

Easter Sunday

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Preacher: James Tang

[0:00] Jesus, we thank you. We thank you that in a room full of people, in a room full of laughter, you are here.

And you are here because of what happened 2,000 years ago when you died and when you rose again. We also know that you are coming back again, that the world right now is not perfect. Just as we hear the drilling happening upstairs, this world is still under construction. But you are making all things new. You will return. You will wipe away every tear. You will remove every crevice of darkness that exists in this world.

You, Jesus, are the light of the world and we seek to follow you. We thank you. So be with us now as we continue together, as we continue to open up your word.

And ask that question, what it means to live with you and what it means to live without you. We pray that you would be in our midst. And Holy Spirit, we welcome you here. We know you have something to say.

[1:04] So we're receptive. Speak. Today we do not want our hearts to be hardened when we hear your voice. Thank you, Lord.

In your name we pray. Amen. Well, thank you so much to Cubon and Jamie for doing that video. I confess I had not watched it.

But Jamie messaged me last night. I was like, I hope you don't kill me after you've watched the video. I was like, why would I do that? It's a video about Jesus and testimonies. Now I know. Now I know.

You made it about my hair again. But thank you, Jamie. It's the resurrection. This is it.

It's all about this day. You and I don't live the lives that we have. We're not for this day. We don't live because Jesus came and was a good teacher and dying for our sins.

[2:04] It was because of today. Something happened today. That's important that we need to remember. And at the beginning of the service, we read through 1 Corinthians 15. There is no getting away from this passage today.

This is it. If you want to find out about what Christianity is all about, you look at 1 Corinthians 15 and you see that it is about the resurrection. It is all just about that.

So as you can see, if we just turn there now, we are opening up the word. So if you have your Bibles, have your apps. 1 Corinthians 15 is the most majestic piece on why the resurrection is important, why it really is only the thing, the only thing that is really important.

I'm going to be sharing only a short while today, as we've had so many other people sharing, because that's really the spirit of what Christianity is. It isn't just one person sharing about the good news, because I don't know how far that would have gotten.

It's when everyone takes on the message and shares the good news of Jesus Christ. It's when not just one person does it because their life is transformed. It's because, can you imagine if every single person in this room goes out and the next person that you meet, hey, do you know about Jesus?

[3:13] Do you know why we have this public holiday? Do you know why we get to have time off tomorrow? Can you imagine the effect that would have if we all went out and did that? And one thing I will say about that is there is true purpose in one person standing on the pulpit, opening up the word and preaching.

But that can't be the only type. Why we had the interviews is because the majority of times when we share the gospel, it is with people. It is through conversation. It is unscripted.

But that's the question I want to ask you today. Where would you be without Christ? And where are you now with him? Has he changed the way you live at all?

This passage says here, chapter 15, verse 1. Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and which you stand, by which you are being saved. Verse 3. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received. He's saying, you've received this message. I told you this message. And guess what? I didn't make it up. I passed it on to you because someone passed it on to me.

[4:14] That's the nature of the good news, that it must keep spreading. You must keep sharing it. When there is a good news, whether it's a good Friday sale or a Black Friday sale, it doesn't matter. We must go and share it with the people when we know that Lululemon has a sale and we all need to go to Francis so we can buy some Lululemon stuff on discount.

That's good news. And we spread it and we share it. But for some reason, the greatest news of all, that the thing that we are most afraid of, death itself, has been defeated.

It's the last enemy standing, is what it says here in 1 Corinthians 15, has been defeated and yet we don't share it. And when we are talking to our friends and our colleagues who are just down and just burdened by the things of this world, when they're grieving because of death in their family, we stand there silent.

When we have this news, when we received it, we must pass it on. Verse 9 is what I'm going to kind of focus on and use as a springboard today.

Paul says, actually verse 8, What we see here is Paul saying, hey, I turned 180.

[5:34] There was a transformation in me because I met the living Christ. If you know scripture, you'll know that in Acts 8, Saul was a Pharisee, a very highly ranked one. And he was standing witnessing the murder of Stephen, the deacon.

