

He is Risen

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[0 : 0 0] Now, one thing I always get excited about, and I'm pretty sure you will too, is you always get excited when you're coming up to your holiday. Everybody get excited about going on their holiday? We all know that feeling, don't we?

But as an adult, we know the feeling of finishing work on that Friday when you've got two weeks holiday to come. You can picture, you can almost feel the sun on your skin.

You can picture the sun lounge or the warmth of the rays. Or if you've just finished, it's been your last day of term at school, and you know that you've got six weeks holiday.

You've been waiting all year for six weeks holiday from school. That feeling is amazing, isn't it? You're excited, you're happily bubbling with energy.

Maybe you get home, or if you're driving home from work, you're playing your favourite songs on the radio. If you get home from school, you switch on your favourite tunes on Alexa.

[0 : 5 9] Walking out of the school gate, six weeks off, there's no better feeling. There's nothing wrong with that. It's great. I am, forever I think, when I have holidays, I'm going to continue being happy every time I go away.

And we should. The reason we're happy is because the wait is finally over. The reason we're happy is because the wait is finally over.

This morning, Easter Sunday, we're remembering Jesus' resurrection. Before that, leading up to Jesus being raised from the dead, the whole of creation had been waiting for this moment.

Waiting for this moment. God himself had planned everything around this moment. That everything would be made right, or the wrongs would be undone.

He would undo every wrong in this one moment. Sometimes we can live knowing that Jesus is alive, but at the same time, we can become blasé and forget of the significance of this moment.

[2 : 1 4] My hope and prayer for us, this Easter Sunday, is that we recapture the happiness, the joy of what it actually means, to know the reality that Jesus is alive, and he's alive today.

And my prayer is that that would bring us happiness and more excited energy than even on the day that we finish for six weeks holiday.

Than we finish for going on two weeks holiday. We're going to be thinking about it in three things. And the first thing that we're going to think about is waiting. Waiting.

Waiting. We're picking up the story. Not on that first resurrection morning, but you'll notice at the end of chapter 15, we're picking up the story on the evening, on the same day that Jesus died, on that Good Friday evening.

And the first thing that I want to make clear is there's no mistake, is there, that Jesus was definitely, at this point, dead. He was definitely dead.

- [3 : 16] It doesn't leave us with any questions about that fact being 100% true. True. It's kind of, you feel like the writer, Mark, he's kind of over the top pointing it out to make sure we definitely understand that he was definitely dead.
- To make sure we firmly understand, yes, he's dead for sure. Firstly, we've got Joseph of Arimathea. He asks for his body. Pilate, we read he's surprised that he's dead. We see the body's handed over.
- Jesus, Joseph has this, he's got a tomb ready. He places him in the tomb. He seals it with the rock. Living people are not put in tombs. It all stands up with Jewish traditions.
- The tomb would have been used for multiple burials. It was a new tomb. Jewish practice was that it would leave the body until the bones remained and then they'd be removed and kept.
- The burial had to be done on the Friday evening. Dead bodies couldn't be left hanging over the Sabbath. So they had to get it down and put it in the tomb. And there is no mistake here that Jesus, the author of life, who created the world in the beginning, now has no life left in him.
- [4 : 28] There is no mistake. From 3pm Friday, when he breathed his last, until Sunday at dawn, his body did not take another breath.
- What they handled was an empty shell that was made of created matter, but his heart was not pumping, his lungs were not inflating. For the scientists among us, respiration was not happening in any cell of his body.
- Jesus' physical body was without life. It was lifeless. You think, by the time he was wrapped and laid in the tomb, rigor mortis would have begun to set in.
- He would have been called to touch. Jesus is dead and appears like hope has died with him. This man that we meet, we meet this character who comes up, Joseph of Arimathea.
- He takes a huge risk, doesn't he? He shows great respect for this hated man. We know Joseph was well thought of. We read in verse 43, he's a prominent member of the council.
- [5 : 36] He would have had a bit of money behind him. It explains why he could afford a new tomb. But this is not normal. Bodies from crucifixions were normally dumped and discarded because it was the way you executed a slave.
- It is highly unusual to honour a condemned criminal with a high-end burial site. I suppose we need to ask, what does this tell us about Joseph of Arimathea?
- We can't be exactly sure where his head's at this moment. Did he believe that Jesus was the king? The Christ? There was obviously higher respect, a degree of love, because he sticks his neck out to honour Jesus.
- Verse 43, we get a hint of what Joseph thought. Verse 43, look with me. It says he's a prominent member of the council. We've said that. And then we read, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God.
- He was waiting. He was looking forward to it. Joseph was just like the disciples. He's not put all the pieces together of what Jesus was all about, but he was waiting for the kingdom of God.
- [6 : 45] To some degree, you might say he was expecting it, but perhaps he thought Jesus would bring it. You might remember the very first thing that Jesus said in the whole of Mark's gospel.
- You can see it in Mark 1, Mark chapter 1, verse 15. He says, the time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news.
- Joseph is waiting for something. Joseph is waiting for something that has actually already arrived when Jesus came. It's something the disciples didn't understand either.

