

The Resurrection Causes Joy

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[0 : 00] John 20, verse 11, would you please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together.

! And she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.

They said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have laid him. Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.

Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned and said to him in Aramaic, Rabbani, which means teacher.

Jesus said to her, Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

[1 : 18] But go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, I have seen the Lord, and that he had said these things to her.

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 said this, he breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them. But if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came.

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

[2 : 29] Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you. Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here and see my hands, and put out your hand and place it in my side.

Do not disbelieve, but believe. Thomas answered him, My Lord and my God. And Jesus said to him, Have you believed because you have seen me?

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. 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.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? I know that I've told you this story before, but I'm going to tell it again because it taught me an important lesson that I've never forgotten, and a lesson that I remember every week as I sit in my office and study for the coming message.

In seminary, I dreaded preaching class. It was one of the last classes I wanted to take. I was absolutely terrified of putting together a sermon and preaching it before my classmates and my teacher for them to scrutinize it.

[3 : 59] And so I remember the first time that I was assigned to preach in class, and Danny and I lived about 25 minutes off campus, and that whole way there, that whole drive to class where I was going to preach, I was feeling sick.

I mean, nauseous. I almost had to pull over on the side of the highway because I thought I was going to get sick. Our professor gave us 35 minutes to preach.

You couldn't preach for less than 30, and you couldn't preach for more than 35. And wherever you were at 30 minutes, a buzzer would go off, and you had to wrap it up in the one thing he would tell us, and you have to present the gospel.

You have to present the life, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And I remember thinking, 30 minutes?

I've never talked about anything for 30 minutes straight before. How am I going to find time to come up with enough things to say for 30 minutes? And, you know, obviously I don't have that problem anymore, right?

[5 : 07] Okay, nobody said amen. That's good. And anyhow, I go there. I preach the sermon. I stutter. I stammer through it. I'm done. I get the criticism, the constructive criticism from my classmates and my teacher.

At the end, he told me, you know, you forgot in your gospel presentation to present the resurrection of Christ. You left him in the tomb. Like, you know, mistake.

Okay, I'll remember that for next time. Well, next time I didn't remember it. And at the end of his critique, he said to me, you know, Mike, again, you left Jesus in the tomb. It's like, duly noted.

I'll remember that for the next time. Well, guess what? Next time came, Jesus was still in the tomb at the end of my sermon. And for about 10 minutes, our professor unloaded on us about why it is so important that we do not forget to share about the resurrection when we present the gospel.

Why is the resurrection so important? Well, in 1 Corinthians, the Apostle Paul explains why in chapter 15, verses 12 through 19. Now, if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead?

[6 : 25] But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be presenting God because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise.

If it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

Without the resurrection, Paul says, we shouldn't even bother talking about Jesus anymore. The resurrection is the validation that Jesus is the Christ, that he is Lord.

It proves beyond a doubt that he is the one and the only one in whom we can have peace with God. And in a world that claims that there are many gods, the resurrection stands as proofs, as proof that Christ's claim to be the way, the truth, and the life is true.

[7 : 35] The only one in whom we can experience peace with God and eternal life is the Lord. But if he has not been raised from the dead, then we have been falsely representing him.

We have been lying about God. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then we would be without hope. Paul says that we should be, we would be pitied among all people. I mean, think of it. Think of the time that you've spent in church. Think about the hours of your life that you've spent listening to sermons and reading the Bible and praying and serving in the name of the Lord.

What if it was all for nothing? You'd have wasted a lot of your life if there is no resurrection. You'd have been duped like me too.

But praise God that Christ has risen from the dead, as Paul continues in verse 20. But in fact, Christ has raised from the dead the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

[8 : 48] For as by one man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Adam's sin resulted in death for us all, but Christ's death and resurrection brings eternal life to those who believe in him. As we saw in our text last week, on the third day, the tomb was empty.

Amen. And in our text this week, we encounter those who witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ firsthand.

And this is what we see from those encounters. It's the main idea for this morning's sermon. Jesus' resurrection brings eternal joy to believers no matter how difficult their circumstances are.

