

He is not here, he is Risen

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[0:00] Matthew 28, verses 1-10. Jesus has risen. After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the woman, Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here. He has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

Then go quickly and tell his disciples, He has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.

[1:10] Now I have told you. So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them.

Greetings, he said. They came to him, clasped his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid.

Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. There they will see me. Jesus, we love you. We are in awe of all that you did and achieved on the cross.

In awe that you are as the Son of God, as the Saviour of mankind, and as our Lord. We worship you.

Above everything else, we want to worship you. Wonderful, mighty, risen Saviour. Jesus, we worship you.

[2:11] Hallelujah. Amen. Please grab a seat. Thank you, band. Wonderful. Wonderful. Hi, my name's Andrew.

If we've not met before, I'm part of the team here. And I've got the privilege this morning of taking that passage, which Rebecca read so well for us, and just helping us dig into it for a few minutes, and allow God, hopefully, to speak to each of us through his word.

And what a passage. I mean, just what a passage. What a glorious passage it is, telling us, basically, the world is never going to be the same again.

Because at that moment, what's been recorded is that Jesus, who had died, has come back to life, proving that sin and death has been conquered. That Christ has been victorious over sin, and that there's a way now through him for mankind, that's each and every one of us, to come to know the love of God personally in our lives, to delight in our heavenly Father as our Father in heaven.

And, wow, what a wonderful thing that is. And I get to share a little bit more out of that. Before I go into that in any detail, I just want to see if we can try and experiment here.

[3:37] Some of us will feel very uncomfortable with doing this, and if you feel uncomfortable, that's fine. You don't need to do anything. But if I, when I'm preaching, when I'm speaking over the next 10 minutes, if I say, Christ is risen, or he is risen, I would love a response.

And the response could be something like, he is risen indeed. Hallelujah. Can we try that? Yeah.

Does that seem okay? You're going to have to spot when I say it, because I'm not going to keep on going, oh, I just said it.

He is risen. He is risen indeed. Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Wonderful. Fantastic. Well, keep your ears attentive, because that may come up a few times as we're looking at this passage.

It's an amazing passage. Today, I want to focus on three things the angel says at the tomb. And recognizing that actually, then later on in the passage, Jesus fundamentally says the same three things.

But I want to pick up on three things. Now, children, on your worksheets, you'll find there is a bit in there, which is three things the angel says. And if you've got the older children's worksheet, you'll find some gaps.

[4:48] And so you may need to listen in, because that will help you work out what those words are to fill in those gaps on the sheet. So, verse 5.

This is the first bit the angel says. The angel says to the woman, do not be afraid, for I know that you're looking for Jesus who was crucified. Do not be afraid.

Why would they feel afraid? Well, can you imagine this? Picture yourself there. Jesus, who you believe to be the son of God, who you want to worship, has been murdered, for want to better phrase, been killed on the cross.

You've gone through the trauma of that. And these two women are now coming to the tomb where they understand he is buried, probably a bit confused as to what's been going on. And as they're coming to the tomb, the earth starts to rumble and shake, and an earthquake takes place.

Now, I don't know about you. I've never experienced an earthquake, but I imagine it's a lot louder than that. And it must be quite frightening.

[5:59] And if that isn't enough, we're told that an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and going to the tomb, he rolls back the stone and sits on it.

Imagine. You see an angel come down from heaven who moves the stone away from the tomb. You think, goodness me, what's going on? And then the angel's, his appearance was like lightning. Wow. Wow. Lightning can be quite something, can't it? And his clothes were white as snow. This was before the days where you had biological washing powder to make your whites whiter than white. His clothes were white as snow. And the guards are so afraid, they shake, they shook and became like dead men.

Now, maybe we understand why the first words the angel uttered, do not be afraid. Do not be afraid.

[7:21] Do not be afraid. Do you know, though, there is another meaning here as well. Jesus has come to banish fear in his death and his resurrection because he's banished sin.

1 John 4 verse 19 says this, There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear. Because fear has to do with punishment.

Do not fear. For Christians, we do not need to fear. Death has been defeated. Christ has been victorious.

He is risen. Oh, you need to speed up on that one a bit. Fear has been dealt with forever.

Wow. I believe Jesus wants to say the same to us today. Fear has been dealt with. Because punishment has been dealt with.

[8:32] We don't need to fear punishment. Because Jesus took the punishment for mankind's sin. For our sin. For our shame. He takes it all on the cross.

So we don't have to fear. Isn't that wonderful? Isn't that fantastic? So we don't need to live under fear of anything.

The angel goes on. Says, For I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. Not only does the angel know what they're looking for, or who they're looking for, but God wants to say the same to us.

If you're looking for Jesus today, if you've come and you're wondering who this Jesus is, that people celebrate at Easter, this is a wonderful moment to explore who is Jesus, to find out who is Jesus. And you know what? He's here for you to meet today. Isn't that fantastic? We don't have to be doing lots of stuff to meet him.

[9:40] He's here. Jesus is here in his church because he loves his church. And he's here for each and every one of us to meet. And some of us need a fresh meeting with Jesus today because life and everything has got so crowded and full and everything else, so tough.

We've forgotten to meet with Jesus afresh. Because he's the one who banishes fear. He's the one who wants to come and encounter us. He's the one who wants to assure us that there is a future with God in heaven, that we have a future we can look forward to with God in heaven.

Are you looking for Jesus today? I'd like to encourage all of us to have that attitude. You may say, Oh, I've known Jesus for years. Yep. Look for him.

