

## SERMON TRANSCRIPT

03.31.2023 | The Risen and Reigning King | Matthew 27:62-28:20 | Ben Day, Senior Pastor

You have a Bible this morning. I'd like you to turn with me to Matthew chapter 28. Today we're actually going to be reading the last two verses of Matthew 27 and then Matthew 28. If you didn't read the Bible, there should be one maybe in the queue or the chair in front of you. In that Bible it's on page 835. We'd love for you to be able to turn there and read along with us as we study God's Word together. If you've been to our church at all really over the last year or so, you know we've been walking through the book of Matthew. It's taken us over a year with some breaks. We've preached over 50 sermons on this gospel account. And so now we come to the end of this long study. But also know that probably many of you haven't been to our church maybe in the last year or so. But it's your first time at our church. What a Sunday for you to be able to join. As we've studied the gospel of Matthew and consider all the promises and prophecies that Jesus has fulfilled to reveal himself as King, as the Messiah, as the Savior that had been promised. We now see as we come to the end of Matthew's gospel that he is the King, that he is the risen and reigning King, that he rose from the dead and he now reigns over all things.

I want to read our text for us this morning, which is Matthew chapter 27 verse 62 all the way through Matthew chapter 28. Matthew writes that the next day, that is after the day of preparation, the chief priest in the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said while he was still alive, after three days I will be blessed. Therefore, order the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Let his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people he is risen from the dead, and the last robbery will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go make it as secure as you can." So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting the guard. Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who is crucified. He is not here, for he has risen as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead. Behold, he has gone before you to Galilee. There you will see him. See, I told you." So they depart quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings." And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee and there they will see me." While they were going, behold, some of the guard went to the city and told the chief priest all that had taken place. And within a symbol with the elders and taking counsel, they gave us sufficient some of the money to the soldiers and said, "Tell people his disciples came by night and stole them away while we were asleep." And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day. Now the 11 disciples went to Galilee to the mount in which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him, they worshiped him. But some doubt it. And Jesus said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age."

You know, if you were trying to write a book that captured the most defining world changing moments in history, it would probably be a pretty difficult book to write. It would probably be a challenge to narrow down a number of events that have shaped the world so significantly that we could not leave them out of this book. It would be hard to try to think about the Western world or the Eastern world and so many parts of the world that we aren't even aware of. There's so many events in history that have taken place. I mean, the world is so broad. History is so long. It would really be a challenge to try to narrow down history to a few defining moments. I mean, think about just maybe even the history of our country. You think about our country is much younger than the rest of the world. It's a much more narrow focus. Could we nail down a few defining moments for our country? Could you think about maybe the declaration of independence or the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation? Maybe any more modern, you've got the bombing of Pearl Harbor or the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. or John F. Kennedy? Probably could start to narrow down, but it would be a challenge. You know, one defining moment that's probably taken place in at least many of our lifetimes. I recognize we've got some here that we're even alive for this, but the attacks from September 11, 2001, many people when they're looking at modern history in the terms of the US, they would say this was a significant event. This was a

defining moment for our country. Think about the ways that things have been impacted since that event. International relations have been affected. There have been now violence and wars and conflicts. It's affected the way people feel. It's affected the way certain people are viewed or treated. I mean, if you float it all, it sounds like it has affected you. I wasn't really that old to fly much before the events of 9-11, but it sounds like you could just do anything you wanted. Like you could just walk people right up to their plane. It was like the Wild West out there in the airport. And now you can't do anything. If you slow down too long, they make you kick somebody out the car and keep driving. It's a, it's an event that has affected everything. And as I was just thinking about this, the way that it would be so hard to define history by just a few, a few events. I want to put that before you that I recognize that that is a challenge, but I also want to put it for you this kind of main idea for us today. And that is that the resurrection of Jesus is the pivotal event in all of history.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the defining moment. It is the pivotal event in all of history. You think about the way that Jesus's resurrection has changed the world. And if you know this, but around Jesus's time in that part of the world, there were others who made similar claims to Jesus. Other people in the Jewish community claim to be the promise of the Messiah. Other people performed miracles. I mean, we've even looked at the last couple of weeks, there are other people who are trying to overthrow the Roman government, lead revolts and revolutions and insurrections. Jesus was probably one of many of his time who would have made some of these claims. But yet it is only the movement of Jesus that has lasted for 2000 years. It's only the followers of Jesus who have spread all around the globe. Why is that? You see, the people at the time, they knew that if Jesus rose from the dead, or at least the people believe that, that it would be a significant moment. You might have checked to 27, what we just read. You notice what the leader said in verse 63 chapter 27. They told Pilate, we remember that the imposter, meaning Jesus, is the one who claimed to be the Messiah. He said, well, he was still alive after three days, I will rise.

