

Come and See: The Risen Lord

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[0 : 00] If you have a Bible this morning, please turn to Matthew chapter 28, Matthew chapter 28, five weeks ago when I asked folks to begin praying about who they may invite and ask God to work and move in lives.

We kind of set an inside goal of hoping that between the 8 o'clock service as well as the 1030 service that we might be able to have 600 folks in both services combined.

Somebody just gave me a sheet of paper that said we had 681 here this morning. Ain't that a blessing? Thank you for being a part of that.

You're one of those, by the way, and so I appreciate so much you being here and being faithful. I want to encourage you to not let this be your only stop with us. Come back and see us and let's worship together again.

Easter sometimes gets confusing to me. When you look at every way people celebrate Easter and how they do it, it can get confusing. We all know that Easter is about eggs, hiding them, and something about the Easter bunny.

[1 : 07] I saw a sign the other day that makes it that much more complex. It said, Peter Rabbit is a boy. Boy rabbits don't lay eggs. Consider Christ instead. That is some deep theology.

And apparently they were fighting the gender wars and the Easter wars, if there are any. So a combination of that. But it gets confusing. You know, I spent my childhood believing that bunnies laid eggs, even as my neighbor's bunny was bearing kittens.

That's right. I had a neighbor who had a rabbit that was bearing kittens. Actually, he had a doe that was bearing kittens. No kidding. Of course, a female rabbit is called a doe.

And their babies are called kittens. Don't Google that. I did for you. So just hang with me for a few minutes. But I really don't think an Easter bunny with eggs really is what it's all about.

Some do, apparently. Some believe Easter is about Easter baskets. I was under the impression that since one of my children a few years ago was an adult, and the other one is, I thought, too old for an Easter basket, that we didn't need to mess with that anymore.

[2 : 36] And boy, I tell you, I shook up Easter Sunday morning. I can promise you that. That went over like a lead balloon. They got baskets again this year.

Have y'all got them yet? I got more money in those baskets than I've ever had in a basket. And I think the whole thing stinks. But anyway, I'm not a believer. Easter's about getting new clothes, ain't it?

By the way, y'all look good today. You do. You do. You look good. If you haven't got your picture made yet, we'll take that after church. Literally, I'm serious. If you haven't, we got a photo booth. Not actually a booth.

It's a cross. And we're taking pictures. And so you make sure, if you haven't been by there, to stop on the way out and let us get your picture. But Easter's about going to church.

Even folks that don't go to church go on Easter. I mean, you got to go to show off your clothes, you know. Not y'all. I'm talking about everybody else, you know. Not us. And Easter's about egg hunts and good family eatings and a long weekend.

[3 : 40] Some folks are not here because it's a long weekend and those type things. Even the name Easter is somewhat mysterious. It's not a biblical term.

It's actually a German term that speaks of some type of spring goddess. But it somehow coincides with the resurrection of Christ. It can get confusing.

And everything that I've talked about so far really is not what makes the difference. I want you to understand this morning what really makes the difference.

Come with me and see the risen Lord. It's in Matthew chapter 28 beginning in verse 1. It says this. Now after the Sabbath toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

And behold, there was a great earthquake for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow.

[4 : 45] And for fear of him, the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, do not be afraid for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here for he has risen as he said. Come see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead.

And behold, he's going before you to Galilee. There you will see him. See, I have told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples.

What a difference Christ makes. And that really is what makes the difference at Easter. What makes the difference is the risen Lord.

He's what makes all the difference. He's what matters. And I want you to understand why today. The risen Lord changes our opportunities.

[5 : 53] The Bible makes it clear that we have all sinned against a God that is holy. And our sin has separated us from God. And the only hope that we have is that the sinless Son of God dies in our place.

And that is exactly what he did. Now all who call upon him, all who dedicate their lives to him shall be saved.

Friend, listen today. You don't have to wonder nor fret. Just surrender to him. His resurrection is a testimony that not only did he die for you, but thank God he now lives for you.

And 40 days after he rose from the grave, he ascended into heaven. And shortly after that, the Holy Spirit came just as he promised. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter stood to tell thousands the truths of Christ.

And I want you to notice how he finishes that sermon. And I want you to notice how they responded. It's in Acts chapter 22, verse 37 and 38. And it says this.

[7 : 01] Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do?

And Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins, and you'll receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Outside of Christ living and dying and living again, Then we would have no opportunity at life in Christ. But because he has done those things, our opportunities have changed.

You have the opportunity to live today. To live in Christ. Let me tell you what else the risen Lord does for us. The risen Lord gives us hope.

When Christ said he came to give us life and life more abundantly, he wasn't just talking about life on earth. He was talking about eternal life as well. I always like to refer to eternal life as not only a quantity of life, but a quality of life.

[8 : 07] God changes us immediately. And he was talking about eternal life with Christ when he said, I'll give you life and life more abundantly.

Because he lives after death, we too shall live. 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 3 through 5 puts it this way. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ according to his great mercy.

He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance that is, listen to this folks, imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

Friend, there is a hope of heaven that is real in our experience, that we can experience right this moment in our lives, but also in all of eternity we can experience it in heaven.

It only comes by his mercy when we place our hope in him. You will not get there on your goodness, although I know you're good people. You gotta be.

[9 : 22] You'll not get there because of your family, although I'm sure your family's upstanding. You can't buy your way there. You can't con your way there.

You only have one hope. Ron Dunn was a wonderful evangelist and a great writer and a great speaker, and I encourage you, if you've never heard him or read him, just look him up.

Ron Dunn. It's a blessing. He told a story one time of how he took his young son to the carnival with six of his friends, bought that roll of tickets that you buy in order to ride those rides, and whenever they would come to a ride, he would pull off one for each kid.

When he got to the Ferris wheel, he gave seven tickets out. When he got to the roller coaster, he gave seven tickets out.

When he got to the swing ride, he gave seven tickets out, and there was one more hand there, an eighth hand. So he said, who are you?

[10:37] And the little boy said, I'm Johnny. I'm your son's new friend. And he told me that you'd give me a ticket. And you know what he did? He gave him a ticket.

When we get to heaven and he asks you, why should I let you into my heaven? I'm going to tell him that my ticket was Jesus Christ, that I surrendered and gave my life to him because he paid it all. And all to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain, but he washed it white as snow. And because of that, because of my commitment to him, and because of his surrender for me, I've got my ticket. Let me tell you something. The risen Lord changes our opportunities, not only now, but for all of eternity. That's the ticket.

But not only that, but the risen Lord gives us a message to share. I mean, when people get a good deal, they want to tell other people about it, you know, kind of braggadociously usually, you know, just let folks know what kind of deal they got.

[11:57] A few years ago, somebody came, came in my office and told me that on tax day, and it was tax day that day, the Great Depression was upon us. And, and he came in and he said, if you go to Hardee's on tax day and say made from scratch, they'll give you a sausage biscuit.

And I said, dude, what are you doing standing here? And he went. And when he came back, he came back with a sack of biscuits. And we gave him out and ate them.

We were building at the time, and there was a construction site behind us, and there were people on the construction. And I went out there to check on the job. And when I, while I was out there, I said, you know what? It's tax day.

And on tax day, Hardee's, if you'll tell them made from scratch, they'll give you biscuits. They gave us a sack full of biscuits. Immediately, some old boy dropped a hammer and took off, you know.

They come back with a sack of biscuits, and I made a bunch of friends that day.

Let me tell you something. We have a story that's much better to tell than about a sausage biscuit. We got a story to tell that will change the lives of everyone who will receive Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

[13:12] Jesus Christ will change your life both now and forever. And I want you to understand our responsibility in that. Matthew chapter 9, verse 2 says this, and behold, some people brought to him, speaking of Christ, they brought him a paralytic lying on a bed.

Get this now. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, take heart, my son, your sins are forgiven.

That one verse tells me that we ought to be bringing people to Jesus. We ought to have the faith in Christ that he'll change lives if we tell them about Jesus.

If we invite them to come to Jesus. If we lead them to Jesus. God rewards our faith that we have in him when we bring people to him because he saves.

God gets in the heart of the real need. You might say, that old boy's got so many problems. I don't know who can solve that. I know who can solve that. And he don't have to fix all that before he comes.

[14:21] He can come as he is. And when he comes, Christ will change him. He rewards our faith possibly with a person's salvation. And so if he was just a man, we would have nothing to tell.

If he was dead, we'd have nothing to share. If he was not who he said he was, we wouldn't have anything to say. However, thank God, he is who he says he is.