Jesus' resurrection brings eternal life to believers no matter how difficult their circumstances are. Jesus appeared to many people after his resurrection.

[9 : 54] But in these verses, John highlights three of those appearances. And in each one, Jesus steps into a moment of crisis, a situation where one or more of his disciples was facing a difficult circumstance, each of those difficult circumstances stemming from the fact that Jesus had died.

Though he told them that he would die and that he would rise again, they didn't believe him. But in each case, when Jesus appears to them, he does not scold them for their unbelief.

Instead, he relieves and he releases them of their grief, of their fear, of their doubts, and replaces those feelings with intense, overwhelming joy.

You know, when you read scripture, you're reminded over and over again of how forgetful people can be. And you know, difficult times and difficult circumstances have a way of obstructing our faith, have a way of obstructing our view of Jesus and what he's accomplished for us.

And they cause us to lose sight momentarily of the joy that we have in Christ. And so my prayer for us all this morning is that the Holy Spirit will remove those obstructions.

[11 : 24] Maybe today you are mourning. Maybe today you do feel afraid. Maybe today your mind is clouded with doubts. Well, my prayer for you is that through God's word, God's spirit will remind you of the great joy and the great hope that we have in knowing that Christ has risen.

So the first appearance is to Mary. And there, Jesus' resurrection, we see, gives comfort to those who are mourning. Gives comfort to those who are mourning. Look again at verse 11. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb.

Now, there's a lot of misinformation about Mary Magdalene. Contrary to what people think, she was not a prominent figure in any of the Gospels.

Some time ago, you might remember that a book was written called The Da Vinci Code that made the claim that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married. But there's absolutely zero evidence to support that thought.

Or that they had any kind of special relationship. The Bible doesn't give any kind of hint of such an idea. But that is what our culture does, isn't it?

[12 : 42] Our culture does that because it cannot fathom a close relationship between people without it having some kind of erotic undertone to it.

What we do know about Mary in Luke 8, chapter 2, was that she was a woman whom Jesus cast seven demons out of. She was in spiritual bondage, and Jesus released her of that bondage, and then she became one of his followers.

But still in the church today, we label Mary with a title that she doesn't deserve. Many of us think that Mary Magdalene was a harlot.

For some reason, long ago, people started associating her with the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet in Luke 7. But there's no scriptural basis to support that.

It could be, but there's no spiritual basis to support that. Others have associated her with the woman caught in adultery in John, chapter 8. But again, there's no evidence that supports that belief either.

[13 : 48] You can go back and reread those accounts later. But she is nowhere mentioned or identified as a harlot in the Bible, despite the popular portrayals of her today.

But you know, of all the people that Jesus could have appeared to first, he chose Mary.

And I think that's awesome. Because you know, if it was us, we'd probably appear to those who crucified us, wouldn't we? Look at me now. What are you going to do now, right?

But he appears to Mary. And that's significant because it shows that no one is insignificant to him. All are truly precious in his sight. Mary was heartbroken. She was inconsolable. Now, I'm sure that you've faced a difficult circumstance similar to Mary where you were just crippled by grief.

[14 : 57] Tears were flowing and they wouldn't stop. You melted into the ground and a puddle just crushed beneath the weight of your sorrow. Mary's love for Jesus was great.

But in this moment, her faith was not. But you know, Jesus won't leave her in this moment of grief for long because he doesn't take joy in her mourning.

You know, in ministry, you hear a lot of stories about stupid things that pastors do to generate some kind of an emotional response. And I was reading this week, there was a thread on social media about the worst church service that you ever attended.

And one guy posted about a time he was in a youth group and they went to a youth camp and their youth pastor followed behind their bus in his own car.

And when they got there, all the kids were taken into the chapel. And they were told that on the way to the camp, the youth pastor had gotten in a bad wreck and had died.

[16:13] Now, imagine being a young person and hearing that. You'd be really upset. And that was the case. He said, you know, we were crying. People were weeping.

We were mourning. And then all of a sudden, supernaturally, we heard the voice of our youth pastor. And he was telling us about how he was in hell and how horrible it was.

