

The Resurrection of Faith

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[0 : 00] Well, it's good to see you once again this morning. For those who haven't had the opportunity to meet me or to hear me yet, my name is Dave.

I'm one of the brothers here, and I'm a fellow servant of Jesus Christ and of his church here in Squamish. Now, I'm fairly new here, not only to Squamish, but also to B.C. more or less. Four years ago, I returned here to what I like to think of as the promised land, right? I know, despite all that rain. I spent a lot of time in the wilderness in the United States of America. And when I moved up here, back up here, I needed to find work. And so the first job that I found when I moved here was actually as a carpet salesman. I was selling flooring for a company over in Surrey, and I worked there for a year and a half. And so for the first period of time that I was working there, I was going out.

[1 : 01] I was going to construction sites from one job site to the next, and I was hoping to sell flooring to home builders. And, you know, obviously, I was really excellent at it.

So good that everyone asked me to leave and become a pastor, you know, so that they could had absolutely nothing to do with the fact that I got almost no sales whatsoever in the time I was working there.

I got to meet all sorts of interesting people on these job sites, right? I remember meeting one contractor while I was visiting a job site in South Surrey.

And we struck up a conversation outside of the house. And as we were talking, this man learned that I was a Christian, and he was a bit of an older gentleman near retirement. And he told me that he used to attend church.

He used to attend church. He used to attend church. But at this point in his life, he really no longer believed that there was a God. And he explained to me that his son had died years ago.

[2 : 03] And as I recall, his son had just left his teen years. He was in his early 20s, and he died tragically. And this man couldn't believe in a God who had just let his son die like that.

It devastated him so deeply. Now, apart from this man, there are a lot of men, there are a lot of women who grew up in the church and then walked away.

I'm sure that every single person in this congregation knows of somebody like that. Whenever I talk to people like that, who have gone through that, it seems what happens for many of them is that they encounter a crisis of faith.

They encounter this crisis of faith that shakes their faith in God, that shakes their faith in his son, Jesus of Nazareth. Now, for some, that crisis may come as a personal trauma.

It may come as suffering they've experienced or they've witnessed someone close to them experience. Maybe it's a death in the family that they can't get over, a death of someone so near and dear to them. For some, it's the shock of learning that once they leave the safe confines of the church, they find that there is intelligent, reasoned opposition to Christian teaching.

[3 : 19] Many students go to college and find that their college professors have many reasons that sound very good, very plausible as to why Christianity is false and Jesus is not the Messiah, not the Son of God.

Then for others, they look at the church, they have seen the character, the behavior of people in the church, and they see that there is a lot of hypocrisy. People who put on a good show, who say all the right things and do all the right things and try to look like good people.

But when it comes time to go home, the way they live with their families, the way they run their businesses, they don't walk the talk. And then, especially with Christian leaders, maybe they've witnessed, seen many headlines recently about Christian leaders who have gotten in trouble because they abused their power or because they engaged in infidelity.

If you haven't yet experienced a faith-shaking moment, a faith-shaking event that will challenge your trust in Jesus Christ, just wait.

Just wait. It's going to happen. It's only a matter of time before you run into something like that. These sort of experiences aren't new. We sometimes act like this is something only moderns experience.

[4 : 38] This is not something modern people just experience. This has been happening to God's people. This has been happening in the church for as long as the scriptures have been around. And what we're going to see is that in these scriptures today, Jesus' disciples, they are absolutely shaken by what is really the ultimate challenge to their faith.

The ultimate challenge to their faith is this. The man that they thought was the Messiah, the man they thought was God's chosen king, the man they put all their faith and trust in, is dead.

He has been executed. And we're going to see what a difference it makes to them that Jesus of Nazareth didn't stay dead, but that he was raised to life on the third day following his crucifixion. And what we're going to learn this morning is this. Jesus rose from the dead so that your fearful unbelief would be changed to joyful trust in his life-giving power.

Now, one of Jesus' disciples, John, he wrote about several appearances by Jesus following his resurrection from the dead. And this morning what we're going to do is we're going to open God's word, we're going to open the Bible, and we're going to read about two of these appearances.

[6 : 09] Now, if you brought a copy of your Bible with you, we'll be reading from the New Testament from the second half of the Bible. It's from the Gospel of John, chapter 20, verses 19 through 31.

