

Peace to You

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[0 : 00] So I'm Aaron, and I'm the minister of the service with Jordan. And like Jordan said, if you're new, if you're visiting, I'd love to meet you. Come and say hi to me. So I'm feeling really tired because I'm full after a huge Easter lunch, but also quite sort of hopped up on sugar.

It's a weird thing happening. Anyway, at this lunch, an interesting thing happened. So I'm at this lunch, and my family got invited out to eat with another couple of families, and it was brilliant. And so we're eating lamb, and I thought, goodness, I'm the pastor. I need to turn this conversation to Jesus, which is reasonable.

And I said, so folks, let's go around, and we all answer this one question. And the question was this, where do you want to experience resurrection life in your life this year?

Which is a good question. First person said, I want to experience resurrection life in the areas of rage and lust.

[1 : 13] And I said, oh, okay, kids? That's what I'm thinking. Kids, do you want to go wait in the kitchen? I need to have some grown-up conversations.

They were joking. I guess they were trying to open up the conversation to get honest answers, which is good, which is positive. I'm not going to say who it was.

I find Australians quite sensitive. So I went. It was afterwards I thought a better question.

You know what? A better question would be this. A better question would be, what does the resurrection mean full stop? Like before we sort of apply it to our lives, which we should do, what does it just mean full stop in general, the big picture?

Which is what we want to do tonight, looking at Luke 24. Now, because this is Easter and we want to talk about the resurrection, we need to jump right into the passage without sort of leading up to it.

[2 : 21] So we're jumping into Luke 24. You heard it read. It's fantastic. It's the climax of Luke. Now, at this point in the story, Jesus has been crucified. Several women have gone to the tomb to take care of his remains, and they find the stone has been rolled away.

The angels appear to the woman, and they say, Christ is risen. The woman head back, tell the disciples. The disciples don't really believe them. That isn't until Jesus appears to a couple of the disciples, and those guys, in verse 33, it says they go to the other disciples and tell them what happened, and that's where our passage begins.

So the disciples are hanging out, and they're barbecuing fish, and they're talking about this so-called appearance of Jesus. And then, bam, Jesus appears right in the middle of them.

And what follows in the narrative here tries to get across two main ideas. There are two really big things that the writer wants to get across.

Firstly, that Jesus is really risen. And secondly, that everything leading up to this, including this, was all in God's plan. So first, Jesus really has risen.

[3 : 34] And secondly, everything leading up to this was actually meant to happen. All right. Jesus is really risen.

Now, I'd like to say a few things about this. Firstly, it's important to note that this is a resurrection. It's not a resuscitation.

Jesus didn't pretend to die on the cross. It wasn't a bit of a kind of a wink-wink, nudge-nudge, I'm God, I can kind of fake this and make people sort of think about it, and just to get the idea across that I'm, you know, pretty tough and, you know.

Nor did he just kind of faint and was revived by the coolness of the tomb, which some people, you know, there's theories out there. No, Jesus really died. And it's why the Bible makes a big deal about the burial, which is not read in our passage, but before all the Gospels.

They make a big deal about the burial. If you read through the Gospel, there's a lot of details about that. They wrap up the body. They lay it in the tomb. They put the stone across. Why do they include all those details? What's the point of all that?

[4 : 37] Isn't it good enough just to say, oh, he died on the cross and then he rose again? No, no. It even gets mentioned in the creeds. I mean, we just talked about it. He suffered death and was buried on the third day.

We just said that. So they do emphasize the burial to get a point, to get the point across that he really did die. He really died.

And now he is really alive. This was not a resuscitation. It was a resurrection. That's my first point. First thing I want to say about this. Second thing. He's back. He's resurrected. But something's changed. He's something different. And you get that. That comes across when you actually read the passage.

He wasn't just alive. He was alive in a resurrection body. A body that no longer obeyed the same rules. A body that had a different kind of relationship with time and with space.

[5 : 33] Hence, he could just appear in the midst of them. And then later on, he could just go to heaven. Now this doesn't mean that Jesus was some type of spirit that appeared to have a body.

That's sort of a, that's kind of like an ancient Gnostic belief. No. The passage says he had flesh and bones. Verse 39. See my hands, my feet. That it is I myself.

Touch me and see. I'm not a ghost. I'm real. It's me. This is the same Jesus he's saying that healed, that fed the 5,000, that preached the multitudes, that healed, that died.

That's really me. More from verse 39. Touch me and see. For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.

It's not a resuscitation. It's a resurrection. Something different has happened. Third thing I want to say about Jesus is risen. So what? Like, so what?

