

# Jesus Has Conquered Death

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

Date: 04 April 2021

Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[ 0 : 00 ] I'm turning the Bible to John chapter 20, verses 11-31 will be the text that I'm going to preach!

John chapter 20, beginning at verse 1. If you don't have a Bible with you this morning, there are Bibles in the pews, and I encourage you to use those. And if you don't own a Bible, would you please take that Bible home with you today as a gift from our congregation to you, and our hopes and our prayers that you would continue to be reading the Word of God.

John chapter 20, beginning in verse 1 and going to verse 31, if you would please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together. Now, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him. So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.

[ 1 : 39 ] Then Simon Peter came following Him and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloth, but folded up in a place by itself.

Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the Scripture that He must rise from the dead.

Then the disciples went back to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. And as she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb.

And she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head, 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 do not 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?

[ 2 : 45 ] 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. 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 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, 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 any, they are forgiven them. If you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.

[ 3 : 56 ] 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 Jesus. 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 not believe.

Eight days later, His disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came in 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 your hand and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.

Thomas answered Him, My Lord and my God. 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.

[ 5 : 13 ] Amen. May God have a blessing to the reading of His Word. Please be seated. Amen. I have a picture in my office downstairs of Danny and I when we were married, a picture of us on our wedding day.

And I've had that in my office for as long as I've had an office. I've been a pastor for about nine or ten years. And so ever since I've had an office, that picture has been there.

And I remember early on and maybe even like one to five years of marriage, maybe even a little bit longer than that, people would come into my office and they would notice that picture and they would say things like, You guys haven't changed a bit.

You look exactly the same. More recently, when people come into my office and they see that picture, what they say is, Oh my, you guys looked so young.

How long ago was that picture taken? It's been, you know, 14 years. And I think, you know, my hair is still the same color, most of it.

[ 6 : 31 ] I've only got a few flecks of gray. And it hasn't fallen out. Danny's hair hasn't fallen out either. Praise the Lord. But I know that 14 years from now, when we look at pictures of Jack's baptism, I'm going to be a lot different looking than I am today.

And I'll be aware of the fact that I have continued to age. The truth is that we are all aging. The truth is that we are all slowly dying.

We all are. And you know, that's a truth that we'd rather not think about, isn't it? It's a truth that we'd rather conceal. And that's exactly what we do.

People spend a lot of money in attempts to de-age themselves, buying hair dyes, wrinkle creams, undergoing surgeries.

moms, and even some grandmothers dressed like their teenage daughters in order to feel or look attractive. Men buy motorcycles and fast cars in an attempt to look cool and keep their edge, feel young.

[ 8 : 04 ] But it cannot delay the inevitability of what is happening to us all. The Bible presents us with a lot of great and wonderful truths for us to delight in.

But it also confronts us with truths that we would rather avoid. The Bible tells us like it is about everything.

And death is one of those uncomfortable truths that it has a lot to say about. For example, in Job 14, 1 through 2, Job says, Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble.

He comes out like a flower and withers. He flees like a shadow and continues not. In Psalm 90, Moses notes the brevity of man's lifespan.

He says there in verse 10, The years of our life are 70 or even by reason of strength 80, yet their span is but toil and trouble.

[ 9 : 18 ] They are soon gone and we fly away. David cried out in Psalm 55, verse 4 through 5, My heart is in anguish within me.

The terror of death have fallen upon me and horror overwhelms me. See, the Bible pictures death as an enemy.

1 Corinthians 15, 26 says very plainly and clearly, The last enemy to be destroyed is death, which brings a question to our minds.

who can destroy it? Who can conquer death? Men have tried in many ways to conquer death.

In fact, now if you have enough money, you can freeze your body in hopes that in the future they'll be able to bring it back to life. But for those who have been frozen, that time has not yet come.

[ 10 : 22 ] And according to the word, they're going to be frozen for a long time until the Lord returns and thaws them out at the last resurrection. We can't conquer death. All of our attempts, our many

attempts have failed to undo death's curse.