And he was basically saying, this is okay. But then one chapter later in Acts chapter 9, he meets Jesus. And he goes from Saul to Paul and Christ says to him, why are you persecuting me? And in one interaction, one encounter, Saul is turned to Paul. He is transformed 180 and he becomes the greatest evangelist the church has ever known. God says, you were killing my people. Now you're going to be my chosen instrument. I'm going to choose you to spread the good news. That's an incredible transformation, people. When you meet Christ, you will transform is the point of today's sharing.

When you meet Christ, you will transform. Look at Peter or Cephas. He's given a new name when he meets Christ. He was impulsive.

[6:40] He was violent. And yet after he meets Christ, he completely turns. And while Paul is the greatest evangelist in the church, Peter is the one who. Oh, that's a really fun sound.

Peter is the one who Christ builds the church. He's the rock that he builds the church on. Again, 180 turn. Again, a name change. Jacob goes to, from Jacob to Israel because of he wrestled, because he wrestles with God.

There's another lady in Luke. You see here this lady called Mary who is probably mentally and spiritually oppressed. She has seven demons inside her, cast out by society, cast out most likely by her family.

And yet in her encounter with Christ, she goes from one who is cast out by society by the first witness of the risen Christ. Let me just retell the story of John 20 just for a second here again. So Good Friday was when Christ died. And then on Sunday morning, Mary, she has nowhere else to go. She had seven demons inside her. People were avoiding her like the plague. And Sunday morning, she has nowhere else to go.

[7:46] So whilst it's still dark, she goes out to the tomb. I don't really know what she's going for. To be honest, I'm pretty sure she doesn't really know what she's going there for. She's just like, what do I do now?

I thought I had, I thought this was my chance at transformation for good. And yet it's going down the same way just as it did in the past. So she stands at the tomb, but then she realizes it's open. And she's like, whoa. So then she goes back and she tells the disciples. And then Peter and John, they run. John is quite amusing because then he notes because he's writing this story. He wants all of us to know that he's a faster runner than Peter.

And he says, hey, I got there first. Peter is a slow guy. He got there afterwards. But both of us realize that the tomb is empty. And so then they ran back and they were like, well, we're going to go home.

We're going to figure out what this means. Maybe we'll find out what happened to the body. Maybe the Romans took him. Maybe the Pharisees took him. Let's go home and recollect ourselves and find out. What does Mary do?

[8:42] Mary goes back to the tomb again. She's like, this can't be. This can't be. The guys won't let me have that conversation with them about the strategy that they're going to dream up. I'm just going to go back to the tomb again where I last saw my Lord's body.

And what does she meet? She does meet the body, but not in the form that she last saw. She meets the risen Lord. She is the first witness. What a transformation that she had. And I've said this before.

If you're making up a story of Christianity, you do not have Mary be the first witness. Actually, you do not even choose women to be the first witness because they wouldn't be invited into court to even be witnesses.

And yet here we are. The truth of the gospel shows us that Christ decides, I'm going to introduce myself to the least of these. I say least of these.

It's because what us people think are the least of these. But that is not how the kingdom of heaven works. In fact, he runs towards the least of these. We are the least of these.

[9:45] And so Mary is completely transformed. Think about Zacchaeus in Luke 19. Hated by his people because he was a chief tax collector. Robbing their money. And what happens when he meets Jesus?

He does a 180. And says, hey, whatever I took, I'm going to give back. Fourfold. Transformation. What about in modern day society?

The people that we see who make these 180 turns. Do you have a turn? Have you changed much? I've had the privilege of meeting some of you before you met Christ and after you met Christ.

And you're different. You're different. The language you use is different. The word you use most of the time. There's a process. Right? I think about Augustine. Who is just one of the founding fathers of just theology.

But was a young man who was trapped in sin and lust and philosophy. But then he meets Christ. He hears a voice telling him, hey, open up Romans 13. And then he completely changes. And he finds his rest in God.

[10:47] Think about a slave trader called John. Who was born to a father who was the captain of a ship. A mother who was a devout Christian. But when he was in his teens, he followed his dad into sea and really kind of just abandoned the faith.

Became someone who actually trafficked slaves around on the ship. So one day he was caught at sea in a storm. And he cries out to this God that his mother knew. And says, please, save me.

