

Sunday 5th April, 2022

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church Welcome & Prayer

"I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. ⁵¹ Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— ⁵² in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. ⁵³ For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." ⁵⁵ "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:50-56)

Prayer. Our Heavenly Father, as we come before you today, knowing even if everything else is changing around us, you are still our rock and fortress, and are unchanging. You are always there for us, dependable and true to your promises, for you provide us with all that we need. And Lord, as we come together on this day, Resurrection Sunday, we are reminded of your greatest provision. That as you promised, you sent us your one and only son, to die for us and to pay the price for our sins. That Jesus, although he did not sin, and was without blemish, was punished and died a cruel death on a cross, so that we might be saved. And Lord, we thank you that through Jesus' death and resurrection, he demonstrated that death has been defeated, that he is our Saviour and the King of Kings, and that we have the hope of being with you for eternity. Lord, help us not to lose sight of what you have done for us. Help us to be reminded of your great love and mercy. And we ask that you will help us to love one another, and to live our lives in a way that pleases you and brings you glory. And Lord, we pray that opportunities may present themselves to let others know about you. We pray that we may be able to tell others of the true meaning of Easter, and that we may be able to encourage and support our brothers and sisters throughout this time. And we ask all these things in your Son's glorious and powerful name. Amen

Song – See what a morning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Rs529D0HQU>

- 1. See, what a mornin', gloriously bright
With the dawnin' of hope in Jerusalem
Folded the grave clothes,
tomb filled with light
As the Angels announce, "Christ is risen"
See God's salvation plan
Wrought in love, borne in pain,
paid in sacrifice
Fulfilled in Christ, the Man
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead*
- 2. See Mary weepin', "Where is He laid?"
As in sorrow
she turns from the empty tomb
Hears a voice speakin', callin' her name
"It's the Master, the Lord,
raised to life again"
The voice that spans the years
Speakin' life, stirrin' hope,
bringin' peace to us
Will sound 'til He appears
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead*
- 3. One with the Father, Ancient of Days
Through the Spirit
who clothes faith with certainty
Honor and blessing, glory and praise
To the King crowned
with power and authority
And we are raised with Him
Death is dead, love has won,
Christ has conquered
And we shall reign with Him
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead

And we are raised with Him
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And we shall reign with Him
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead
Christ is risen from the dead*

Bible Reading – John 20:1-18 (NIV)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" 3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. 11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head & the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 At this, she turned around & saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). 17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father & your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" & she told them that he had said these things to her.

Announcements

Resurrection Sunday is worth celebrating We celebrate Resurrection Sunday because Jesus' rising from the dead proves that sin and death have been defeated once and for all. It confirms that His sacrifice on the cross was accepted by God and that forgiveness and new life are truly available. And it gives us a living hope—because He lives, all who trust in Him will live too.

School holidays. NSW School holidays start this weekend and that means the regular activities of the church will go into recess until Monday 20th April. Many thanks to the creche helpers, the kids church, and youth leaders, the bible study leaders and everyone else who have worked so hard for us this last term. You deserve a break. We hope you enjoy it!

We have had a wonderful start to the year. What a year it has been so far

- A successful mission trip to Vanuatu in January
- Hundreds of hours of work to get the church and the new gathering space ready to move in.
- Finally enjoying our new redevelopment after almost a year at the primary school
- Our largest ever Sunday @ 6 services full of young men and women.
- A record-breaking attendance at our Church camp at Tahlee.
- Having the enthusiastic Christ College team join us last week.
- And now the chance to celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection over Easter.

A special gift. If you are visiting us for the first time this weekend, we would love to give you a thank you gift. Please see Stephen after the service for two books – Easter Unbelievable by Rebecca McLaughlan and the Gospel of John. And if we can do anything for you or if you want to know more about having a relationship with Jesus just ask and we would love to catch up with you sometime in the future.