When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they plunged all of mankind underneath the curse of sin, which we understand and experience brings pain, toil, blood, sweat, and tears in this life.

However, though, in the midst of pronouncing all of that bad news, God delivers a promise in Genesis 3.15 as He addresses Satan, saying to Him, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. You see, this is the first mention of the gospel. One will come, an offspring of the woman.

Though Satan will strike him, the crushing blow, the victorious blow will be delivered by this one to him. One day, God says here, He would send someone to reverse the curse.

[ 11 : 50 ] A conqueror who would defeat it, but not in the way that we would expect that He might defeat it. He would overcome the curse by becoming it.

And in order to become it, He would have to die. Galatians 3.13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

For it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. On the cross, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who knew no sin, became sin.

The wrath of God was unleashed upon Him there. And there He suffered for hours in anguish, forsaken of God and despised by the men who He came to save.

And He was suspended between heaven and earth on a tree, on a cross, bruised, bloodied, and in the eyes of those who were watching, He was beaten.

[ 13 : 12 ] They had beaten Him. Death in their minds had claimed yet another victim. And Jesus was taken down from the cross and He was laid in a tomb on Friday.

His body remained there all day on Saturday. But then Sunday morning came. And with it the news that Jesus Christ has destroyed death.

Jesus Christ has conquered death by rising again. The cross extinguished the curse and the empty tomb proved that death has been defeated created by Jesus Christ.

Our great conquering King. Our great and risen Lord. So the main idea of this morning's sermon that I hope and I pray that at the end we will all understand and believe and hope in is this.

Jesus Christ has conquered death, transforming it from an enemy to a friend. Jesus Christ has conquered death, transforming it from an enemy to a friend.

[ 14 : 39 ] Now, you might hear that and you might be thinking that sounds crazy. Death is not a friend.

How can something we seek so desperately to avoid becomes something that we can embrace as a friend? 1 Corinthians 15, 54 through 57, Paul explains it so well, how we can embrace something that was once an enemy as a friend.

It's because of Jesus. Paul says there, when the perishable puts on the imperishable, speaking of ourselves, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come the past, 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.

By dying and rising again, Jesus conquered death, removing its sting, transforming it from something we fear, into a friend that ushers us through this life and into His eternal presence.

[ 16 : 03 ] Like Him, we will die, but like Him, those of us who are in Christ, we will be resurrected to an eternal life.

When the perishable puts on the imperishable, Jesus conquered death, death. And He conquers and overcomes still today the attitudes that we often express towards it, towards death.

And so again, my hope for you is that God will fill your heart and your mind and your soul and your life with joy this morning in the eternal hope that we have in Jesus Christ.

Jesus conquers death. The first thing that we see here is that Jesus' resurrection conquers our sorrows regarding death. Jesus and His resurrection conquers our sorrows.

You know, there's a lot of people, a world full of people that Jesus could have first met with after His resurrection, but He chose Mary.

[17:17] Out of them all, He chose Mary. Well, why? She was a follower of His, but He had many followers.

In fact, He had followers, His disciples, who are much more prominent throughout the Gospels than Mary is. She's not mentioned nearly as much as them.

And a lot of things have been written and said and believed about Mary Magdalene that Scripture never explicitly states. It doesn't explicitly state that she was a harlot.

It certainly does not say that she was Christ's wife, so if you have the Da Vinci Code, it's fiction, and my recommendation is throw it away. But she was not His wife.

She, like many other women, followed Him in His earthly ministry. The Bible says that when Jesus met Mary Magdalene, she was demon possessed.

[18:21] And He, in meeting her, released her of that oppression, and as a result of that, she followed Him. She followed Him.

I think Jesus chose Mary for at least a few reasons. First of all, to authenticate the validity of His resurrection.

You see, back then in this culture, and during this time, women were not permitted to bear witness in court. Their testimony was not viewed as being credible testimony.