Help me. And God does save him. And then through a series of years, he starts to transform. Hey, when I'm talking about transformation, I'm not expecting, hey, you know Jesus.

You meet Jesus. Boom, you transform. That's not how it works. Those of us who have followed Christ know that isn't how it works. You are justified immediately the moment you put your faith in him. But the process of sanctification, which is you becoming more like Christ, will take a whole lifetime before you meet him.

And so this John goes on this journey and starts to become more and more like Christ. And ends up being so uncomfortable with the slave trade, he has to leave it. And eventually writes the words, amazing grace.

[11:52] How sweet the sound. I was blind. I was blind. But now I see. What's your story? Where would you be without Jesus?

Imagine. Trevor shared with us a little bit of where he thinks he would be. Where would you be without Jesus? Or maybe I'll go a step further and go, hey, you've got Jesus now.

How is your life different? How has it changed? This is an important question because when you meet the living Christ, you can't help but change. Because his love compels you to change.

He doesn't love you because you've changed, by the way. You might be sat here going, well, I don't deserve that because I'm not really committed to change. Well, he loves you regardless. He loved you first. But hopefully that love compels you to change.

The question is, do we actually really want to? You might say, well, I don't know. I don't know whether I need to change. I think I'm actually quite a good person. I had a coffee many, many years ago with a dear friend who I would say, hey, what do you think about Christianity?

[13:01] Do you want to follow Christ? And he said, I don't know. My life's quite good right now. Things are okay. I don't really know if I need to change. I'm quite a good person. Until we realize that there is a deep need for us to change in our hearts.

Until we realize that actually we do need Christ. And often it happens through bad things that happen. When you start losing health. When you start losing loved ones. And when you start losing all the things that you thought you had.

And you realize, wow, I really need Jesus. And I really need to have him change and transform my life. Where would you be without Jesus?

We're going to have a quick practice now. I know that most of you are sat next to people who you do know. Some of you are sat next to people you don't. We're going to practice this a little bit now. Or even just a reflection. Go, hey, where would you be without Jesus?

If you're a follower of Christ, I want you to, I want us to be able to practice. Can we actually articulate that? This before and after is super important. Because why else? How else are we going to share the good news to people? If we don't realize the bad news that we've had inside us.

[14:02] So have a think. Now, if you're a non-Christian and if you're here just to, hey, is this a Sunday? So a friend invited me. I don't know anything about Jesus. Then please say so. If there's anything that you've gleaned from our service and the video and everything is.

We are all real people trying to figure things out. And if you don't know Christ at all, please tell the person next to you. Hey, I don't know at all. That's okay. Completely okay. But if you're sat next to a Christian, I would encourage you to, hey, but what about you?

What's Christ meant to you? Where would you be without Christ? And let me just kind of do a little disclaimer for the Christian who sat next to you. We're not perfect people. We don't have a perfect answer.

But before Christ we were here and after Christ we were here. It is a journey. But I think it's important. I think it's helpful for us to be able to articulate that journey. Because how else are we going to spread the good news? If my dream is for all of us here to head out there and be able to gather and then scatter, then we must equip each other with at least practice.

Go, hey, what does that mean for me? What does Christ mean to me? All right. I've said a lot of things. I'm going to give you a couple minutes. Where would you be without Christ? Is the question I want you to answer to the person next to you.

[15:07] Can we do that? Very quick. Go, go, go, go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. Go. All right, okay. Gather around, gather around. Gather around. Here comes the moment of truth that keeps us all on the edge of our seats. Let me look around who I can ask.

I am going to ask the people who are still talking because clearly that means there's some serious stuff going on. JP, you're sat next to someone who is wearing a glorious football shirt, one that is going to win the Champions League this year. Tell us what Lucas said.

Would be parting a lot if he didn't know Christ. But like after Christ, he is working young life.

He's walking with people. He wants to be a light to his friends. That just reminds me of what Paul says in Ephesians 2.

That when we were before Christ, actually all the focus is on us. It's all on our own desires, on how we can have fun. But then the moment you turn and follow Christ, actually the transformation that happens is suddenly you're like, actually, it's not even just about me.

[16:44] It's about other people. And it changes the way you use your time. Because I would say, I would probably argue that partying itself isn't the wrong thing. It's who you're partying with. As Melissa now parties with Jesus all the time.