Chapter 20 in the big numbers, beginning in verse 19, the little numbers that you see in the text. If you don't have a Bible, as Carl said earlier, you can raise your hand, and one of the ushers will be happy to bring you one, or just kind of peek over the shoulder of the person sitting next to you.

I'll be reading from the English Standard Version, and what we're going to be doing is I'll be breaking this down into three sections. Rather than reading it all at once, we're going to break this down into three sections, because John breaks this down into three sections.

There's two encounters with Jesus, and then the third section is a summary statement by John, and what John is doing in this statement is he's going to tell us the reason why he is writing about these encounters.

And John's writing not only these encounters, but why he is writing the whole book. And what we're going to do is we're going to confirm that Jesus rose from the dead so that your fearful unbelief would be changed to joyful trust in his life-giving power.

[7 : 26] So verses 19 through 23, John chapter 20, verses 19 through 23, we're going to see that their feelings and their behavior, they're going to move from powerless fear to powerful joy.

Verse 19. On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, peace be with you.

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, peace be with you.

As the father has sent me, even so I am sending you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, receive the Holy Spirit.

If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld. Now at the beginning of this encounter, the disciples have locked the doors to the house where they're staying in the city of Jerusalem, right?

[8 : 41] When I was growing up, my family, we would lock the doors when we were away from home. But when we came home, we would leave them unlocked. And the reason is, of course, you know, we're home.

We can, you know, no one's going to break into our house when we're actually there, was the way that we thought. Now I once had a roommate of mine, when I lived in Indiana, I once had a roommate of mine who would diligently lock the doors to our apartment whenever he came home. So not only would he lock the doors when he was gone, he would lock the doors when he was home as well. And I kind of made fun of him for it. I made fun of him for it because we were four guys living in an apartment.

So not only are there four guys in this apartment, but other than our computers, the most valuable thing we had was probably our microwave. It really wasn't a lot worth stealing in there.

But my roommate, he'd grown up in the Philadelphia area. He was used to living in kind of a sketchy neighborhood, kind of a dangerous neighborhood where just because you were home didn't mean you were safe, didn't mean your belongings were safe.

[9 : 47] He knew that he was in danger of home invasion at any time there. I mean, this guy knew, like we all know, everyone from Pennsylvania is a criminal and a crook, right? So if you lock your doors when you're at home, it's because you believe there's a threat from people outside, right?

You believe that there is a threat on the outside. And John tells us why the doors were locked in verse 19. He tells us what the disciples perceived as a threat. He says the doors were locked for fear of the Jews.

Now, the word that we see translated as Jews, John uses that sort of as a shorthand for the religious leaders of the Jewish people. After all, pretty much every person in this story is actually a Jew.

So when he uses that word, he's talking about the religious leaders, the religious leaderships. Throughout the Gospel of John, we've seen these leaders trying to trap, trying to discredit Jesus, trying to harm Jesus.

And ultimately, they succeeded in having Jesus executed. And now Jesus' disciples are thinking, we're next.

[10 : 57] We're next on the list. And even if the religious leaders don't kill or imprison Jesus' disciples, they're no doubt going to ensure that Jesus' disciples are excluded from God's people.

In John chapter 9, verse 22, we read this, that the Jews had already agreed that if anyone should confess Jesus to be the Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue.

So in other words, what these leaders are doing is they're going to excommunicate the disciples from the center of religious, from the center of community life.

They're going to be excluded from God's people. They're going to be shunned as outsiders. They won't be given access to the scriptures. Faithful customers probably won't be doing business with them anymore.

Their family members probably won't be speaking with them ever again. So the disciples, they're afraid of being harmed by the Jewish authorities.

[12 : 00] They're afraid of being excluded from God's people. You've got that going on. When John doesn't mention explicitly, but what they must have been feeling too, is that they feel like they've been abandoned or rejected by God.

They feel in a way like they're orphans. They're ashamed of their own unfaithfulness because at Jesus' arrest, all these disciples who were convinced that they were never going to leave Jesus, they all abandoned him.

They all ran away. And so they're living in fear. They're living behind locked doors. And even there, they don't feel safe. They feel insecure. They've got nothing they can depend on, nothing they can turn to.