They had a low station in life. In fact, again, in this culture, they were viewed as the property of their husbands. And so, if the disciples were going to make this story up, that Jesus had risen from the dead, if they had fabricated this story, they never would have chosen a woman to be the first one to see Jesus because no one would have accepted that.

Or, if they wanted people to believe it, they would have said, it's a man. So, why her? Well, she's mentioned as the first witness because that's how it happened.

[19:41] But again, there's more still here as to why. Second, and more importantly, I think Jesus chose her to demonstrate His love for those whom society views as being unworthy, unimportant, and undesirable.

people. Jesus loved her and He loved her with the same amount of love that He loves all of His disciples, all of His flock.

He doesn't play favorites. He loves them all. No one in His flock is neglected. Third, she was overcome with sorrow.

She's filled with sadness. Peter and John, they had saw the empty tomb and they walked in and they discerned what had happened and they marveled at what had happened.

They had questions, but they soon left the scene, but she was still there. She was sad. She was weeping uncontrollably. We call that ugly crying.

[20:53] Have you ever ugly cried before? Where you're just, it's a mixture of sweat, maybe, tears for sure, and snot, and it's just all over your face.

That's Mary. Just so overcome. No control over those fluids. They are just pouring and gushing out. Why?

Because in her mind, Jesus was dead. In her mind, Jesus was still dead, and now his body had been taken away by somebody else.

And so her sorrows are compounded here. Imagine you went to the grave of someone whom you loved, and you got there, and you saw that the gravestone had been removed.

And imagine that you see a big gaping hole in the ground where the casket had been laid, and it is gone. You'd be upset, wouldn't you? You'd have some questions. You'd be angry, but you'd be overcome with sorrow, because how could someone you would think rightly desecrate the remains of someone whom I love so much?

[22:09] And so Mary stoops down once more to look into Jesus' tomb. Maybe she thought she was missing something.

Maybe it was there, and she just, I don't know, she just had to see it again to believe. Or maybe she was looking for a clue as to where the body might have been taken to.

I think she was so overcome with grief that she just melted into the ground. Have you ever been so overcome with grief like that, that you just hit the floor?

You just melted into the ground in a puddle. But at the height of her sorrow, at the height of her sorrow, she sees something unbelievable.

Two angels are sitting where Jesus' body had been laying, one at the head and one at the foot, and that's going to be significant, that is significant, and I'll explain the significance here in a moment.

[ 23 : 14 ] They speak to her, and they ask her a question, woman, why are you weeping? And she explains why, they've taken away my Lord, I don't know where he is. Again, in her mind, Jesus is dead, but then she turns around, and I think she turns around at the gesturing of the angels.

As you said, I don't know where he's at, I think the angels kind of point behind you. And she turns, and she sees someone standing by her, but she doesn't know at first who it is.

Well, how come? How does she not know? Well, first of all, her eyes were puffy and filled with tears. And if you've been in that ugly cry moment before, you know you don't really sing too well. But secondly, and more truthfully, we understand that Jesus was able to hide his appearance and his resurrected form from people. He could obscure his identity. And so he did for a moment, but then he speaks to her.

Again, following the same line of questioning as the angels, but adding, whom are you seeking? And then he speaks to her and reveals himself to her with only one little word.

[ 24 : 40 ] And it's a name. It's her name. You know, it feels good, doesn't it, when someone you respect and admire, someone who you know maybe as an acquaintance, you've had enough time together, you're not real close, you're not maybe really friends, but you admire them and you hope when you see them later on down the line that when they see you, they'll recognize your name, although remember your name.

Have you ever had someone like that where you're like, man, I know them well enough that they probably remember my name, but I don't know them so well that if they forgot it, it would be understandable.

My favorite teacher, best teacher I've ever had in my life at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary was Dr. Aubrey, our preaching teacher. He had a lot of students and he knew a lot of people.