[6 : 36] What's, what's, so what? You know. I mean, Christ clearly wants them to understand something here. He doesn't just say, hey, I'm here, I'm back.

You know, it doesn't matter what form I'm in, just as long as I'm back. He doesn't do that. It seems his form is really important for some reason. Because it emphasizes that, doesn't it?

Hands, feet. Touch me. I'm not a spirit. It really wants us to see that. Why? Why is it such a big deal that Jesus had a body? Wouldn't it just be effective, just as effective for Jesus just to kind of like be a voice that sort of says, I didn't die, you know?

Well, the picture of Jesus really being there physically with these disciples is an amazing picture for us because of this.

It's, it's, it's the old creation. It's the old creation. The world as it is, meeting its future. Jesus has experienced what all Christians will experience.

[7 : 43] This new, deathless body. So Jesus is showing us that what God has done here, he'll do for all of us. And he'll do for all creation.

And Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians 15. He says, the Messiah has been raised from the dead. Why? As the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Now the first fruits, that's kind of like a, it's like a harvesting term, obviously.

It talks about the fruits that appear at the beginning of a harvest, which promise a big harvest later on. Which promise something amazing happening in the future. Which promise that there is more to come.

So it is with Jesus here. Jesus raised from the dead with a body. As we will be. So, one, it's not a resurrection.

It's a resurrection, not a resuscitation. Two, it's a real body that Jesus has. But it's a changed body. It's a deathless body. Three, it's there to point us to the new creation.

[8 : 45] Four, I want to talk about some of the objections to this. Because it does sound, it can sound from the outside, a fairly wild, a fairly wild kind of thing we're talking about here.

Liberal theology doesn't do well with these supernatural aspects of traditional Christianity, of orthodox, historic Christianity.

Especially the bodily resurrection of Jesus. Liberal theology. Liberal theology is not liberalism like the political party. I don't know if they have a stance on this. But liberal theology is a brand of theology.

This is very, very simplified. It's a brand of theology that elevates modern reason so that it trumps any part of the Bible that doesn't fit into how modern people think.

Or how they think the world should work. And since in the modern world science does not make room for things like resurrections, liberal theology tries to work around this event.

[9 : 49] So it may, and again sweeping generalizations here, it may say things like this. The resurrection was not historic, physical, but rather it was an ecstatic experience that the disciples had.

Yes, Jesus was resurrected in their hearts. His ideas live on in here. Which, you know, which kind of can sound nice, I guess.

And is a way of dealing with an event that has no precedent. Now if you are tempted to kind of think along those lines, let me say a few things here, okay?

First, I want to say this idea that he is raised in our heart, just in our heart kind of idea. The major problem with this, of course, is that the passage is written in such a way that as to sort of explicitly exclude this interpretation.

Just look at verse 36. As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace to you. Jesus himself.

[10 : 52] Do you notice the emphasis there? Jesus himself. So this is not a ghost. It's not a phantom. It's not a projection of their hopes. It's not a dream.

Sort of, you know, this kind of communal ecstatic kind of dream thing that they're having.

Transparent Jesus isn't floating above them saying, I'll always be with you.

You know, live on in my name. You know, there's nothing like that going on. It's, you can't get around the fact that he clearly has a body and that he is alive and he is there with them. See, my hands, my feet.

And verse 41 is the clincher to this. Jesus says, do you have anything to eat? They gave him some fish. He ate it. One commentator wrote this, said, Jesus ate fish and scholars have had indigestion ever since.

They don't know what to do with that. Like, how did it get in there? If this is, wow, what's going on here? There is no getting around the fact that the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus died and he rose again.

[12 : 02] He came back from the dead in bodily form. The other thing I'll say about the sort of more of a liberal interpretation is this. If you throw out the bodily resurrection of Jesus, you might say, oh, but we have all that.

I remember saying this to somebody one day. Mate, you throw out the resurrection, you're in trouble, right? They go, nah, but there's so much other good stuff. I mean, he said some great, there's so much good stuff, you know?

And I'm like, here's the thing. You throw out the bodily resurrection, you've got to throw out a whole lot of theology with that as well. That's connected to that. Namely, the new creation.

If it's just a spiritual resurrection, there is no new creation. You see, this idea that, you know, like it's...

No, let me say it differently. The big idea here, one of them. Old creation meets new creation in Jesus. We see into our future and it's beautiful and it's hopeful and it's glorious and it's deathless.

[13 : 07] You take that out of Christianity, what do you have? You have Jesus who lived a good life, maybe got in over his head and got killed for it and his memory lives on in our hearts. Let's try and make the world a better place on our own.

