

# Sunday Service ~ March 31, 2024

## Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

### Welcome & Prayer

<sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance<sup>[a]</sup>: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> & that he appeared to Cephas,<sup>[b]</sup> and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers & sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles <sup>8</sup> & last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born

**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 – Oh, What a day [Oh, What a Day - Lyrics Video \[Risen\] on Vimeo](#)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Let the joy begin, let our songs ring out<br/>Let our hearts be glad—love has banished doubt<br/>See the empty cross—all our debts are gone<br/>Only grace remains, for the victory's won</p> | <p>2. See the empty tomb, see the grave clothes there<br/>He has left this place; you won't find Him here<br/>All our fears have fled, let our hopes arise<br/>Heaven waits for us—we will never die</p> |
|---|--|

Chorus: Oh what a day, what a glorious day  
Oh what a day, what a glorious day  
When You conquered death  
And rose up from the grave  
What a day What a day

Chorus  
Bridge: There is still a day that we're awaiting  
When the glorious One we love appears  
He will take us home with Him forever  
He will finally wipe away our tears

### Bible Reading – Luke 24:1-35 (NIV)

*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. <sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup> In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " <sup>8</sup> Then they*

remembered his words. <sup>9</sup> When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. <sup>12</sup> Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

<sup>13</sup> Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup> As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; <sup>16</sup> but they were kept from recognising him. <sup>17</sup> He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. <sup>18</sup> One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" <sup>19</sup> "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. <sup>20</sup> The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup> but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. <sup>22</sup> In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup> but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus." <sup>25</sup> He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. <sup>28</sup> As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So, he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup> They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together <sup>34</sup> and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." <sup>35</sup> Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognised by them when he broke the bread.

## Announcements

**Easter.** For Christians, Easter is the most important time of the year. And we are fortunate because Australia has traditionally given us two days off work to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. Please don't see these days as extra holidays but as what they really are HOLYdays. Please use these days wisely to grow in your holiness as you fill your vision with who Jesus is, what He is doing and how he wants us to respond to all he has done. what he requires of us in return.

### Hamilton 5pm service – Alive @ 5!

It's great that our partnership with Hamilton Presbyterian Church has led to a brand new service beginning each Sunday afternoon, Alive @ 5. If you know of someone who used to go to Church or someone who needs to hear the gospel of Jesus, why not invite them to go along (and go along with them that first time!)

### Positions Vacant.

We are hoping to be able to employ a new Administrative Assistant (10 hours a week) and a Young Adults Worker (8 hours a week) from term 2. With Jon leaving we also have a position for an associate minister. This would normally be filled by an ordained Presbyterian minister. The process to find the right person will begin with the congregation choosing a selection committee on its behalf (at our annual meeting 7/4/24) who will then agree on the sort of person we are looking for, interview potential candidates, ask the best candidate to preach before the congregation makes the final decision.

### Easter Services

31/3 Resurrection Sunday Swansea 8am Charlestown 9:45am & 6pm

ST

## Annual Congregational Meeting.

Will be held on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2024 from 11:20am. This year's meeting will be an important (and long one!) Included in the items to be decided

- Receive all the annual reports
- Approval of financial statements
- Elect a committee of management
- Find out the latest about the Charlestown redevelopment
- Re-elect the Construction Working Group
- Re-elect our Deacons for another 12 months
- Vote for a Selection Committee to help choose our new associate minister (nominations can be given to Ross Logan before Friday 5<sup>th</sup> April). This committee will comprise the elders plus 7 members of the congregation and should represent a good cross section of the congregation but especially include those who will work most closely with any future associate such as member of Sunday @ 6 and families with school aged children.
- Appointment of a new Administrative Assistant
- Agree to a job description and hopefully appointment a Young Adults Worker.

## JOY

Our next JOY (Just Older Youth) will meet this Friday at the 16 footers 10-11am. All welcome

### Renew Women's Conference (Women of Truth)

Registration is now open for Hunter Gospel Ministries next women's conference. Date: 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024. Place: Metford Baptist. Topic: God-Centred Relationships. Speaker: Dani Treweek. More details at [hgm.org.au/renew](http://hgm.org.au/renew)

## Pastoral Prayer

**Pray for Nigeria (Pop 222 million, Christians 103 million!).** Nigeria is the most violent country in the world to follow Jesus. More believers are **killed** for their faith in Nigeria each year than everywhere else in the **world combined**. The attacks are often **brutal** in nature and can involve **destruction of properties, abductions** for ransom, sexual violence, and death. **Please pray** that victims of violence and their families will find healing and hope in Jesus; for peace, stability, and safety in the areas where extremists attack with impunity; that the worldwide Church can help displaced Christians with trauma care and healing.