Our evening service. It would be great at some time to turn up to our evening service to see what God is doing there. It may not be your cup of tea but it will be highly encouraging for you to see all the young adults worshipping God and they will be encouraged to see you there as well. Members of the mission

team commented that there are very few churches in Sydney that has such an enthusiastic group of young adults. Audric, Jannah and their team are doing a great job

Song – Jesus thank you [Jesus, Thank You \(feat. Brook Hills Music\) - Official Lyric Video - YouTube](#)

- i. The mystery of the cross I cannot comprehend
The agonies of Calvary
You the perfect Holy One, crushed Your Son
Who drank the bitter cup reserved for me

Chorus *Your blood has washed away my sin. Jesus, thank You*
The Father's wrath completely satisfied. Jesus, thank You
Once Your enemy, now seated at Your table. Jesus, thank You

- ii. By Your perfect sacrifice I've been brought near
Your enemy You've made Your friend
Pouring out the riches of Your glorious grace
Your mercy and Your kindness know no end

Chorus
Bridge Lover of my soul, I want to live for You (x4)
Chorus

Pastoral Prayer Points

Praise God for the resurrection. Risen Lord Jesus, we praise you for conquering sin and death and rising in glory on the third day. We worship you as the living Saviour, whose empty tomb declares your power and faithfulness forever. Fill our hearts with joy and hope, that we might live each day in the light of your resurrection.

Pray for Afghanistan. (Population 45 million, Christians, a few thousand) Since the Taliban retook power in August 2021, Christians have either fled the country or gone deeper underground. The Taliban believe that it's impossible for any Afghan to be Christian. Please pray that God protects His people and gives them a spirit of hope and peace. That Afghan Christian refugees will receive comfort and be protected from harm. That God will change the hearts of the Taliban leaders so they will receive Christ.

Pray for our world at war. Pray for those innocent people caught up in the conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza, Lebanon and Iran. Pray for those who have lost loved ones to find help and support in the god of all comfort. Pray that Christians in those countries can model faith, hope and love. Pray that there might be a just and fair solution found to end these conflicts. And pray that Australians will focus more on what is going on in the world that what is going on in their hip pocket.

Pray for safety on the roads. Pray for alertness, patience, and wise decision-making for all drivers, especially during busy holiday travel. Ask for God's protection over families and individuals on the roads, that journeys would be safe and free from harm. Pray for emergency services and first responders, that they would be strengthened, protected, and able to act quickly and effectively when needed.

Bible Reading – Matthew 19: 23-30 (NIV)

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them & said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." 24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was

not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." 30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Sermon: Beyond Belief (Stephen T)

Sermon link: <https://youtu.be/CD8cblXneA>

The internet article was entitled, "Fifteen Celebrities Who Were Resurrected with CGI." You see it has become quite popular in Hollywood in recent years to give dead actors a new lease of life by including them in their latest film or the reboot of the series they once starred in. So, people like Peter Cushing, Audrey Hepburn, Bruce Lee, Marilyn Monroe, Fred Astaire and a whole galaxy of stars have, with the help of Computer Generated Imagery, special effects and groundbreaking editing techniques, popped up on the silver screens once again.

Interestingly, when CGI was used to include Peter Cushing in "Rogue One," one of the Star Wars prequels, it was written that "This return to the franchise sparked an industry wide debate about the morality of bringing the deceased back to life." Wait a second they haven't actually come back to life. The word resurrection here is just a metaphor. They are all still dead, right? Yes, but the same can't be said of Jesus.

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In a unique, once in a lifetime, no once in everyone's life time event, Jesus the one who we remember just two days ago "*who suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried*", on the third day rose to life. Not with the use of smoke and mirrors, chat GPT, CGI or clever editing but by the power of God Himself. And thus, it is the resurrection of Jesus that the integrity of the Bible stands or falls on. It is the resurrection that our faith completely depends upon. Which is why the Church historian, Jaroslav Pelikan once said, "*If Jesus is risen, nothing else matters. And if Christ has not risen – nothing else matters.*"

Slide 3

The whole of history revolves around whether the God – man Jesus actually rose from the dead. If he didn't rise from the dead, we are still lost in our sins and we may as well make the absolute most of this life, because that is all there is. But if he was resurrected back to life, then we can move beyond belief into life, **life to the full**. And in John 20, we see not only proof that the resurrection really happened but five encounters with Jesus that will help us grow in our faith as well. Starting with

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1. Peter: Faith that investigates (verses 1-7)

"Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

We begin with a woman, Mary Magdalene, visiting Jesus' tomb. She was most likely with some of the other women in Jesus inner circle and they were going to finish off the hastily completed burial of their friend & teacher Jesus Christ. But what she finds shocks her. The stone has been rolled away. And that just pushes her over the edge. As if losing her beloved teacher was not enough, now someone has desecrated the remains of the dead.