He was a popular guy at the school. And after I graduated and some years had gone by, maybe three or four years had gone by, I went back to the seminary.

They were having a conference and I saw him standing outside the sanctuary and I thought, he probably has forgotten who I am. But he's meant so much to me.

[ 25 : 57 ] I just want to go over and say hello and I normally don't do that because I'm a shy person. And so I went over to him and before I could even say his name, he said mine.

Mike, it's good to see you. How are you? It feels good, doesn't it? When someone whom you admire knows your name. Jesus knew Mary's name.

He said prior to his crucifixion in John 10, 3-4, to him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice and he calls his own sheep by name and he leads them out.

And when he has brought out all of his own, he goes before them and the sheep follow him for they know his voice. Mary heard his voice calling her name.

And instantly, with that, she is transformed. She goes from being in sorrow to rejoicing. She's still crying, I believe, but her tears of grief now become tears shed in gladness.

[ 27 : 14 ] Jesus does that for us, doesn't he? He comes to us in our time of sorrows. He calls us by our name and he reminds us that he is our conquering king.

Taking our sin, giving us life in return. Giving us strength for the day and reminding us of the purpose that we have in this life.

Giving us hope for tomorrow. And so he instructs Mary to go on to the other disciples and to share this good news with them that he lives. And as he lives, we know that one day we will, too, live and reign eternally with him.

Now, I said when Mary saw the angels on the stone slab where Jesus' body was, that that was significant. See, in the Old Testament, the tabernacle had an inner chamber called the Holy of Holies.

That was a place where the Ark of the Covenant was held. God had instructed his people to design for him a replica of what is in heaven, a replica of his throne room.

[ 28 : 38 ] And inside of that Ark was the law that he had given his people, the law that they consistently broke. Because them, like us, were sinful. But God is not. God is holy. In fact, he's holy, holy, holy, totally sinless.

But because of our sin, there was a division. And that Holy of Holies, that inner chamber, only the high priest could enter in on behalf of the sins of the people in only once a year, once a year.

Where there he would take the blood of the sacrifices and he would sprinkle it on the lid of the Ark of the Covenant where two angels sat.

Two angels carved and covered in gold, two cherubim. And so, he would leave and you've got to understand that there was this huge curtain that divided the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place and everybody else who was outside.

Reminding us that sin separates us from God. Atonement must be made. You see, when Jesus died, he ascended into heaven, I believe, where those replicas of what is replicated here is there in its genuine form.

[ 29 : 51 ] And he came as our great high priest, presenting his blood to the Father. And so, when Mary enters that tomb and she sees those angels there, what is God communicating to us?

The sacrifice has been atoned for. In fact, when Jesus died on the cross, the curtain and the temple was torn in two. There was no longer a separation. The tomb was empty.

The stone was removed as Tom prayed, reminding us or declaring to us that separation between God and man no longer has to be because Christ has come and he has died and he has atoned for our sins.

And we have peace with him. He removes our sorrow because he has defeated death. Are you sorrowful this morning? Do you feel sorrowful?

Maybe you're sorrowful over your own sin, your life, your purpose in life that you don't feel like there is one.

[ 30 : 53 ] Maybe you're sorrowful over the inevitability of death. And the answer, if you're sorrowful, is like Mary to turn to Jesus, to turn to him.

He says that he will remove our sorrow for sin. He will remove our sorrow over death and he will replace it as he did for her with joy.

He calls your name. He reminds you that you belong to him, that he has conquered sin and death. And therefore, we rejoice. Jesus' resurrection conquers our sorrow and it also conquers our fears.

Jesus' resurrection conquers our fears. So now we move on from Jesus and his interaction with Mary to that evening when the disciples are huddled together in fear.

Growing up, my grandmother lived in an apartment above a funeral home. It was an old house that had been built and was owned by a doctor in town and upon his death at some point in time a funeral company came in and bought it and so my grandmother lived in a pretty large apartment atop this pretty large house.

