

He Lives! (John 20:1-18)
That You May Believe: The Gospel Of John
Southern Hills Baptist Church
January 14, 2018

WELCOME

Welcome! It is good to be with the people of God, gathered to hear the Word of God. If you have your Bibles go ahead and open them to John 20, we will be there momentarily.

INTRODUCTION

There is no question that Jesus has forever changed the world that we live in. Even those who don't believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior wouldn't deny this. Its undeniable. The way we measure time is literally built around His life. We now live in 2018 AD. AD, Anno Domini, which means, in the year of our Lord. Everything that took place before the life of Jesus is B.C., Before Christ. We have drawn what seems to be an arbitrary line through history, separating history into two parts. Why? Because Jesus lived and He forever changed the world.

Short Ministry, HUGE Impact

Now remember, Jesus' public ministry, the account we have read in the Gospel of John, took place over the course of 3 years, just 3 years. How could Jesus have had such a sizeable impact on the world over the course of just 3 years? Additionally, in some respects, as we try to categorize Jesus, there have been others throughout history who have done some similar things to Jesus and created movements.

- There have been others who have had spiritual teachings that were received as profound.
- There have been others who have created faith-based groups.
- There have been others who have even been worshipped as God.
- There have been others who have died as martyrs for causes.

So what separates Jesus from the others? From Budah? From Mohammed? From Kirsihna? What makes His 3 short years of public ministry world-altering on an unrivaled scale?

The answer... **The Resurrection.** Jesus overcame what no one else could, death and sin.

Death Comes for All

Death is no respecter of persons, it comes for us all. There are none who can escape it.

- Death doesn't care about the impact you have had on the world
- Death isn't deterred by your resume or list of accomplishments in this life
- Death will stand over the strongest of us
- Death can't be outwitted or outlasted
- Death can't be bought off with a big check

Death comes for all. Death comes for the best of men.

One Exception

Save One of course. And this is the great separator between Jesus and the rest of humanity. Jesus tasted death, but **it didn't get the final word over Him** as it has everyone else. Jesus overcame death by His own power. **Death knows its role before the Almighty and takes a knee before Jesus.**

Changed Everything

It is this miracle that changed everything. It changed history as we know it and it promises to change eternity as well.

Much More than a Twist Ending

As we prepare to consider the resurrection of Jesus this morning from John 20 I want us to be on the same page about this. **Jesus' resurrection isn't just a heart-warming twist ending to the horrific and brutal murder of Jesus on the cross. No, the resurrection so much more than that.**

- The resurrection is the **proof that all the promises** that Jesus made during His life will come true.
- The resurrection is **the foundation that the Christian faith rests upon**. I say that without the slightest bit of hyperbole.

Resurrection = Foundation

Listen to how Paul speaks to the foundational importance of Jesus' resurrection...

1 Corinthians 15:17-19

[17] And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. [18] Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. [19] If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

If Jesus didn't rise from the dead Christians have wasted their lives and should be pitied.

With It We Have Everything

So again, I can't understate the importance of the resurrection of Jesus. It is everything. Our faith is meaningless without it. More than that, our faith is a lie without it.

- With it, however, our faith is the **starting point of an eternal source of hope and joy**.
- With it, we are **heirs to untold and immeasurable riches** in Christ.
- With it, we can find **true forgiveness of our sins that we might stand before the Holy God** of the Universe, where our souls can find true and lasting satisfaction.

So this morning we have the joy of coming to John's resurrection account and I want to walk through it and rejoice over it with you.

Unique Challenge - Harmonization

Let me just make a brief note before we read our text and say that the resurrection accounts often present a unique challenge in that each author captures different details and shares the event from a different perspective, which often causes the accounts to have what might appear to some as inconsistencies. This is not the case. All of the Gospel accounts harmonize. I could spend all morning taking time to show you how these puzzle pieces fit together. That would be a worthy effort.

Walk with Mary, John, and Peter and Rejoice

However, what God has placed on my heart this week as I have studied this text isn't the academic pursuit of mapping out the harmony of these accounts. Rather He has given me a desire to walk with

Mary and Peter and John and rejoice over the shocking and joyous events of that first Easter when Jesus rose from the dead. So as we study John's account, if you were to have some questions about how it syncs with Matthew's account or Luke's account I would ask that you table those questions for a moment and just focus your heart in on the life-giving joy of Jesus' greatest miracle.