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3 *“So, Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him & went straight into the tomb.”*

Now please understand, Jewish men in those days who wanted to preserve even a shred of their own dignity, did not run. But here they are, they are sprinting to the tomb to see what has happened, because Mary has reported to them that the body is gone. This is an absolute disaster! And what they find at Jesus tomb doesn't make a great deal of sense either.

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“He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen.” The body was gone. But the grave clothes were still there. Why would anyone do that? And those expensive spices, they are still there in the grave clothes as well. Actually, it was like **the body had passed through the grave clothes**. That's freaky. In the words of John Stott, “it was like a discarded chrysalis from which a butterfly had emerged.” Incredible.

But it doesn't make sense to Peter. He can't join the dots together, at least not yet. But he hasn't dismissed Mary's report. He's gone to investigate. He steps inside the tomb. But I want you to note that for Peter investigation is not enough. He sees the data. But he doesn't yet grasp the meaning. He is convinced that something has happened but is yet to understand exactly what has happened.

Slide 7

Now in places like Lightning Ridge, opal miners spend hours examining rocks that look completely ordinary. To most people, they're just dull stones in the dirt. But experienced miners know that inside some of those rocks is something extraordinary. So, they inspect carefully. Chip away. Look closely. Until they find what they are looking for.

That's what Peter is doing. He's investigating what happened to Jesus. He senses something extraordinary has happened so he has made the journey to investigate the evidence. And that is what the gospel of John is encouraging us to do as well. Examine the evidence carefully. Have enough faith to be curious about what happened that first Easter. In the words of Pelikan *“If Jesus is risen, nothing else matters. And if Christ has not risen – nothing else matters.”* And that's what I did just over 40 years ago.

I read up on other religions. I looked at the evidence in history, in literature, in the Bible. I had enough faith to investigate. And over time my faith became like John's, a faith

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2. John: Faith that sees (verse 8-10)

8 *“Finally, the other disciple (that is John), who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.”*

John saw the same evidence as Peter – an empty tomb and the ordered grave cloths, but he also saw something that Peter didn't see. That Jesus was now alive. That Jesus had done what he said he would do; he has gone back to the father alive. Jesus body was gone because it had been transported back to heaven. Now he didn't know how that happened. He didn't remember that God in the OT had said that it would happen. He just knew that somehow it had happened. He saw and he believed.

Slide 9

Now isn't that a comfort for you and me? John doesn't believe the whole kit and caboodle. His faith is not yet complete. But it has started. Jesus is no longer dead. He has been resurrected. A few moments ago, he was confused, anxious, wondering what on earth had happened. Now he knows the resurrection is a real event.

Slide 10

Often, I am watching a sporting match, and the captain or an umpire asks for a video review of a controversial incident. The game stops and everyone watches the screen again, slowly, closely and from multiple angles and often the decision becomes more obvious. The evidence didn't change. But the perspective did. In the same way the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus changes everything for John. His faith grows and becomes real.

That was my experience as well. If it happens, Jesus really is who he says he is. If it didn't happen, he is a fraud and I should have nothing to do with him... ever. That helped me to realise that faith is not just looking at the facts, but it is seeing **what those facts mean**. The crucified Jesus has risen. He is the one who can defeat death. He is the one who has defeated sin. God Himself shows the whole world his personal stamp of approval is on Jesus because the one who proved faithful in life and was willing to die for the sins of the world has now been resurrected and brought back to life. Which then leads us in our passage to

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3. Mary: And a faith that clings (verses 11-18)

11 "Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head & the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."

Mary's world has been well and truly snatched from under her feet. All she can do is cry. Not even the presence of two angels can change her outlook. Her grief completely clouds her sight and her judgement. Until, until Jesus stands before her.

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14 "At this, she turned around & saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher")."

All it takes is one word "**Mary!**" The Good Shepherd calls His sheep by name. And she responds in faith. This is sovereign grace. She does not recognize Him at first. But he then reveals Himself. She then cries, "Rabboni, teacher!" And she clings onto him for dear life.

