Why did Jesus rise again?

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[0:00] Good morning, everyone. It was about 10 years ago that Alyssa and I spent a couple of months living and working in a church in Nairobi in Kenya. And it made me realize how good Australia is and that it's also not perfect. Nairobi is a wonderful city, but there is some issues with crime that they have, particularly at night. And so if you're out driving at night, which you don't really do too much, if you're driving, you don't stop at stop signs, you don't stop at red lights. You might slow down and look, is anybody coming? And then you go through.

There is a problem with carjackings sometimes, so you have your doors locked, you don't stop. And do you know what? It works there, it functions. And then when we came back from being away for a couple of months, at night I was out driving, sitting at a red light, thinking, why does this feel so weird? Oh, that's right, I have to stay here. But there's no one around. This is very strange.
And it made me think, okay, this is good. My doors aren't locked. We don't have as much crime. But there's no one around. I kind of felt overly controlled by the government. I felt that there's too much regulation. And it helped me realize that no matter the country we're in, there is always a longing for things to be different, for things to be better. We can long for better health care, for government leadership to be better, to end corruption, for justice to be unbiased and consistent.
There's a longing that we have for a new era of rulers and governments to care for people, because we have an uncertainty about the future, particularly as this country has been hit with drought and fires and flood, and now as we've seen the coronavirus spread. We can think that, oh look, our leaders will sort it out, or maybe we just need to vote in new leaders and they will sort things out. We can pin our hopes on the future on humans. But we don't just need a better government.
We need a radically new one. We need a whole new era to begin. Not just better countries and leadership, but a whole new kingdom. So today, as we are continuing to go through the Apostles' Creed, we see the new and better kingdom that we already live in. That Jesus, in his resurrection and ascension, has brought in a new era for us. And he is the ruler who won't let us down.
[2:48] So let me pray for us this morning. Heavenly Father, as we continue to look through the Apostles' Creed, this summary of faith, we ask that we would be placing our trust in you.

Father, we thank you for governments and particularly good government. But Lord, we thank you so much that your Son is now ruling and reigning. Amen. The first part of the Creed that we are looking at this morning is that we believe that Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day. All four Gospels tell how Jesus died and that he was raised three days later. And they all focus on slightly different aspects. The Gospel of Mark focuses on the empty tomb and the angels' report that Jesus had been raised. Matthew 28 shows a resurrected Jesus.
He comes and speaks with the women at the tomb. And then he sends them away to tell his disciples that he's alive. And then Jesus, in Matthew 28, sends his disciples all across the world to spread the good news. The Gospel of Luke, again, shows a slightly different view. It shows the resurrected Jesus speaking with his disciples, eating fish with them, and then how Jesus ascends into heaven.
And John shows Jesus appear to his disciples, except for poor old Thomas, who misses out, and then he doubts that Jesus was really alive. And so Jesus appears to him to prove it. I'm sorry if this font is a little bit small, but we're in John chapter 20. A week later, his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though 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 hand. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Stop doubting and believe. And Thomas said, My Lord and my God. Jesus told him, Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are all those who have not seen and yet have believed. Thomas has the right response to seeing the resurrected Jesus, my Lord and my God. And the Gospel presents this consistent picture of a resurrected

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Jesus. He has the right to say, He has the right to say, He has the right to say, He has the right because He really was alive, physically resurrected in body. Thomas could have reached out and touched
Him. He ate fish with His disciples. His resurrected body was the same as before and yet somehow new and unique. And what the Gospel writers are doing is they're showing these things because there was, people would put claims to a false resurrection. Just like today, there was myths and stories about people coming back to life. There was, you know, vampires and demons and ghosts and zombies. And that is not Jesus.
[5:59] Zombies and vampires don't eat fish. Ghosts can't be touched. Jesus was fully restored, raised from the dead.

