

# Jesus and the Kingdom Demands of Easter Sunday

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Date: 20 April 2025

Preacher: Rev Callum Macleod

[ 0 : 00 ] So let's begin our worship by singing to God's praise from Psalm 72 in the Scottish Psalter on page 312.! Psalm 72 on page 312.

It is a psalm about the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, and rejoicing in Him and in the peace that He brings and in the endurance of His reign. We're singing at verse 1.

O Lord, Thy judgments give the King, the Son, Thy righteousness. With rightly shall Thy people judge, Thy poor with uprightness. The lofty mountains shall bring forth unto the people peace. Likewise, the little hills, the same shall do by righteousness.

And we're going to sing from verse 1 to the end of the verse marked 7, and we're singing to the tune Evan. So we stand to sing to God's praise. O Lord, Thy judgments give the King, the Son, Thy righteousness. With rightly shall Thy people judge, Thy poor with uprightness.

The lofty mountains shall bring forth unto the people peace. Likewise, the little hills, the same shall do by righteousness.

[ 1 : 49 ] The people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, the people voyque, voyque, voyque, voyque, voyque, voyque, voyque, voyque, voyque, voyque, voyque, voyque voyque, voyque voyque, voyque voyque voyque voyque voyque voyque voyque voyque voyque voyque voyque voyque voyque voyque They shall be feared while sun and doom do last wages all.

Like rain on moon grass he shall grow or search on earth that fall.

The just shall flourish in his days and prosper in his reign.

He shall while the moon endure a hundred feet maintain.

Let's join together in prayer. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Almighty and most gracious God, we rejoice once more in the worship of your name.

[ 3 : 41 ] We rejoice in your word that we have sung together. We rejoice in the knowledge that your son is crowned as king. We rejoice in the knowledge of the peace which he has secured by his saving work.

We rejoice in the knowledge that his kingdom knows no end, that it shall endure forever. We rejoice in the knowledge of the salvation that is freely offered to us in the gospel of Jesus Christ, your son. We rejoice in the knowledge that that gospel offers to us a pathway into your everlasting kingdom to be the kingdom of God, to be citizens in the kingdom of heaven, to have you as our father here in this world, caring as I'm watching over us and rejoicing in the knowledge that such care will lead us safely through this world amidst of all of its turmoil and uncertainty and will bring us at last into your everlasting kingdom.

We give thanks to you for this day, for the Lord's day. We give thanks to you for the significance of this Lord's day, of this Easter Sunday.

We give thanks to you that your son was raised by you from the dead. We give thanks to you for the way in which you received his finished work.

[ 5 : 19 ] We give thanks to you for the way in which your plans succeeded in his life and his death and in his resurrection. And we rejoice in the knowledge tonight that the glory belongs to him and that you have indeed crowned him with glory and with honor.

And help us as we reflect on these things during the whole of this day. Help us with faith, we do pray. Help us so that we would not treat the story of the resurrection of your son like any other story. Save us from dismissing it when we close this day and move on to another day. Help us to understand the reality of the resurrection of your son as the great moment of the work of your redemption.

As a great moment in which the destiny of this world has been changed and has been secured forever. And help us, O Lord God, to understand that on this Lord's day, like every other Lord's day, the gospel demands our attention.

That it demands our faith. That it does demand our wholehearted commitment. Commitment to you as our God. Commitment in discipleship to follow your son.

[ 6 : 41 ] And commitment to serve you here in this world as long as we are in it. So bless your word to us tonight, O Lord our God. Instill within us that deep desire to respond in love to the news of the death and resurrection of your son and understanding its personal significance to be able to speak of it with joy and with gladness and to speak of it with love to those who are around us in life who, although today may be interested in the story, have no interest in the real meaning of it.

So bless our hearts, we do pray in that way this evening together. Bless to us this whole day. And bless all those who came under the sound of the gospel, not only in our own congregation here, but across our island communities and even throughout our land on this Easter Sunday.

We give thanks to you for every mention of the death and resurrection of your son. And we pray that all who heard would know something of the power with which you did raise your son, that power working in their hearts to bring about new life, to bring about new birth, and to bring about a new hope and the hope of a new and a greater and a better day.

And so we pray that you will follow the message of Easter and the preaching of your word with the power of your Holy Spirit, that it may indeed bring forth fruit in the lives of all those who came in contact with your word today, and that we may truly see your kingdom coming and evidence of your work, that you are indeed building your church around us in our congregations, around us in our families and in our communities, that you are making your name great, and that you are causing people who are far from you to be near to you and to walk with you and to find peace and rest in you as their God and as their Saviour.

