

Easter Sunday

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[0 : 00] Well, good morning friends. Let me add my welcome to Dave and everybody else who's been up here this morning. It's lovely to have people from Morning Church and Uni Church gathered in one place today and people who are family and friends and people who are new here this morning.

It's great to have you here. Keep your Bibles open there at John chapter 20. We're going to spend some time thinking about the things of the resurrection of Jesus. So let's pray. Our Father in heaven, thank you that we can gather here this morning, hear your word and hear these great truths and this great hope that we have.

Because Christ is risen from the grave. And we pray, having heard your word this morning, that we'd go away changed as the first disciples were as well. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, I wonder if you know what day it is. Just go easy on me. It's not a trick question. It's kind of, kind of. Did you know that we are in the reign of King Charles II?

Third. He's been reigning since the 8th of September 2022. Which means that we're in the 212th day of the first year of his reign.

[1 : 18] That's what day it is. We're no longer living under the reign of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, for she's died. But today is also the 9th day of April 2023 AD.

Which according to the Julian calendar, which much or most of the world goes by, we're in the 2023rd year of the reign of King Jesus.

Anno Domini, that's what AD stands for, since we're into Latin, all that kind of stuff this morning, means year of the Lord, the Lord Jesus.

So the calendar which most of the world uses is divided into two eras. BC, before Christ. And AD, you got it.

Anno Domini, the year of the Lord. So the calendar which most of the world uses declares that Jesus Christ is alive today and reigning as King.

[2 : 34] The fact that Jesus rose from the dead, never to die again, is the greatest miracle recorded in the Gospel of John.

It's the greatest sign recorded in the Gospel of John. Sure, Lazarus rose from the dead. But Jesus rose from the dead, never to die again.

And you see there in verse 30 that we just finished reading. The reason that John wrote his Gospel, the reason that we're reading this part of his Word at one level today is because, we see there in verse 30, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book.

But these are written, the resurrection of Jesus is written, and the others, 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.

Let's just recount some of the things of the resurrection. We see that Mary believed, there in verses 1 to 18, the Bible never sets out to prove that Jesus rose from the dead.

[3 : 50] It simply records it as a fact. This is what happened. And every page of the New Testament, from the book of Acts on, assumes that Jesus is alive and is reigning as King.

And here we have the account. Early on Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene finds the tomb empty, runs to tell the disciples. The disciples run to the tomb, breathless.

And then you see there in verses 6 to 8, on entering the tomb, they believe that the body's gone, not there. But they didn't believe that Jesus had ridden from the dead yet.

He's just not there. They hadn't understood the scripture that he must rise from the dead. Now my question to you is, which scripture? Which scripture is talking about the one that Jesus must rise from the dead?

Then, rack your brains for a minute, think about what it is. Well, Psalm 16 comes to mind. I won't let my Holy One see corruption. So Psalm 16 be one. Hosea chapter 6 verse 2 comes to mind.

[4 : 50] On the third day, He'll rise. He'll give us light. We'll rise. That's a fairly oblique reference, really. Isaiah 6. The whole Old Testament, right, requires that the Messiah must rise from the dead.

I mean, Isaiah chapter 9 is what we usually read at Christmas time, but I thought it was good to read it this morning, because ponder this. A child is born. The government's upon his shoulders. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of the peace there'll be no end, and on the throne of David and over his kingdom establish it and uphold it with justice and righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of the Lord, the host, will do this. The child will be born as Jesus, and like all children, he will grow up, and he will reign on the throne of David in justice and righteousness forever.

Now, you can't have a king reign on the throne forever if he's dead. That's obvious, isn't it? And you can't have a king who is God everlasting if he's dead.

[6 : 16] So, Jesus, who is the great, great grandson of David, does not see decay in the tomb, as Psalm 16 promises, but like Jonah come out of the belly of a few fish on the third day, so Jesus comes out of the tomb on the third day to reign as eternal king.

And the first to behold their kings, Mary Magdalene. And while crying at the tomb, after talking to the two angels, she turns and sees him.

