

# A Preview of the Resurrection

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 04 April 2021

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, a very warm welcome to everyone today to the service. This is a really happy occasion when we're able to go on the Lord's Day in a gathered service like this, which is, of course, also being streamed live onto our YouTube channel.

There's a new YouTube channel for the services coming from the seminary here. So whether they're Gaelic or English, the YouTube channel for the seminary will always have the services from the seminary.

And whenever we get back to the church, that'll be the old YouTube channel will still continue to be used for that. So if you do check in at any time to the seminary services, they'll be on that new YouTube channel.

So welcome. I think I know who everybody is behind the masks, although sometimes it's difficult to make out. But it's absolutely wonderful to see you all and to see you and be able to come together in this way.

And welcome to those who are actually joining virtually as well. We're glad to have your company wherever you are in the world. And we're pleased that you've joined us and are able to participate in the worship this way.

[ 1 : 05 ] A couple of intimations, first of all, as already intimated on Wednesday, those who use envelopes for the freewill offering can take them now to the services in the church here on the Lord's Day or actually on Wednesday.

Wednesday, the collection can be taken. The envelopes can be taken for the freewill offering connection, any of the services. And arrangements have been made for a collection day.

For any who can't get to the services yet, an arrangement's been made for Saturday, the 10th of April in the MA Hall from 2 to 4pm. Treasurer has made that arrangement.

So anyone who has envelopes or has collected envelopes for some time and needs to hand them in, the hall will be open 2 to 4 on Saturday, the 10th of April.

And sadly, too, I have to announce the death of Mr George MacArthur. Geordie, as he was known, Geordie MacArthur, has passed away.

[ 2 : 05 ] And we extend our sincere condolences to Annie and to the family. I have no details yet as to what arrangements may be made for the funeral. And I'm not sure about tomorrow's a public holiday.

So there may be a slight delay before that can be announced. But anyway, we're sorry to hear of Geordie's passing. And we commend this family to the Lord. Well, we're going to begin now by reading, first of all, from God's Word.

And that's in the book of Acts. And chapter 2, verses 22 to 36. Acts chapter 2 at verse 22.

This is Peter preaching on the day of Pentecost. And we're beginning halfway through what he's saying.

But it ties in with what we want to look at later on from the Gospel of Luke. Men of Israel, hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.

[ 3 : 11 ] So this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

For David says concerning him, I saw the Lord always before me, for he is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoiced.

My flesh also will dwell in hope, for you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption. You have made known to me the paths of life, and will make me full of gladness with

your presence.

Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

This Jesus God raised up, and of all that we are all witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

[ 4 : 34 ] For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. And we pray, as always, that God will follow with his blessing this reading of his word.

We're now going to join in prayer. Let's bow our heads and engage in prayer. Our gracious God and our heavenly Father, we thank you today for this privilege, for this renewed privilege we have of gathering together in person in this place of worship.

We thank you for all who are joining us virtually, and for the interest that we all have in the worship of your glorious name, in having you exalted in our praises, and come to experience you in our hearts.

We thank you today, O Lord, for all that has made this possible, for everything we receive in life that is of benefit to us, comes to us out of your goodness.

[ 5 : 48 ] Your goodness is the source from which flow all blessings that we receive. We thank you today for the blessings of the gospel, the blessings that accompany your word as we use it in your worship.

We pray today that that blessing will be ours, O Lord, even more than we are able to ask or think.

We pray that having spent all of these months unable to gather here in this place of worship, we ask, O Lord, that as we celebrate the fact that we are able to do so today, we also, Lord, above us celebrate the fact of your resurrection.

For we gather together today on a day that commemorates your resurrection. Every Lord's Day is a reminder to us of how you have come to conquer death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

And, Lord, we give thanks today that we share in that great victory of Jesus. When we come to trust in him and entrust ourselves to him, we give thanks that united to him, we are promised that we will be brought into the fullness of eternal life at your right hand.

We thank you for the beginning of that experience, even in this world, for your people are given life, that life that Jesus himself gives. We thank you today that that life is experienced by so many people in the world as they live out their life as Christians.