We need to get some tips from her to see what that looks like. But it's how you use your time. That's the biggest thing. When we are with Christ, it should change the priorities that we have.

Aaron, you're stood next to Matthew. What did he share that you can share with us? I think it was similar to what you just said. We both shared a common theme. I think before Christ, it would have been all about us.

Yeah. You know, money and pleasure and everything about us. We could have done something.

Yeah. But after Christ, yeah, it was about us. Yeah. Which almost seems counterintuitive.

Because when we're, you'd think that, hey, society says, focus on yourself. Focus on whatever you enjoy. And you will find the contentment and the satisfaction. Following Christ is basically deny yourself.

[17:44] It's die to yourself. And in doing so, you will then have life to the full. I think it's a key theme here, which is the moment you start looking away from yourself, that's when life changes.

That's when fulfillment comes. And we wonder when we spend so much time just on ourselves. And then we wonder why we're still in the same state that we were in. Uday, what about that handsome gentleman next to you?

What did he share? Mainly, in summary, with a change of heart. So it seems like it is from beauty to gift. Yeah.

From feeling that you need to do all these things to wanting to do things that you need to do. Yeah.

There's a change of heart is what he talks about. So there's a change in priorities.

There's a change in focus. All of that really comes from because there's a change in heart. What we don't want, by the way, is when you become a Christian, you become a Christian and your behavior starts to change, but mostly really restricted to the fact that now you choose to spend your Sunday mornings in a church, listening to someone talk, and then you kind of just carry on with your everyday life.

[18:56] That's not it. It's not behavior modification. It's heart transformation. It's when you meet Christ, he does something to your heart. He tugs on your heart in a different way, where you start thinking of other people, where you start giving yourself to other people.

And from a place where, actually, this isn't a duty. I want to do this. I know for sure Josh will never say this, but after a long day of work, he would still drag himself to whatever place that he needs to go because he feels compelled to show love, to go out of his way, which is what we talk about all the time.

When was the last time we went out of our ways to do anything for other people? Imagine if this group of people went out and said, the next thing I'm going to do won't be for myself.

It'll be for someone else. Why? Because Christ transformed me. Because Christ changed me. Not just because Christ is a nice guy, by the way. Not just because he was a good guy who came, gave some good teaching.

No, because he died and then he rose again. That changes everything. You see, when he did that, as C.S. Lewis puts it, a change happened. Once he died and once he rose again and said, all authority has now been given to me, follow me and go and tell people about this.

[20:05] You now have to decide. Every single person in this room has to decide. Was that person a liar? Was he a lunatic? Or was he truly Lord? Was he a liar?

Was he a lunatic? Or was he truly Lord? C.S. Lewis himself had a transformation. As someone who was an atheist, a staunch atheist, who would mock his friends. And he had a friend called J.R. Tolkien who wrote The Lord of the Rings.

Can you imagine just being in that friendship? Oh, what are you writing? Oh, there's just some story. What's it called? I don't know. I'm kind of thinking of a name. It's end with Narnia probably. And then you've got Tolkien going, oh, what's your word?

I don't know. Mine's going to be about little dwarves and maybe a ring. And they both write these crazy stories. But Tolkien goes on this journey with him. Converses with him.

Answers his questions. And now probably, if you did an audit of all my quotes, C.S. Lewis is probably the one I quote the most. This transformation that happens. We all have to decide what we're doing.

[21:00] Because the moment he resurrected, we all have to decide. Tim Keller says you cannot react and respond moderately to the resurrected Christ. You cannot. He doesn't give you that choice anymore.

You either take what he says seriously and you follow it with the whole of your life. And you let your life be completely transformed from the inside out. And let everything that you do be impacted by that. Now, there's other people who say, I like Christians.

I like Christianity. I like this Jesus. But hey, that's my Sunday. But you don't know about my work. You don't know about the consulting firm I'm working in.

It's a dog-eat-dog world. You don't know about the law firm that I'm working in. I've got to act like them. To compete with them to survive. But here's where I say, no.

That's where the resurrected Christ shows you a different way. He can subject himself to the ultimate horrors and to the ultimate injustice. And yet he still comes out victorious. That's the transformation that we are looking for.