I give thanks to you for all those who gather with us this morning. I pray that you will bless all of our homes and our families and all of our people. I give thanks to you for all who have gathered together here this evening as well for this time of worship.

[ 8 : 54 ] I pray that you will bless each and every heart before you, O Lord your God. From the youngest to the oldest, you are the God who, as a word for each and every one of us, help us to understand the gospel tonight, we do pray, and help us to hear your voice and your claims upon us, and help us to recognize the authority of your word and the authority of your voice, and give it to us, we pray, a heart that will respond in obedience to your call and your claims upon us, and bless every heart and life with their own different experiences in life, their burdens, their concerns, their anxieties, their joys, and their sorrows.

We commit all to your care, and pray that all would know in the midst of whatever their experience and circumstance might be, that they would know that you are the God who is suited to their every need, who is rich in your grace, and who is able to supply their needs from your riches in glory by Jesus Christ, your Son.

We pray for your blessing to be upon all of the homes of our congregation. We remember them before you this evening. Be with the homes where there are people who are unwell, people who are frail and weak, who are confined in their homes.

We remember also those who mourn and grieve, and we pray your comfort for them, that you will be near to them, O Lord your God. Continue to remember Ian Faragey and his family in their time of grief and sorrow.

I pray that you will bless and comfort them today, that you will be near to them and give to them a sense of the hope of the gospel, giving them joy in their hearts in the midst of their loss, and pray that they may know your comforting presence at this time, O Lord your God.

[ 10 : 36 ] We pray for your blessing to be upon all the nations of the world today. We ask you, O Lord God, to enter in and to intervene and to even interrupt the course of the destiny of the people during these days, and the peoples of the world, different ways in which there is chaos and there is disorder.

We pray you to come and cause your light to shine in people's hearts and minds, and especially in those who are leaders, who make important decisions that affect not only their own nations, but other nations as well.

We pray you for wisdom and for grace and for light in all of the decisions that they do make, and pray that you will indeed restore order and peace to the lives of people across the world, and that on this Easter Sunday you will cause your power to be sent to every corner of this world, and that in the personal power of your Holy Spirit that you would work and bring the benefits of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to reach the hearts and lives of the people in every corner of this world, to relieve the oppressed, and to comfort those who are broken, and to restore order in communities and the nations of the earth.

We pray you to have mercy, O Lord of God. We pray for your blessing to be upon us as a congregation of your people. We continue to look to you and to wait upon you. We recognize that you are the God whose church it is, and we pray for your leading and for your guiding.

We pray that we would have that spirit of prayer which engages with you and which leaves us sensitive to your direction and to your hand upon us. And so we pray that you will bless us and provide for us a pastor that will be over us in the gospel along with Reverend Calamurda that you will bless and guide and lead us during these days and to make provision of the person of your choosing and of you preparing to lead this congregation in the ongoing service of the gospel and in the missionary work of the kingdom of heaven.

[12:39] So bless us, we pray, as we commit ourselves to you. Bless us, we gather later on for the Easter praise and quiz. Pray that you will bless to us to continue to reflect on the resurrection and on Easter.

And pray that you will bless the hearts of all those who gather and help us to rejoice in you in all that we do on this Lord's Day and all the days of our lives to find our joy in you as the great God and Saviour that you are.

So help us as we continue before you. Bless to us your word as we come to read it and to share in it as we continue to sing from it. We pray that you will give to us freedom and joy in doing so we do ask and keep from us anything that would spoil our attention and that would distract us in the short time that we are together.

Here I pray, we ask unto mercy that we ask these things for Jesus' sake. Amen. We return to praise God this time in Psalm 34 in Sing Psalms.

It's on page number 40. Psalm 34 at verse number 15 is on page 41. And we're singing at verse number 15.

[13:51] And we come to verse 20 and the reference there to the fact that their bones shall not be broken. These verses are referred to when we read of Christ Jesus on the cross at Calvary.

So once more, the Psalm refers to the Messiah, to the Lord Jesus and to his redeeming work.

We're singing at verse 15 down to the end of the Psalm. The tune is Bedford.

The Lord, the Lord's eyes are upon the just. He listens to their plea. The wicked he rejects and blots from earth and their memory. We stand to sing from verse 15 to the end of the Psalm to God's praise.