**Pray for A Rocha.** Give thanks for two people who have nominated to join the board of A Rocha Australia. Seek the Lord's guidance in securing funds to support production of theological resources regarding Creation care and employing staff to undertake conservation projects.

**Pray that Australians** can find hope in Jesus over this Easter weekend.

**Pray for safety on the roads** and for all those who are in the emergency services or service industries that have to work this weekend.

**Pray for the Church in Australia** that it will provide light in the darkness, hope where there is hopelessness and will keep pointing to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

## Bible Reading – Luke 24:36-49 (NIV)

*<sup>36</sup> While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." <sup>37</sup> They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. <sup>38</sup> He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? <sup>39</sup> Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." <sup>40</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. <sup>41</sup> And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" <sup>42</sup> They gave him a piece of broiled fish, <sup>43</sup> and he took it and ate it in their presence. <sup>44</sup> He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." <sup>45</sup> Then he opened*

their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup> and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things. <sup>49</sup> I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

## Song – Yet not I but Christ in me

[CityAlight ~ Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me \(Lyrics\) - YouTube](#)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemer<br/>There is no more for heaven now to give<br/>He is my joy, my righteousness, and freedom<br/>My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace<br/>To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus<br/>For my life is wholly bound to His<br/>Oh how strange and divine,<br/>I can sing, "All is mine"<br/>Yet not I, but through Christ in me</p> | <p>3. No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven<br/>The future sure, the price it has been paid<br/>For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon<br/>And He was raised to overthrow the grave<br/>To this I hold, my sin has been defeated<br/>Jesus now and ever is my plea<br/>Oh the chains are released,<br/>I can sing, "I am free"<br/>Yet not I, but through Christ in me</p> |
| <p>2. The night is dark but I am not forsaken<br/>For by my side, the Saviour He will stay<br/>I labour on in weakness and rejoicing<br/>For in my need, His power is displayed<br/>To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend me<br/>Through the deepest valley He will lead<br/>Oh the night has been won,<br/>and I shall overcome<br/>Yet not I, but through Christ in me</p>         | <p>4. With every breath I long to follow Jesus<br/>For He has said that He will bring me home<br/>And day by day I know He will renew me<br/>Until I stand with joy before the throne<br/>To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus<br/>All the glory evermore to Him<br/>When the race is complete,<br/>still my lips shall repeat<br/>Yet not I, but through Christ in me</p>   |

## Sermon: Be a witness! – (Stephen T)

sermon link: <https://youtu.be/sIC2VMadpgI>

I have to say this Easter weekend has been absolutely incredible for me. For yesterday I got word from my mum that my dad who passed away almost two years ago is alive again. He just walked in and said 'Hi' to her as if nothing had happened. How amazing is that? I didn't believe it until I went down to Sydney to see him with my very own eyes.

Now if I was to tell you that this morning it would seem like nonsense to you. Stephen, these things don't happen. It is not as if they don't happen every day, they just don't happen. Full stop. When people die, they die. They don't come back from the grave. And no amount of so-called proof will ever convince you that I am not stark raving mad.

Slide 2

And yet that is the story we Christians believe actually happened to Jesus some 2,000 years ago. He died. He was buried. And on the third day he was resurrected. And then he appeared to his disciples, why 1 Corinthians 15 said, he appeared to up to 500 people in all.

It seems like nonsense. Far-fetched. Crazy. And that's what Jesus first disciples thought as well. They didn't believe when they first heard the news of Jesus resurrection. They were sceptical, very sceptical; because these things don't happen every day, no these things never, ever happen. So, what convinced them? What was the thing that made all the difference?

I want to suggest it wasn't that they actually saw Jesus being resurrected. All four accounts of the gospels talk about the resurrection but none of them talk about when it happened or how it happened. And I don't think it was because the disciples saw the resurrected Jesus either. No, this morning we are going to look at three stories concerning the women at the tomb, the couple on their way to Emmaus and the disciples meeting together behind closed doors. And for each of them the key thing that changed them was not seeing Jesus but seeing that Jesus' death and resurrection was the fulfilment of the word of God.