[21:59] Maybe a question you might have is, if you're not a Christian here, is, well, okay, why must I change? I'm actually a pretty decent person here. Well, let me tell you this and I'll do a quick run through. If we're talking about why he had to die, there's no better book than the book of Romans.

And I'll tell you why. Chapter 3, and we'll whiz through the few chapters here. It says this. Chapter 3 says this. For all fall short. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. You and I, we've all made mistakes.

We've all turned our backs on God. We've all decided at one moment in our lives, God, I can't trust you anymore. I've got to take matters into my own hand. I've got to do this in order to fight for what I want.

And we've turned our backs on him. And we've all fallen short. We've all made mistakes. And then it carries on into Romans 5. He says this. And because we were sinners, it was that whilst we were still sinners, he then died for us.

To reconcile us back to God. Because what is sin? And sin is basically saying, God, I don't trust you. I'm going to do this on my own. It's going to be much easier if I do it on my own. And then we're shocked when it doesn't work out.

[23:01] But while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 6 says this. And when we choose our own path, the ultimate consequence is death. The wages of sin is death.

So it would be wrong of me to not talk about the resurrection without talking about why the resurrection needed to take place. He needed to die for us. Because we were heading down that route. The choices that we'd made, we were heading down that route.

And the consequence, it would only be fair if we were put to death. Or we would be led to death by the decisions that we made. Romans 7 then says this. Just when you're thinking, oh man, what hope do I have?

Even the holiest of holiest people, the greatest evangelist, the apostle Paul says, hey, I'm still right there. My inner self really delights in the Lord, but every time I want to do something good, the bad is right next to me.

Do you feel that? Every time you want to do something good, suddenly there's an excuse that comes around and says, hey, don't do that. Every time you want to go out of your way for someone, suddenly someone says, hey, but what about you? There's that voice that's inside that Paul talks about in Romans 7.

[24:04] It is no longer I who do it, but the sin that dwells within me. And last week I talked about the fact that we all have sin. The King David said he was born in sin. And then it carries on.

For I delight in the law of God in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind. What a wretched man that I am. Who will deliver me from this body of death? You've sat there before.

I know you have. I know I have. Where I want to do something good and evil is right there with me. And I suck. This is. How am I ever going to get out of this? What a wretched man I am.

And when I say that word, I'm reminded, man, I'm not the first person who's ever said that. The Apostle Paul said that. And then he says, thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. When we set our minds on the things of the flesh, it will lead to death. But if we set our mind on the spirit, it will lead to life and peace is what he's saying.

[25:04] And if we follow that way, if we follow the spirit, then it will lead us to life. Why did he die? He died because of us.

And now the debt has been paid. That's good news. Uday is in debt.

He can't pay his way out of this debt. Gabs can't help him because Gabs is in debt. So it's not as though Gabs can say, hey, let me pay for Uday's debt. No, because Gabs still has debt.

But it's not as though I can then pay for these two because I have debt. And so you look around here and you see a whole room of people who are all in debt. Who all have no way to pay ourselves out of that debt.

Even the richest of us here cannot pay all of us out of this debt. There can only be one who pays out of that debt. The one who does not have any debt. And that's where 2 Corinthians 5 comes in.

[26:05] The one who knew no sin was made sin so that we could be the righteousness of God. That is good news. That is good news.

That whatever debt that you've been holding on to, that weight of sin that is holding you down, that's been paid off. That can be gone. That is good news. But that's actually only just half the good news. See, why was Paul even writing in 1 Corinthians 15 about the resurrection? It's because there were certain people in the church who were like, hey, that Jesus guy was a good guy. He gave some great teachings.

He even died for us. Sure, cool. But that resurrection bit, we don't know. Because we don't know anyone who's actually done that. That seems a bit too far. Is what they were saying.

Maybe he died but in a kind of like a spiritual sense and resurrected in a spiritual sense. So maybe that's okay. Maybe he, they were just making excuses. So then Paul had to write 1 Corinthians 15 saying, no, this is it.

[27 : 03] Everything hinges on whether he lived. He says, my preaching is useless. Your faith is futile unless Jesus died and rose again. That's why the first point why we must change is because he died.