Well, come to find out, youth pastor was hiding up in the rafters and speaking to them supernaturally about the horrors of hell.

How messed up are people, you know? And why would you be in hell? That's messed up too. And no wonder so many of our kids, after they go through experiences like that in their youth groups, they don't come back to the church.

Thankfully, we have Eric who would never do something like that. Jesus doesn't play with people's emotions.

[17:20] He sees Mary's overcome with grief. He doesn't play with her emotions. We see in verse 12, And as she stooped in, she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet.

Now, here on a side note, I think that this is awesome. This imagery that John shares with us about the angels that Mary saw and where they were positioned. One at the head and one at the feet of the stone slab where Jesus' body had lain for three days.

You know, in the Old Testament, God ordered the construction of the Ark of the Covenant, which was a box or a chest. And that box housed the stone tablets and some other things, but the tablets that contained the Ten Commandments.

It was made of acacia wood. It was overlaid with gold. And it was placed inside the most holy place in the tabernacle and then eventually in the Holy of Holies in the temple. Once God's people took possession of the promised land and Jerusalem was constructed and the temple was built.

But on the top of the Ark, that cover was called the mercy seat, which in Hebrew means to cover, to placate, to appease, to cleanse, to cancel, or to make atonement.

[18:32] Once a year, the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies and he would make atonement for the people's sins by sprinkling the blood of the sacrifice on top of that mercy seat where there were two angels, two golden cherubim.

The mercy seat served as a visible representation of God's presence, of his throne, his place among his people.

But ultimately, it was a foreshadowing of Christ and his coming and his being the ultimate sacrifice and his shedding his blood to atone for the sins of his people.

And so I think it's amazing that here we see where the body of Jesus laid. Here's two angels that Mary sees very, very much brings up that imagery of the Ark of the Covenant and what it symbolized.

Your hardest boss said of that verse, of that imagery, what more convincing evidence of the truth of the resurrection could have been offered than the presence of these two angels silently, reverently, majestically sitting where the body of Jesus was laying.

[19:45] Placed like the cherubim on the mercy seat, they covered between themselves the spot where the Lord had reposed and flooded it with celestial glory. It needed no voice of theirs to proclaim that here death had been swallowed up in victory.

Ever since the angels descended into this tomb, the symbolism of burial has been radically changed. Mary did not recognize all of these things.

And it appears that she didn't even recognize that the angels were angels. And we know from Scripture that often they were able to hide their appearance from men. But they spoke to her in verse 13.

They said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, They have taken away my Lord and I don't know where they have laid him. So that question that the angel asks is a gentle rebuke. Because by this time Mary was a follower of Christ. She heard him say that he was going to rise again. And she should have seen the empty tomb and the body that was no longer there. And she should have stopped crying. She should have trusted that Jesus had risen as he said that he would.

[20 : 53] But then she became aware of something or someone standing behind her. Now it could have been that maybe the angels pointed or maybe they shifted their eyes to something behind her.

Whatever the case was, Mary turned in verse 14. She turned around and she saw Jesus standing there. But she did not know that it was Jesus.

Now we can ask, Well, how could she not recognize him? Well, we know from other gospel accounts, and we'll see next week in John chapter 21, that Jesus in his resurrected body, he was able to hide his appearance from people.

Also, Mary had been weeping. Have you ever cried and sobbed like that? You know how red and puffy your eyes get, and they're filled with tears. It's hard to see well.

And also, Jesus was the last person that she would have expected to encounter that day. You know, if ever you've been to a funeral before and somebody tapped you on the back, the last person you would expect to see is the person whose funeral you had come to be a part of.

[22 : 05] But Jesus speaks to her, and he repeats the questions the angels asked. Jesus said, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I'll take him away.

So again, Jesus' first question to Mary, like the angels, was a bit of a mild rebuke. But the second question was an invitation to her to reflect upon the kind of Messiah that she was expecting.

And it was a challenge for her to recognize that as great as her devotion to Jesus had been, she had greatly underestimated him.

Whatever had caused her blindness, with one single word, Jesus removed it. And she could see. What was that word? It was her name. Jesus said to her, Mary. She saw. She understood. Don't you love that?