OPENING PRAYER

Let's pray to that effect now...

Dear Heavenly Father,

We come to Your Word this morning ready to read and hear of Jesus' victorious resurrection. Would you press upon us the weight of this event? Would you help us feel what Mary and Peter and John felt? Would you help our hearts to soar with joy as we consider what this means for us today and forevermore? Would you lead us to greater satisfaction in you? We ask you to do what only you can, change us, satisfy our hearts, show us your glory.

We pray this in Jesus' name,
And all God's people said,
Amen!

CONTEXT

As we turn our attention to God's Word in John 20 let me remind you of what has gone on. In the past week Jesus entered into Jerusalem and received a hero's welcome. The city was excited to see Jesus come as they prepared for the Passover Feast. A crowd of people met up with Him as He entered the city, crying out Hosanna, which was an exclamation of joy or praise. It was an acknowledgement of Jesus as the Messiah.

Disciples on Cloud 9

As all of this is going on the Disciples were on cloud 9. Jesus' moment had finally come. He has been tirelessly serving people, teaching, performing miracles, but the crowds seemed to come and go. Now that they were in Jerusalem Jesus was on Israel's biggest stage and He couldn't be ignored. People would see His greatness and He would start to step up and be the Messiah they expected Him to be. He would rise to political power and deliver Israel from Roman rule.

Misguided Expectations

The expectations of the Disciples were off, biblically speaking, but this is what they anticipated nonetheless. So when Jesus was arrested in the cover of night and then put on a covert, sham of a trial that a false conviction might be brought against Him, **you have to know the Disciples felt like their world was being turned upside down.** This Disciples had to feel like they were on a rocket, being shot up into space, chasing after their dreams, but all of the sudden with the arrest of Jesus they had been shot out of the sky and were falling back to Earth. They never saw it coming, despite the warnings Jesus had given. And they were not scared and devastated.

Their Messiah Killed

Then the next morning, the man they believed would rule over Israel and be a political force no nation could reckon with, the man who was to lead Israel to a new freedom and to ownership of the land God had given them in the past, the man who held all of their hopes and dreams, the man they had followed faithfully for the past 3 years, that man, Jesus, He was lied about, brutally tortured, sentenced to an unjust death, and horrifically and shamefully killed like a criminal.

Crushed and in Danger

The Disciples were crushed. Everything that mattered to them had been taken from them. Not only that, but their lives were in danger. The religious leaders had killed Jesus. What would stop them from killing the Disciples? Jesus was a somebody and they got to Him. They were nobodies, they would hardly be missed. Their lives were in read danger so they went into hiding as they tried to make sense of life.

Heartbroken and Lost

This is where we pick up in John 20. Jesus has been dead and buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea for 3 days now. The Disciples are heartbroken, scared, and lost. They are sheep without a shepherd with wolves roaming all around them.

OUR TEXT

Let's pick up in John 20 now. Hear the Word of God...

John 20:1-10

[1] 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. [2] 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." [3] So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. [4] Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. [5] And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. [6] Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, [7] and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. [8] Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; [9] for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. [10] Then the disciples went back to their homes.

Isaiah 40:8

[8] The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

THE EMPTY TOMB (John 20:1-10)

We pick up 3 days after Jesus' death on the cross. His followers, the Disciples and a group of women, were heartbroken, they were scared, they were confused, they were discombobulated, trying to figure out which way was up. In the midst of all of this, they were mourning. Mourning the loss of the man they had put all their hope in.

First Opportunity

This is where we pick up with Mary Magdalene, who was headed to Jesus' tomb at her first opportunity. Remember, Jesus was killed on a Friday, and Saturday was the Sabbath, so Mary or the Disciples wouldn't have been able to go and see Jesus until Sunday. So it is Sunday and Mary get up before the sun and begins to walk towards the tomb. Likely she was accompanied by some of the other women, but John doesn't give us those details.