[ 7 : 19 ] Bless us, we pray, here together today. Bless all who are gathered with us virtually. We thank you for the encouragement over these past months, O Lord, of many joining together with us, of us being joined together virtually online and in recorded services.

We ask, O Lord, that these may continue to prove to be fruitful to us in our experience and that our own lives may be progressed further spiritually through your word being preached and read and experienced by us.

We pray today for your Holy Spirit to lead us and conduct us in our worship. We thank you, O Lord, today that this especially is what binds us together more so than even physical matters, physical presence, buildings, that it is through your Holy Spirit that your people are bonded together in fellowship with yourself and with one another.

And we thank you today, O Lord, for that Holy Spirit that unites us, the Holy Spirit that teaches us, that leads us into your truth. And we pray today, Lord, that you would lead us into your truth by your Spirit and apply it to our hearts once again, O Lord.

But we need the power of your word, the power of your truth working in our hearts. We need our lives day by day, O Lord, led by you and led into avenues of further sanctification and holiness of life and away from those things of sin and of the flesh that we know we are so prone to, O Lord.

[ 8 : 52 ] Forgive us today, we pray, all our trespasses grant that we may know the cleansing power of your Spirit and that we may realize in you the wonder of your salvation that provides for us such

glorious redemption in which we find forgiveness of sin.

For as your word tells us, Jesus himself is our peace, our peace with God, our peace with one another. And we give thanks today that he, as our Redeemer, is the one who has purchased at the price of his own life through his death and resurrection this glorious peace, this wonderful salvation. So bless us, we pray here. Grant your blessing to us as a congregation, as we anticipate, by your grace and by your mercy, days ahead of a greater liberty to be together and to do things in our communities that we were not able to do for some time.

Lord, we ask that today you would prepare us for this and by your mercy give us as a people and as a nation to make progress in these matters.

We thank you today for the means by which vaccination has been made possible. We thank you especially for the rapid progress of vaccinations in our own island here and we give thanks for that.

[10:13] And, O Lord, we pray that even in those things too we remember that it is in your goodness, that in your providence you have provided this for us. And yet we pray that you would help us to depend upon yourself particularly.

Give us, we pray today, to know that it is in you that we live and move and have our being. Bless our children. Be with them at this time, we pray. Help them as they find so many challenges in relation to their work in school, in Sunday school and all the other ways in which their life is restricted at this time.

Bless them. Bless them and their families. Bless us in our homes, we pray. Thank you, blessing today to those who mourn the passing of loved ones. We know that the devastation of death, O Lord, has been so evident over the past year through the virus itself.

Yet we know that others die even though they have not contracted the virus at all. We pray today that you bless Annie MacArthur and her family as they miss Geordie now from their midst.

O Lord, we pray for them, asking that your counsel and your peace will be their portion. And you grant them, Lord, that comfort of your Holy Spirit. And now lead us, we pray, further into our time of worship.

[11:30] Hear us, we pray, and accept her. As we pray, seeking cleansing from all our sin, we do so for Jesus' sake. Amen. Okay, now children, there's not many children present, but children online hopefully watching.

Today we're looking at another of passages in the Bible, in the book of Psalms, where we find a reference to Jesus, even if his name is not mentioned. We've been looking at how in the New Testament some passages tell us that these parts of the Psalms are actually about him.

And today it's Psalm 16, and verses 10 and 11. For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol. That's the Old Testament word for Hades in the New Testament, as we read from Acts chapter 2 a minute ago.

And it really is, it has to do with the dead, or the fact that people, without taking account of hell or heaven, is just the area of death, beyond this life.

They've gone to be beyond this life. So here is the Psalm saying, you will not abandon my soul to death, or let your Holy One see corruption.

[12:41] You make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. And the passage we've just read in Acts chapter 2 makes it very clear that these words in the Psalm were about Jesus.

They're a prophecy about Jesus. Because Peter there preaching in Acts chapter 2 states that this is what was meant in the Psalm when David wrote, you will not abandon my soul to Hades.

He says that David has died and was buried. His tomb is with us. Therefore, being a prophet, knowing that God had sworn with an oath that he would set one of his descendants on the throne, he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.

So it's about the resurrection of Jesus. And at Easter time, we especially focus on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. It's important to realize that Jesus really died.