Slide 3

And that is helpful for us this morning. Because none of us are going to see the resurrected Jesus today, unless today is the day that he comes again. We can't & won't introduce him to you later on in the service. He has risen, he is alive but I can't point to his physical body to you this morning. But what we can do today and what will make the crucial difference to our lives is if we believe the word of God. If we grasp the fact that the whole of the OT & all the words of Jesus in the gospels are pointing us to the fact that God promised to raise his son from the death; & on that first Easter Sunday that is exactly what God did in Jerusalem.

And you will only believe that if God opens your eyes this morning. If God's Spirit moves in your hearts today. If God's word cuts deep into your life and reveals the risen Jesus to you. My words can't convince you. The quality of our worship will not bring you to that point. Only the word of God can do that. Which is why we are going to look at the word of God this morning and see what God wants to say to you & me about Resurrection Sunday, beginning

Slide 4

### **1. With Morning – the witness of God's works (Verses 1-12)**

*"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. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. "*

Luke's account begins at Sunday 6am at the crack of dawn. A number of women come to Jesus' grave to apply the finishing touches to the work that no one had time to do on Friday evening. They are sad, distraught, confused because they have lost the man they had been following for the last couple of years. And you have to say if you are taking flowers to the cemetery or spices to the grave side you are not expecting to see an empty grave.

Slide 5

But that is what they find. An empty tomb, a stone rolled back & two men clothed in white, presumably angels & those things just tip them over the edge. And the angels gently rebuke them, *"Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"*

The angels, who are known as God's messengers have a message to tell the women. But the emphasis is not on their words but Jesus' words. Ladies, he told you this in advance. He predicted that he would come back to life. And that is what he has now done. I know this never, ever happens but Jesus is not your average person. He is the promised Son of Man. He is the one that Israel has been looking forward to for a couple of thousand years.

Slide 6

*8 "Then they remembered his words."* The penny dropped. All the pieces fell into place like the tumblers in a combination lock. And soon they were scurrying back to tell the good news to the apostles. But Luke is pointing out here that they haven't yet seen Jesus. All they have received at this point is a reminder of God's word spoken through Jesus. And that is all that they need. To remember that Jesus had told them this was God's plan from the very beginning.

So, these women are a witness to God's work. They see the evidence of what God has done all around them in the stone, the empty tomb and the angels. But it is the word of God that helps them put two and two together to get four. And so, they hot tail it out of there ready to witness to this good news. But the response of the disciples? They think it's nonsense.

Of course, they think it's nonsense. They saw Jesus die on the cross. They know he was buried in the tomb. They understand that once you are dead you are dead. People might be resurrected in a spiritual sense at the end of the world but not in a physical sense, that just doesn't happen. And let's be honest here, those who are witnessing this fact are women. And in that culture their testimony was not considered trustworthy enough to count for much in a court of law. It must be nothing short of wishful thinking.

Slide 7

But of course, it adds weight to us when we 2000 years later look at the word of God. How amazing that God would entrust the revealing of the most significant event in human history to women. You wouldn't make that up. Unless it was true. And none of the apostles think it is true with maybe the exception of Peter, who *"got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened."*

The announcement of an empty tomb was not enough. Even for Peter the seeing of an empty tomb, him seeing evidence of the work of God, was not enough. He needed something more but that would come later for him, much later. So, let's move from morning

Slide 8

## **2. To Afternoon: The Witness of God's word (verses 13-35)**

Because the news of the empty tomb quickly spread to the rest of Jesus disciples but it wasn't enough for two of them, Cleopas and his mate or was it his wife? They thought it was too dangerous to stick around Jerusalem so they were getting out, presumably going home with their tail between their legs.

And as they were going, *"they were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognising him."*

They didn't recognise him. Now don't you find that fascinating, I do? They had heard that Jesus tomb was empty. They then saw the resurrected Jesus. But they still didn't recognise him. Is that because they were too heartbroken? Were they still in shock? Was it because God didn't let them see what was in front of them? I don't know. And we are not really told.

Slide 9

What we are told is the gospel according to Cleopas. For this stranger asks them why they are so downcast and Cleopas replies it's all about, *"About Jesus of Nazareth... "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. Slide 10 And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."*

Slide 11

Cleopas had all the evidence that he needed right in front of him but like the mixed-up pieces of a jig saw puzzle, he was yet to put it all together. Jesus was from God. He was the redeemer of Israel. He was powerful in word and deed but he had been sentenced to death; but the women had told them that the tomb was empty & they had been spoken to by angels. All of those things are true. All of those things are right but they were not enough.

