He Is Not Here...He Is Risen

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[0:00] Just as we've read in 1 Corinthians, so here so many people today as well questioning the resurrection of Christ, denying the resurrection of Christ, denying the resurrection of Christ.

Out of all of the religions in the world today, Christianity alone claims to have a living, risen Savior. A God who became man and who has suffered and died and been resurrected from the dead. One who is alive today.
And I just want to look very briefly at three short points. At the necessity of the resurrection. And the evidence of it.
And the benefits of the resurrection. So first of all, the necessity. There are two particular short phrases in the Bible that are perhaps the two most powerful phrases in the whole of the Bible.
[1:28] In fact, probably two of the most powerful phrases that this world has ever heard. And these two phrases are, It is finished.

Christ's words when he had accomplished everything on the cross with his perfect sacrifice. And secondly, he is risen.
Christ conquered death. He was dead. And now he is alive again. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is absolutely central to the message of the Bible.
The Bible just doesn't make sense without the resurrection. Because without the resurrection, everything is incomplete in every way.
And we need to ask the questions. Well, did Jesus die on the cross at Calvary? Did he die for sinners like us?
[2:39] Did he shed his blood? Was his sacrifice a perfect atonement for sin? And we can rejoice and say yes as an answer to all of these questions.

But what would things have been like if he hadn't risen from the grave? It would have meant that his sacrifice was in vain because a dead Christ is of no use to us.
If Christ isn't raised, then our faith is in vain. And Paul drives his vital message home by repeating it time and again in the passage we read in 1 Corinthians 15.
If Christ hadn't risen from the grave, then we would not have glory to look forward to. And the Gospels tell us a lot about the remarkable things that Jesus did during his three years of ministry. Through his teachings, through his healings, and so on. This is what the Gospels primarily focus on. But isn't it really interesting that in the rest of the New Testament, from particularly the middle of Acts onwards, these things are hardly mentioned again.
[4:11] And all of the emphasis is put on the death and resurrection of Christ. The Gospels can't explain the resurrection because it's the resurrection that explains the Gospels.

And the resurrection of Christ, it was an open and a visible sign from God the Father that Jesus had done all things well, that he had finished the work that was required of him on the cross in perfect obedience.
He who was the Lamb of God, that sacrificial Lamb on the cross at Calvary, the perfect Lamb, unblemished Lamb, and who was obedient to the very last word.
Justice then was satisfied through Jesus' sacrifice, and mercy and peace kissed mutually, as Psalm 85 so beautifully puts it for us.
And the way to eternal life was at last opened up for sinners like you and me. through his sacrifice and death, and through his resurrection.
[5:44] And this resurrection is a central and focal point of our faith. What evidence do we have for the resurrection?

Well, Luke was an eyewitness of the life of Christ. And you and I know that whenever there is any case in any court of law, no matter what evidence there may be, whether it be circumstantial or

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otherwise, it's the evidence of an eyewitness that is really taken seriously.
When you have a trustworthy eyewitness, that is the evidence that people focus on. And Luke was an eyewitness of the life of Christ.
And he wrote it down so that we can have confidence in the truth of the gospel. And in the book of Acts, Luke also wrote, after his suffering, Jesus showed himself to these men, that is, to his disciples, and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive.
So what are these infallible and convincing proofs Luke wrote about here in chapter 24? Well, first, there is the empty tomb.
[7:16] When Mary Magdalene and the other women arrived at the tomb, they discovered that Jesus was not there.

The body of Jesus was not there. He had already risen very early that morning. But Matthew 28 tells us that there was an earthquake, and two angels descended, and they rolled away the stone that was at the front of the tomb.
This did not help Jesus come out, because Jesus had already come out. But to show those coming later, this was done. Those like these women who were there first, to show them that Jesus' physical body was not in that grave, in that tomb, any longer.
And the testimony of these women is given prominence, very much so, it's given much prominence, even in an age at that time when women were not considered to be proper witnesses in either Jewish or Gentile law.
Secondly, Luke gives us the proof of two witnesses. The two angels witnessed the resurrection. And the angels asked, who do you seek?
[8:49] The loving, why do you seek, sorry, the loving among the dead? And then they gave this majestic announcement of confirmation.