Perhaps handling, burying Jesus' dead body, Joseph of Arimathea now wonders if his way is going to get a whole lot longer. Perhaps it's like that feeling when you've come back from your holiday and you're sat on the first school day in August or you're sat at your desk just after getting back from a nice rest and the wait till your next holiday feels very far away and you've got a lot of waiting to do.

Perhaps it's not quite the same, but we get the idea. Because waiting can be hard. It all depends on our perspective, doesn't it, waiting?

[8 : 09] Waiting, we can be frustrated at waiting or waiting can we can be excited about what is coming.

Sometimes when it's hard, it's because what we expect or want is different. It can be hard because what Joseph wanted was he wanted to see the kingdom of God in its fullness now.

In one sense, we're waiting, when we look at Joseph of Arimathea, we're waiting for something different to him and in another sense, we're waiting for the same thing. Joseph wanted to see all the wrongs made right.

He wanted to see the kingdom of God now. He wanted to see Jesus take the throne. He wanted to see him announce himself as king. We're waiting for that still.

The death of Jesus, it must have felt like that was a million miles off. And sometimes we can feel today like it's far from us when we look at our world and our lives surrounded by the effects of death.

[9 : 20] It is the thing we fear the most. It still is, isn't it? We live in a world that avoids talking or thinking about death.

And in many ways, that's right, because death without hope is too scary to comprehend. Perhaps we have loved ones who are ill and we're afraid of it happening to us and we're afraid of what that means to the ones that we love.

We see how the fear plays out in our lives, not only avoiding it, but to do everything to stop talking about it. This is why the resurrection is the most important moment in history, because it takes our biggest fear and it reinterprets it.

It reinterprets our biggest fear, which is where we're going to go with our second point. Jesus is risen. Jesus is risen. As I've mentioned, Jesus' dead body was in the tomb around 36 hours-ish when the women who know where Jesus' body was, because they know where it is because they watched Joseph Arimathea bury his body.

We see that in verse 47. And so they go with spices. The reason they go with them would be to cover up the smell of his decomposing body. That would be normal practice. They would have remembered Joseph.

[10 : 39] Joseph, he wouldn't have done this on his own. He would have had servants who helped cover the tomb with a large stone. And naturally, they wonder on the way, having seen the big stone rolled in front of the tomb, how are we going to get in?

How are we going to get in? We're just three women. But verse 4. When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

It's the first thing that is strange. What must have been going through their mind is, who else is up at this time wanting to see Jesus apart from us?

Who else has come to the tomb? Who's beaten us to it? Who's here? Second strange thing, they enter the tomb, they see a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and we read they're alarmed.

For me, I don't know if the word alarmed quite captures how I would have felt or responded. Alarmed, to me, when I think of the word alarmed, I kind of use that as like a minor concern.

[11 : 49] A minor, trivial kind of, oh, that was quite alarming. You'd be freaked out. You'd be freaked out. It would shock and fear on many levels. You'd have a number of questions.

This guy, this guy sat in white, who are you and what are you doing here? Two, where is the body of Jesus? We saw him being buried here just 36 hours ago on Friday night.

And that's forgetting the immediate question, who on earth moved the stone? They don't say anything. But the man dressed in the white robe, we know to be an angel, answers in verse 6.

He must pick up from what he's seeing, how they're feeling. Don't be alarmed, he said. You're looking for Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified. He's risen.

He's not here. See the place where they laid him. We're going to pause and dig into what the angel says. Don't be alarmed.

[12 : 50] Paraphrase. Paraphrase. I can see you're really shook up. Don't be. And I'll tell you for why. I know you're looking for Jesus the Nazarene. There's a reminder there.

He calls him Jesus the Nazarene to remind them that this Jesus had a human body and grew up in a real physical location. People saw him grow up. A real village called Nazareth.

You're looking for him, Jesus who comes from Nazareth. The one who's crucified. Reminder that man that I know you really saw die. But verse 6 again. He's risen. He's not here.

See the place where they laid him. In other words, I know his body is gone. I know that. But it's not disappeared or vanished into thin air. No one's stolen it because he is alive.

He's risen from the dead. From death to life. This moment is what the whole of the Christian faith hangs on. The whole of the Christian faith hangs on this moment right here.

[13 : 51] Because if Jesus stays dead, if you could still visit his grave knowing that his body or his bones were inside, there would be no proof that what we've looked at over the last kind of few months or what we think about every week, there would be no proof that the cross did anything.