And I find that really interesting because what is missing? It's the resurrection. Without the resurrection the life and teaching of Jesus is depressing. Without the resurrection there is no redemption and no hope. Without the resurrection these disciples are heading back home disappointed. As someone once said "*the resurrection was not created by the Church, the Church was created by the resurrection*" (Darrell Bock).

The resurrection of Jesus makes the news about Jesus good news. For it shows that his death was not in vain. That the work of forgiveness on the cross continues on working. That death is not the end. That God is stronger than the grave. That Satan is well and truly defeated. That there is hope for life to come. All because of the resurrection of Jesus.

The story of Cinderella is a sad one without the prince fitting that slipper onto your feet. The recounting of WW2 is depressing without the victory that comes on V Day. And the death of Jesus would be the saddest day in the history of the world without Resurrection Sunday. But Resurrection Sunday has to be properly interpreted. Which is what happens next.

Slide 12

*25" He (Jesus) said to them, "How foolish you are & how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."*

What they needed to understand was that the whole sweep of God's revelation was pointing to Jesus. All the patterns, and people and prophecies found in the Old Testament have now found their fulfilment in Jesus. If you want to understand what is going on in the Old Testament you have to see how it points to Jesus. Which is why one of my lecturers at theological college once told us that if we preach the OT in a way that a Jew would be happy with, we have done it wrong. Because every part of Scripture should bring us to Jesus.

Slide 13

Now wouldn't it be good if we had been there to hear that discussion? It would have been the greatest Bible study ever held. Now it's a long quote but Sinclair Ferguson says Jesus would have told those two on the way to Emmaus that

*\* "Jesus is the true and better Adam; Who passed the test in the garden and whose obedience is now imputed to us*

*\* Jesus is the true and better Abel; Who though innocently slain has blood now that cries out not for our acquittal, not for our condemnation but for our justice*

*\* Jesus is the true and better Abraham; Who answered the call of God to leave all of the comfortable, familiar home; And go out into the void not knowing where He went to create a new people of God*

*\* Jesus is the true and better Isaac; Who is not just offered by His Father but sacrificed by His Father; And when God said to Abraham, 'now I know you love me because you did not withhold your only Son whom you love from me.' Now we can say to God, 'now we know you love us because you did not withhold your only begotten Son from us.'*

*\* Jesus is the true and better Jacob; Who wrestled & took the blow of justice we deserved, so we, like Jacob, only receive the wounds of grace to wake us up and discipline us*

*\* Jesus is the true and better Joseph; Who at the right hand of the King forgives those who betrayed and sold Him and uses His new power to save them*

*\* Jesus is the true and better Moses; Who stands in the gap between the people and the Lord and who mediates a new covenant*

*\* Jesus is the true and better Rock of Moses; Who, struck with the rod of God's justice, now gives us water in the desert*

*\* Jesus is the true and better Job; The truly innocent sufferer who then intercedes for us and saves His stupid friends*

*\* Jesus is the true and better David; Whose victory becomes His people's victory even though they never lifted a stone to accomplish it themselves*

*\* Jesus is the true & better Esther; Who didn't just risk losing an earthly palace but lost the ultimate heavenly one; who didn't just risk losing life but it cost His life to save His people*

*\* Jesus is the true and better Jonah; Who was cast out in the storm and the deep so that we could be brought in;*

*\* Jesus is the Real Passover Lamb, innocent, perfect, helpless, slain so the angel of death will pass over us. Jesus is the true Prophet, the true Priest, the true King, the true Temple, the true Sacrifice, the true Lamb, the true Light, and the true Bread."*

Slide 14

And hearing this teaching causes its hearer's hearts to burn. It lights a fire within them. The Word of God brings them alive. So much so that when they recognise that it is Jesus who was with them all the time, they dash back along a dark and dangerous track in order to tell the apostles that Jesus is alive. And that he appeared to us on the Emmaus Road.

Slide 15

And you have to say that it was the witness of God's word that made all the difference. Yes, God does his work by raising Jesus but it was through the word of God that the works of God are applied to the people of God. And friends that is why we are spending so much time this morning looking at the word of God. Because my witness is not going to convince you that someone came back to life. That is going to sound like complete and utter nonsense. But God's word can you teach you that. God's word can convict you of that. God's word can light a fire in your heart that will never go out. If you are open to God's word that is.