The Lord's eyes are upon the just. He listens and blots from earth their memory.

The righteous cry the Lord responds and frees them when dispressed.

[15:16] The Lord throws near the broken heart and rescues that he pressed.

From all the davel's of the just the Lord the Lord will set them free.

The Lord protects His every bone and broken none will be.

The wicked are dark condemned to death all those who hate the just.

God saves His own they're not condemned for in the Lord they die.

[16:29] God to hear the word of God and we read from the New Testament from the gospel according to John and in chapter number 20.

John chapter 20 and we're reading at verse number 19. John 20 verse 19. Let us hear the word of God.

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 anyone they are forgiven if you withhold forgiveness from anyone it is withheld 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 eight days later his disciples were inside 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 and see my hands and put out your hand and place it in my side do not disbelieve!

believe! Thomas answered him my Lord and my God Jesus said to him have you believed because you have seen this blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed!

[18:35] Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the 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 Amen that is the word of God we bless to us our reading from it we turn now to sing in Psalm number 118 and we're singing at verse number 22 and we're on page 399 Psalm 118 at verse number 22 and in my view at least there is the greatest Easter Sunday Psalm that we have in the whole of the Psalter Psalm 118 and we're singing from verse number 22 and it's all really about what has happened to the Lord Jesus and how God has reversed the judgment of men and has made his son the cornerstone that stone is made head cornerstone which builders did despise this the doing of the

Lord and wondrous in our eyes so sing verse 22 to the end of the psalm and the tune is martyrdom! that stone is made in cornerstone which builders did despise!

this is the doing of the Lord and wondrous in our eyes this is the day God made in it will joy triumphantly save now I pray thee Lord I pray send thy prosperity blessed is thee in God's great name that cometh us to save we from the house which to the

Lord pertains you blessed God God is the Lord to unto us have made light to our eyes bind thee unto the altars short with forth the sacrifice thou art my God I thee exalt my God I will thee praise give thanks to

God for he is good his mercy lasts always amen let's turn together to John chapter 20 and we can read again at verse number 19 John chapter 20 and at verse 19 John on the evening of that day the first day of the week the doors being locked with the disciples were for fear of the Jews Jesus came and stood among them and said to his disciples peace be with you and so on down through the rest of this chapter now we all love a good story and some people are better at telling story than others George Whitefield was wrongly accused of being a great preacher because he was before he was converted an actor and he had a very special poetic way of preaching the gospel and people would listen to him forever but he was able to preach like that because he understood the reality of the truths of the gospel that he preached and we come to the story of Easter and we want to make sure as we do so that as much as we like a good story we don't simply want to hear a story we want to understand the reality and the truths that are in the story and that are so important to each and every one of us and when we reflect on Easter weekend and Good

[24:11] Friday and Easter Sunday these are perhaps the defining moments and events in the kingdom of God that God has worked in a special way on both of these days to bring us we heard this morning to bring his plans to the point at which the goal has been achieved and God's kingdom is now being built I want to look at these verses this evening and to in a sense continue with the theme of the morning that there is a plan and to remember especially that as we read through this story and the story in the gospel according to Luke what we do understand more than anything else that as much as it is great to see things the important thing that Jesus himself reminds the disciples in Luke 24 the important thing is that we understand what the Bible says and we understand the Old Testament promises behind the cross on which Jesus died we come to understand the Old

Testament promises that lie behind the resurrection and the power with which Jesus was raised it's coming to understand our Bibles and when we come to think of believing what the Bible says we believe with our minds and we take to heart what we begin to understand we don't simply parkour our understanding and our intellect when we come to receive Jesus and the gospel it's something that we do understanding what we are doing and this evening I want us to bear that in mind as we go through this passage because it highlights a lot of these things and I want to see the way in which John in writing and the way with Jesus in interacting addresses the needs of the disciples and going on to look at these things we bear in mind and remind ourselves the significance of the