It's like the ship they've been on has sunk. They're floating in the middle of the ocean. They're clinging to each other. But they know they're all going down. It's in this room, it's in this environment that is choked with fear that Jesus appears.

And he says to them, peace be with you. Peace be with you. And that's a pretty normal way, on first glance, that's a pretty normal way to greet someone in that culture.

[13 : 19] Even to this day, throughout the Muslim world, that's what people say to one another to greet each other. At that carpet store that I first worked at, my coworkers were all Muslim, and that's how they would greet one another.

They would say, peace be with you. But Jesus is giving this sort of a standard greeting, but this greeting is, at the same time, it's just filled with meaning because Jesus is really fulfilling this. He is really bringing peace to a room full of people who are absolutely being smothered by fear. Right? He's giving them what he promised in chapter 14, verse 27, when Jesus told his disciples, peace I leave with you.

My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. What he's telling his disciples is, you have not been abandoned by God.

You have not been rejected for your unfaithfulness. You are loved. You are forgiven. Now maybe you're in kind of the same place that Jesus' disciples were in.

[14:37] Maybe you feel, right now as you're sitting here, you kind of have this horrible feeling that God has abandoned you. Maybe you have done something so bad that you're sure that you cannot be forgiven.

But what Jesus does is he comes into that dark and locked room and he says, peace be with you. Because Jesus is eager to accept and forgive anyone who repents of their sins.

Jesus is eager to forgive anyone who trusts him completely to cover their sins with Jesus' death on the cross. Do you see the kindness?

Do you see the heart of Jesus Christ? The very first thing he wants his disciples to know is, there is peace. Don't be alarmed.

Peace be with you. That's amazing news. But it's news that the disciples would have found so hard to believe, right? I mean, put yourself in their shoes.

[15:40] You saw Jesus die. You saw him die. You saw his death confirmed when a Roman soldier, an expert in death, an expert in execution, plunged a spear into his side and blood and water came out.

When the Roman soldier knows he's dead, you know he's dead. You know that Jesus was buried. You know his body was wrapped up. You know people don't come to life again when they've been through that.

And now this appearance happens where Jesus seems to appear out of nowhere in the middle of a locked room.

How did he get in here? And what are you going to think? You're going to think, maybe the first thought that comes into your mind after the shock wears off is this.

Maybe this is an imposter. This is a fake. Someone who just looks really like Jesus. Or maybe this is a ghost. So what Jesus does is he shows them where the nails have pierced his hands and he shows them where the Roman soldier's spear gouged a hole into his side.

[16:58] He's not an imposter. He is the real thing. And he has a real body. He's not a ghost. And John writes this. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

And John had a gift for understatement, didn't he? Right? The disciples were glad. Well, yes! They must have been joyful beyond belief.

John really, it's just so amazing how much this must have changed everything. because Jesus promised to his disciples in chapter 16, verse 20.

It's finally coming true what Jesus said to them. And he told them before his crucifixion, he's told them, truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice.

You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn to joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come. But when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish for joy that a human being has been born into the world.

[18:05] So also, you have sorrow now, but I will see you again. And your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. No one will take your joy from you.

Those of you who are mothers, do you remember the joy? Do you remember the happiness that you felt when each one of your children was born?

Wasn't it worth the pain? Wasn't it worth the sorrow? Wasn't it worth that agony? Because in an instant, your pain was turned to joy. None like the joy of childbirth, which eventually fades away, Jesus tells his disciples, no one will take your joy from you.

No one will take your joy from you. And that's because Jesus is risen from the dead, and he can never die again.

He is ours forever. He is yours forever. He is mine forever. If your happiness, if your joy, if your life is grounded in Jesus Christ, then you can never lose it.

[19:22] You can never lose your joy. Even through the deepest pain of your life, you still will have that well of joy that you can draw from in the middle of sorrow. No one will take your joy from you.

Jesus rose from the dead so that your fearful unbelief would be changed to joyful trust in his life-giving power. And now, what Jesus is doing is he's speaking to his disciples, he's speaking to these men who felt powerless, who felt afraid, and what he does is he gives them authority, and he gives them power.

And he says in verse 21, he says, Peace be with you. A second time. As the Father has sent me, even so, I am sending you.