Slide 13

When Australian soldiers return from overseas deployment, families wait at airport arrivals. There are tears. Tight embraces. Nobody wants to let go. They cling to each other. That's Mary. Mary's faith is not just in the head but in the heart. It's not just rational, its relational. The risen Christ does not merely prove Himself; He calls His own by name & those of us who respond to Jesus calling, have a faith that grasp him, love him, cling to him no matter what.

For Jesus' resurrection changes everything. For me it gave me my first and greatest love. Greater than parents, greater than spouse, greater than friends or family. The one who when I am too weak or too stubborn or too distracted to hold onto, instead holds onto me. Clings to me. Makes sure that I am never alone. But the Christian life, the Christian faith is not just being in the presence of Jesus but it is also doing the work of Jesus. It is not just clinging but it is also proclaiming.

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17 "Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father & your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" & she told them that he had said these things to her."

Jesus is not returning to normal life. He is going to his father and her father. His God and her God. The resurrection opens up the door to a new relationship with God. We are not just slaves but sons and daughters. Not just object of God's mercy we are now part of the family. And Mary will get another chance to see Jesus, for we will later learn he will pop in and out of the disciple's lives for another 40 days. But now, right now, Mary you have a job to do.

I think it is amazing enough that a woman is the first eyewitness to the risen Jesus. Now Mary becomes the apostle to the apostles. The one sent with the good news of the resurrection of Jesus to the ones who will soon be commissioned and equipped with the HS to become the bearers of that same good news to all the ends of the earth. But before they do that, our passage wants to show us that for the disciples, faith is also mixed with fear.

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4. Disciples: Faith that fears (verses 19-23)

You see, you can't just transfer your faith from one person to another. Faith is a personal thing. Faith is an individual thing. And so *"On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them & said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side."*

Peter had seen the evidence for the risen Christ. John believed he had gone to the father. Mary had held onto the risen Christ and yet that night here the disciples are still cowering behind locked doors. If the Jews and the Romans had killed Jesus, they thought, it would only be a matter of time before they would be after us as well!

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There is not much faith there, is there? But there is plenty of fear. But somehow Jesus came through the locked doors and stands among them and gives them his peace. And he doesn't say "Where were you guys when I really needed you?" No, he sees they are afraid and so he gives them his shalom, his peace, his wholeness.

I remember when I had my ACL reattached, the doctors and physios said to me, you can now stand on it. It will hold your weight. But I was still fearful. To stand was painful, to shuffle involved risk. I knew and trusted the experts all around me but it still didn't stop the fear.

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And here we see that fearful faith is still faith. Jesus doesn't abandon his trembling disciples, he strengthens them. He sends them off to do his work. *"The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them & said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."* Now how amazing is that?

You don't have to have perfect faith, to live the life of faith. Because the emphasis of faith is not on the one who has faith but on the one **that you put your faith in. Jesus**. And just as God breathed on Adam in Genesis 2 and gave him life, so Jesus breathes on his disciples and gives them new life. To take up the baton that Jesus has passed onto them and make sure the message of forgiveness of sins is not only heard but seen. Proclaimed and experienced.

It is interesting that every time Jesus appears to His disciples, He gives them something to do. To Mary she had to go and witness. To the disciples they had to go and forgive others. And next up Thomas has to stop doubting and believe. For there is something beyond belief. It is putting your faith to work. "Faith is," Martin Luther said, "a busy little thing." And for...

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5. Thomas: Faith confesses (verses 24-29)

24 *“Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.”*

Can you imagine that? Thomas doesn't go to church on that first Easter evening and misses seeing Jesus. Dr. Lloyd-Jones used to say again and again, *“You know, we pray for revival, we pray for the outpouring of God's Spirit, and one day that will come, in the way that it came in phenomenal fashion in the middle of the eighteenth century. It came again in the middle of the nineteenth century. It could come. And if you're not here (at Church) you'd be kicking yourself for the rest of your life.”* Just a thought, he used to say, don't miss meeting together with God's people, you might miss God doing something completely unbelievable.

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And Thomas missed a resurrection appearance from Jesus. And he still needed something extra to push his faith forward. He's like a typical Aussie, isn't he? You need to give me tangible proof. I don't want anything airy, fairy. You have to give me concrete evidence. And notice that Jesus meets Thomas exactly where he is and gives him exactly what he needs.