She's an eyewitness. And at first she doesn't recognise him, but then on hearing his voice she does in verse 16. She recognises this is Jesus.

As all those who are sheep of the shepherd will hear the voice of their shepherd and come out and follow him.

And in verse 17, Jesus said to her, Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to my brothers and say to them, I'm ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

[7 : 34] She wants to hold on to Jesus for dear life. Don't go going anywhere else now, Jesus. You're alive. I've found you. I'm hanging on here. Unless you disappear.

But he hasn't yet ascended to the Father's throne, so he's not going to disappear for a while yet. Go tell his disciples. Go tell them, there'll be time to see me some more on the earth before I head back to where I've come from, back to my Father's side.

Mary Magdalene's the first to behold her King. And then that evening, Sunday evening, the first day of the week, the disciples are still hiding. All but Thomas are there, we see, verse 19.

I mean, if the authorities had killed their leader, had killed your leader, and you are known to be a fellow acquaintance with him, known associate, well, what happened to him, you be fear and it happens to you as well.

But then Jesus comes to them, the one who brings everlasting peace and proclaims peace to them.

[8 : 50] Peace be with you. You're no longer at odds with God. No longer are you estranged from me, even though you abandoned me and left me alone to face the cross on my own.

Can you imagine the scene? seeing the risen Lord Jesus, touching the risen Lord Jesus, speaking to the risen Lord Jesus, seeing the wounded side where he'd been pierced.

Unfortunately, Thomas missed out on that show with the disciples that Sunday evening, and so Thomas speaks for us all, doesn't he? All through history, there's people like Thomas.

Unless I see, I'm not going to believe. Forseeing is believing. Well, in God's mercy, eight days later, he does get to see the risen Lord Jesus.

And so Thomas comes to faith. He comes to faith, belief, that John had written this book for, for people down the ages, to believe the whole purpose.

[10 : 10] And what does he confess? He confesses that Jesus is his Lord and my God. See it there in verse 28. Thomas answered him, my Lord and my God.

This is a massive statement from someone who now comes face to face with the risen Lord Jesus. This is Jesus who is now recognised as Messiah and is none less than true and living creator God, the one who made the world and everything in it.

And Thomas sees him and is a changed man and he speaks a word to us who live down the ages. Look at verse 29. Jesus said to him, have you believed because you've seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

Blessed are all down the ages who haven't seen the things that Thomas has seen but have believed. Thomas has paved the way for us all really.

[11 : 32] He's seen it and he's believed so we can too believe as well. And so let's just consider our King from Inalto.

He's the one who's reigning in verses 30 to 31. The resurrection of Jesus is a fact of history. It's not some just enlightening of the soul.

It's not that Jesus lives on in the hearts of people who believe and love him. This is an earth shattering world changing event as the Lord of heaven and earth is raised from the dead never to die again.

The resurrection of Jesus is not just some added on bonus part of the message either. It's the absolutely essential part of the message of Jesus for by it the world is on notice that there is a resurrection of everyone from the dead.

The world is on notice. Everybody will be raised from the grave and that there is a judgment day to come and that judgment will be done by no one less than Jesus who is the king who has been raised who is the reigning prophet and priest and judge sitting on the eternal throne.

[13 : 05] See Jesus is the one who acquits that is forgives people their sins that's in his prerogative and he is the one who finds people guilty and holds people accountable for their rejection of him and rebellion against him and with Jesus there's no court of appeal no higher authority for he is the king of kings Jesus reigns and Jesus is no temporary king for by his resurrection he is the eternal king who reigns now and will reign forever more it is the year AD king for and so it's paramount that we come to see the risen Jesus for who he is now that is the very reason that John wrote this gospel and it's by believing that Jesus is the

Christ the anointed king the king of the kingdom which is not of this world that we have real life life now and life beyond the grave in the future and we have this life in his name and it comes by no other name for there's no other power no other God other than the Lord Jesus Christ so it's by believing that Jesus is the Christ that we have life and life in his name and as we do that we receive him the scriptures make much much more of the risen Lord Jesus those who receive him as Lord and so obey the gospel are guaranteed the very things this world longs for but can't find by looking elsewhere I'm not sure what others will be saying today on this