[ 32 : 21 ] It was an old house. It was a scary house. My father would, well, me and my sisters, we would, you know, play games, we would play hide and seek and there was a casket room, a room where all caskets were on the ground, caskets were on the wall, a terrifying room and my dad would hide in there and he would jump out and he would scare us.

But you know, I'd do the exact same thing today. I might even take it to a further extreme that would be even worse than that. It was scary and the shower was downstairs and so as a kid, if you were going to take a shower in this house, it was located right next to the sanctuary where a lot of the funeral services would be held and let me tell you, it's terrifying as a kid to think about the fact that as you're taking a shower, there's a dead body in the next room over.

Death can be scary and many people fear death. That Sunday night, the disciples minus Thomas were hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews.

Why did they fear the Jews? Well, they orchestrated by God's providential design the execution of their Lord and Master. And so, they reasonably were of the mind that just as they killed Him, they're probably out to do the same to us.

Though Mary had delivered the message to them that Jesus had sent to give to them, they were still huddled away in fear. And what does Jesus do when He appears to them?

[ 34 : 21 ] In His resurrected body, He simply passed through those locked doors and He speaks to them. Well, what does He say?

What would you think that you might say? You chickens! Didn't I tell you? I've been telling you this whole time that this was going to happen.

You're hiding up here like a bunch of cowards? Didn't you hear what I had to say to you? He entered into their place of fear.

And He simply said to them, what you would want to hear when you're afraid, peace be with you. peace be with you.

What was the last thing that they heard Jesus say before that? It is finished on the cross. John 19. What was finished? His work on the cross that brought what?

[ 35 : 25 ] Peace between God and man and His people. Romans 5.1 says, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through faith in Jesus Christ we are saved. He takes our sins upon Himself and He gives us His righteousness in return. And with that, peace with God.

The division between Holy God and sinful man has been bridged forever by His life, His death, and the resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus then showed them the places where He had been pierced to purchase that peace.

And as He did so, again we see transformation. The disciples' fears are swallowed up in joy at the realization that Jesus was alive.

And like Mary, He had a mission and a purpose for them too to go and to share this good news.

And they did. And as we get into Acts, we see their ministry and quite literally these ordinary men were used by God in an extraordinary way to bring change and transformation to the world.

[ 36 : 44 ] Jesus removes our fear about death and He can replace it with encouragement and joy when we trust in Him. the disciples emerged from that room changed men because they knew that their greatest fears and enemies had been conquered by their great Savior and Lord.

Do you have that same assurance this morning as they did? You know, if I didn't know Christ, I would fear death.

If I didn't know Christ, I would fear death. In fact, Jesus said that you should fear death if you don't know Him because without Him there is no peace between sinful man and holy God.

He said in Matthew 10, 28, Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, fear Him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Jesus preached a lot about hell more so than He preached about heaven. He described it as a place of eternal torment, a place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, a place from which there is no escape.

[ 38 : 14 ] When Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, on the night before His crucifixion, He knew that that was soon at hand. And He was in such anguish.

I'm sure you've been in anguish before and stress, but I doubt like Him that you were in such stress and anguish that you sweat drops of blood from your forehead. that's how stressed He was.

And yeah, He would be suffering an excruciatingly painful death on the cross, but worse than that, infinitely worse than that, would be the suffering He'd endure when God, His Father, forsook Him and turned His back to Him as He became sin on the cross.

If you have trusted in Christ as your Lord and Savior this morning, you must understand that on the cross, He endured hell for you. He suffered for you.

and if Jesus, the Son of God, who stood against Satan in his temptations, a man whom demons feared, was in such anguish over what He would endure on the cross by being forsaken of God, please know that without Christ, dying in your sins is something to fear above any and every other fear.

[ 39 : 58 ] But understand this too, that God will save you. God will save you. You don't have to pay Him to save you.

You don't have to work for Him to save you. He's paid it for you by His Son through His blood. He's endured it so that you don't have to so that you can have peace with Him now and forever.