And so while the authors of these four Gospels are saying what He was, they're also clearly showing what He was not. It was not fake. It was a real bodily resurrection. In Acts chapter 2, Peter, the apostle, says, God raised Him from the dead, freeing Him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him. Death couldn't hold Him. He was perfect and innocent. He did not deserve death. And Pilate, as we saw last week, declared Him innocent. He was right to do so. And then later in Acts, again, when Peter is sharing the Gospel with the Gentiles, he said, we are witnesses of everything He did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem.
They killed Him by hanging Him on a cross, but God raised Him from the dead on the third day and caused Him to be seen. He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen, by us who ate and drank with Him after He rose from the dead. Jesus, His death on the cross alone is not sufficient to deal with our sin.
He had to rise. He had to rise. And in His resurrection, He secures forgiveness. His resurrection gives us assurance that we too will be raised. It's God's big stamp of approval on...
There's some batteries there. It's God's big stamp of approval on Jesus' life and that His death was not wasted. It's the certificate of authenticity to prove its value. It's the signature on the check, if you still use checks, to show that it had currency at the bank. Paul describes Jesus' resurrection in Colossians 1 as the firstborn from the dead.
[8:06] And so we have a wonderful joy in the era that we now live in. Jesus has brought us into a new age, into a new kingdom.

With Jesus' resurrection from the dead, we live in a new time. We live in a time where dead people come back to life. Death is temporary.
Jesus is the first one to come back to life from the dead. And so will all who repent and believe. Do you remember when the internet first came in?
Might be showing your age a little bit. There's some young people over here who probably weren't alive when the internet first came in. Over the last 20 years, the internet, the technology age that we are in, has radically changed how we do everything in life.
The way we buy food, the way we buy clothes, the way we just book hotels, and just generally are humans.
[9:08] Alyssa was watching the movie You've Got Mail the other night. And somebody said, oh, I couldn't get online. And it was really frustrating. And I'm like, just that concept of being online, it doesn't exist anymore.

We're just always online. And so we've entered this new age, but that is not nearly as significant as the new era that Jesus brought in when he was raised from the dead.
Jesus, in his resurrection, has changed the very way the whole universe functions. The very nature of the universe is different because now the dead come back to life.
God placed his seal of approval on Jesus. He has ensured us forgiveness of sins. And we now live in a kingdom where dead people come back to life.
There's only been one who has done that permanently. But he is the firstborn of the dead. And that is the hope that we live in. We don't hope that the next piece of technology will fix all of our lives.
[10:11] We hope in the resurrection. I still feel relatively young. And I have a young man mindset about the way my body heals itself.

It'll heal itself. Give it a bit of time. If I do these right exercises, everything will be fine. I'll get stronger. And you know what? I might even get better than before. But as I gracefully age into my mid-30s, I'm realizing that maybe it won't all get better.

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I've noticed that if I stand the wrong way for too long, it hurts to walk. So I'll be standing just over here at the crossing, waiting for the lights to change.
And I've got a dodgy hip. And what it means is that when the lights change, I think I can just start walking and cross the road. And then all of a sudden I'm hobbling. And I have to do this awkward hobble run to get across the road before the cars are trying to hit me and make things even worse.
The hope for my body is not that it will get better. It might get better. But the joy of the gospel is that it is fixed. My hope for my body is to come in the resurrection.
[11:26] Because the kingdom that Jesus has brought in is far better than any era that can come in now. The Industrial Revolution, the technology age that we can come in, whatever age comes next, the one Jesus brought in is better.

Because we are guaranteed perfect bodies. Because he has defeated death. The second part of the creed today is that Jesus, raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father.
We see Jesus' reign in his kingdom. And Paul, when speaking about God's power, said in Ephesians 1, that power is the same as the mighty strength he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead.
And seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age, but also in the one to come.
And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.
[12:43] And in Philippians 2, God exalted him to the highest place, and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and unto the earth, and every tongue confess, and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus is at the top of every hierarchy. He is so high, that even just at the very mention of his name, Philippians says, every knee shall bow, just at the mention of his name.
We've had Steve back in the office this week. It's been wonderful. It's been wonderful to have you back, brother. And, now he's not Jesus, but when he came back, when he, you know, walked through the doors, we were all standing up.
We were all acknowledging that, you know, our brother is here, our leader is here, and at that point, there were still hugs and handshakes, because we've missed him.
We all stood up and took notice at his return. There was a response. But when Jesus returns, every person will acknowledge him, regardless of culture or ethnicity, position or preference.
[14:01] The ascension of Jesus here is a, it's a royal coronation. Now, I wasn't around for Queen Elizabeth's coronation. You can tell me stories of it later, if you like.