He wasn't unconscious. It wasn't a swoon of something like that. It wasn't a faked death. It was a real death and a real burial of his body, just as you find described in the Bible.

[13:58] In fact, there were guards set on the tomb by the Jewish authorities. They set guards there so that nobody could come and open the tomb and take his body away and pretend that he had risen from the dead.

That's how they saw it. But on the morning, third day after his death, third morning after his death, they found the grave open. And when they looked into the grave, there was no body there. But the grave clothes were there that had been covering his body when it was laid in the tomb. And not only that, but John tells us that the grave clothes were exactly as they had been on his body. Nobody had disturbed them. It wasn't as if somebody had gone in taking the grave clothes off and then, or Jesus himself, getting up and folding up his clothes neatly.

The grave clothes were just as they had been on his body. The cloth that was round his head, which was the practice in those days, and the other clothes on the rest of his body. And he had risen out of these clothes and left them behind because they belonged to death.

[15:08] They were no longer relevant to him because he was now risen from the dead. And as he rose from the dead, he left the grave clothes behind. They were showing that he had actually risen out of them.

In other words, today we mark the fact that Jesus has defeated death. He's conquered death. He has come to die a real death.

His body was buried and he rose from the dead in such a way that demonstrated that now risen from the dead, he's in a new kind of life.

And that's such an important thing for us when we come to realize how important it is for us to trust in Jesus because when you trust in Jesus, you actually come to be given this victory over death by Jesus.

What is eternal life? The Bible promises if we believe in Jesus, then we have eternal life. We shall live forevermore. We shall be in heaven forever when we die.

[16:13] What is eternal life? Eternal life, you could say, is sharing in Jesus' victory over death. It's life above death.

It's life through Jesus' resurrection. That's why we can actually sing. We're going to be singing it. Well, we're not going to be singing it. I'm going to be singing it, but you'll be following it in your heads, as it were.

Psalms 16, at the end of the service today, where we find these words actually about Jesus, as we've read in Acts chapter 2, and how important it is as we do that, that we realize they are about Jesus.

So there is the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, the ongoing life of Jesus, as he now lives in heaven, and not only lives in heaven, but through his spirit, we enjoy his presence and his blessing.

And all of that is important for us as young or old to realize that these words in the Psalms are about Jesus, the Jesus who's so precious to his people, So now we're going to say the Lord's Prayer.

[17:24] Let's pray the Lord's Prayer. We are praying the Lord's Prayer, not just speaking it out, but we want to have the words in our mind and on our lips as we say the Lord's Prayer together.

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. Now we're going to read once again, this time it's in the book, the Gospel of Luke.

Gospel of Luke chapter 7. And we're continuing with our studies of the miracles of Jesus. And we come to another miracle here in Luke chapter 7. We'll begin reading at verse 11.

There's a miracle in the first part of the chapter as well, where the centurion's servant is healed by Jesus. And in verse 11 of chapter 7 of Luke, we read as follows, Now soon afterwards, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him.

[18:49] As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a considerable crowd from the town was with her.

And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, Do not weep. Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bierer stood still. And he said, Young man, I say to you, Arise.

And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet has risen among us, and God has visited his

people.

This report about him spread through the whole country of Judea, through the whole of Judea, and all the surrounding country. And again, we pray God to bless us as his word to us.

Let's look at this passage as another of the raisings that Jesus engaged in as he raised people back from the dead. And as we look at this passage, we'll see that his resurrection, the resurrection of Jesus, is really inseparable from the resurrection of his people.

[ 20 : 10 ] A resurrection that's going to take place at the last day when Jesus returns, when all his people will be raised up and go to be with him forever in heaven. Well, that resurrection is inseparable from, it's united to, the resurrection of Jesus himself.

Romans chapter 6 and verse 5 says, if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

So there's one verse there that very clearly ties the resurrection of Jesus and his people's resurrection together. You can't separate his resurrection from the resurrection of his people.

And when we go to the raising of Lazarus from the dead, which is the third of the raisings that you find in the Gospels, it's very clear there as well that what Jesus says of himself also comes to be true of his people.

The resurrection that he is, as he said to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.