[23 : 12] You know, a while ago, we were in John 10. And there in John 10, 2 through 4, Jesus says, but he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him, the gatekeeper opens.

The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name, and he leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. You know, when someone you admire calls you by your name, it means a lot to you, doesn't it? It's not, hey, you, or, you know, hey, whatchamacallit, what's your name, I can't remember.

And doesn't it hurt a little bit when someone whom you think should know your name doesn't know your name? Jesus, the Son of God, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the one who created all things, and for whom all things were created, the one who keeps it all together, knows your name. One day when you see Jesus, it's not going to be, uh, uh, what, he's going to know. Because he truly knows you.

[24 : 35] He knows his people. To most people, Mary was insignificant.

Most people, what they knew about Mary was her past. That demon-possessed woman. But Jesus knew her.

He knew her, and he called her by her name. And with that, all of her anguish, all of her despair, all of her grief, her mourning, were instantly swallowed up in astonishment, in joy, that Jesus was alive. I mean, what an, what an instant turnaround. Have you ever experienced something like that? Just a, a moment of, of deep sadness to, to great joy. Makes me, uh, it reminds me of a time when, when, uh, when our son Jack was about five years old.

Uh, at our, at our church then, we had a carnival, and, and one of the prizes was goldfish. And Jack wanted a goldfish. And I knew that that goldfish would not make it long in our home.

[25 : 54] But he wanted it, so we got it. And we got a goldfish bowl, and we got goldfish food, and, and we were gonna take great care of that goldfish. Well, guess what? About, about three days into it, um, and Jack named it Mike.

About three days into it, Mike died. Mike the goldfish died. And so, Danny and I had a conversation. He's gonna be heartbroken. He's only five.

Let's go to Walmart, and we'll replace Mike with Mike number two. So we get, uh, we get Mike number two, and bring it home, and, and put it in, in the goldfish bowl, and, and Jack, uh, you know, for all he knows, you know, happy fish.

He's been around. This is the one he wanted at his carnival. Well, uh, Mike number two didn't last much longer than Mike number one. And so I told Danny, uh, we can't keep doing this.

I, I, I gotta, I gotta tell him. And so, uh, the goldfish bowl was in our kitchen, and I, I took Jack, and I sat him up next to, to Mike number two's body floating on the water.

[26 : 55] And, and I explained to him as best as I could, you know, Mike has, has died, and tried to explain what that meant as best as I could. And, you know, he was, he was heartbroken that his fish was dead.

And so he asked me, well, what, what do we do with them? And, uh, and all I could think of was what I know most people do with dead goldfish. And I said, well, I think most people flush them down the toilet.

And I'll tell you, he jumped off the counter and sprinted into the bathroom as he hollered over his shoulder, all right, let's do it. and, and he, and he flushed, uh, Mike number two down with a lot of joy as he did it.

But I mean, what an instant turnaround sadness to a, to intense moment of joy. That was Mary right here realizing that Jesus had resurrected.

She was filled with overwhelming joy. And so in verse 16, she turned and said to him in Aramaic, Rabbani, which means teacher. And she flew into his arms or she flew at his feet.

[27 : 58] Whatever it was, she squeezed him very tightly. Having found Jesus again beyond her wildest hopes, she did not want to lose him. And so she held onto him for dear life, symbolizing her desire to keep his presence with her permanently.

But then Jesus says in verse 17, do not cling to me for I have not ascended to the father, but go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my father, to my God, God and your God.

And so basically what Jesus is saying here to Mary is, look, I'm not leaving yet. We have time. I'll be here for 40 more days. I'm going to spend a lot of that time with, with my disciples before I return to heaven.

You don't have to hold me captive. And in fact, I have a mission for you. I want you to go and I want you to tell my disciples what you've seen. And so Mary went, transformed with this great news that Christ had been resurrected.

And she went faithfully just as Jesus commanded her. In verse 18, Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, I've seen the Lord and what he had said to her. And you know, as a believer, haven't you received that same mission from your resurrected Savior, who has brought you from spiritual death to spiritual life, to announce to others that Jesus has risen from the grave.