That's what you got. That's what you got. That's what's left. History suggests humanity making the world a better place is not our strong suit. So those are the problems with like a sort of a liberal humanist interpretation of this particular passage here.

It just doesn't reflect the text at all. In any of the Gospels, and without the bodily resurrection of Jesus, there's no hope. There's no future hope for us. If this is about anything, goodness, it's got to be about hope.

So there you go. That's the first major point of the passage. Jesus is risen. And so will we one day. With him. And be with him forever. The second point. I think the second major point of this text here is Jesus coming and dying and rising has always been part of God's plan from the beginning.

[14 : 15] Right from the beginning. Verse 44. You see that there. These are my words that I've spoken to you while I was still with you. That everything written about me in the law of Moses and

the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

This means that Jesus fulfills the prophets, the law, the Noah's Ark. That's basically about Jesus. Old Testament temples. All the temples. It's all about Jesus.

The sacrificial system. It's all about Jesus. The Psalms, which we're going to study next here in the evening service for about seven weeks. That there are the Psalms of David, who was the Old Testament Messiah. They're all about him.

They're the Psalms of Jesus. It's all leading up to Jesus. The deepest intention of the world is Jesus. And the passage makes it obvious that... Makes this very obvious.

But there is a part of the story of God's plan that can seem rather brutal. Verse 46. Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer. Very specifically reminds us that it was always God's plan that Jesus would suffer.

[15:26] And Christ, you know, pointed to this earlier in our story here, in our text, when he repeatedly tells the disciples to look at his hands and feet. Not because he had particularly unusual hands or feet that they'd recognize him by.

But because they would see the scars of the crucifixion. So why does it specifically want us to know that Christ suffered?

Why is that important? I mean, certainly the early Christians thought it was important. Again, we've already talked about this in the Creed. You said it. Suffered death. Suffered. The people who wrote the creeds weren't talking it up, trying to make Jesus sound tough or anything.

Trying to fill in some space here. The early... The church fathers knew this was important. Because it was important to Jesus.

And it was important to the gospel writers that that came across. And it's important because it tells us something about salvation theology. Let me explain it like this using an example.

[16:29] I have used this example before. It's a good one though. It's worth repeating. The story arc of a regular movie is something like this. Good. Bad, bad, bad, bad. Good. We like that story.

Anything you can imagine is that story. Most movies are that story. Good. Bad, bad, bad, good. Paradise. Paradise lost. Paradise regained. Now, a guy I read a while ago sort of said this.

He goes, yes, that's true. But a really great story has a different sort of arc. So a really great story is like this. Bad, bad, bad, bad, bad.

Good, bad. Kind of mashed together at the end. And that's what Jesus is teaching us. Do I need to explain that anymore?

Or is that pretty clear? I think you've got it, right? Maybe just 30 more seconds on that. Okay. A really great story is where the bad is part of the deliverance.

[17:33] Where the bad is part of the good. Here's a fantastic example. The movie Science. I love science fiction movies. There's a movie called Science. It stars Mel Gibson.

I can't remember when it was made. Maybe 2000, something like that. Mel Gibson and Joaquin Phoenix. So Mel is a former church minister. He's lost his faith. He's had lots of really hard things happen in his life.

His wife has died in a car accident that he sort of was there when she died. His son has terrible asthma. His daughter has OCD. His young daughter has OCD about water. So he has glasses of water all throughout the house.

He has a brother who could have been this great baseball player. But he swung really hard at every single pitch. So he has this record of home runs. But also the record of being...

What's the word when you're... Strike out. Yeah, yeah. Strike out, right? And then aliens invade the planet. And then... So it's, you know, it's like based on a true story.

[18:37] Yes, this is a good example. Now at the end of the movie, climax of the movie, there is an alien in their living room that wants to kill them.

And the alien is holding the really asthmatic son. Mel Gibson remembers his wife's dying words, which were... His brother's called Meryl.

He says, tell Meryl to swing away. For some reason, he just thinks of... He's thinking about his wife dying. His wife said, tell Meryl to swing away. So he says to Meryl, swing away. So Meryl grabs a bat, his home run bat, baseball bat, off the wall.

And then the alien senses that there's an attack imminent. So sprays poison on the really sickly son. The son survives because his lungs are closed up due to having an asthmatic attack.

Meryl swings his baseball bat, it hits one of the glasses of water accidentally. And the water splashes on the alien. Turns out the water is like acid to the aliens. And so he keeps swinging... [19 : 44] Because there's hundreds of glasses around the living room. And keeps swinging. The water's on the alien. The alien dies. Just a fantastic one. Now, do I still need to explain this?