Sunday = Resurrection Day

Just a brief side note here... Mary is going to the tomb on Sunday, the first day of the week. We are gathered here today to worship Jesus on a Sunday, the first day of the week. Coincidence? Of course

not. Sunday gatherings were not started out of mere convenience because Sunday is a part of the weekend. No, Sundays became the day of worship for Christians because it is the day of the week that Jesus rose from the dead. Many centuries ago Sunday used to be a working day. Cultures who were heavily influenced by Christianity made Sunday a day of rest. Really, the weekend exists because Jesus rose from the dead. Think about that! The more you know about Jesus and His impact the deeper you understand the grace of God to be. Jesus gave you weekends! Praise be to Him!

Sorry, the larger issue I wanted you to connect was simply that each and every Sunday that we gather is a celebration of the resurrection. We gather on Sundays because He rose on a Sunday.

Carrying a Heavy Heart

So it is Sunday and Mary begins to approach Jesus' tomb. As Mary walked the rocky path to the tomb she carried with her a heavy heart that had been devastated by loss. **All she wanted in this moment was to go and pay respects to Jesus**, to go and care for His body and make sure He had been taken care of well. This trip was a part of her mourning process. **As she approached the tomb she could see it from a distance**, but it wasn't fully light yet, so she probably questioned what she saw. It appeared the stone, sealing the tomb, had been moved away and the tomb was opened. That couldn't be!

Our Assumption - Hope

Now, knowing what we know, we might be inclined to believe that Mary started to have a glimmer of hope. Perhaps Jesus was alive after all. Perhaps He had risen!

Mary's Assumption - Grave Robbers

But, no, that didn't cross Mary's mind. She had seen the blood covered body of Jesus. She had seen His face unrecognizable from all the blows He had taken. She had seen Him hang for what seemed like days on that cross. She had seen Him take his last breath. She had seen His lifeless body lowered from the cross. She knew Jesus was dead. She too had missed on all the resurrection promises and clues Jesus gave. So when she saw the open tomb, she assumed the worst. Grave robbers had come. Someone had gone into Jesus' tomb to pillage the tomb and take the body of her Lord.

Running to Peter and John

Mary was the first to witness the empty tomb of Jesus. She is distraught over it and quickly runs to go tell Peter and John what she had seen. Her concern is that Jesus' body has been stolen and has been desecrated as a result.

The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved

As Peter and John get the news we are told that they run to the tomb. John doesn't actually refer to himself by name, but instead calls himself the Disciple whom Jesus loved. He does that in multiple places in the Gospel. We have indications that John was the Disciple that Jesus was closest with, which is probably where the title comes from.

The Anonymous Brag

I think it is kind of funny that John feels it necessary to record that he out ran Peter. I mean, if it happened, it happened, but it is just kind of funny that he thought he should include this in the account. Maybe it felt a little less braggadocious since he didn't use his name.

Maybe I'll start trying that.

Matthew and the other Pastor whom everyone loved worked diligently on the project, but the Pastor whom everyone loved worked much faster and efficiently, and He was better looking too.

Yeah! That felt good. I wasn't bragging there, right?

John's View

Sorry, back to the story, John arrives at the tomb first and he peers in, seeing that Jesus' body is gone. He also notices that the linen clothes used to wrap Jesus' body are laying in the place where Jesus' body had once been laid. John stays outside waiting for Peter to arrive.

Peter and the Linen Evidence of Resurrection

As soon as Peter catches up he moves straight into the tomb. He too saw the burial clothes laying the tomb. He also noticed that the cloth used for the face of Jesus had been folded up and set aside. **The evidence that they had before them indicated that grave robbers had not been there.**

- Why would they leave behind the burial linens? It would have taken some **serious time** to unravel them and typically when you are robbing a joint time is of the essence. Why waste the time?
- Additionally, wouldn't it have been **easier to move Jesus' body** had he been wrapped up? His arms and legs would have been tucked in that way? His shredded back with exposed wounds wouldn't have been a mess. Taking the linens off wouldn't have just been time consuming; it would have made the job harder.
- If they did take them off why would they **take the time to set them back where Jesus' body had been laid**? Why take the time to fold the face cloth? Most robbers are not concerned with tidying up after they have pillaged a place. Most robbers are not exactly "others-oriented."
- Finally, the linens would have had expensive spices wrapped up in them, to leave behind the linens was likely to **leave behind something in the tomb of street value**, something they could have easily sold in the market.