Now, what's he sending them to do? Well, we've seen earlier in John that Jesus is sending them with authority. He's sending them with authority to announce that by believing in Jesus Christ, who is risen from the dead, you and I can have life in his name.

And with this authority, he promises them power. In verse 22, John writes, He breathed on them and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit.

[20 : 39] Now, it's hard to know, perhaps the Holy Spirit began in some way empowering them at that very moment. Or maybe this was simply a promise of power of the Holy Spirit that's going to come seven weeks later at Pentecost.

We're not sure, but either way, the Spirit is going to empower them. The Spirit is going to empower them to testify about Jesus. He's going to give these weak and fearful men power and authority. Jesus promised his disciples before his crucifixion in chapter 15, verse 26, When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

And you also will bear witness because you have been with me from the beginning. And no doubt, through this all, there's going to be continued opposition from the Jewish authorities.

No doubt, Jesus' words in chapter 16, verse 2, they're going to come true where Jesus tells them, They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering service to God.

[21 : 49] But through the power, through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, Jesus promises that they will have a greater authority than their enemies ever could dream of having.

Jesus tells the disciples, If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld. Remember, the religious leaders of Israel, they think they're the ones who hold the key to God's kingdom.

They think they're the ones who get to kick people out of the synagogue. They think they're the ones with authority, but they don't have the keys. The disciples of Jesus Christ who make up his church, they're the ones with the keys to the membership of the kingdom of God.

They're the ones with the power and authority given by the Holy Spirit when they make decisions guided by the Holy Spirit. So what reason do they have to fear?

What threats could possibly frighten them? What exclusion, what ostracism could ever intimidate these men now? Jesus has begun to change his disciples.

[22 : 56] He's begun this process of change that's going to bring them from a lifestyle of powerless fear to a lifestyle of powerful joy. And this movement is going to be obvious.

It's going to be so clear to everybody on the outside as they see the look. They see the look on the disciples' faces. They hear the tone of their speech. They see the boldness of their actions.

This transformation, it's kind of like, it's kind of like you've been living in a valley that's been filled with smoke. It's been filled with smoke from forest fires around you and you wake up one morning after a week of this and you find the smoke is all gone.

The skies are clear. You can see clearly everything around. The air is fresh again. And you're wondering, how did this happen? What changed?

What dispelled? What cleared away that smoke? And we're going to see in this next encounter with Jesus how that smoke of powerless fear, how it was dispelled. How Jesus cleared it away.

[24 : 01] We're going to find out what changes, what changes in my heart, what changes in your heart that move us from powerless fear to powerful joy.

beginning in verse 24 we read, Now Thomas, one of the twelve called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

So the other disciples told him, we have seen the Lord. But he said to them, unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, peace be with you.

Then he said to Thomas, put your finger here, see my hands and put out your hand and place it in my side.

[25 : 15] Do not disbelieve, but believe. Thomas answered him, my Lord and my God.

Jesus said to him, have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. We see again that powerless fear turns to powerful joy when we move from unbelief to belief.

It's when we move from unbelief to belief. Jesus rose from the dead so that your fearful unbelief would be changed to joyful trust in his life-giving power.

You and I can see this happen. We see this happen here to Thomas. The first thing we learn here is that Thomas, he wasn't there the first time, right?

He wasn't with the other disciples when Jesus first appeared and John doesn't say where he was. We don't really know what he was off doing. I mean, anytime you've got ten guys in a room and another guy's missing, I'm assuming he's off getting pizza for everybody.

[26 : 27] So we're just going to run with that. Thomas is out picking up pizza and when he gets back, he finds that the other disciples aren't thinking about the pizza anymore. They're telling him, we have seen the Lord.

They're excited. They are completely pumped up, but Thomas is not happy with the new direction the pizza party is taking. He's not happy with where this is going because what he does is he tells them, unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and place my finger into the mark of the nails and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.

Now this is the passage where the commonly used phrase Doubting Thomas comes from. Many of us have heard that expression. That phrase Doubting Thomas, you know, I see it a lot of times. It's used to describe this person who's just generally skeptical, who just generally doesn't believe good news when he hears it. He's always looking through things, always poking holes and something, wants evidence. But I don't want to mischaracterize Thomas here because I think we misunderstand who Thomas is a lot of times.