resurrection of Jesus that it is the final turning point in God's plan and from the moment of the resurrection of Jesus that we have a clear pathway for the first time from the resurrection to the eternal kingdom of God the way is now clear sin has been dealt with death has been overcome and we have this pathway so how this evening can we be on this pathway and how can we believe and have faith and ensure that we are going to the best and the correct destination so this evening I want us to think of Jesus and the kingdom demands of Easter Sunday I want to think first of all of the peace and there is a moment here in this passage from verse 19 and it's a moment that's really significant and it's a moment where Jesus himself on the evening of that day the first day of the week the day on which he has loosened the doors were locked for the disciples were for fear of the Jews now we can understand why they were afraid we can understand why the door was locked because their master their lord the person whom they had trusted had been captured by their enemies he had been put to death and we can understand why they may be in fear of their own lives and therefore they are in this room and the door is locked and into that room comes the lord Jesus he comes and he stands in the midst and his very appearance is the first signal that we have that something is different about the lord Jesus now after his resurrection and there is that sense in which he is able to stand in the midst of this people without coming in the door he is able because of who he is to stand in their midst but as he comes to stand in their midst and to say to them peace be with you I want us to notice that there are two particular moments that the disciples have experienced here and the first moment is that this is a God moment because as soon as Jesus says to them peace be with you it reminds them and it should remind us of the way in which down through the Old Testament at particular times when the angel of the Lord God himself appeared to the people of God and they recognized that it was the angel of the Lord they were afraid and we see that happening to Gideon and Judges chapter 6 the angel of the Lord spoke to him and he was afraid because he had seen the angel of the Lord face to face it's something that should not happen and somebody live and in that moment the angel of the Lord says to him peace be with you do not fear you shall not die this is a God moment who has suddenly appeared in this room behind locked doors it is nothing less than the son of God who has been raised from the dead and as soon as he stands before them it is a God moment for them and as we reflect and think of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus we need to remind ourselves that as he does appear to them and as he appears to us here in the Gospel this is a God moment it is a simple story of something miraculous it is a moment when they come face to face with the son of God who is the equal with God who is God of himself it is a God moment and along with that it is also a peace moment or a cross moment because when he says to them peace be with you it is a reminder to us that he is the one in the words of Paul that he God is making peace through the blood of the cross and so in this moment when he stands with them the Jesus who has promised them my peace I give to you not as the world gives to you here he is speaking

to them of that peace God has demanded peace in his relationship with a lost world God has demanded he has asked that this peace be accomplished through the work of Jesus Christ who goes to Calvary's cross on Good Friday the demand is there there must be the sacrifice there must be the substitute there must be the death of a son in order to establish peace and so in this upper room in the midst of all the fears it becomes a cross moment as well as a God moment the peace has been secured God's demands have been met and as soon as they recognize that Jesus is here then it is peace for them and it is peace for the whole world and we ourselves need to recognize that the very resurrection of Jesus is both of these things for ourselves that Easter Sunday has the God moment and it also has the cross moment that lying behind it is the finished work of the Lord Jesus on Good Friday at three o'clock in the afternoon he said it is finished and peace has been secured the ransom price has been paid and on Easter Sunday it is the declaration that God has accepted the ransom that the demands of justice have been made and there is peace with a lost world and tonight we celebrate once more the resurrection of the Lord Jesus because it does speak to us of the very peace with God of which we all have such a great need and Paul in writing to Romans and in chapter 5 speaks of the way in which being justified by faith we have peace with God and so because Jesus is no longer on the cross and no longer living under the shadow of the cross he is now proclaiming the peace that he has secured through the cross and that comes to light on this great morning there is peace and tonight we want to experience the reality of that peace the shush that comes from knowing that we have peace with God and as we wonder at the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ on this resurrection morning on this first day of the week that the peace that flows from the fact that he stands with his disciples that peace may descend upon us and we may

experience that peace in our hearts and when these moments become living and real to them what do you think they need more than anything what they need more than anything is the confirmation that this indeed is the Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified on Calvary's cross on Friday afternoon they need the confirmation the evidence that he is one and the same person so what did Jesus do to drive home the point what did Jesus do for them when he had said this he showed them his hands and his side there's the evidence what they were looking for and what they needed was continuity between the son of God who came into the mansion in Bethlehem who lived his life as a young child who began his ministry when he was 30 who performed a powerful ministry who was captured by his enemies and was crucified there needs to be that continuity the confirmation that this is the same person that now stands with them and when he shows them his hand his hands and his side we see clearly that there's a cross connection because he was he was suspended on Calvary's cross but significantly he doesn't show them his hands and his feet he shows them his hands and his side and that makes this makes a Christ connection with the way in which he shows them the evidence why is the side important because there were three crucified together and when the time came to make sure that they were dead before the [36:09] Sabbath day and the soldiers went to break their legs to make sure that they would die before the day was out they found that Jesus was already dead there were two criminals with broken legs there was one saviour with a pierced side so that it would be fulfilled what he sang in Psalm 34 that a bone of him would not be broken it's convincing it drives home the point it brings the peace to be full of meaning for them personally it's the restoration of the relationship with the Lord Jesus and because of that when he showed them his hands and his side the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord it seems to be the case that that's what clenched everything for the disciples when they were sure of the evidence and sure of the continuity between the cross and that moment then they were glad and sometimes we're glad over certain things and perhaps glad things didn't happen and glad things did happen but this gladness goes deeper than that it's the gladness that we hear of in the