But imagine, if Prince Charles becomes king, imagine what his coronation will be like. There will be a massive ceremony, where representatives from all of the Commonwealth, come and acknowledge that he sits on the throne.
Jesus has ascended to a throne much bigger, much grander, and much more powerful. Not only will all people bow to him, but the very heavens, and the planets, and the earth will too.
The sun, and the stars, and the planets will all bow before Jesus. And whilst he said on the cross, it is finished. His work of salvation is finished.
But Jesus continues to work even now. Not saving, because he has saved, but he is reigning, as the king of the universe. Hebrews 1 says, after he had provided purification for sins, he sat down, at the right hand, of the majesty in heaven.
[15:18] He is sat down, not like falling, this is what I do, I fall into the couch at the end of the day, exhausted. But he sat down, into a position of power, and responsibility, and authority. He rules, and leads, the created universe.

And as he reigns, he is also interceding for us. Romans 8 says, that he is at the right hand of God, interceding for us. And Hebrews 7 says, that he lives to intercede for us.
He is still working for us. It is as if he is pointing out to God, these ones. These ones, I died for. Those in Chatswood, who doubt how much I love them. Who are filled with anxiety, and fear, and who attempted to make gods, out of other things.
Those little ones are mine. And Jesus does that now, for all who follow him. Jesus' ascension to this throne, of heaven, has brought in a new kingdom.

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[16:25] We not only live in an era, where dead people come back to life, but Jesus sits on the throne. He has crushed death. He has taken on our sins. And God's new creation, is pushing into this one.

Because Jesus rules, and reigns over this universe. At the moment, throughout the world, there is a fair amount of political instability.
And we can fill this pool that, if only the government would be better. If only they were better. If only we elected the right government, all would be well. Maybe they'll bring in good policy, to help people, to spend tax dollars in the right way, and to end corruption.
Now, it's been interesting, watching a little bit of the US politics, as they ramp up for the next election. There is this tangible yearning, that people have.
They want good government. It's true in schools, we want good leaders. It's true in our workplaces, we want our bosses, and the people who run our organizations, to be good.
[17:35] To make good decisions. But if we place, all our hope, on whoever wins the next election, even if they are great, we will be let down.

I've heard of, people's dissatisfaction, with the current leadership of China. Why didn't you tell us, that the coronavirus was so bad, back in January?
Why was there a two week gap, between telling the US, that it was spreading, and telling your own people? Many people in Australia, are questioning the government, even though the government, has been working, there's still the question of, what have you been doing, in the midst of drought, and fires, and floods, and now the coronavirus?
We don't want, rulers who play political games, but instead help, to protect lives, and guide the country. But if we keep, looking for, our happiness, and our satisfaction, in the future, from our governments, will always be let down.
Jesus is, the good, governor, he is, not only sitting, in the seat of power, but he also has, all power to rule, and he does, what is good, for his people.
[18:51] So we believe, in a Jesus, who was, raised from the dead, who ascended, into heaven, and now sits, at the right hand, of the father, and from there, he will come, to judge the living, and the dead.

So Jesus's kingdom, is going to come. Jesus will return. And his second coming, will be different, to the first. When Jesus first came, he came as a baby, he took on humility, he learned, obedience to God, and he came, to point to God, and to be crucified, raised, to ascend, to a throne.
But now, in that power, when he returns, we will see him, coming, in all his power, and authority. It's the two sides, of the same coin. It's like how, a mother can be, compassionate, and caring for her child, but also, lift a car, or fight off, an enemy, for the sake of her child.
Revelation 19, paints this picture, of Jesus, coming back, to fight for his people. It says, I saw, this is John speaking, I saw heaven standing open, and there before me, was a white horse, whose rider, is called Faithful, and True.
With justice, he judges, and wages war, his eyes, are like blazing fire, and on his head, are many crowns. He has a name, written on him, that no one knows, but he himself.
[20:17] He is dressed, in a robe, dipped in blood, and his name, is the word of God. The armies of heaven, were following him, riding on white horses, and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.