But the second point must be because he lives. The fact that that empty tomb still remains unchanged, changes every part of our lives right now.

If you don't know that, let me tell you why. Very quickly as I finish up. First thing is this. Because he died and then he rose again, it tells us there's something beyond the grave. There's something beyond this life. Everything that you and I see, this material world right here, that shows us there is something beyond.

There is something beyond the grave. There's something beyond what we see here. That is important because that will then change the way you live. If this isn't the end of it, because imagine if this was the end, then you and I should just be like, hey, let's just do whatever we want.

This is it anyway. There should just be carnage and chaos. But if there is something else, that changes the way we live. Our destination is different. If your destination has changed, it changes the way you head towards that destination.

[28 : 09] There is something beyond the grave. Secondly, it defeats death, the biggest enemy that we face. Fear itself is gone. Who lives in fear? I don't even need you to put your hands up. I live in fear.

You live in fear. But we have someone who has overcome all of that. If I asked you, hey, how does being with Jesus change the way you live?

My prayer, I hope one day the answer is, I don't have to live in fear anymore. Because I know that my Savior has my back. Actually, I'm not worried about which university I end up at, because I know Jesus is going to be there with me.

Whether I'm going to Princeton or whether I'm going to UCL or whether I'm not even going to university at all. Jesus is there with me. There is no need for any fear. There is no need for any guilt or condemnation.

Because his love covers a multitude of sins. Everything that I've done in the past, everything that I'm doing right now, everything that I will do in the future, all the messing up that I will do, Christ has paid for.

[29 : 12] You should be able to live as a free child of God. Not held back by sin and shame. It also means he is alive and present right now.

Sadly, there's not that many empty seats next to us. But can you just imagine if Christ was here right now? This is how I do church. Every Sunday I come and I'm just, God, remind me that you're here right now.

Remind me, if you walked through the door right now, how I would respond. Because that is what is happening. Christ is here right now.

Imagine you taking Christ to work with you. Imagine you taking Christ to school with you. Talking to a young man the other day who I was so inspired by, who decided to follow Christ two years ago. And then he says he goes to school and he tries to share the message. And he's like, he just gets slandered. People just get ridiculed and laughed. But can you imagine if, yeah, that does happen and that will happen.

[30 : 09] Jesus says that. He kicks his sermon off and says that. Blessed are those who are persecuted. When other people utter all kinds of evil against you because of me. And he says, hey, don't worry. They did that to me and they'll do that to you.

But imagine when that's happening to you, Christ himself is stood right next to you. That changes everything. Imagine when that boss that has been treating you unfairly. And in that moment when he's doing it, Christ has stood right next to you. That changes everything. He died and then he rose again. And because he rose again, that means he's alive and present. I think, I don't know about you, I think I lose sight of that. I say, yay, Jesus died and he rose again. Where is he? I don't know. But he's right here. Don't we take that for granted? He said, his spirit is right here with us. And then it changes the way you live. It must. If that whole, let's say the video that we watched or even just sharing there, you're like, yeah, I don't know. [31 : 10] I don't know really what changed before and after Christ. Here's my fear. Then I wonder whether we have met Christ yet. Truly.

Because if you met him, there would be change. I think my fear is there are those of us here who are so acquainted with just hearing his name, singing songs during Easter. Kind of like, yeah, Jesus, nice guy. Help me be a good person. Oh, it is so much more than that, my friend. It is so much more than just you being a good person. The whole point of the gospel is that there is no one good.

Not one. Just him. Don't sell yourself short of what the gospel is. Let your life be transformed by the living Christ.

And you might say, well, okay, I want to change, but I don't know how. Well, great. Galatians 2 is perfect for you because it's no longer you who live, but Christ who lives in you. The way you live, the way you posture yourself is simply with your hands wide open, with your heart open and go, Christ, take over.

[32 : 16] Live in me. So that when I want to do something good, but I can't, you will help me do it. When I want to read scripture and I don't understand, your Holy Spirit will help me understand it.

When I'm facing the same demons again, time in and time out, I sit and I go, Christ, you are the one that has overcome. I take heart. You have overcome the world, not me.