Psalms so often in the Old Testament and in other parts of the Old Testament it's the gladness that's connected to understanding that God is accomplishing his word and fulfilling his promises with regard to everlasting and eternal salvation what is the gladness why are they glad it's because they recognize this moment they recognize the plan of God the purpose of God and know they have the peace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ they are glad they have joy and they rejoice and tonight that's where God wants to bring us on this Easter Sunday to bring us through the story to bring us through these moments and to come to the place where we are convinced in our hearts that it is the Jesus who died who is alive that he has secured peace and to find in our hearts that joy the joy that Simeon had when he held the child Jesus in his arms he saw God's salvation it's that deep seated joy which reaches our innermost being and which gives to us to sing the song of God's deliverance the peace do we sense that peace on this Easter Sunday do we sense that joy the unspeakable joy that comes from from discovering that the resurrected Lord is our Lord and is our Savior and he has established our peace with God and given to us that new relationship with him and so we have the peace the demand for peace it's God's demand that there must be peace and the demand is fully met and there is peace for all those who hear the good news and to receive it with gladness secondly we see there is participation in verse number 21 we read Jesus said to them again peace be with you as the father has sent me even so I am sending you there is a work to be done there is there has to be continuity in the work continuity and his passion was important here is the same Jesus but Jesus now reminds them that his work is going to continue through them and as the father hath sent me it's God the father sending the son with the emphasis on the authority of the father to send the son out into the world and to connect this lost world with the father who sends and to do that through the work of the one who is sent he is sent on a mission with the authority of God and so he has finished his work and just like that Jesus now telling them even so I am sending you and although we don't want to go into the differences in this verse there are two verbs used for the sending and the first verb that speaks of the father sending the Lord Jesus the emphasis is on authority the second verb even so I am sending you the emphasis is on participation it's joining in the same work it's becoming part of the whole and as surely as Jesus was conscious in every step that he took of the fact that he was here to serve the father to do the will of the father and always delighting in doing so knowing that he was the saint!

[ 42 : 01 ] one so now Jesus wants them to understand that he is sending them they are to participate in the same mission and in the same work and of course it is true that a work has been finished on Good Friday it is true that the evidence of that is that Jesus rose on Easter Sunday that work has been finished but the mission of God has not yet been concluded there is a work to be done in serving God and continuing the mission of God in reconciling the world to himself and they are not to stay in that upper room in the confines of it and in the comfort of it and with the presence of Jesus in it they are not going to stay there and enjoy that moment precious as it is instead of doing that

Jesus is sending them out into the world and John speaks in chapter 10 about Jesus himself being set apart and sent by the father and so here is Jesus setting them apart and sending them out as we see in Acts chapter 1 and through the book of Acts sending them out to continue the ministry of the gospel and the mission of God and to ensure that this good news spreads forth out into the world in which they are living participation God wants to remind us all this evening that our enjoyment of salvation is actually experienced in our obedience to his command to serve him in the gospel service as we follow the

Lord Jesus as our master we are to show forth what he has done we are to be his servants and so we come once more to the sense of the demands of the kingdom on Easter Sunday here is the command the demand from Jesus to you and to me the disciples were told you'll be witness to me in Jerusalem and to the very ends of the earth well tonight the disciples are not here tonight you are here and I am here and there is a work that continues and because of the urgency of the salvation of those who have not yet found the peace is there not an urgency to unfold our hands and to begin to serve and to ensure that we are walking this world delighting in the will of

God which is directing us to serve others as Jesus served us and served the world in which he lived participation it's the demand of the Lord Jesus it's for all of us tonight that we receive of the peace that we share the peace and that we take delight in serving the Lord Jesus because he came to serve and to give his life a ransom for many and the moment that the word of God reminds you and to me of our need to serve the first objection so often is I cannot do that I'm not able to do that I don't have the gifts I don't have the talents to do that well in the call of