[29 : 31] And so you cannot let grief cloud your vision of the truth that you have in Christ. Do not let mourning crush your hope and diminish your joy in Jesus and what he's done.

And again, we know that when a believer dies, yes, there's sadness and grieving and mourning for a time is necessary and needed, but it's also a celebration. We celebrate the reality that that brother or that sister is now in the presence of Jesus Christ and will be forever.

Where there is no more sin, where there is no more death, where he will dry every eye and wipe away every tear. You can be grieving about what's going on in this world around you and I'm with you, but if we allow it to, that will distract us from the mission that Jesus has called us to do, which is to go and tell people who he is and what he's done, that he's died for sins, that he's risen again, that there's life in him, in him alone.

You know, each time we gather on the Lord's day, each time we witness another baptism in our church, it's a celebration of new life. That Jesus gives life today as he did then and as he will continue to do until he returns.

Spiritual life. And one day you who are in Christ will likewise experience a resurrection. You know, again, going back to the Corinthian church, for some of those Christians, they had a difficult time believing that they would be resurrected one day by Christ and like Christ.

[31 : 20] And so, Paul addressed that concern and that fear that they had with these words in 1 Corinthians 15, 53 through 58. For this perishable body, and I love the word here, must.

It's not might, it's not maybe, it's not probably, it's must. It must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

The hope of the resurrection, the hope of the resurrection that you will experience when the Lord returns should give comfort to you, when you mourn, and when you grieve, assuring you that every effort, every sacrifice made and done in the name of Jesus Christ will be totally worth it.

[32 : 44] Next, Jesus appears to his disciples minus Thomas, and there we see Jesus' resurrection gives courage to those who are fearful.

His resurrection gives courage to those who are fearful. So now the scene shifts from that morning when Mary sees Jesus resurrected to that evening, the disciples minus Thomas have gathered in a secret place.

They are huddled in a room behind a locked door. They are afraid. They're afraid because of the authorities who had executed their leader, and they reasonably assumed that they were likewise wanted and would meet the same fate.

So verse 19 says, Now again, if this was you or me, we might have different first words for these disciples who abandoned us, wouldn't we?

You chickens, right? You wimps. Here you are, huddled in here, afraid? Don't you remember what I told you?

[34 : 02] My goodness. But those aren't Jesus' words to them at all. Again, to them, his first words were like the word he gave to Mary. It was a word that instantly transformed their thoughts and their feelings.

When you're afraid, when you're overcome with fear, when you are working out the worst case scenario in your mind, what is the thing that you most lack?

Peace. You lack peace. Peace be with you was a common Jewish greeting, but notice that Jesus says it twice.

Verse 21, When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. When the disciples were glad, when they saw the Lord, Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you.

Now imagine you're one of the disciples. You're locked in a room. You're afraid. People are either silent. Maybe they're whispering quietly for fear of being discovered.

[35 : 07] And then suddenly, and without notice, no knock on the door, the last person you ever expected to see again appears. And it's Jesus.

And you know that because you see the wounds as he draws your attention to those things. But he's different. Now imagine taking all of those things in visually.

You probably wouldn't have paid much attention to the words that came out of Jesus's mouth. And so I think that's why he repeats himself once more. And I think he does that so that the disciples would remember the words that he had spoken to them not long before he was arrested and crucified in John 14, 27.

He said there to them, Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled. Neither let them be afraid.

It's like Jesus is saying to them here, Look, I did the things that I said I was going to do. And I have one peace for you forever. Don Carson says of this verse, Jesus's shalom, which means peace, on Easter evening is the compliment of his words, It is finished on the cross.

[36 : 21] For the peace of reconciliation and life from God is now imparted. What follows is John's account of Jesus's commissioning of his disciples to carry out his mission.

Again, looking at verse 21, As the Father has sent me, Jesus says to them, 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 sins of any, they are forgiven them.

If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld. And so here, this is a pledge of our Lord to once again send the paraclete to them, the Holy Spirit, who will come on the day of Pentecost, as we read about in the book of Acts, after his ascension.