And that is enough. Can I encourage you, if you have been following Christ for many years, let your life be transformed. My prayer is that we look back, even on just the year before and go, okay, I am a different person.

I have changed. I'm becoming more like him. And if you've never experienced that change before, I pray that this year will be the year that you start. That the spirit of the living God would be inside you and you wouldn't be able to help it.

That change will just happen and there will be a glow about you. We met some old friends yesterday visiting us from Birmingham. And the first thing they said when they saw me was, wow, you're glowing even more than you did last time.

[33 : 20] Now they said it in a, again, just the whole hair thing. It's like, seriously, not creative. I am trimming a little bit closer to the skin now. But my prayer is that they would also say, James, there is something different about you.

You know God's word more. You act more like God. In fact, I look at you, Nathan, and I think, and I guess, there is a little glimpse of God.

If you met Nathan's dad, you'll know the glory that awaits him. And awaits Nathan as well. His dad has the same hairstyle as me. So one day, Nathan, one day, you will.

But can we be able to look at each other and go, something is different about you this year? It doesn't have to be a big step, but it has to be a change. When you meet, when you encounter the living Christ.

Final thing. Once you've met, you can't stop talking about it. If you've stopped talking about it, then let's start again. Because Jesus comes back and he says, hey, I've done the thing.

[34 : 31] And now authority has been given to me. You go. Matthew 28. You go and make disciples of all nations. You go. You share this good news. Holy Spirit, I ask that you put just even just a name in each of our minds right now.

Someone who doesn't know you yet. And go, hey, I have to tell you some good news. If there's one day in the year I need to tell you this, it is today. That the thing that you're facing, you don't have to be afraid.

Because Christ died and he rose again. You have to share it. You can't not share it. Whether it's Paul transforming to being the greatest evangelist.

Or Peter being the head of the church. Or Mary Magdalene being the first witness. What happens is, when you are transformed, you move. You go. That's why next week we're starting a series. And we're starting the book of Acts.

Which is all about going. You know they said that Mary Magdalene is basically the apostle to the apostles. Because she's the one who first saw and says, I have seen the Lord. That's our job.

[35:35] I'm talking only to those who are following Christ now. Please, this week. Please, today. Can you share with someone who doesn't know? And I'll tell you from personal experience.

When you do that. If you're still there going, yeah, but I'm not in a great place. My faith is a bit stale. I'll tell you there's nothing that helps your faith. More than sharing it. Your faith is stale because you've stopped sharing it.

The good news isn't powerful to you because it's stopped becoming news. Because it's stopped becoming good. Share it. Share it. He has risen.

And today is a good day. Friday is good because Sunday has arrived. That is why we're here.

We're here. Can I ask you now just to spend a final moment to reflect what the resurrected Christ means for you.

As we invite the team back up just to lead us in the final song of celebration. Holy Spirit, we do not want to.

[36:42] We do not want to. We cannot. We should not. Receive this good news and then just keep it. Just like Paul. Just like Peter. Just like Mary.

We must share it. Today is a good day. Christ, you are here.

You are closer to us than we realize. You are closer to us than the humidity that swarmed around us yesterday.

You are closer to us than the air that we breathe. You are living inside us. You are living inside us. And would that spirit that raised you from the dead be the same spirit that lives inside us.

The same spirit that allows us to call you Abba, Father. God, would you remind us again of your presence, of your love. And that today is a good day.

[37:52] It is a day worth celebrating. We rejoice because today is a day that you have made. And because of today, we get to look forward to that day when we see you again.

Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Lord. Jesus, we thank you. That truly today is a good day. Because of you, we live.

Because of you, we live life to the full. And we thank you for that. So would you be with us as we go from here? That we would continue to be people of the cross and people of the resurrection. That we would go out and we would share good news.

We would share peace and joy to those you've placed around us. Lord, empower us with your spirit so that we would have the words to say. But most importantly, Lord, can we just admit this joy that comes from knowing that you are here.

In your presence, there is truly fullness of joy. Let us be that people. Thank you, Lord, for the Caesar Sunday.

[39:00] Thank you for the celebrations that we will continue to have today. Be with us as we gather. Thank you. In your name we pray. Amen. Happy Easter, everyone.