Meet him fresh today. It's a good thing to do. Each and every day. Even throughout the day. But if you are here and you don't know Jesus yet, he's here to meet with you today.

And you can know him today. And we'll give an opportunity for that in just a few minutes. Okay, let's move on to the next thing the angel says in verse 6. He's not here.

[10:57] He is risen. Hallelujah. Just as he said, Come and see the place where he lay.

Come and see the place where he lay. If you need evidence that Jesus has risen, here it is, guys. The stone has been rolled away from the tomb by the angel, and he's not there.

The grave clothes are left folded there, and that's it. Wow. Jesus has proven he's not bound by the earth.

He's not bound by death. He's not bound by sin and shame. He's defeated all of that. He is risen.

He is risen indeed. Hallelujah.

That is the great news of Easter. That is it. I'm sorry to say it's not about chocolate or eggs. It's not even about roast lamb, which happens to be my favourite, and sometimes we have at Easter.

[11:59] But it is about the Lamb of God who died for the sin of the world. Jesus, who dies for humanity's sin, has not only died on the cross, but has vanquished sin and death.

He's conquered sin and death. It's dealt with once and for all, for all time. It doesn't need to happen ever again. How wonderful.

How wonderful. And we see the empty tomb, and it tells us we don't need to doubt. We see the evidence, the empty tomb, the grave clothes where he lay.

And it goes, oh, I don't need to doubt this. There's no uncertainty about this. Something has happened which is divine, which is godly, which man cannot explain. Jesus has risen from the dead.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. He has. Makes me wave, that one. And then the angel says this, verse 7.

[13:06] Then go quickly. Tell his disciples, he has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him. Now I have told you.

In other words, he says, hey, I've done my job now. That was the part I had to play. I had to point you to go into Galilee to see that Jesus indeed has risen. He's risen indeed.

Hallelujah. Is it getting in your spirit yet? Is it stirring something in your heart and your spirit? Yeah, he's risen indeed.

Oh, how wonderful. Can I also encourage us to hear what the angel says and then what Jesus says three verses later?

Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go into Galilee. There they will see me. Let's remember, we're also called to share this faith we have. We're told to go and make disciples, help people come to understand who Jesus is, to enjoy Jesus, to know Jesus for themselves, to know that sin and shame and death has been dealt with once and forever.

[14:19] And so on this Easter day, this day of great celebration of rejoicing in the fullness of the cross, let's remember we're also called to share of the cross to the people God puts around us, to share of the good news, to share of the grace of God, the love of God, the very fact, I don't need to fear death.

I don't need to fear punishment. I know what happens when I die and I get to be in glory with the risen Jesus and his father in heaven. Wow. What's that going to be like?

Let's encourage each other with this good news too. We all need encouraging at times. Life can be hard, it can be tough at times. Part of saying, when I say he is risen and you say he is risen indeed, hallelujah, that's encouraging one another.

One another, let's encourage one another by saying it. Yes, he is risen. He is risen indeed.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. The great news is if you don't yet know Jesus though, you can today.

Jesus has died for each and every person on this earth to deal with their sin, to deal with our sin, to deal with my sin.

[15:39] And he's died because he wants to make us pure and holy, to make us clean so that we can know the father in heaven, his father in heaven.

The father in heaven we talk about when, if you know the Lord's Prayer, our father in heaven. So we can have a relationship with him because he is pure and holy and he can't have anything to do with sin and this is how we get sin dealt with and we're made pure and holy so we too can know him and delight ourselves in him.

Today that can change. If you don't yet know that Jesus has died for your sin, if you've not made that step, today you can make that step and say I want to put my trust, my faith in Jesus, that he was the son of God as evidenced by his death and resurrection and eventually his ascension that comes in another few weeks' time.

Yeah, that he is victorious, that he has conquered sin and death and I want to enjoy that and know that I can be forgiven for all of my bad stuff. and I can come into a pure relationship with him today. I'm going to pray in a moment and you may want to join me in that prayer. You may want to join me in that prayer. It will be an opportunity for anyone to join in with that. Basically saying, Jesus, I want to know you more.

[17:05] Help me to know you more. Help me to live for you more. So I'm going to lead us in prayer at this point. Let's pray. You don't need to close your eyes if you don't want to.

I close my eyes because it helps me to focus. Jesus, help us to see you refreshed today. You may want to repeat this after me just quietly.

I want to know you as that risen, victorious son of God. He's died for my sin.

And I want to be washed clean and pure today because of your sacrifice.

I turn away from my sin. I don't want anything more to do with it. I repent of my sin and God, I want to live for you instead. Help me, Lord.

[18:09] come and meet with me. Just as you met with those disciples on that Easter Sunday. Come and meet with each of us now.

Remind us who you are. Help us to celebrate all that you've done and to give our lives to you. For your glory, Lord. Amen. Amen. There's one more thing just as the band are coming back I would love to encourage us to do.

I think well, we can be very British, can't we? I know not everybody in this room is British but those Brits in this room we tend to be quite reserved, don't we?

Unless it's a football match. And today what I'd love us to do in a moment I'll tell you when is going to be to stand and to express our thanks to Jesus for all that he is and for all that he's done.

[19:19] And you can do that in any way you want. You may want to clap, you may want to shout out, you may want to cheer. Oh dear, that sounds very un-English. Yep. People from other nations where you're more used to being like this please lead us and help us.

Let's express Christ is risen. He's risen indeed. Hallelujah. Let's stand, let's thank him for that. Lord, we love you. Jesus, we love you. Thank you, you're victorious. Wonderful.