[ 21 : 19 ] Do you believe this? He asked her. And then he goes and raises Lazarus from the dead, saying, to the tomb in which Lazarus was bound up, Lazarus come out.

And Lazarus came out still bound with the grave clothes. But the voice of Jesus, just as here, as we'll see later, brought this back to life, this man back to life.

So the raising of, these raisings that you find, like this miracle here, they're really in a sense a preview of Christ's resurrection, but of our own resurrection, particularly.

And that's why we're able to call our study today a preview of resurrection. Because as Jesus raised this young man back from the dead, he was on his way to being buried, so that's a preview for us of resurrection, of being, of sharing in the power of Jesus, the power by which Jesus brings life to the dead.

We're all dead spiritually until he brings life to us. And that spiritual resurrection is followed by, on the last day, our actual physical resurrection as well, to be with Jesus forever.

[ 22 : 36 ] So as we say, this is the second of the two raisings. We saw the previous one in our last study in Mark chapter 5, the raising of the daughter of Jairus, and that was done privately within Jairus' home.

Jesus had put everybody out except Peter, James, and John, and the parents of the girl. But this one was very public. There was a great crowd along with this mother and the carriers of the bear, of the stretcher, that was taking him to his burial.

So this is a very public demonstration of something that previously was very private. And it really shows us, again, the power of Christ to raise the dead.

So here's a preview of resurrection. Let's divide it into three different sections. The first section, let's look at the context for the miracle in verses 11 and 12.

And then look at the compassion of the Lord in that context. You find that in verse 13, when the Lord saw her, he had compassion and said to her, do not weep. And then verses 14 to 15, we can deal with that as the conqueror or the conquering of death.

[ 23 : 48 ] So the context and the compassion and the conquering of death. The context for the miracle is very easily set out there by, clearly set out by Luke, verses 11 to 12.

He went to a town called Nain. A great crowd followed him and his disciples. And they met this procession. A man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother.

And Luke very deliberately then mentions, she was widow. So here was this poor widow, this widow who had, whenever she had lost her husband, we're not told.

But here she was, her only son had now also died. And remember, in those days, widows were very vulnerable. I'm sure that's the case to some extent too, but there was no, there was no social services or anything to back up the needs of people at that time.

Widows especially were pretty vulnerable. In fact, widows were seen as something of a burden.

Now she would have been at the head of this procession. That would have been the practice at the

time as she went along with those who were carrying the stretcher.

[ 24 : 53 ] She would have been at the head of the procession. And so she would have been the first person really that Jesus saw as the procession approached him as he drew near to this town of Nain where the woman lived.

And as they drew near, she, he saw her there. And this is a feature of Luke's gospel.

I'm just saying this in passing really, but it's important. A feature of Luke's gospel is how women are set out as dignified by Jesus and indeed by the gospel.

You know, you find many people saying it's the Bible that's really at fault for having denigrated women or womanhood and devalued womanhood. It's the fault of the Bible because without that, if we just went by human perception and human ideologies and human philosophies, women would be far better treated and much higher off in society.

That is not true. In fact, when you go to Luke's gospel, one of the features of Luke's gospel is how Jesus elevated womanhood above the practice of the time because the practice in his own time was that women were not actually seen as very important.

[ 26 : 13 ] Women were not given the rights that they ought to have been given. Women were treated in a very much secondary way. And Jesus, through his preaching and through his teaching and through his miracles too, was really setting out what womanhood was like as far as God's creation is concerned.

And he was concerned to show that women have a place in God's creation of wonderful importance. Even though there are distinctions, like for example in a marriage or even in a church setting as far as leadership is concerned, that does not devalue women.

And in fact, there are aspects of a womanhood and a woman's place that men simply cannot match. After all, when the Lord said to Adam, it is not good that man should be alone, he provided a wife for him as a help meet, as somebody commensurate with his own needs.

Nobody else could do that for Adam and that was demonstrated by the fact that Adam went through the whole creation as it was then and there was nothing found in the creation amongst all the creatures that God had made compatible with himself, able to supply his needs as a human being. That's why God created a woman. Nobody else can take that place. That's not devaluing womanhood. That's actually giving her a place that's unique. We have to remember that in Jesus' day, women were not valued.

