

We are glad to have you here this morning. Just a little bit of housekeeping. I was already told my pants look like they're unzipped. So I just want to tell you this. My eyes are up here.

Okay, everybody. I've checked it three times. I think we're good. No wardrobe malfunctions this morning. Yeah.

We are glad to hear you. Thank you very much, man, for leading us in worship this morning. I love those. Love those songs. Can I begin with a word of prayer?

And we'll get right into the word. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the fact that we are redeemed. And our position now in you is along with the saints and the angels, we are worshipers. We're worshipers. And so today, as we've lifted our voices in song, we've given you worship.

Today as we open your word, we will be giving you worship and honor. As our ears tune in to your spirit. We are ascribing to you honor and worship as we give this morning. We will be worshiping you with our giving as we care and we love and we pray and just embrace people around us. We are giving honor and glory to you.

You have redeemed us. You've called us your own. And now our lives are really just a testament to you. We want to bring glory to you. So, Lord, I thank you for that worship that brings us to that point where we together, with all those who have gone before us, just sing Holy, Holy, Holy to you, Father, we give you thanks and we praise you not just for the chance to gather inside, but I'm looking out the window even as I'm praying.

And I see blue skies. And I'm thankful for that. You're good to us. In Jesus name, amen. It's been a big week if you've been with us through the week.

On Thursday night, we celebrated time of communion and reflected on the last supper Jesus had with his disciples before he was betrayed and handed over to be crucified. And we had the band and we had an orchestra. We had a great time of worship and communion then. Then on Friday maybe, you gathered with us as an entire community here in Lawrence County. And we spent time together reflecting on the cross and the sacrificial love of God.

He demonstrated in Christ Jesus, Jesus death as an atonement for the sins of the world and our sins as well. Today we celebrate that death does not have the final word because after three days, Jesus rose from the dead. In fact, as we begin this morning, can we just read Luke's account of this miracle together. The scripture is found in Luke 24, and we'll just begin right there. On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and

went to the tomb.

They found the stone rolled away from the tomb. But when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. And in their fright, the women bowed down with their faces to the ground. But the men said to them, and let's read this together.

Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen. The early church. I'm not sure Alan talked about this.

Did you talk about this in your welcome? The early church? When they would greet each other on Easter Sunday morning, on Resurrection morning, they would begin by saying this. He is risen. And the congregation or the people would respond with this response, he is risen indeed.

So let's say that together. He is risen. Is risen indeed. Can you imagine, just for a moment, walking tentatively into that burial cave? It was a dark.

It was a forbidding place. I don't even like to walk through a graveyard in the daylight, let alone walk into a tomb. And they expected to see a decaying body. The smell of death would already be filling up the place. Their little oil lamp would be creating sort of an oily, smoky atmosphere.

And to be sort of expecting that, and then to walk into a place where you're expecting only darkness and dampness and despair and death, and instead be met with brilliant light and the sweet aroma of heaven and life. No wonder the Scriptures say these women were overwhelmed. But the resurrection of Jesus not only brings light to dark places, it restores life to that which we thought was dead forever in the garden. If you remember way back in the beginning of the Bible, Adam was warned, death will follow if you disobey my commands. For you.

And that's exactly what happened. If you're familiar with the story of Genesis, Adam sinned. And that stain of sin spread from him and his relationships and infected his children and their children, infected every aspect of their lives. And nothing was exempt from. From this curse and stain of sin.

Not even you and I, if we're honest. We know that our sin, too, not just infects us, but it infects those around us. It affects the people in our lives. Sin brings death. But Jesus says In John, chapter 10, verse 10, says, the thief comes only to steal and destroy.

But listen. Listen to this. I have come that what they may have life and have it to the full. Sin brings death, but Jesus brings life. So

Jesus resurrection is the cornerstone of our faith.

Paul In Corinthians, chapter 15 says, if Christ has not been raised from the dead, then our faith is futile. Now, why would he say that? That's a, that's a big statement. He says it because Jesus said it. Jesus said in John 11, says, I am the resurrection and the life.

And whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Jesus thought the resurrection was a big deal. The resurrection of Jesus is a proclamation that sin's power is disarmed, death's power is disarmed, and God can bring back to life what we thought was dead forever. Now, what does that look like in our lives?

Well, first of all, resurrection brings me, and it brings you to this point where we recognize forgiveness and the new life that is offered to us. So again, sin doesn't just hurt us, it hurts the people around us. And maybe some of you can, can look at your family, can look at your life situation. Go. I see how someone's sin has affected me and how my sin has affected others.

It doesn't just affect others. It doesn't just affect us. It also affects our relationship with God. Now the cross is where that sin is forgiven and our relationship with God is restored. Ephesians 1:7 says that in him, in Christ, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.