Easter Sunday they might be quoting all kinds of things speaking about all kinds of stuff but what we need to hear what the world needs to hear today is the great hope and joy that comes the great peace and comfort that comes to all who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as King see those who believe and trust in him are forgiven for our sins as Peter and the apostles so boldly proclaimed God exalted Jesus to his right hand as leader and saviour to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins that's what Peter preached in Acts chapter 5 or Paul in Romans chapter 5 speaks about like this we're told that Jesus was delivered up to death for our so Romans chapter 4 verse 25 that Jesus was delivered up to death for our sins that he paid the penalty for our sin by his sacrificial death and he was raised to life why for our justification to declare that we are okay with God that we are right with God because Jesus has been raised to life we can too be declared right with God because his sacrifice works his righteousness is our righteousness his okayness with God means by trusting in him I can be okay with God too and it's through Jesus resurrection that we have redemption the forgiveness of sins Paul speaks about in Colossians chapter 1 and as we are looking at 1 Corinthians 15 a little bit now singing if Jesus did not rise from the dead we would still be held guilty in our sins but because he is risen we can and we are no longer be in our sins 1 Peter chapter 3 believers are given a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead it's a new hope a living hope we're no longer having our sins counted against us I don't know how bad you've been I don't know how bad I've been but we are made new if we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ we're rescued from our rebellion and brought into the family of God and we have great hope now beyond the grave because Jesus has conquered it well I want to think about responding to this idea now this truth now you and I are unlikely to ever meet King Charles unlikely well some of you might some of you probably have already met the Queen I don't know but the truth is this is the truth we will all meet King Jesus every one of us we will all see the risen

[18 : 48] Lord Jesus one day for he has been raised to rule and he's been raised to rule forever so the question is here's the question when we meet Jesus when we do meet him will we meet him as Lord and God and judge saved from our sins having submitted to him as Lord and trusted him as

saviour that's like Thomas having confessed that he is Lord and Christ that's that's the way to meet him right let me tell you that is the way to meet him someone who has confessed and submitted and trusted and recognised he is Lord and Christ or will we meet him as Lord and judge condemned by him having refused to submit to him as Lord and rejecting him as saviour of the world now friends if you're in any way unsure if you're standing before Jesus today there's nothing more important than to talk with someone about it if you're not sure if you're reading these words hearing these words and would like to investigate the truth about Jesus more that's exactly the right thing to do nothing more important to do than to talk to someone today and starting investing

Jesus and what it is that Christians believe we'd love to do that with you however it may be this morning that you would like to start following Jesus Lord and Saviour today is a great day to do that one of my friends died on this day and had been transformed has gone to glory but today is another good day to start trusting in Jesus and so become part of his family it's a great day to do that to be able to write in your Bible today I became a follower of Jesus that'd be nice wouldn't it front cover of your books your Bible so there is a prayer that we're going to lead us in that we can pray you'll find it written on the bulletins normally you don't have to pray right now but it's normally written every week but I'm going to lead us in prayer and if today is the day for you to pray that prayer this is the prayer to pray I'll read it out to you it goes like this dear

God I know that I'm not worthy to be accepted by you I don't deserve your gift of eternal life I'm guilty of rebelling against you and ignoring you I need forgiveness thank you for sending your son to die for me that I may be forgiven thank you that he rose from the dead to give me new life please forgive me and change me that I may live with Jesus my ruler that's the prayer I'm going to pray if you want to pray that prayer you're welcome and love you to pray we can know let me lead us in prayer you pray in your head to God after me if you'd like and then we'll conclude so I'll lead us in the prayer dear God I know that I am worthy to be accepted by you I don't deserve your gift of eternal life I am guilty of rebelling against you and ignoring you

I need forgiveness thank you for sending your son to die for me that I may be forgiven thank you that he rose from the dead to give me new life please forgive me and change me that I may live with Jesus my ruler amen if you prayed that prayer for the first time or second or third who knows then please do let us know Dave will sort us out in a minute too how to do that