Why did Jesus come? John 3.16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

In Christ, there is nothing to fear because we have been made the recipients of His great love and grace. 1 John 4.17-19 By this is love perfected with us so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment because as He is so also are we in the world.

There is no fear in love but perfect love casts out fear for fear has to do with punishment and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

[ 41 : 21 ] We love because He first loved us. Are you fearful this morning? Are you fearful of the future?

Are you fearful of living a life that you feel like doesn't have any purpose? Are you fearful of standing before a righteous holy God still clothed in your sin not in Christ's righteousness?

It's the same answer. Turn to Christ. Turn to Him. Turn to Him. Trust in Him and you will know His perfect love that casts out all fear.

And you will know as Romans 8 said that we who are in Christ share in His conquests. We are conquerors with Him. We are maybe the third well like the third string offensive lineman who never sees the field but his team wins the Super Bowl and he gets a Super Bowl ring.

That's like us. Jesus has done it all. I didn't get on the field but I got this ring to show it. He overcomes our fears. He also overcomes our doubts.

[ 42 : 42 ] Our doubts about what happens after death. And Thomas was one of the twelve disciples. He wasn't there. This time though he was. We know from Thomas' life that Thomas was a pessimist.

Thomas was a negative Nancy. He was that one who whenever anyone had an idea who was always pointing out everything that would or could go wrong.

he'd be there crossing his arms. Nah, that's not going to work. Have you thought about that? Nah, it's not going to happen. That was Thomas.

In fact, when Jesus made plans to go to raise Lazarus from the dead that meant returning to the area of Jerusalem where they just sought to kill him. You remember what Thomas said?

Let's go back with him too. If he's going to die we might as well die with him too. That was Thomas. Thomas was a realist.

[ 43 : 44 ] He needed proof. And that's what he told the disciples. I know you guys but I don't believe you guys until I see it myself.

Until I put my hands in those wounds. Eight days later Jesus comes to his disciples again. This time Thomas is there. And he issues the same encouraging words.

Peace be with you. And then he looked to Thomas and spoke to him. What does he say? Thomas you're always bringing this group down. What is your problem?

You know what? You're fired. Get out of here. No ever the sympathetic, gentle, compassionate, loving, loving Savior that he is.

Jesus gave Thomas the proof that he asked for. The Lord met him in his doubt and conquered them with the truth.

[ 44 : 53 ] What proof do we have today? I would say to you the miracle of salvation is a tremendous proof. life when someone goes from spiritual death to spiritual life.

I thank God that as a pastor I've gotten to see many people transformed miraculously by him. I want to share a story of one of those miraculous transformations that I know I've shared with you a few times before and I'll probably share it again because it was just so unbelievably transformational.

My church in Leavenworth there was a family and a grandmother who had come to church alone ever since anybody could remember and she had been a member of that church for a long time.

In fact I'd been there maybe two or three years and I'd never met her husband but I'd heard about him from his grandchildren and their words to me is he's tough.

He's real tough. He was in the Navy. He was a boxer in the Navy. He spent his life as a mechanic busting his knuckles on carburetors and whatnot and he got sick.

[ 46 : 11 ] He had colon cancer and he was in the hospital. His wife was afraid to drive to the hospital. The hospital was located about 40 minutes away, 45 minutes away from Leavenworth, our town.

And so her daughter worked, couldn't always take her there. So I volunteered. I said I'll take you. I'll take you. And I did. And I took her up into his room and he wasn't very talkative.

She introduced us and he said a few words. I don't really remember what he said but I kind of got the impression he's in pain.

He's not doing too good. I'm going to get out of here. I went home and Danny asked me, so you got to meet Melvin? And I said, yeah. And she said, well how did it go? I was like, I don't know, either he liked me or he hates me.

I can't tell. I brought her back there, got to talk to him a little bit more, and he got better.

[ 47 : 12 ] He got to go home. And then out of the blue, about a week later I got a phone call at the church. And it was him. Asked if I could come to their house.