John Believed

After looking at all of this John didn't see a crime scene as Mary was fearful. Instead, we read that John believed. What did he believe? I am not sure he really knew exactly. But he believed something miraculous had happened. He believed that Jesus wasn't in that tomb because He had walked out of it.

Didn't Know What He Believed Exactly

Our text indicates that while John believed Jesus was alive and had risen from the dead that John didn't really understand what any of it meant or the significance of the event. This is what John meant when he recorded,

John 20:8b-9

and he saw and believed; [9] for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

John is essentially saying,

"Look, I know what happened, but I didn't know what it meant or why it was so important. My account is true. I didn't make it up to fit some kind of narrative I thought would be self-serving later. I couldn't. I didn't know what it meant, I just know what happened, and that is what I am recording."

After witnessing the unexplainable, Peter and John went home, likely confused, likely with hope that the end of the story had not been written yet. **They didn't have answers yet, but they had exciting new questions to ponder.** Answers would be coming.

THE ENCOUNTER (John 20:11-18)

Let's continue on in our text by reading the verses 11-18...

John 20:11-18

[11] But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. [12] And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. [13] 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." [14] Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. [15] 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." [16] Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). [17] Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" [18] Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her.

Mary Returns

So we see that Mary returned to the tomb. She too didn't have answers, but wanted them desperately. So she stood outside of the tomb weeping and wondering. We don't know if she crossed paths with Peter or John, but the indication we get is that she hadn't. So she still likely believes the body had been stolen.

Two Messengers – Human Form

As she wept outside the tomb, two messengers from God appear in the tomb. The other Gospels seem to indicate that the Angels took on human form and wouldn't have been recognized as angelic (Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4), which explains why she doesn't respond as most do in the Scriptures to an Angel.

Their Question

The Angels asked Mary why she is crying. She responded by explaining that the body of her Lord had been taken away without announcement and she can't find Him.

Unknowingly Seeing Jesus

After Mary answered she turned and saw a man she believed to be the gardener of the tomb site. It is in fact Jesus, but Mary doesn't know that yet. We will see this on a few occasions, but Jesus had the ability to hide His appearance from others so they didn't recognize Him (John 21:4; Luke 24:16).

His Question

With His appearance hidden, Jesus asked Mary why she was crying and what she was looking for. Mary explained once again that the body of her Lord had been taken away and she asked if He was aware of where she might find Jesus.

Called by Name, Mary

In that moment, Jesus calls Mary by name, "Mary," and in an instance Mary knew who she was talking to. This was no gardener, it was the very one she was looking for, it was Jesus. This reminds me of what Jesus said in John 10:27...

John 10:27

[27] My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Mary heard the voice of her Lord and without hesitation knew it was Him.

The Flood of Emotions

Can you imagine the flood of emotions Mary was experiencing? **She was in a state of broken-hearted mourning over the loss of Jesus.** More than that, she had set her hope in Jesus as the Messiah. Her world revolved around Jesus. Life made sense with Jesus, so for Him to die was for her world to spin out of control. Nothing made sense anymore. In the midst of all this she faced additional devastation when she believed grave robbers had taken and defiled Jesus' body.

One Moment Changed Everything

The tears she shed by the tomb came from a place of deep sorrow and despair. Life had lost meaning. How would she pick up and carry on? She just wanted to finish mourning by taking care of the body of Jesus. **Then in a moment** she learned that the One who meant everything to her, the One who offered hope, the One who had showed her God in a whole new way, the One who made sense of life, He was not dead, but He was alive, standing before her!!!

Rabboni

She fell to His feet calling out, "Rabboni," which is a strengthened form of the word "Rabbi." The word "Rabbi" is used in the Gospel accounts more than a few times and means "Teacher." "Rabboni" takes that meaning up a few levels. It was a title for a teacher who carried the greatest of honor. It was a title that demonstrated supreme reverence. **Mary is calling out words of praise to Jesus!**

Never Letting Go

She then clung to His feet to demonstrate her humility before Him as Lord and also to just hold on to Him. **She would never let Him go again, she would never lose Him.**

What a sweet picture.