But he's telling them, he's preparing them, that the Holy Spirit, again, that he will assist them in this mission that he has for them. Yes, the task would be immense, but one that he would enable them to fulfill.

He was delegating his authority here to his disciples, to his church, to go and make disciples, to execute his authority in his church in accordance with his word, in conjunction with the Holy Spirit.

[37 : 42] And again, the resurrection should give you courage to make disciples. In Acts, as we read the accounts of the early church and these followers, these disciples of Jesus, we see a transformation, don't we?

No longer are they hiding, no longer are they avoiding the religious authorities. In fact, they are being brought before them and they are preaching the gospel with boldness.

And even when they're told to stop doing it, they say, hey, we can't stop. We won't stop, no matter what, because we will be obedient to our Lord. We need more Christians like that today.

Christians who are bold, Christians who are courageous, because they know that Christ has overcome sin and death and Satan.

this past week, when we were at kids camp, they have missions each day and when it was missions, we watched a video of these Christian men.

[38 : 52] They were probably in their late 20s, early to mid 30s, and they were in the Himalayas. And if you know that region, it's very dangerous terrain to walk on.

And they were going up high, I mean, thousands of feet up, climbing these mountains. And as they showed the pictures and the images, I mean, they were saying, one slip of the foot and you would plummet hundreds of feet, thousands of feet to your death.

But they would go because God told them to reach these people who had never heard the gospel before. And it's amazing, as they go into these villages, they don't know anybody, they're praying for a person of peace.

And in one of those videos, they found one, they had portions of Scripture translated in their language and handed it to a man. And the next day, that man talked about a dream he had of a man in white with a key.

And he said, I have the key. I have the key. And the next day, one of those missionaries said, well, the key is what you have in your hands. It's the Word of God. It's Jesus Christ who has risen from the dead.

[40 : 03] We need more courageous Christians like that. Maybe God's not going to call you to go to the Himalayas. That's not His will for each one of us. But certainly His will and His command and His expectation of you is that you be bold and you share the good news that He has come, that He has lived sinlessly, that He has died sacrificially to atone for sins, to absorb the wrath of God for the sins that you've committed from Him.

He died and He was buried. On the third day, He rose again because He is the way, the truth, and the life. Now thirdly, Jesus' resurrection gives confidence to those who are doubtful.

Gives confidence to those who are doubtful. Verse 24, Now Thomas, one of the twelve called the twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told Him, We have seen the Lord. But He said to them, Unless I see His hands and the marks of the nails and place my finger in the marks of the nails and place my hand into His side, I will never believe.

Now Thomas was a pessimist, to say it lightly. He was like Eeyore in Winnie the Pooh. You've all seen Winnie the Pooh, right? If it's a good day, which I doubt.

[41 : 21] That was Thomas. Thomas was a melancholy person. Thomas was the one who had a knack for finding every dark cloud in every silver lining. But Thomas was devoted.

Now we often give Thomas a hard time for being doubtful and he was, but Thomas was devoted. Remember when Jesus said that they were going to go back into the region of Jerusalem, he was going to go and he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead and Thomas knows, Well, they just tried to kill you there.

Hello? That's not a good idea. But Thomas says, All right. We'll go with you and we'll die with you. Thomas was devoted, but he was often doubtful.

Again, in John 14, Jesus talks about how he's going to die and how he's the way, the truth, and the life and you love that Thomas is just right there like, Wait a second, Lord.

We don't know the way. We don't know where you're going. Are you going to give us some kind of instruction? That was Thomas. And here he demonstrates his doubts once more that the disciples, they hadn't really seen what they thought they had seen.

[42 : 39] And I love it. He says, And I will never believe. Well, things change. Eight days later, his disciples were inside again and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said again, Peace be with you.

Then he said to Thomas, Put your finger here. See my hands? Put your hand here. Place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.

And what did Thomas reply? My Lord and my God. Jesus said to him, You have believed because you have seen me and now he speaks to the rest of us.

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe. Don't you love that? I mean, Jesus is looking right here and we see that in the high priestly prayer right here in what's in front of him but beyond that to you.