Jesus in him sending his disciples and in recognizing their demand for ability and power to do so addresses that very demand before they are able even to respond and how does he do that when he had said this he breathed on them and said to them receive the Holy Spirit there is a new creation there is a new work and there is a promise being fulfilled and Jesus throughout his conversation with the disciples in chapters 14 to 16 reminds him repeatedly that it is to their advantage that he goes because if he doesn't go the helper the Holy Spirit will not come but if he does go he will send him here is the power the enabler the guide the help the one is going to give them strength in their every time of need and more especially the power to make their witness effective and when

[ 49 : 13 ] I read John chapter 16 that's exactly what Jesus promises I will send the helper he will convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment the sin that they don't believe in me of righteousness because I go to the father of judgment because the prince of this world the ruler of this world is judged There's a complete gospel message that is entrusted to them and the success of that gospel is dependent not upon them but on the power of the Holy Spirit that comes to dwell in their hearts and Jesus in that very context said to them he is with you in me and he shall be in you and he breathes upon them in a kind of precursor of what happens in Acts number two receive the

Holy Spirit there are no excuses God is with them his demand on them is that they serve him their demand for power and their complaint that they cannot do so has been answered by him because he gives them the power for success and surely this evening that's an encouragement to us our words can feel to be so empty and meaningless our messages of the gospel can feel the same and day after day and month after month and year after year we speak the gospel in our church service we speak the gospel in our families amongst our friends and amongst our colleagues and those who share life with us and we see so little success but the encouragement is here that it is God that does the work that he works through your service and mine to build his kingdom and our sense of inability and weakness is not a reason for us not to serve but it is a pointer for us to think of the power that dwells within us which Christ has given to us in the power of his Holy Spirit so that with his power we are able to serve him the Jesus who served his father with the same power and with the same devotion is calling you and I this evening to follow in his footsteps to continue the

work that he had begun and are you tonight willing to hear his demand are you willing to respond in faith and in love because of what he has done for you are you willing to trust in the power of his Holy Spirit that works only when you are serving and not before the success comes in the moment of our obedience in doing the things that God and the Lord Jesus commands us to do participation the demands of the kingdom it's for you it's for me it's for all of us who are disciples of the Lord Jesus so there is peace there is participation and finally there is persuasion and there is somebody absent from this group and when we are absent from anything so often we have missed opportunities and when this group of disciples met on this first

Lord's day this first day of the week Thomas was not with them he was absent and because he was absent he missed out on what they had experienced he had absented himself and the Bible doesn't tell us why he did so but the Bible gives us some kind of overview of the kind of person Thomas was he was kind of tenacious in the sense that he wanted when Lazarus was dead let us go and die with him there's that kind of tenacity about him and about his faith but he was also a realist and he was also somebody who wanted to have evidence before he believed we don't know where you are going he says to the

[ 54 : 44 ] Lord Jesus so how can we know the way he had desires he was tenacious he was inquisitive but he was perhaps also a pessimist and that left him that he was not with the other disciples and perhaps that description of Thomas this evening describes you in its detail having desires for the Lord Jesus being tenacious in some ways and showing that and in being part of the work and the kingdom of the Lord Jesus in the world realizing that you need more before you are to believe but yet being inquisitive about the very things that God has spoken and decided to understand these important truths

Thomas was not with them and perhaps because you're like Thomas perhaps you have missed opportunities and we know that God is sovereign and that his plan is outworked but nevertheless at a human level there are places that you and I should have been in and we weren't there and we missed opportunities and tonight you may have missed opportunities because of your Thomas like kind of character and because you refused and you're looking for something more so they told him the story they were he was the first person that they served they begin this work by telling Thomas what they had seen themselves and