We wouldn't even be thinking about the cross because Jesus would be forgotten because he'd be dead. Jesus, risen from death, is the proof that his mission to go to die, to the cross, succeeded.

It's the proof that the mission to the cross succeeded. It's the proof that sin, death, and evil can not only be beaten, but they're beaten and defeated. They're overcome. The punishment for sin is over.

The impact of sin on our world is over. Death and all suffering can be beaten and the power of all sin, all evil that comes from sin will be gone too. It will cease.

The resurrection proves that because Jesus is alive and he has overcome. Everything that brought sin, sin brought into our world has been reversed. From that moment, from that moment, Jesus has never stopped living.

[15 : 04] Jesus is alive now today with a real body made from the dust of the earth from created matter. You see, that also tells us something, doesn't it?

It reminds us that the resurrection body, the new body that Jesus has, his raised body is not like ours. It's the same body, but it's changed.

It's a completely new type of living, a new type of life. It's so important. So important. You might remember in the New Testament, we see Jesus does raise people to life.

Lazarus, the young girl, John 11 is Lazarus. We looked at that verse that came from our call to worship. But when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead after four days, Lazarus got his old body back.

Lazarus still had to die. His body would still decay, get aches and pains as he grew older and be affected from living in a dying sinful world.

[16 : 11] But when Jesus is raised, it's different. He's not given his old body back in the same way. It is his body. It's the same substance. It's made from the same stuff.

It's created matter, but it's changed. It's changed. It's now a resurrection body that will never perish, spoil or fade. 2,000 years on from that happening, Jesus doesn't have or has never had and will never have bad knees or a dodgy ticker.

He's not getting wrinkles or needing a transplant. There's no risk of him getting cancer because he's got a bad diet. He's never going to suffer from mental fragilities or forgetfulness from old age.

His body is as perfect a body as the day he received it that will exist like it did on that day forever into eternity. And yet it is still made up of matter comprised of created matter from the earth.

It still matches up with the DNA of his mom. Isn't that amazing? The DNA of Mary is in Jesus and that is it is still made up of Mary's DNA.

[17 : 26] 1 Corinthians 15 explains it like a seed and a plant. A seed and a plant still contain the same DNA but the seed must die for the plant to grow.

And yet they're the same thing but one is new and one is dead. This is the resurrection life the new life that Jesus offers to us and assures us if we follow him.

Never again to die. Never again undergo the pain of failing health no more anxiety or concern. This life is what's promised. The curse is reversed.

You'll be raised in him and have the life given to you that he has and you'll suffer no more no threat of failing health. You'll be the same but you'll be changed. The seed your old shell will in some way die your body but you'll be given it back changed with new spiritual life a resurrection body.

But there's more than that. Your mind and your heart will be made perfect too and you'll always live as God intended. No more arguments or broken relationships no abuse or corruption or desire to gain control or to be in charge just peace and blissful joyful life.

[18 : 48] I don't know if that's what the women were thinking in that moment. I don't know what was going through their heads right now. They were scared. Must have seemed strange unbelievable but what they did have was hope.

What if this man in white is right? What if he's right? The angel tells them what they must do. Move to our final point.

Go see for yourself. Go see for yourself. The women they went looking for Jesus' body they didn't find one. The angel tells them where to find Jesus alive and what they need to do and in verse 7 we see that the angel has two instructions for the women.

We're going to look at them one at a time. The first thing the angel says for them to do is to go and tell. Look with me verse 7 but go tell his disciples and Peter he is going ahead of you into Galilee.

Go and tell the others where to find him. In fact Jesus had told them where he was going to be. You might remember if you were to look at it it's just a flick over the page in chapter 14 verse 28 he tells them but after I have risen I will go ahead of you into Galilee.

[20 : 10] He tells them where he's going to be. If they'd have understood that and realised what he said or remembered it they would have never gone to the tomb. They would have gone straight to Galilee because that's where he said he was going to be. But the angel says what the angel is reminding them is this this is not just for you but you need to tell the others.

From the first moment the first eyewitnesses even have any idea that Jesus is alive it's not supposed to be a secret. The angel doesn't want them sticking around and chatting to them.

What good will that do? The angel get out of here there's nothing to see. Jesus isn't here you shouldn't stick around. Go tell your friends that Jesus is alive and where he is.

even before they fully know what's going on go and tell what I've told you to your friends. Their idea is that they should share it. Jesus being alive is not a secret to be hidden but a reality to be made known.

It's not a secret to be hidden but a reality to be made known. The point is this it doesn't actually matter whether you're a follower of Jesus and you know and believe that Jesus being alive today is a concrete reality for you.

[21 : 26] You might be in that you might be in that sort of case or perhaps you're here and you're still thinking it through and looking into the Christian faith. The suggestion here is either way everyone no matter what they think about Jesus being alive should investigate that reality together.