Coming out of his mouth, is a sharp sword, with which to strike down, the nations. He will rule them, with an iron scepter. He treads the wine presses, of the fury, of the wrath, of God Almighty.
And on his robe, and on his thigh, he has a name written on it, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.
This is Jesus, in all his splendor. A sword coming out, of his mouth, an iron scepter, in the other hand, leading an army, to pour out God's wrath, on those who are his enemies.
And when he comes, he comes to judge. Matthew 25 says, that when the Son of Man, comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit, on his glorious throne.
All the nations, will be gathered before him, and he will separate, the people, one from another. As a shepherd, separates the sheep, from the goats. He will put the sheep, on his right, and the goats, on his left.
[21:32] His judgment, looks like, separating the sheep, who love him, who follow his voice, separating them, to eternal joy. And he separates, the goats, who don't listen, to his voice, who don't follow him, and who destroy, and damage.

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And they get separated, to eternal, everlasting torment. This judgment, is coming. Paul said in Philippians 2, that every knee, shall bow.
The kingdom, that Jesus, has brought in, sees dead people, come alive. It has, an all powerful king, and his kingdom, is only for those, who follow this king.
It's easy, to be fearful, of this day. The prophet Joel, describes it, as the great, and terrible day, of the Lord. But the reassuring, thing about this day, is not the judgment, it's the judgment, is not from a human judge.
The reassuring thing, is that the judgment, doesn't come from, a human judge. Judgment, is not going to be biased. This judgment, can't be, bought out. Jesus, would judge, with justice.
[22:43] The king, who is coming, to judge, is the same one, who died, for the guilty. What human judge, has done that? What human judge, has gotten out of their, seat of judgment, and power, and taken, the place, of the condemned?

Jesus, is the king, and judge, that we can trust, because we long, for his good judgment. Rather than being, fearful, of this judgment, it's a wonderful joy, that we can draw, near to him.
There are plenty, of goats, who destroy people, only for themselves. This is our, natural position, without God.
To do what a goat does, which is to tear, and destroy, and to rip it, everything in sight, until it's gone.
In this life, many people seem, to escape judgment, for the most heinous, of crimes.
But we are promised, that there is, a powerful king, who will come, to make things right. But it's also, a reminder, that this world, has an expiry date. We're not sure, when it's going to end.
[23:50] We can't do, what we do with a milk carton, and give it a sniff, and check, whether your expiry date's right, or whether it's still okay. We don't know, when the end is coming, but there is, judgment coming.

And this should spur us, to speak loving words, to our friends, our family, who don't know Jesus.
Easter is coming, it's in a matter of weeks. The eggs have been, on the shelves, for two months, so that must mean, it's around the corner, anytime soon.
I think I've eaten my weight, in hot cross buns already, and Easter's not for a month. And Easter, is a wonderful time, to remind people, to start the conversation, that there is a God, who would do, all that is necessary, to guarantee, a future, for people.
Especially, when we are, in a time, of doubt, and fear, and anxiety, about what will happen tomorrow. We believe, in a Jesus, who was raised, from the dead, ascended, to the greatest throne, and he will come back, to judge.
Jesus has brought in, a new kingdom, a new era, a time of, wonderful blessing, before God. A time, where we have an assurance, that the dead, will rise, where the one, who showed his love, on the cross, is now the Lord, of all the universe.
[25:07] And that loving Lord, will come to judge. No government, or leader, can fill our yearning, for the good, and sacrificial ruler.

No health fix, no health solution, not even a cure, for coronavirus, is going to fix, our anxiety, about the future. No justice system, will ever deal, with all of those, who deserve to be punished.
It is only, the ascended Jesus, who will do that, sitting on his throne, waiting to return, to bring us home. Let me pray.

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