It's not like Thomas is this, you know, it's not like he's this skeptical robot, right, who's always demanding evidence for everything, who won't believe anything he doesn't see. Thomas isn't the Sherlock Holmes type, okay?

[27 : 49] That's not who he is. Thomas, he is kind of, the way that we see him characterized in the Gospel of John is he does seem to be sort of a pessimistic guy, but Thomas is a genuinely passionate, genuinely devoted follower of Jesus.

Back in chapter 11, verse 16, when Jesus is heading towards Jerusalem, Thomas was the one who said to the other disciples, let us also go that we may die with him.

Let us go that we may die with him. Thomas really loved Jesus. Thomas couldn't imagine life without Jesus. He'd rather die than be without Jesus.

He didn't want to leave Jesus' side. So when every one of the other disciples tells him, we have seen the Lord, what you'd expect, wouldn't you, is this.

Thomas should be jumping for joy, right? You've seen the Lord, that's amazing! The one I love, the one that I've given my whole life to, he's alive again. Thomas doesn't respond that way, does he?

[28 : 59] He responds with this cold skepticism. He responds with this series of acceptable evidences that he requires in order to believe their claim.

Why doesn't Thomas believe? Again, put yourselves in the shoes of this man, right? You're Thomas, and the man that you were convinced was God's Messiah.

The man you were convinced was the King of Israel. The man that you have devoted your whole life to. The man you were willing to die for. At least you said you were willing to die for, and you thought up until that moment you were willing to die for.

this man has been executed by the Roman government. He's gone. He's gone forever. And you didn't die with him like you said.

You're just going to go through the rest of your life alone, without the one you loved. The last three years of your life, they've just come to this horrifying, shocking conclusion like they're a bad car accident.

[30 : 19] And all you see, and all you feel, is faith-shattering disappointment and despair.

Everything that you thought you knew about God, everything you thought you knew about God's plan for his people, everything you thought you knew about God's plan for you, it was all a lie.

It was all wrong. Thomas is really hurting right now. Thomas is really hurting. And he's responding the way that you and I do sometimes, the way I almost always do.

when my naive expectations are dashed at my feet. Thomas has become cynical. Thomas has become cynical.

He's become suspicious. He's quick to hear good news and to look right through it. Thomas got hurt. Thomas got really, really hurt. And he doesn't want to open up his heart and get hurt again. And I think that's the reason why some professing Christians who walk away from the faith, I think that's the reason why they do it, is because they get disappointed, they get hurt. They don't want to open their hearts to be hurt again.

[31 : 38] it's easier to just disengage. It's easier to just leave the church, walk away from it all, get on with your life.

What I really, you know, one thing I really love about Thomas is this, he hangs in there. Thomas just hangs in there with the other disciples.

That's got to be a tough week for him. this whole next week, these disciples are probably talking about Jesus, they're probably talking about when Jesus is going to see them again, what Jesus is going to do, you know, what's Jesus up to, where is he now?

And it must be absolutely grating at Thomas' soul. Because I've felt that way before. I've sat through a church service before with my heart broken.

Have you ever been there? I've listened to happy, upbeat worship songs and they just make me feel numb. And I've kept, and I can't even open my mouth and sing them.

[32 : 46] Because I couldn't bring myself to do it. It wouldn't be honest, it wouldn't be heartfelt worship. That's where Thomas is for the whole next week. But he hangs in there.

Thomas hangs in there and a week later Thomas' faith is resurrected. Thomas' faith is resurrected. Because what happens is that Jesus appears again and this time, this time Thomas is there to see him.

And this is one of those scenes where I wish I were there. Oh, to see the look on Thomas' face. Thomas' face.

When Jesus holds out his hands. When Jesus shows him the wound in his side. I mean, Thomas' mask of cynicism, this protective wall that he has built up to keep his heart safe, it falls in an instant. Thomas doesn't need to touch the wounds. He noticed that it never says that he does it. Deep down, Thomas wanted to believe, but he couldn't bear the pain of losing Jesus again.

[34 : 06] And this must, the man must have been a weeping mess, because in this one moment he sees it's all true. Jesus is alive again. and all he can do is gasp.

My Lord and my God. In that moment, Thomas moves from unbelief to belief.