[ 27 : 55 ] There was prejudice against them and when they came to be widowed, they were often exploited and often very vulnerable. So here was a woman, her source of income was gone, her husband had died and now her only son had died.

So she was in a very vulnerable situation. and Jesus is going to bring her son back to life and he's going to do it out of his compassion, not just to show that he can do spectacular things.

That's the context for this miracle and it's something that we need to bear in mind in our own particular day as well. There's an urgent need today that we present to the world what the Bible really says about women and about womanhood and about marriage and about sex and about sexuality because that's where our source of information, our infallible source of information is, our authoritative source of information is.

Not in the philosophies of human beings, not in a secularist agenda but in the teaching of God's word and that's where you find your point of departure, your starting point and finishing point. for womanhood and what that means. So here's, first of all, the context of this grieving widow on the way to bury her son.

[ 29 : 21 ] And secondly, look at the compassion of the Lord there in verse 13. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her. Now it's interesting that Luke precisely records things just as they were.

When he saw her, he had compassion on her. This is not a case like in some other cases where people come to Jesus and immediately start pleading with him to have mercy on them or previous context, Jairus, have mercy on my daughter.

She's at the point of death. We looked last time. There's an appeal made to Jesus in these contexts. Here there is no appeal from this woman. She says nothing. She asks nothing. He just sees her coming at the head of this procession on the way to bury her son and in his sight of her there is compassion.

When he saw her, he had compassion on her. These are wonderful words. It took no more than the sight that Jesus had of this needy, vulnerable woman to draw his compassion towards her. And so often, that's what you find in the Bible when it talks about God and God being compassionate and God being God in that compassionate way because again, that's what we have to rely on, the teaching of the Bible.

[ 30 : 41 ] Not what you find in some people's view or caricature of God because of the way that they despise the whole idea of God and God ruling lives and the word of God, the gospel, being central to human life.

You go to the Bible, you'll always find this consistently. Israel in Egypt, the people of Israel in Egypt. What does Genesis, what does Exodus say about it? That God was drawn towards them in their plight of slaves.

And he said to Moses, I have seen, I have seen their hurt. I've seen, and I have come down, I've seen their enslavement.

And I have come down to deliver them. That's compassion speaking. And you go to Hosea where God is threatening his judgment on the people of Hosea's day because of their abandonment of obedience to God.

They've so much fallen in love with idols. And God is saying about himself through Hosea, I will not exercise the fierceness of my wrath.

[ 31 : 48 ] He has a covenant love for these people. He says, my compassion, my tender compassion is moving within me. See, there's the heart of Jesus prefigured there in the Old Testament.

As you find here, Jesus actually in the world. And we saw in the miracle of feeding the 5,000, how that was a feature in Mark chapter 6 and verse 34. When Jesus saw them, he had compassion on them.

Why? Because he saw them as sheep without a shepherd. You see, the compassion of Jesus is so abundantly emphasized in Scripture that that's really what we go to as the source of our blessings. He saw this woman and he had compassion on her. And isn't that how he views ourselves? Isn't that why there is such a thing for us as forgiveness of sin and abundance of spiritual life?

Isn't that really the cause, the moving cause from which we receive all the blessing that we receive, especially the blessings of eternal life? Because Jesus has moved with compassion as he sees us and applies to no lostness as sinners.

[ 33 : 10 ] That's still the case. Just because Jesus is no longer physically on earth, that doesn't mean that he doesn't have a compassionate look anymore. That doesn't mean that his compassion has ceased to be active.

It doesn't mean that he doesn't look compassionately upon you and upon I, upon me, upon all the people that he has compassion when he sees us in our sins and in the death that our sin has brought upon ourselves.

Today, friends, that's the compassion that comes from deep within the heart of Jesus. Because this word, we've seen it before, this word compassion, it's a word that shows how very deeply Jesus felt about this, how inwardly he was so moved about this woman's situation, this woman's plight.

And you see that probably better than anywhere else in the Bible shown out in what happened with the raising of Lazarus.

And you recall there in John chapter 11, you recall the various ways in which that inner, emotional heart, if you like, of Jesus is spoken of in verse 33 there of John 11.