Jesus' Planned Return

I am sure Jesus allowed Mary to take in the moment for a time, but as much as Mary never wanted to let go, she would have to. Jesus told her that this reunion was temporary. He would be leaving again, but this time it would be different. He would ascend back up into Heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father. While He was leaving He would send the Holy Spirit to come and reside within all those who are His.

Go and Tell the Others

Jesus then gave Mary instructions to go and tell the Disciples of His resurrection and immanent return to God the Father. There are a couple of interesting things we can pick up on in Jesus' language here.

Brothers

First, Jesus doesn't call the Disciples His followers or even Disciples. He calls them "brothers." Jesus' work on the cross has forever changed things. **On the cross and through His resurrection He purchased salvation, redemption, and adoption.** The Disciples were now children of God and brothers with Jesus. Paul described this in Romans 8:29...

Romans 8:29

[29] For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Jesus is the firstborn among many brothers.

Your Father

The change that Jesus' cross-work brought about is underscored again in this passage when Jesus tells Mary that He is going to return to His Father and Mary's Father. **God the Father is now our Heavenly Father.** In Christ, we have received the forgiveness necessary to enter into this intimate relationship with God. It is through the atoning work of Jesus that our sins have been washed clean.

Telling the Others - Disbelief

In obedience, Mary ran back to the Disciples and the other women to share what she had seen and heard. According to Luke 24:11, the Disciples at this point disregarded her account as nonsense. Perhaps John or some of the other women believed, based off of what we know from verse 10 and the other Gospel accounts, but the others were not there... yet.

Transition

This is the beginning of the story of Jesus' resurrection from John's perspective. The story is of Jesus' heart-broken followers, some of whom, have hope restored when they discover an empty tomb and when they begin to encounter the risen Christ, as Mary did. **That is the story, but the news here, the headline, what should capture our attention more than anything, is that Jesus lives! He is alive.**

In consideration of this account I want to ask two questions.

- Why should we trust this account? Why should we believe what John has recorded?
- What does it mean for us?

THE EVIDENCE: WHY WE SHOULD BELIEVE JOHN

The first question I want to answer is, "Why should we believe John's account?"

There are far more robust answers than what I have time to offer up. A few Easters ago I walked us through some of the biggest historical evidences for the resurrection. This morning I am going to offer up 2 that were in our text that point us to the honesty and authenticity of John's account of Jesus' resurrection.

1. A Female Witness

The first historical evidence we see revolves around Mary's witness in this story. Mary, a woman, was the first person to witness the empty tomb and the resurrected Jesus. This is significant. Back in this day and age women were second-class citizens to men. Shamefully, they were not valued as equals. One way we see this is that a woman's testimony couldn't serve as evidence in a court of law. A man's testimony could, but not a woman's.

The Impact of Mary's Testimony

So with that in mind, **how do you think the Gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection are impacted by the fact that Mary is the first one to witness the empty tomb? Does it help their reliability? Not back in this day and age.** Not to the audience that John was writing to. It would have hurt it. What this does display, however, is the commitment that John and the other Gospel authors had to the truth of what happened. It would have been easy for them all to agree that Peter and John were the

first witnesses. That wouldn't have changed much about the story and it would have strengthened it with their audience.

Again, John and the other Gospel authors were not trying to piece together the most believable story, the story that would receive the fewest objections, they story they could most likely see go viral, rather they were trying to tell people what happened, even if the specifics ran into conflict with the values of the culture they lived in.

So this is one evidence of the authenticity and honesty of John's account.

2. Disciple's Disbelief

The next has to do with how the Disciples received Mary's testimony. I referenced it earlier, but let me read it to you.

Luke 24:9-11

[9] and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. [10] Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, [11] but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

What this shows us is that after the death of Jesus, when the Disciples were in hiding, **they were not plotting some kind of scheme to fool people into believing that Jesus had risen from the dead.** They didn't believe it. They were not even entertaining the idea.