So, friends, put yourself under the Word of God. Put yourself under the Word of God often. Put yourself under the Word of God frequently. Put yourself under the Word of God expectantly and pray that the Holy Spirit will open your eyes. This is the point that Luke is driving home in Luke 24. You & I didn't see Jesus being resurrected & you & I have never seen him alive again in real life? Well, we don't need to see those things. We just need what the first disciples received. The word of God. That is how we are going to understand God's grace and that is how you and I are going to grow in God's grace. And that leads us to the

Slide 16

### **3. Evening: And the witness to God's world (Verses 36-49)**

Because Luke 24 is like a triptych, now do you know what a triptych is? It's a three panelled painting that depicts three related or parallel scenes. For when you look at it closely all three stories in Luke 24 are structured in exactly the same way. They start with confusion – the women at the grave, the disciples on the road and the apostles behind closed door are all bewildered, confused, heartbroken. And then they all hear the word of God either by being shown the fulfilment of the OT or remember the words of Jesus in the gospel and that brings them peace. Then they all go on to be Jesus witnesses back to the twelve or to the world.

Slide 17

And that's what happens again in the last scene. 36 *"While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."* The disciples are plagued with guilt because they let have Jesus down. They are troubled by his death & confused by the empty tomb and you would think that Jesus first words to them would be "I told you so!" Or "get off your backsides and do something constructive!" But it isn't.

Instead, he says "Peace be with you" & if he can speak peace to these fumbling, stumbling disciples isn't it something he wants to bring to all of his disciples? "I know that you have let me down? I know that following me in this world is rough. But you are my children. I have not come to judge you but to save you. I have come to give you forgiveness, love, shalom."

Slide 18



But you will only understand me and what I have come to do, you will only understand yourselves and how you are to live in my world when you come to grips with the Scriptures.

*“He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”*

Slide 19

The OT does more than just point to the role of the King & his death and resurrection. It also points to the role of the Kingdom & how it needs to go to the world. And the King's servants, the disciples of Jesus, you and I, are called to be his witnesses. To not just witness God's works, to not just hear the witness to his word but we are to be his witnesses to the world. We are to ensure that God's word is preached and taught, far and wide. Starting with where we are now and ending at the ends of the earth.

Slide 20

The final word of Jesus in Luke's gospel is Jesus saying that the gospel is not just for you, it is for the world. Yes, you have never seen the risen Jesus and you and I were not there to see the empty grave but we have the power of God in our midst because we go armed with the word of God. It was the words of Jesus that turned the women's around. It was the word of God that set the heart burning on the way to Emmaus. And it was the word of God that fuelled the disciples to wait in Jerusalem to coming of the Holy Spirit and then they lit the flame that has since change the whole world.

Slide 21

So the challenge of this passage is that we need to understand our lives not through what we see or what we feel but what we read in God's word. So often we can only see a few of the things in front of us. We are like Elisha's servant who could only see his enemies surrounding him but didn't see the host of angels protecting him. So often we can only see our sadness, our disappointments and that blinds us to the work that God is doing all around us and the work that God wants us to do to witness to him.

And this passage reminds us that the resurrection changes everything. Jesus is alive. So as we proclaim the good news we ask that God will open ears, give sight to the blind and burn hearts all around us. He has done it for us and he will do it through us, for this is the way that God will change the world.

Slide 22

Let me end with the story of John Scully. He was the head of Pepsi Cola and one of America's fastest rising corporate stars but Steve Jobs was trying to headhunt him and take him to Apple. Jobs gave Scully his pitch but it seemed that the financial benefits of staying with Pepsi were beyond anything that Jobs could currently match. So, he issued his final challenge to Scully, 'Do you want to spend the rest of your life selling sugar water or do you want a chance to change the world?'

In the end joining Apple won't really change the world. But following Jesus will. So today be a witness to the God's work, hear the witness of God's word and then go and be a witness to God's world. As we point others to the earth-shattering truth that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus makes all the difference to both us and our world.

## 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  
Death is dead, love has won, Christ has  
conquered  
And we shall reign with Him  
For He lives, Christ is risen from the dead  
Christ is risen from the dead*

**Closing.** <sup>46</sup>“He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, <sup>47</sup>and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup>You are witnesses of these things.” (Luke 24:46-48)