[ 34 : 30 ] You find these words, Jesus, here he is on the way to bringing Lazarus back from the dead and meeting Martha and then Mary comes with the same words and then when Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

There's a deep agitation in the soul of Jesus about this. And verse 35, Jesus wept.

And then verse 38, Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. See, three references there in a very short passage to Jesus being deeply moved, disturbed, as it were, emotionally within himself because that's what the words mean.

What is this about? Why is he so deeply disturbed? Is it just because he has compassion in that sense of sharing in the loss of his friend Lazarus? Is it because he's lost a friend?

Yes, there's all of that to it. But in the context, there's actually much more than that to him because the inner movement of the heart of Jesus is actually over the fact of death.

[ 35 : 47 ] It's not just that he's lost a friend in Lazarus. It's that this human being has a representation, if you like, of all human beings that he created as God to have fullness of life with God in fellowship.

Where is he now? He is in a tomb in the earth. He's confined to a little plot of ground where his body is beginning to decay.

And Jesus wept. Jesus was deeply moved by the fact that human beings that were created to live are now dying, are now being buried.

That's why he was deeply moved, you see. It's not just simply the fact of sympathy and compassion on that level, though there is that there, but there is this sight of dead human beings compared to what they were created for.

See, there's the glory of the gospel again. The death that we had brought upon ourselves is something that Jesus looks at in Lazarus' case and in this young man's case as a deeply disturbing thing to him.

[ 37 : 08 ] That's not why they were created. and the fellowship that they had with God and our creation that we had is gone, but it is restored.

There is such a thing as being raised back to life spiritually as well as physically here. So there's the compassion of the Lord and thirdly, the conqueror of death because from that compassion Jesus now moves to bringing this young man back to life.

Of course, the root of grief here for this woman and those who are grieving with us is the death of this young man, but the root of the death is actually sin.

Romans 5 verse 12 makes it so clear as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.

There's the connection. These are the connections that are made.

Sin entered into the world and on the back of sin, death came upon all human beings for all sin. And there is how Paul deals with the union between Jesus and his people.

[ 38 : 18 ] Firstly, we're united to Adam and that brings us to share in his death. And then, by God's grace, we're united to Jesus and therefore, we come to share in his victory over death, in his resurrection.

What a wonderful God he is. What a wonderful gospel this is. What a wonderful message this is.

You don't find anything like it anywhere else. This is the conqueror of death in the person of Jesus.

Well, he says to the woman, do not weep. Now, he's not saying that it was wrong for her to be weeping. The Bible nowhere denounces grief as something wrong in itself.

Sometimes we can perhaps overdo it or sometimes, indeed, as you see in our society, there's all too little grief sometimes over some of the things that are happening to people in our world.

But there's nothing wrong with grief in itself at the death of someone who was loved. But he's saying don't weep. Of course, that means in a context such as he's going to show of bringing her son back from the dead, context of resurrection, if you like, there's no space for weeping.

[ 39 : 36 ] Weeping does not belong to the world of the resurrection. Weeping does not belong to that life that has triumphed over death, which is why heaven, in the words of Revelation, is so clearly specified as that there is no more pain and no more death and no more weeping for all these things have gone.

They're away. They're behind us. And here is that really in a sense it's something as we said at the beginning that's set out as a preview of resurrection and of the life of resurrection with Christ.

When he came to Mary Magdalene, you remember, in John's Gospel, it's in the context of raising Lazarus back again from the dead that he said, woman, why are you weeping?

And in the context of his own resurrection which had then taken place, he said to Mary Magdalene, why are you weeping? See, he's risen from the dead. It's a cause of celebration, not of weeping.

And that's, of course, natural because Mary Magdalene didn't understand that at the time. Today, that's where we're at. We're the risen Jesus. We're celebrating the fact that he's risen from the dead, that he's conquered death, that he is the conqueror of death.

[ 40 : 57 ] That's why he's saying here, do not weep. And then he comes and touches the bear.

And, of course, normally, that would have been regarded as contracting ceremonial uncleanness to himself, ceremonial defilement because you weren't allowed, going by the laws of the Old Testament, the ceremonial laws to touch the dead or anything to do with death.