He is not here. He is risen. And this was God's word of explanation for the empty tomb.
Resurrection. Resurrection. The third proof is Christ's own words. We have here, we're told here in Luke 24, 7, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and on the third day be raised again.
And in Greek, the word or day means it is necessary or it must be.
And that's the word that is used here. It's used and it puts a real emphasis on the words about the Son of Man because it tells us the Son of Man must be delivered, must be crucified, and must rise on the third day.
[10:13] And these prophecies are clearly recorded for us in the Gospels. In Matthew, in chapter 12 and 16, in Luke, chapter 18, and in John, chapter 2.

And Jesus indicated that this was the divine purpose and indeed a divine necessity. And then after the resurrection, Jesus, of course, declared, he himself declared that he had wisdom from the dead.
And we're told that in John, chapter 20, and also in Revelation, chapter 1. As three proofs, the fourth proof is the witness of the Old Testament scriptures.
And we have that really from Genesis right through right through to the end of the Old Testament.
And the whole of the Old Testament points to Christ's death and resurrection.
In the chapter we read here in chapter 24 of Luke, the second part of this, or the central part of this focuses on the road to Emmaus.
[11:34] Let me just read a few verses because this is where it really points to us of the prophetic nature of the Bible.

In verse 25, as Jesus walked with these two men, Jesus had appeared beside them. and Jesus began to give them understanding about what had happened because these two men were totally confused that the person they relied on, Jesus, had been crucified on the cross because they thought they were going to have a ruler who would rule with them.
But Jesus said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?
And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. So at that time, the scriptures to go back on were the Old Testament scriptures.
And Christ explained everything from these scriptures to these two men who subsequently rejoiced and went back to the disciples and told them of everything that had happened.

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[13:00] And then the first proof is towards the end of this account of the two on the road to Emmaus. And it tells us Jesus broke bread.

Jesus took the bread, he blessed it as he had a meal with these two men. He broke bread and he blessed it.
And he gave it to Cleopas and his friend who is unnamed. Just as he had done in the upper room before his death on the cross when he had instituted the Passover, the Lord's Supper, should I say. He had instituted the Lord's Supper with his disciples there as he shared the Passover. And then it tells us here that after Christ broke bread then their eyes were opened and they recognized him. So there we have a first proof from the word itself. then we got to ask the question what about the transformation in the disciples themselves?
[14:17] Surely we have infallible proof with it as well. Because when we look at the disciples after the death of Christ they were broken.

It's hard to imagine any group of people who changed their outlook like the disciples did in the 50 days between their experience in that upper room where they shared the Passover Jesus just prior to his crucifixion and then on the day of Pentecost.
And the picture we have of the disciples after the crucifixion is of a fearful and dispirited and defeated group of men and also women who were with them.
They were broken. Broken people. Didn't know how to go forward. Didn't know what they should do next. They had lost the Lord who they loved and the Lord who was leading them.
He was now dead. And so they were in a totally defeated state of mind. He had been brutally executed.
[15:49] their Lord. And yet when we look at Pentecost the picture is dramatically changed. Totally.

The disciples have been transformed into an effective team who are now leading the church under the Lord's guidance. They are now bold and powerful in preaching the message.
church. Now what a transformation that is from the way they were in the upper room after Christ had been sacrificed when they were hiding from the Romans and the Jewish leadership and now they're out up front preaching to these men.
Excuse me. I'm just trying to get over a cold as you can tell in my voice. And Peter who had denied his master when it came to the conscience now fearless and publicly faces the crowds at Jerusalem proclaiming that Jesus is indeed the Messiah and the risen Lord.
At Pentecost we're told in Acts chapter 2 this is what Peter says to the people there. Men of Israel listen Jesus of Nassau he was a man accredited by God to you by miracles wonders and signs which God did among you through him.
[17:26] As you yourself know but with the help of wicked men you put him to death. God has raised this Jesus to life and we are all witnesses of the fact.

And Peter further states it was impossible for death to keep a hold of him. It was impossible.
And when Peter was brought before the high courts as we're told in Acts chapter 4 he said rulers and elders it is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead that this man stands before you completely healed we cannot help speaking what we have seen and heard.
And Thomas doubting Thomas who hadn't been with the disciples when Jesus first revealed himself to them doubt Thomas after he met them afterwards said well I'm not going to believe unless I see his hands and put my fingers through these wounds the nail wounds and put my hand into the wound on the side and after he met with Jesus the resurrected Jesus Thomas is now also fully convinced that Jesus is risen from the dead as he said my Lord and my God and Mary the mother of Jesus who had watched her sons agonizing death is no longer mourning but she is with the disciples praying with them as they wait for his promised gift of the Holy Spirit that's what scripture tells us and
James James the brother of Jesus who had previously been sceptical about his brother and his brother's claims is now identified with the believers and he also later became a leader of the church in Jerusalem what made the difference we might ask well one thing is clear the disciples hadn't expected Jesus to rise from the dead even though he had told them several times that he would and yet it's now equally clear that the disciples are wholly convinced that this has happened and Luke tells us in his gospel in chapter 1 verse 2 that the information in his gospel account came from

