. In John 13, 18, you have it in your notes. It says, but that the scripture will be fulfilled.

In John 17, 12, that the scripture might be fulfilled. In John 19, 24, this was to fulfill the scripture. John 19, 28, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the scripture.

John 19, 36, for these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled. And now, in 19, 37, again, another scripture, they will look on him whom they have pierced.

And now John draws attention to something that is missing in his faith. For as yet, they did not understand the scripture.

Faith had not yet dawned on John's heart, but it was beginning to rise. Faith would not be complete until Christ initiated the process.

[46 : 04] That's what we find in our study next week with Mary. That's what we find in the gospel of Luke when Jesus shows up to the disciples in the upper room and it says, and he revealed to them all the things related to the scriptures.

He opened their eyes to see it. Finally, faith would come. the resurrection means life for those who believe.

Life for those who believe personally. Are you here today and you have personally staked your claim in the unwavering faith in Christ?

faith not just for the moment but faith that endures. Listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1.18.

He says, For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, present, active, continuous. But to those of us who are being saved, it is the power of God.

[47 : 18] Present, active, continuous. Not just for some time in the past but the gospel connects to your heart today and tomorrow and enduring for the rest of your life.

You see how God changes everything for you. Changes your parenting, changes your marriage, he changes your work, he changes your neighboring, he changes your priorities and how you do your finances, he changes your perspective as a student, he changes everything for you.

Not just for a time in the past but for today. Are you a person of faith? Without faith, it is impossible to please him.

You want to please God? He makes it possible through his son Jesus. Not just for those who don't know Jesus and need to come to salvation but for those who know him and need to remind themselves of that fact day after day and be people who are believing.

Are you somebody today who is believing in him? And is it changing everything for you? Let's pray.

[48 : 38] Lord, we want to be people who are believing. Not just for a moment and not just because of the immediate situation that we see.

The evidence of God that shows up here and there through our lives. But we want to be enduring. We want to change our priorities. Change our perspectives.

Change our orientation as people who are not looking to self. We're not looking to please and gratify our own sense of desire but looking to please you.

Who are seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. May that be said of us, Lord. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.