But when Jesus came to touch a leper, for example, to heal him, his touch reversed the disease. His touch led to his rehabilitation into society.

Jesus did not contract defilement, even ceremonially, by touching this man's stretcher, the bear on which he was being carried. But the touch of Jesus led to a transformation, as it always does.

And then he says, I say to you, young man, arise. Now, again, Luke is very precise in recording this incident, and it fits in, again, with what you find so often in the Bible.

It's through Christ's words, through God's words, that things happen creatively. The whole of the creation, the physical creation, came into being through God's speech.

[ 42 : 13 ] image. God said, let there be light, and there was light. God said, let the earth produce. God said, let us make man in our image.

God's creative voice, God's creative will spoken out, and things happen, and life is the result, or sometimes death too.

But here is life spoken into being by Jesus. When he speaks, he speaks creatively, and you see the instant response.

The dead man sat up and began to speak. Instantly. He sat up. Just imagine the crowd watching this.

And he said, let us see this. Here is this young man who is obviously dead, and he is being carried to his burial. And this Jesus comes along and says to his mother, don't weep.

[ 43 : 14 ] And then he touches the beard and he speaks to that dead corpse. He says, young man, I say to you, arise. And he sits up. Instantly sits up. Just imagine the reaction.

The faces of that crowd. The wonder on their faces. The amazement as it goes on to speak about the reaction of the crowd that glorified God saying a great prophet has risen amongst us.

But here is the proof of Christ's authority and Christ's power. It's not just his power that brings this man back to life. It's his authority over death. That's what's important for us to realize that when we think of the resurrection of Jesus and a preview of our own resurrection, it's Christ's authority over death that you are seeing.

Because when Jesus speaks to death, death has to obey. as he showed at Lazarus' tomb, Lazarus, come out! And the instant response was he came out.

When Jesus speaks to death, death must also obey. And I think you can take that into the context of Jesus' own death on the cross. Because you recall that when he died, he said with a loud voice, it's in Luke chapter 23 here as well, chapter 23, verse 46, he said with a loud voice, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

[ 44 : 41 ] With a loud voice. Despite the abuse that he had been subject to and the weakness of his body, still he said with a loud voice, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

What is he saying to death in that? He's saying to death, you're not going to claim me. I'm here to defeat you. And here, my Father is going to receive me.

I'm not going to be going, I'm not going to be going, though my physical remains will be buried, I'm not going to be in the custody of death. I'm not going to be in the hands of death.

I'm not going to be under the authority of death. Death is under my authority is what he's saying.

Father, into your hands, into your hands, I commit my spirit, not into the hands of death.

In a world that is so full of weeping, a world that has known of so much death even over the past year, a pandemic that has taken so, so many lives, here's the message of the gospel.

[ 45 : 50 ] Jesus has triumphed. Jesus is Lord and Master of death. Jesus has conquered death. death. Jesus is still triumphant over death and always will be.

And that's really something that belongs to the purpose of his coming into the world. This preview of resurrection is essential to our salvation, this resurrection, this resurrection to life.

It's essential to our redemption. This is why Jesus died. This is why Jesus rose out from the dead. But you notice the wonderful words.

The dead man began to speak and Jesus gave him to his mother. Gave him back to his mother. death. Just think of what that really means.

Here's the context of this grieving widow wrestling with the fact that her son, her only son, has died. She's left alone in the world. Death has robbed this mother of her dear son.

[ 47 : 04 ] Death has come into her life and robbed her of her son. And what has Jesus done? He has gone into death and grabbed this dead son of hers and brought him back to life.

And in doing so, he has shown that he's the master of death. And as he does so, he gives him back to his mother. It's almost as if he's saying, I think you could just envisage this as the meaning of these words, he gave him back to his mother, that he's more or less saying to his mother, well, death took him from you.

But I have gone and defeated death by my authority. I have spoken to death and death has obeyed me and now I'm giving him back to you.

And don't you see the compassion of Jesus even at that level? He doesn't want to make a show for himself. He doesn't want just people to say what a spectacular man this is.

He's concerned genuinely concerned for this woman, for her plight. So he gives her back her son. Of course, that's an exceptional situation.