Bless those. They don't see me physically but they'll believe. Once again, Jesus didn't attack Thomas for doubting. You know, you did it again.

[43 : 51] Thomas, you're always doing this. But he compassionately instilled confidence in this man and he believed.

And then as we go on here, this is really the conclusion of the gospel. We'll see the epilogue which is great next week. But here John says very clearly, this is the purpose.

All these things that I've written about, all these things that the Holy Spirit has inspired me to write, this is why. Verse 30 through 31. Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book but these are written and this is the purpose that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name.

And so the main point of application for this sermon is basically this. Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

You know, I love going to camp with our kids and our teens. I mean, you know, I don't do as much work as the volunteers do but I, you know, I know it's late nights, it's early mornings, it's eating food, at least at kids camp that's not the best and it's hot over 100 degrees every day and you know, you just step outside and you're instantly drenched in sweat but man, it is worth it.

[45 : 29] It is worth it. I have the privilege, amen, I had the privilege of, you know, at the end of each night of worship, our speaker would present the gospel and then he would encourage our kids to go find their leader and I had the privilege again of talking to a couple of our kids about what the Lord was doing in their lives right then and what they were coming to understand and I mean, there's just that if you've made a disciple, you've seen it, you don't make a disciple but if the Lord uses you to make a disciple and you see that look in their eyes, you know what I'm talking about?

It's like there's just a gleam there and man, to see that gleam in some of our kids, Kennedy is one, she'll be baptized soon, Deke is another, he'll be baptized later but it's just like, you know what?

It's just a reminder of things you already know but gosh, the Lord is at work today. His work didn't end after he died, his work didn't end after he rose from the grave, his work didn't end after he ascended to the right hand of the Father where he is now.

He is bringing people from death to life today. Don't you want to be a part of that? Don't you want to be used by him to make disciples?

You know that's his will and his plan for you and it's a pleasure and it's a privilege that he gives to you but if you're so overcome with mourning and grieving over what you're seeing in this world or you are trapped in fears because you're not having enough faith or you're constantly filled with doubts instead of trusting in God, you're not going to be a very good disciple maker and God wants you to be and so what do you need to do?

[47 : 22] Believe, trust, have faith. Jesus Christ has risen from the grave. He lives. You who are in Christ live and you'll live forever.

Two questions of application for you to go over on your own time later today, later this week. How should the reality of Jesus' resurrection conquer your grief, fear, and doubts?

How should they conquer your grief, your fear, and your doubts? And then secondly, why is it so important that you communicate the resurrection when you share the gospel?

Why is that so important? And if you're not sure, I'll call my professor from class and he'll tell you for about 10 or 15 minutes.

Lord has risen. Praise be to God. Let's pray. Lord, we're so thankful for you. We're so thankful for the hope that we have eternally in you.

[48 : 29] We're so thankful for your grace and your mercy to open our eyes, to call us by name, to call us to you, to give us life. Life that begins at salvation and lasts forever.

Lord, you've also given us a mission. You've called us to go and make disciples. You've called us to go and share the good news of who you are, to share the gospel.

And Lord, we know that you are still gathering your people. You are still collecting your church and you desire to use us right now in your mission to do that before you return.

And so God, I pray for those of us this morning who, like Mary, we're just overcome with grief, mourning. All we can see is what's in front of us and we're not looking or forgetting what you've told us about how you've risen from the grave.

Or maybe we're like the disciples and we're fearful. Lord, we're afraid of the cost of following you. We're afraid of so many things and they take our focus off of you and where it needs to be and the words that you've told us to not be afraid.

[49 : 42] God, or maybe there's some here who are filled with doubts. Lord, I pray that you would reveal yourself to them and that they would know that there is life in your name.

There is hope in your name. And they would trust and believe. And so for each of us, Lord, I pray that we would look at your word, that your spirit would remind us of the mission that you've called us to be upon and that we would do so joyfully knowing that Jesus has come, that he has died for our sins and that he's risen again and we too who are in Christ will experience the same one glorious day.

Until then, Lord, we pray that we would be busy about your business, that you would use us to glorify you. And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.