I wonder then if he realized that he had missed an opportunity I wonder then if he regretted that he wasn't with them that instead he had chosen to be alone but when he hears the news he makes his own demand and he demands in verse number 25 unless I see 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 there is total resistance unless his demands are made and we may think that that's being unrealistic and we may think that that proves Thomas is a doubter my view is that that's not the case my view is that he is asking for the very things that they saw he had missed the opportunity he wasn't there but he wants to see the same evidence the same marks he wants to see them physically and to touch them physically and unless he sees that he will never ever believe it's a double negative in the Greek language and that's an emphatic no I will never believe and maybe tonight you yourself may have placed conditions before God and no matter how much you feel moved under the gospel towards faith in the Lord Jesus you are stopping short of coming to that faith because you have placed demands before God and if these demands are realistic and if they're correct to make because we're not expected to believe in what we don't understand but we may make demands that are not realistic and that are an expression of our belief and for unbelief and therefore refuse! to believe he makes his demands and Jesus responds to these very demands and eight days later that's the second Lord's day in the county of the Jews so he appears on the first Lord's day and then the next Lord's day he appears to them again same conditions peace and then he said to Thomas put your finger here and see my hands and put out your hand and place it in my side do not disbelieve but believe Jesus is giving him exactly what he asked for but it is accompanied by a rebuke and the rebuke is something that I want us to think about as we come to a close and the picture that we have in the words of Jesus when he says to him do not disbelieve!

[ 59 : 57 ] believe it gives us the image of a pathway and the pathway begins at the passion of the Lord Jesus and it ends at the place of unbelief and because of the words of the Lord Jesus here to Thomas Thomas is already on that journey away from the Lord Jesus away into the place of unbelief it's a pathway that we can so easily step onto and once we step onto it so easy to come off it and Jesus in that sense is saying don't carry on on this pathway to unbelief instead believe be

persuaded and accept the truth about me the risen resurrected Lord and there

Thomas looks and makes that great confession my Lord and my God he recognizes immediately that this is a God moment he recognizes immediately that this is the savior of the world that he is the covenant king of Israel who has come to give himself and who has redeemed his people and is now beginning this new exodus in their lives he recognizes exactly who Jesus is and I wonder tonight if you're on that pathway that you have come close to Jesus and failed to believe and because of that failure and because of your wrong demands that you're on this trajectory away from that person whom you need more than anyone else the pathway to unbelief tonight

God is calling you back from that pathway he is rescuing you from going in that direction and by his response to Thomas he the experience of Thomas has caused the Lord Jesus to think of you and to think of me to think of the church beyond the time of Thomas and the disciples and that's why he says have you believed because you have seen me blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed we tonight are not going to see the hands or the side of the Lord Jesus but we have the confirmation of the Bible of the word of God and Jesus spoke to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and he made that quite clear should not the scripture be fulfilled and from Moses down through the Old

Testament he showed them the truths concerning himself and tonight Jesus wants to encourage you to believe in his word it is the sure word the certain word of God the promises of God no vision will come to save you the truths of the gospel are the place where you need to place your faith to find your security and to have the experience that Paul speaks of in Romans 10 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you shall be saved you won't see the evidence that Thomas saw but you have the truth you have the promise of the Lord Jesus and tonight you are blessed if you believe highly favored to be envied more than anyone else in the world if you believe the truths of the gospel and

Jesus Christ is your Savior and may God help us to think of the peace of God to wrestle with the importance of our participation in the work of the kingdom of God and to be persuaded at last to believe in the name of the Lord Jesus that he has been raised from the dead and so that we might also be saved may God bless his word to us let us pray most gracious God we bow before you thankful to you for your word that it is the is powerful that it is full of all that we need for our salvation and help us oh Lord to receive it as we hear it help us with faith in our hearts to believe your promises to accept the offer of salvation and to know your son as our saviour as we journey on through life and to know what it is to find our joy and our gladness in you and the paths that lead at last to everlasting life so hear of prayer and accept us for

[ 65 : 24 ] Jesus sake Amen the closing psalm is psalm number 22 in Sing Psalms and we're singing at verse number 22 and it's on page 27 and we know of course that this psalm is a psalm about the Messiah it's a psalm about the cross and the suffering of the Lord Jesus on the cross we're singing from verse 22 which speaks of the message to his brothers now to my brothers I'll declare the praises of your glorious name within their gathering I will stand and you renown I will proclaim from verse 22 to verse 25 and the tune is Warrington now to my brother shall declare the praises of your glory name within their gathering

I will stand and your renown I will proclaim praise him all you that fear the Lord give honour to him Jacob praise all Israel's children worship and down to love before his face he has not scorned the suffering which on the afflicted one mislead he did not hide his face from men but listen to his cry for aid you are the theme of all my praise within the great assembly

Lord before for all those who fear your name I will fulfill my solemn word now the benediction I'll go to the main door the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the holy God God