And Thomas utters one of the greatest declarations of faith in all of the Bible, that Jesus Christ is not only God's appointed king, he is not only Lord, but he is God himself, he is God come in the flesh, come as a man like you and me.

And all in an instant, Thomas' faith is resurrected. And he knows joy again.

And Jesus says to Thomas, do not disbelieve, but believe. That's the inner movement of the heart. That's what it means to move from unbelief to belief, from mistrust to trust.

[35 : 18] It's believing that Jesus really has risen from the dead. Do you believe it? Is this really true? What if everything that we say about Jesus, what if it's really true?

What if Jesus really is risen from the dead? How does that change your life? For Thomas, what that meant was that he moved from powerless fear to powerful joy.

Jesus rose from the dead so that your fearful unbelief would be changed to joyful trust in his life-giving power. And this is the point in the story, this is the point in John's account, where Jesus addresses you and me.

Because he says to Thomas, have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. You know who that is? That's you, that's me. Because we weren't in that room.

[36 : 30] We haven't seen Jesus appear in the flesh and walk around among us after his resurrection. Do you feel like you've been left out?

Do you kind of wish that that would have happened for you? Do you feel like maybe you missed out on an incredible blessing the disciples had? Well, Jesus says you haven't missed out on a thing. Because you can know the incredible blessing of the Holy Spirit.

You and I can receive the words of God's favor, words that his apostle Peter wrote in 1 Peter 1 verse 8. Though you have not seen him, you love him.

Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

What a beautiful thing it is to the Lord. It is a beautiful thing to the Lord when you and I trust him absolutely. When we trust him the way that a little child will trust her daddy.

[37 : 42] When we face the suffering, when we face the heartache, when we face the disappointment of life, and we continue with courage because we trust our Father, our Father in Heaven, who loves us and knows how to show his grace to us.

Leon Morris wrote a commentary on the book of John and he wrote, as he considered this verse, he wrote, there is a special blessing for those possessed of a faith that can trust absolutely and that does not need to see at every turn.

There's a special blessing for you and me when we possess a faith that can trust our Father absolutely and we don't need to see, to know everything at every turn.

And we can trust him. And at this point John closes the scene with two verses that explain why he's telling us about these encounters with Jesus and in fact why John even wrote the entire book, John explains in verse 30.

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name.

[39 : 10] Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and by believing you may have life in his name. Because what we have read about that is only a small part of what Jesus did.

but the Holy Spirit he guided John to write about all of these miracles. There's so many more things that Jesus did that we will never know of until we see him face to face, until we perhaps meet the disciples in person and they tell us of the many things that Jesus did that they didn't write about.

But what the reason they did write about these miracles, the reason John wrote us about these and about the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ was so that you and I, so that we can believe that God has sent us a king, that God has sent us a Messiah to save us from our sins, to save the world from its sin.

And that Messiah is his own son. That Messiah is God the son. He is Jesus of Nazareth. And though you do not see him, you are blessed if you believe in him.

You will have life in his name. I had a relative of mine who told me recently that he admired people who had faith.

[40 : 30] He thought it was a good thing to have faith, is what he told me. But you know what? Just having faith isn't enough. It really isn't.

People can have faith in a lot of things that aren't faithful, that aren't trustworthy. What's most important is whether the person, whether the thing that you have faith in is faithful.

Whether the person or the thing that you trust is genuinely trustworthy. And I'll tell you what, we have been given, you and I have been given, a trustworthy Savior in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

You can trust someone, you can trust something else, but if they are not the eternal Son of God, if they are not risen from the dead, they can never give you unshakable and fearless joy.

And they can never give you eternal life because they are not eternal. John writes in verse 31 that the reason he wants you and me to believe in Jesus Christ is not just so that we can have faith, not just faith for the sake of faith.

[41 : 43] He wants you and me to believe in Jesus so that you may have life in his name. you and I need a Savior who can give us new life both here and now and all the way through eternity.

That Savior who can give you life is Jesus. Jesus rose from the dead so that your fearful unbelief would be changed to joyful trust in his life-giving power.

God if you are a Christian may his resurrection turn your fear into joy. If you're not a Christian, if you're not a believer here this morning, I beg you turn from your unbelief.

Trust Jesus alone to give you new life. I and the other elders here of this church would be happy to talk with you about who Jesus is and what he has done for you.

Let's turn to our Lord in prayer.