If you're not if you're looking into the Christian faith you're not quite there yet it might go something like this with somebody you see who hasn't here just right now. You'll never guess what I heard at church there was a bald guy with a beard who said from the front that Jesus is alive today.

What do you think? And notice these women they're not expected to have a clear presentation of the good news like written down in their back pocket.

They're not expected to articulate the details of deep theology they're just expected to tell their friends what they've experienced themselves. They're to witness of what they've been told go and tell them what I've told you.

They don't need to know the answer to every question just go and tell them where Jesus is. Go and tell. Second thing the angel says there you will see him just as he told you.

[22 : 51] Once you've told the others where he is you must go and see him for yourself. Go tell the others where he's going to be and then go see him for yourself.

You might hear that and think well that's alright for them because he was still making appearances in his resurrection body on the earth. It's not really possible to follow the angel's advice today is it?

Because even if I did go tell others the possibility that Jesus is alive and that he came to church today how can I find him and go see him for myself? The women were looking in a tomb for him yeah they were in the wrong place but Jesus had told them where he was going to be they just had to be reminded and then they'd get out to Galilee and there he was.

Today Jesus isn't in a geographical location is he? If you go to the Sea of Galilee today he's not waiting for you there in a boat and there isn't any other place where he's present in his physical human body not in any church building in his physical human body not in any nowhere apart where is he right now?

His body is at the right hand of God the Father in heaven that's where his body is. So if you're looking for Jesus where do we go?

[24 : 14] If you haven't found him if you haven't found him can I tell you this is not me having a go at all it's it's just you've been looking in the wrong place if you haven't found him.

The risen Lord Jesus does want you to find him he wants you to seek him but he's not hiding from you you know he's not been since he went he's not been playing some elaborate generation spanning spiritual game of hide and seek he's not sniggering to himself in a corner of the universe thinking nobody can find me here Jesus is seekable and he's findable he's made it so that he can be tangibly known and experienced because he's alive the question is where do you look to go find Jesus or maybe the question is do you want to find him I'm going to share two verses with you that explains what it means to seek Jesus where he is in Luke 11 Jesus says this to his disciples he says ask and it will be given to you seek and you'll find knock and the door will be opened to you for everyone who asks receives the one who seeks finds and the one who knocks the door will be opened but he also says there's two verses I'm sharing he also says earlier on in the

Old Testament the living God says this that if you seek the Lord your God with all your heart you will if you seek the Lord your God you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul you put these two verses together and you see what it means you put these two verses together and it means this this is what it means to seek to find Jesus to look for him and to know that you're going to find him that if with all your heart with all your heart if you honestly and honestly and truly you're not just paying lip service to this idea but genuinely on the very fibre of who you are with all your heart if you ask for Jesus if you seek him if you knock on his door this is the promise that Jesus says he says you will receive me and you will find me and I will open the door to you and be on the other side if you knock on it you will have a relationship with me and I will come and spiritually make my home with you and you will know me you have a perfect friendship a perfect relationship with the risen

Jesus it's wonderful news it's amazing news Jesus is alive today he's risen hallelujah he was definitely dead no doubt about that but he is risen and he is alive today on the throne of heaven like us with a body like ours but different and we are waiting we are still waiting we will be waiting for the kingdom of God to come in its fullness but one day it will come one day we will not just be raised spiritually but we will be raised to new life and have a body like his that will never perish spoil our forfades and the way that we have received we receive that if you want to receive that is to seek him with your heart is to ask for him with all your heart and to knock on his door with all your heart and you will receive him you will find him and he will be there for you you will have a perfect relationship with the risen Lord

Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit he will make his home with you it's the beauty of Christian faith the one who made you wants to have a relationship with you and has promised to know you that is the hope that we have in the face of all sin of all death and all evil but he is bringing he is undoing the curse so reversing the curse so that everything is made new so that you can have a relationship with the author of life let me pray almighty God we praise you we praise you love you because you are so good Lord all our fears you will take away in the resurrection our biggest fear you take away because you are alive and we want to we pray Lord we ask for you today even those who may have known you we may have known you for years we want to come to you afresh we want to seek you and ask for you and knock on your door afresh so that that bond of relationship is something that we can cultivate and experience tangibly knowing that we will receive you knowing that we'll find you knowing that you'll be on the other side of the door to experience what it means to have a life in your name and we thank you that you call people that you not only do you ask us to seek you but you're the good shepherd who seeks us you seek out the lost and we know that we were all at one point lost in need of a saviour and so we praise you that you are our

[29 : 30] God that you love us that you came and made a way for us to have a perfect relationship with you that you would make your home with us we praise you and ask for your blessing upon each one of us in Jesus name Amen