The Great Change

Yet, what kind of response do we see from the Disciples within a month's time? They are boldly proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus at great cost to their own safety. **If you want to deny the resurrection of Jesus you have to contend with the reality that His closest followers believed Him dead and hid afterwards out of fear for what might become of them, but in short order they had some kind of radical change of heart and did a 180 degree turn.** They started boldly proclaiming the Gospel at great peril to their own lives. They even did so before the very men who killed Jesus.

Explain the Change

What could cause these men to go from defeated, scared, in hiding, trying to protect their own lives, to bold, courageous, self-sacrificing for the message of the Resurrection? The most likely answer is that they had an encounter with the Risen Christ. This is what we will continue to see over the weeks ahead of us.

We can Trust God's Word

The resurrection account from John and the other Gospel writers is **trustworthy**. These men **showed a commitment to the truth and their lives radically backed up their claims.**

THE APPLICATION: WHAT IT MEANS FOR US

Let me turn our attention to one final question. What does all this mean for us?

We Serve a Living Savior

Let me first answer that question by pointing out that we serve a living Savior! **Our Savior is not dead. Our God lives! He sees us. He hears us. He speaks to us through His Word and the working of His Spirit. He is with us.** We should **live from a place of victory** in this life. There is **nothing that can overpower** or stop our God. Jesus' resurrection is proof of that, thus we can know that our Heavenly Father's **good and wise will, will be accomplished.**

Promises Made, Promises Kept

One other implication of Jesus' resurrection is that as a Living Savior, He lives to deliver on the promises He has made. I wanted to take a moment and remind you of a few of them.

Rest

Matthew 11:28-30

[28] Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Life is often hard. It is laborious. There are seasons where we are in a grind. We carry heavy burdens, emotional burdens, physical burdens. Jesus promises to give us rest. That promise is good on this side of eternity as we can live in the knowledge that He has secured the salvation we couldn't. We don't have to add anything to it, His work is perfect and complete.

His promise of rest will be more fully realized one day in eternity when the curse of sin is undone, when ever tear is wiped dry for the final time, when sickness is only a memory, when conflict no longer rears its ugly head. One day our souls will find a full and forever rest.

And these promises are only true if we have a Savior to deliver on the promise of rest.

Acknowledged

Here is another promise from Jesus...

Matthew 10:32

[32] So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,

Jesus promises to vouch for us, He promises to stand before God for us that we may enter into the eternal joy of the presence of God. What a wonderful promise. **When we get to Heaven we won't have to justify ourselves and make a defense. Jesus has that covered if we will confess Him today.** This is an empty promise if it comes from a dead Savior. Jesus lives and He will

Answered Prayer

Listen to this promise on prayer...

Luke 11:9-10

[9] And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. [10] For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.

Prayer is one of the sweetest gifts that God has given us. An open line of communication with Him. That we may share our hearts, that we may get the help and strength that we need to live for Him. **Our prayers though are dependent upon Jesus. We need Him. He is our access to God. It is His righteousness that we ride into the presence of God.** If He is dead we don't have that. If Jesus is dead, prayer is dead, but He lives and thus does prayer!

Heavenly Treasure

Let me share two final promises from Jesus around Heaven...

Luke 12:33-34

[33] Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. [34] For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

John 14:2-3

[2] In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

We don't have to live for stuff in this life because Heaven promises to be a treasure so wonderful it will be as if we have never-ending bank accounts according to Jesus. And Jesus has saved a room for us there in God's great kingdom.

If Jesus lay lifeless in the ground our reservation in Heaven can't be kept, our treasure won't be saved, our future is insecure and weak. Thankfully that isn't the case. Our future is glorious in Christ. If you have placed your faith in the Resurrected Jesus, you've been promised a rich home of full and abundant joy.

CONCLUSION

Brothers and Sisters, Jesus is alive and thus so is our hope, so are many special, life-giving, joy-inspiring promises that Jesus delivered throughout His ministry. As I said when we opened up tonight. The resurrection isn't just a cool twist ending to the story of Jesus' earthly life, it is our hope, it is foundational to our faith, **without it we have nothing, but with it we have everything**, and brothers and sisters, we have it. Jesus lives.

John 11:25

[25] Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

Let's Pray