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those who were first eyewitnesses and servants of the Lord this word eyewitnesses is being repeated time and again throughout the narrative of the
[20:23] New Testament they were disciples were eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus Christ including his death and burial but above all eyewitnesses of his resurrection and nothing could stop these disciples now from preaching this word of God preaching this new way of salvation to whoever was before them it didn't matter who was before them whether they were friendly whether they were enemies they were preaching this word this new way to the people who came before them then we might ask well what about Saul of Tarshish the man we now know as the apostle Paul Paul's confidence in the reality of the resurrection was twofold and we're told that firstly we're told by Luke the author of

Acts as well that he had personally met the risen Christ at his conversion on the road to Damascus that's what Luke recorded for us in Acts chapter 9 and secondly Paul's faith it didn't rely solely on a personal experience but the testimony of other reliable eyewitnesses was just as important to him and let me just give you an example just as we had here in 1 Corinthians 15 5 to 8 just as it says to us there Paul lists some of the people Jesus appeared to after his resurrection he appeared to Peter and to the twelve and then he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time most of whom are still living that's what it tells us and then he appeared to
James and then to the apostles and then Paul says last of all he appeared to me Paul relied on those other people and their eyewitness accounts as well and their confirmation Paul knew Peter and James personally and what Paul is effectively saying in this chapter is if you don't believe me then go and ask them because they'll tell you exactly the same thing that I'm telling you and even in all of that in many respects we've just summarized the evidence of the resurrection but nothing in scripture is left without an explanation so then what are the benefits of this resurrection let me look at this very briefly Paul tells us Christ died for our sins in some incredible way
Jesus was making our forgiveness possible and the New Testament constantly confirms that the death of Jesus was a sacrifice initiated by God himself to pay for the sins of the human race but it was in raising Christ from the dead God set the seal of approval on what Christ had done his death and resurrection they were all part of one act Romans 4 tells us he was delivered over to death for our sins and he was raised to life for our justification his sufferings made our forgiveness possible but it is the risen Christ who offers that forgiveness to us and guarantees it for us all when
Christ uttered these words it is finished down to the bottom then the veil of the temple it was split from top down to the bottom that was as thick as a man's hand and it was God we understand who broke that temple open and opened up the way into the most holy place in other words Christ's sacrifice opened up the way into the presence of God but it's through the resurrection of Christ that now we know that all of us surely will be resurrected as well because he was raised first his sufferings may give forgiveness possible his victory over sin and death through his own death and resurrection is God's final and triumphant word over evil and sin and the devil and because of it we have a glorious hope death has now been swallowed up in victory and his people
[25:47] God's people God's children will be with him forever more when they leave this earth because you see the resurrection it guarantees believers their share in that final victory those who have faith those who are co-heirs of his kingdom and the resurrection is more than just a past event and it's more than a future prospect because it's also a present reality for all of God's people all believers here and now because all of God's children they have now become new creatures new creations in Christ Jesus because they now have a new living hope through

Christ's death and his resurrection Jesus appeared to his followers 11 times in the 40 days between his resurrection and ascension and later he appeared to Stephen at a stoning when Stephen was being stoned to death for preaching the gospel he also appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus and Jesus also appeared to John on the island of Patmos in giving him the revelation from the utter darkness that surrounded the cross in those three hours of our Lord's spiritual agonies what we now see through his resurrection is a glorious light of hope and we have a gospel that offers very real hope the risen
Christ who lives today he offers you these benefits and he offers you his love because he's demonstrated his love for you and I through his sacrifice and death on that cross and he now offers to come into your life but you need to go to him and you need to acknowledge that you are a sinner you need to repent and turn away from the ways of just following the things of this world you need to look to Jesus and turn to him and give your life over to him and he will come to you that is a

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promise his word promises that because he offers to come into your life by the!
Holy Spirit God and to restore you to full fellowship with the living God because Jesus is alive and he will save everyone who comes to faith in him let's have a short word of prayer

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