So the message of the cross is that all who put their hope in Jesus are forgiven of their sin. The resurrection takes it to the next level. Because the message of the resurrection is this, that all who put their trust in Jesus receive a new life, a fresh start. We are redeemed. That's what redeemed means, a fresh start to begin life again with the righteousness of Christ and the purpose of God moving us forward.

First Peter says it this way in 1 Peter 1:3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to God's great mercy, he has caused us to be born again. That's a new life to a living hope. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Born again, a new start. Your old life controlled by sin is over and. And now you are washed clean by his blood and empowered to live a new life. So resurrection points us to forgiveness and a new life, but it also gives us hope for the future. Now, when I say future in church, most people probably think about heaven or Eternity.

That's all right. The Bible is really clear about that. Romans 8:11 says, the Spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you. And just as God raised Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies, your physical bodies, the bodies that bleed and bruise

and break. He's going to give life to your mortal bodies by the same spirit living in you.

So the resurrection means that physical death has no lasting power for believers. You will live again. Turn to your neighbor and tell them that if they were worried about it, you will live again. But it's not just for the afterlife that resurrection matters. It's for this life as well.

Now, what does that mean? It means that the grind of life can often leave us feeling a little helpless and hopeless. Anyone ever been there where you just feel a little helpless and a little hopeless? It seems to be a little too much. I've been there.

I've been there. And I think about the friends of Jesus on the day he was crucified, the day their best friend was hung on a cross and left to die. I know that they walked away from that moment feeling helpless and hopeless. But as Alan Burris says, oftentimes quoting Frederick Buechner, he says this. The resurrection means that the worst thing is never the last thing.

The cross was the worst thing, but the resurrection reminds us that the worst thing isn't the last thing. Anyone want to say amen to that? In Christ, we are not defined. Our lives are not controlled by the worst things. Instead, the resurrection reminds us that we can receive not only the new mercies every day that were promised in the Scriptures, but we can also.

As the old hymn says, we receive a bright hope for the future. So resurrection, Resurrection gives us hope for our future.

That means that it affects the here and now, too. That means that we can live with a fresh, with a new perspective again. If you're like me, surrounded by people and situations that are broken through the effects of sin, I'm not the only one. Sometimes those situations can feel as dark and as dank and as hopeless and as scary as a tomb.

Sometimes it's tempting to think those things will never change. It's just the way it is.

But if Christ has raised us from the dead, and if Christ has redeemed our lives back to life again, then he can do the same with those helpless and hopeless places in your life as well. Can I just say, those of you who know my life pretty well right now, I have seen God bring back to life things that I thought were gone forever. And bit by bit, seeing life restored, relationship restored, hope restored, futures restored. That's all because of Jesus, and that's because of the resurrection. So today, are there people that you have given up on?

Maybe it's a son or daughter, maybe it's a family member, maybe it's a. Yeah, maybe it's someone you've just given up on, that they're never going to change, that's never going to get better. Are there situations that seem absolutely hopeless? Are there personal connections that seem broken beyond repair?

Other places in your life that just feel so messed up that there's no solution for them? The resurrection reminds us that those who trust their lives to God and those who trust those situations, those people, those circumstances to God, will experience his resurrection power. Ephesians says this. Ephesians 3:20 says, God is able. He is able to do far more abundantly than all that we can ask or.

Or think God can do bigger and better than we can ever imagine, according to the power at work within us. Our hearts resonate with this because we've seen him do it in our lives. We've seen the power of God work powerfully in our lives, and we trust him to work powerfully in the lives of others. If the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead, the scriptures tell us this, live in us, then it changes how we see and think. Think about the people and circumstances around us, how we interact with the brokenness of the world around us.

And if the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead lives in you, then you approach the world with a fresh perspective, one that extends love, Sacrificial love, compassion. Unbounded compassion. And justice. And justice. Just as Jesus did.

Finally, the resurrection calls us to action. Sin had left a crimson stain, the old hymn says. Sin had dug a deep and dark pit and we had fallen into it. But the resurrection empowers us to live differently. Now that we've entrusted our lives to Jesus and received his forgiveness and grace, now we can live a life of righteousness, hope and joy in the Holy Spirit.

2nd Corinthians 5:17 says this. If anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation now. Old things. I love this. Old things.

The old has passed away, done and gone. Behold, the new has come. You are a new creation in Christ. If you're tired of living in the dank and the dark of sin's tomb, can I just invite you to receive Christ and the resurrection life that he offers? Now, here's the deal.

You and I are not strong enough. We're not good enough. We can't do enough to bring about this new life on our own. It takes something much stronger. It takes God's love demonstrated in Christ Jesus on the cross.

God sent His Son who entered into our mess. He experienced it. He felt it. He redeemed it. And I want you to watch this video that tells it much better than I can.

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