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26 *“A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”*

Now there is no evidence that Thomas actually felt the nail holes in Jesus hands or thrust his hand into the spear hole in his side. The evidence was there for all to see but he already had enough evidence starring him in the face. And quick smart Thomas moves from scepticism to submission. From worry to worship.

28 *“Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”*

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This is the clearest confession of anyone in any of the four gospels. Jesus is not just Lord but **my Lord**. Not just a God, but **my God**. Faith is personal. Faith is real. Faith is confessional. 29 *Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen & yet have believed.”* That's us, he is talking about here. You and me. We didn't get to see the empty tomb. We didn't get to talk to Jesus outside in the garden. We didn't get to see him inside that upper room. But we don't need to. Christian faith is not blind faith. It's based on the eyewitness evidence presented to us in the Bible.

And that's enough. Enough for me. Enough for you. We don't need to see. We just need to investigate like Peter. We need to open our eyes to what John saw. We need to cling to Christ like Mary did. Continue to believe despite our fears. And be willing to confess that Jesus is my Lord and Jesus my God even when I don't have all the facts in front of me. Why?

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6. Because John wrote his gospel for **Us**: offering us a **Faith that lives**.

30 *“Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may **have life** in his name.”*

At the end of John 20, the apostle John does something unusual. He steps out from behind the story. For twenty chapters he has been quietly showing us the signs of Jesus. But now he turns to the reader and says, 'Let me tell you why I wrote this.' These things are written so that **you may believe**. In other words, John is no longer just telling us what happened to Peter, Mary, and Thomas. He is asking: **what about you?** What are you going to do about it?

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“This was written... so that you may **have life** in his name.” Do want life? Life to the full? Life here and now? Life in the future. Eternal life. Well, here’s your chance. Don’t say that resurrection stuff is an interesting story. Don’t just think that Jesus is a really, really good man. Don’t decide that I really should try a bit harder to go to church this year. No, no, no.

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Believe in Jesus. Have faith in Jesus. Put your trust in his name. Not your own name. Not your own actions. Not your own goodness. But put your faith in Jesus. Be like Peter and investigate. Be like John and have a good look at Jesus. Be like Mary and cling to him until, until, you are sure. Be like the disciples and have faith in the midst of your fear. Be like Thomas and look for a personal relationship with Jesus where he is my Lord and my God.

Many Australians have had the experience of waking early to watch the sunrise on the coast, perhaps at Nobbies or Redhead beach. When you first arrive, it’s still dark. You can hear the waves, but you can’t see much. Then the sky slowly begins to lighten. Some people notice it immediately. Others take a little longer. Some are still half asleep with coffee in their hands. But gradually the sun rises and everything becomes clear — the water, the cliffs, the horizon.

That’s John 20. Peter is looking carefully in the dim light. John begins to see the sunrise. Mary hears her name and recognizes the risen Lord. The disciples slowly step out of fear. Thomas finally stands in the full light and confesses, “My Lord and my God.” And John says: this story is written so that you may stand in the light as well. You might have life in his name How do we do that? By faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. You need to have faith in the death & resurrection of Jesus. The ball’s now in your court. What will you do with Jesus?

Song – Christus Victor (Amen) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KF5knxzKCVw>

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| <p>1. O Most High, King of the ages
Great I AM, God of wonders
By the blood You have redeemed us
Led us through mighty waters
Our strength, our song, our sure salvation</p> <p>[Chorus]
Now to the Lamb upon the throne
Be blessing, honor, glory, power
For the battle You have won
Hallelujah! Amen</p> <p>2. O Most High, dwelling among us
Son of man sent for sinners
By Your blood You have redeemed us
Spotless Lamb, mighty Savior
Who lived, who died, who rose victorious</p> <p>Chorus</p> <p>Bridge</p> | <p>With every tribe and every tongue
We join the anthem of the angels
In the triumph of the Son
Hallelujah! Amen</p> <p>3. O Most High, King of the nations
Robed in praise, crowned with splendor
On that day who will not tremble?
When You stand Christ the Victor
Who was, and is, and is forever</p> <p>Chorus
Bridge</p> <p>Amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen, amen</p> <p>Chorus
Bridg</p> |
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Benediction “But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may **have life** in his name.” (John 20:31)