And because of that, we can rest in him. When the house of God was looking more like a furniture market on flea market day or looked like a place where people would just barter and sell whatever, Christ went in and cleaned it out, turned the tables, called it a den of robbers and ruffled some feathers.

And they asked him, why are you doing this? Who do you think you are? And in John chapter 2, verse 19, Jesus answered them, destroy this temple and in three days, I'll raise it up.

They thought he was trying to tear down the temple. They thought he was going after a terrorist attack or something. No, that wasn't it at all. In reality, what he was saying is destroy this temple and in three days, I'll raise it up.

[15 : 48] You can kill me if you want to, but I'll rise. Forty days after he walked out of the grave, he ascended into heaven and before he went, he told us to go and tell the message of his salvation.

The risen Lord, thank God, gives us a message to share. When Martin Luther King was tragically killed, many people feared the riots that would come that may ensue and undo a lot of the progress of the civil rights movement.

His funeral was a pivotal event and several people spoke and one of them that spoke was James Bevel. James Bevel, when it came time for him to speak, said this.

He said, you've heard that our leader is dead. That rumor is false. Our leader's not dead. Our leader was not Martin Luther King.

Our leader is the one who led Moses out of Egypt. Our leader is the one who went down with Daniel into the lion's den. Our leader is the one who walked out of the grave on that Easter Sunday morning.

[17 : 12] Our leader neither slumbers nor sleeps. Our leader can't be put in jail. Our leader's still on the job. He is not dead.

That, my friend, is the Easter message. Thank God our leader is not dead. He lives. Christ lives today.

And because he's risen, thank God, all is different. Because he's risen, our opportunities have changed. Because he's risen, we have hope.

Because he's risen, we have a message to share. And so let's celebrate it. Not just in one hour of worship. No, no. Let's celebrate it with all of our lives.

Let's live it. Let's share it. Because God gets into things like that. And when God gets into it, he brings it alive.

[18 : 18] May God be honored and blessed and praised through our lives. And may we celebrate. Thank God our living, risen Lord.

with every head bowed and every eye closed, I ask you this morning, I've made special time for you. If you're here this morning and you've never acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, I want you to know that today he'll change you right where you are. You don't have to clean up to come to Christ. Christ will clean you up. You just need to submit. You just need to acknowledge the sin that's in your life that separates you from the Father.

Ask him to cleanse your life and commit your life to him. If you'll surrender your life to the Lord Jesus today, he'll save you. I promise you, if you feel a yearning for that, it's not something that you came up with.

God came to you. He initiated that. And he'll work and he'll move in your life from this day forward. Please don't let the specialness of this day, please don't let the place where you seat ever crowds you from believing that you can't step out and come forward and give your heart and life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

[19 : 46] Maybe you're here this morning and you know that you are a Christian, but the reality is your life does not reflect it. You're struggling in your faith and you need to start anew with God. You know you're a Christian, you don't need to be saved again, but you need to live like a Christian.

And today you need to submit your life to the Lord Jesus and ask him to make you whole again. Make you right again. Recommit your life to follow him from this day forward.

You may be here and you've made a private decision for the Lord. There's been a time in your life when you've asked the Lord Jesus to come into your life and to save you, but you've never acknowledged that publicly. You've never let anybody know. Jesus, by his teaching and by his example, tell us that we proudly proclaim our faith through baptism.

And if you've never been baptized as a believer, we're going to do it next week. We're going to begin our service next week with baptism. We'd love for you to be a part of that. You come forward today and say, Pastor, I know I'm saved, but I need to be baptized as a believer to be in obedience to the Lord.

Or maybe God's drawing you to this congregation. Is there a better time to join a church than each Sunday morning, my soul? God's leading you to be a part of us.

[21 : 00] I encourage you to come. We'd love to guide you in that process. Welcome you into our church family. God's doing a wonderful work here at Pickens First and we're thankful for him.

We want him to continue to do that by people just simply being obedient to follow exactly what he'd have you to do. Lord Jesus, have your will and your way in our hearts and lives right now.

Help us, oh God, to be obedient to follow you as you lead us in all that we do. In Jesus' precious name, amen. we want you to take ket ■ to fight that makes this marriage we want you to go where we can and if you'll enter aneck into Eller's któr■ how we feel like getting into the snake will Him Ex horsepower