[ 48 : 19 ] We have all lost loved ones and we're not going to have them back in this world. And that ongoing sense of loss remains with us.

But where do we go for consolation? When we can't bring our loved ones back, when we know they're not going to be restored like this young man was restored to us?

Where do we go for our consolation? Where is the root of our comfort? Where is the strength that we need going to come from? It's from the power of his resurrection, isn't it? The reality of his resurrection.

The reality of Jesus conquering death. Something that's already happened. That's really where the source of our comfort is today. as we face the reality of death.

This is salvation. He has gone into the realms of death. He has died the death that we deserved as he exclaimed on the cross to the father.

[ 49 : 25 ] Why have you forsaken me? That forsakenness is the death of hell that we deserved. And he died in our place. place of his people.

Why did he do that? So as to give us back to God. That's why. To be able to redeem us from death. And give us back to God. And you know, there's a picture, I think, in our minds at this point where every time and every person who comes to know Jesus, and into his life Jesus comes triumphantly, you have a picture there, if you like, of Jesus going to the father and saying about you, Father, this is why I died.

This is why I rose from the dead, so that I could give him or her back to you, saved, alive, from the dead. That's why he's such an incomparable savior, and why this is such an incomparable gospel. You know the song probably called, usually called Because He Lives. It's verses that I chose when I was on ILS FM a few nights ago, and some of the verses run like this, and I'll conclude with these words because they're very much in keeping with our study this morning.

[ 50 : 48 ] God sent a son, they called him Jesus. He came to love, heal, and forgive. He lived and died to buy my pardon, an empty grave is there to prove my savior lives.

Then one day I'll cross that river, I'll fight life's final war with pain, and then as death gives way to victory, I'll see the lights of glory, and I'll know he reigns.

Because he lives, I can face tomorrow. Because he lives, all fear is gone. Because I know he holds the future, and life is worth living just because he lives.

May God bless these thoughts on his word to us today. Let's pray. Lord, our God, we thank you that you live, that you live beyond the reach of death, that you have come into this world and taken hold of death and defeated it for your people.

Lord, help us constantly to hold on to the reality of this. Help us to see in our times of despondency that there is no weeping in resurrection.

[ 52 : 06 ] Enable us, we pray, as we weep throughout the days of the course of our life, to bring our weeping to you so that you would reassure us, O Lord, that we are safe in yourself.

And as one who has conquered death, that you are able to look after us throughout all of life. Bless all who do mourn and weep today.

We pray for them and ask that from your own consolation as the risen triumphant Lord, that you would lend them your comfort, that you would give to them day by day to experience the beauty and the power of being united to you in your resurrection.

So, Lord, be with us throughout this day, be with us again in the evening time when we will hear a recorded service being transmitted. Bless, we pray, your word to us at all times and hear us now and pardon our sin for Jesus' sake.

Amen. We're going to conclude with a singing and that singing is Psalm 16. Psalm 16 and sing Psalms, version of Psalm 16.

[ 53 : 16 ] As I said, as you know, we're not actually able to have congregational singing, so as I sing, you can sing in your heads just as you follow these words of Psalm 16. Before me constantly, I set the Lord alone because he is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown.

You need to wear this visor because it's part of the regulations, unfortunately. So, Psalm 16 and from verse 8, before me constantly, I set the Lord alone.

We'll sing to the tune, Golden Hill. Before me constantly, I set the Lord alone because he is at my right hand, I'll not be overthrown.

Therefore, my heart is glad, my tongue with joy will sing, my body too will rest secure in hope and withering.

Or you will not allow my soul in death to stay, nor will you give your holy one to see the tombs decay.

[ 55 : 13 ] decay. You have made known to me the path of life divine.

bliss shall I know at your right hand, joy from your face will shine.

divine. Now, just to say before the benediction, if you can remain seated, please, until the office bearers have, at the front, have guided you out from the building.

Do sanitise your hands as well when you're leaving using the sanitiser on the top shelf outside the steps there. And we're not also going to gather outside the building at all, so if you can make your way, please, to your cars or to the street immediately after the benediction.

These are all the intimations. Let's stand for the benediction. Now, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.

[ 56 : 27 ] Amen.