I said, yeah, when would you like me to come? And I'm pretty sure he said, as soon as you can. So I went to their house and me and him met at their dining room, sat across the table from one another.

Sharon left the room to give us some space, though she was secretly listening in the other room. And he said to me, and I'm paraphrasing his words, but he basically said to me when I was in the hospital, I realized that I could die.

And I was terrified. Scared me. You know, I grew up going to church. My parents would drop me off. They wouldn't go. One of the last Sundays I remember going, I was supposed to be baptized, and my parents wouldn't even come for that, so I didn't go through with it.

For the rest of his life, he was out of the church. He didn't have peace with God. And so I went through the Romans road with him.

[ 48 : 31 ] You guys know that, talking about how all have fallen short of the glory of God. There's no hope without Christ, but in Christ there is hope. He had a few questions.

I was just sharing the gospel with him, and I saw him change before my eyes. A tear came down his face.

I asked him, Melvin, do you believe this? I said, I do. And I think we heard some clanking in the kitchen because his wife's prayers, years and years of prayers had been answered.

And he came to church, and he was baptized. I don't know, 70 years old or more, baptized. And oh, the tears that were shed.

All these people who knew Sharon had been praying for Melvin for years and years. Prayers had been answered, and I'll tell you, he was one of the most dedicated and faithful church members that I have known for those next three years.

[ 49 : 34 ] And then his cancer came back. This time it was lung cancer. We prayed for him, but we knew that it was stage four, that was eventually going to take his life.

And Melvin became my buddy. Not only was he a great church member, he was my friend. We went fishing together. He would come into my office during the week and just sit down and ask me how I was doing and tell me, don't work too hard, things like that.

He was my friend. So not only was I losing a faithful church member, but a good friend. And you've seen what cancer does to somebody.

Just riddles their body. They don't look the same. And I remember the last time I saw Melvin, he was in his house. He had been sent home. He was on hospice care. He was in the back bedroom, and Sharon told us and greeted us, he's not feeling well.

He's just hot. He's sweating. He's not looking too great. And as a pastor, when you go see someone who's dying, a lot of times you think, what can I say to encourage them in what they're going through?

[ 50 : 56 ] But what I found is the opposite happens. When I go to see a believer who is dying, I leave encouraged. And here was this man, three years ago, was terrified of death and dying.

And here he was in his room. And he was. He looked frail and weak, and he was strung out over the bed like this.

I entered, and he opened up his eyes, and he saw me, and he smiled. He said, hey, Pastor Mike.

And we prayed. He said, Melvin, you know where you're going? He's like, oh yeah, I know. He said, okay. Keep praying for you, but I'll see you again.

He said, I know. Fear of death, to seeing it as a friend. Doesn't mean that he was wishing for it, but he knew that through death he would be ushered into the presence of his eternal Savior.

[ 52 : 06 ] Jesus conquers our fear. John 20, verse 30 through 31. This is my hope for you that you would understand that these things that are written about Christ are written that you may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

Do you have life in his name? I hope that you do, and if you don't, you have questions, you can always come find me. I'd love to talk with you. Let's pray.

Lord God, we are thankful to know that you have conquered death, that you have conquered our attitudes towards it, our sorrows, our fears, even our doubts about what is to come.

God, I pray for those this morning who feel sorrowful, who feel fearful, who feel doubtful, that, Lord, as you did for your disciples, that you would reveal yourself to them, that you would call them out by name, that they would turn to you and know the hope that we have eternally in Jesus Christ, our conquering King, our blessed Lord and Savior.

God, we pray that in the lives that you've given us to live, that we would do what you called your disciples to do soon after your resurrection. Go and share, go and tell. And, Lord, we pray that we would, that people would hear the good news of Jesus Christ and know and experience that eternal

hope that we have in Him.

[ 53 : 36 ] To you be the glory and honor forever and ever. I pray. Thank you.