All the bad things... So all of the bad things that happen to Mel Gibson end up being part of his family's deliverance. And so the storyline is bad, bad, bad, bad, bad, bad, bad, bad. And the bad being incorporated into the good. Into the deliverance. So the time of Jesus was violent and brutal. And God used that brutality and violence to do something amazing. So the crucifixion. The crucifixion. The worst thing humanity had come up with to do to another person, they did to God.

And God used that to save those very same people. Now, if you are sort of newish to the whole Christian thing, you might be thinking, but what does that do though?

[21 : 01] I mean, what does... So I see what you're saying. He's suffered. Yes, he's suffered and it seems like it was God's idea and he's suffered and it was terrible. But how exactly does God use Christ's suffering?

I mean, it's a very compelling narrative. But how is it... How does it work? In terms of our deliverance. In terms of our salvation.

Okay, well the purpose of Christ's suffering is this. A price must be paid for all of the sin in the world. You can't just sweep it under the carpet.

God can't do that. But instead of us paying that price, Jesus took the cost upon himself and that's why he let himself be crucified. So God's anger, God's righteous anger, God's right anger for all the wrong in the world was poured down onto him instead of us.

And it had to be that way. Because God is loving. But he is just. It's like this. It's like a judge, like a court judge. You go to court because you did a U-turn and it costs you, you know, and you need to go to court, right?

[22 : 09] And the judge says, you're guilty. You're absolutely... He has to do that or she has to do that because they're a judge and they say, I send it to you to \$167, right?

Which is what it costs, in case you want to know. And then the judge takes off the robe, walks down to you, pulls out the checkbook and writes the check. The cross has always been part of God's eternal plan for us.

It had to be this way. The suffering of Jesus was always part of God's plan. And that's why the scars remain on it. Now, I don't know how deeply you let that kind of, those ideas sort of impact you.

But the fact that it had to be like that says something about us. And they're very pointy things that it says, very pointy truths. It says that we are more sinful than we can possibly know because the cost was so great.

and more forgiven and accepted than we can possibly imagine because the cost was so great. We see this in verse 47, right? Repentance and forgiveness of sins must be proclaimed.

[23 : 22] So after the drama of the cross and the resurrection, Jesus turns up. And what is it that Jesus wants to talk about? Forgiveness. There's forgiveness. That's what he wants people to know about.

Folks, there's forgiveness. There's forgiveness if you repent. And repentance is not... Repentance is just being honest with God. I don't know what you think about repentance or forgiveness for that matter.

Perhaps you are one of these people that's very aware of their sinfulness but having trouble accepting God's forgiveness. For you, I'd like to point to the very first thing actually. The very, very first thing Jesus says to his disciples post-resurrection.

As you can see in verse 36 to these disciples here. Verse 36. As they were talking about these things Jesus just appeared. He appeared to them and he said to them peace to you.

So these are two disciples who across the board abandoned him. Peter famously cursed him and denied even knowing him. He appears in the middle of Jesus and says peace to you.

[24 : 26] I don't know when you've been wronged by people I don't know if you do this you create these fantasies you fantasize about just ripping into them with these perfectly formed insults.

Folks, if you have trouble grasping the forgiveness on offer you need to know Jesus, the judge of all mankind wants peace. Wants you to have peace. He doesn't want you to carry guilt or shame.

He wants you to have peace. You know, I know some people have trouble accepting God's forgiveness. Wants you to remember that. Others of you might have trouble accepting your guilt. I think some people sort of feel like it's God's job to forgive you know without any response from us. Thinking they don't have to be honest with God because you know God's loving he'll get over it my sin.

He's just what he does. Folks, there is no Jesus will accept me as I am doctrine in Christianity. Forgiveness brought by the cross means that God accepts you the way Jesus is.

[25 : 37] Jesus lived the life you couldn't. He died the death we should and that's why the only way to be right with God is to accept what Jesus did. To trust in that work and that means to say I am guilty but I trust that Jesus paid the price for my guilt.

That's why we call it you know Good Friday. Let me sum up here really, really quickly. Let's step back and just look at this at 10,000 feet.

On Easter Friday Jesus went through the suffering and the death that we should so that we don't have to face God's anger. It was all on Christ and he did that so we could have peace with God. and then on Easter Sunday Christ turned up in the midst of a group of very disorientated followers risen from the dead so that we will also rise from the dead and be with him forever.

And that's the Easter story. And if it's not part of your story I'd love to talk to you about that. Amen. Thank you.