So Jesus had predicted his death and resurrection. And so they say in verse 64, go in and order the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Let his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people he has risen from the dead. And the last straw will be worse than the first. What the leaders recognized, they recognize that if Jesus really raises from the dead, it changes everything. Even the belief about him being resurrected is out there. And this whole movement of Jesus is actually going to be worse than the first, or worse than the first. They're saying that what Jesus has started in this movement, we think we stamped out with his death. But if people believe that he rose from the dead, it's actually just going to continue to spread. And they were right. They tried to seal the tomb. They tried to put the guards at the tomb. I'll tell you, I think the Roman government, the Roman guard was probably good at anything. It was killing people as they did Jesus on the cross, making sure that they were dead. And if they were to guard the tomb, I think they would have done that versus just 11 disciples. It says here that as the disciples, the first of the women and the disciples discovered that Jesus has been raised from the dead. And therefore the guards and the rest of the leaders start to discover that as well. They start to come up with a new story. Right? Because they recognize that this is going to be such a significant event. In chapter 28, verse 13, they say, tell the people his disciples came by night and stole them away while we were asleep. Matthew actually says that when he's writing this decades later, that this story is still being spread amongst his people, that the body of Jesus was stolen by the disciples. Why did they have to come up with such a story? Because they knew that if Jesus really rose from the dead, it would change everything. You see, a lot of people realize this actually. A lot of other religions and belief systems actually kind of changed the story of Jesus's death and resurrection. There are certain religions that believe Jesus didn't actually go on the cross. They believe Jesus was called up to heaven and someone else took his place on the cross.

Other belief systems claim that Jesus didn't actually die on the cross. That he nearly passed out. He fainted. And then when he came to on the third day, he wasn't resurrected, just resuscitated. Other people just call him and question whether or not this really happened. They come up with all these different stories and conclusions because they recognize the resurrection of Jesus is significant. And if he really raised from the dead, it changes everything. In fact, the Bible says so. The Bible says that if Jesus did not raise from the dead, that our faith as Christians is in vain. That everything we trusted as Christians is based on who Jesus is and what he has done. And the Bible says that if Jesus didn't really raise from the dead that we as Christians, we should be pitied. People should look down upon us and say, bless their hearts. That's what people say when they kind of pity you and they want to say it in a nice way. They said, bless their hearts. They got together on this Sunday morning. These four people got in the cold water and they professed their faith in the guy who they didn't even exist or really raised from the dead. Think about the amount of time that we've wasted, the amount of resources that we've wasted if Jesus really didn't raise from the dead. But if Jesus really did raise

from the dead, it changes everything. If Jesus really did raise from the dead, it confirms that he really was God the Son, born to a virgin. That he really was the Messiah who had been promised from the times of the Old Testament, a savior who God had promised from the very beginning. If Jesus really raised from the dead, it really is the pivotal event of all history.

And here's why I'm spending so much time trying to help us to consider that this morning. Because I think there's a lot of people who don't actually believe that. And when I say that, it's not because they don't believe Jesus actually rose from the dead. Interestingly enough, there was a survey done a few years ago. A few thousand Americans were surveyed. And what they found was that two-thirds of the people who were surveyed said that they believed that Jesus really did raise from the dead. Two-thirds of the people that were surveyed, only one-fifth, 20%, said they don't believe it. Now I think if we were to look around our country, we would say we don't really see two-thirds of people actually living as if Jesus raised from the dead. There seems to be a significant number of people who maybe believe that this is true, but don't see it as a pivotal event in history or in their lives. So I have to say something's probably similar here. I mean, maybe in San Francisco the number's a little bit lower. Maybe you could just say maybe a third of San Franciscans would believe that Jesus rose from the dead. Would we say that a third of the people in our city live as if Jesus is his king? A third of the people here live as if he is their only hope.

I think there's a significant gap between people believing that this happened and actually seeing it as the pivotal event of history and making it the pivotal event of their lives. The moment that everything hinges upon is the resurrection of Jesus, the pivotal event of your life. If so, there is a hope that you can have that was professed so clearly in these testimonies this morning. The hope that Jesus has conquered death. The things that we most fear in life. The ways that the enemy most tries to scare us and to guide us away from God have been conquered in Jesus's death and resurrection. If Jesus really rose from the dead, it can mean that you have nothing to fear in this life. (That you can have hope in life and in death because of what Jesus has done. That you can know at these testimonies professed who you are, what your value and worth is, what your future holds if Jesus really rose from the dead and if that is the pivotal moment of your life. This morning for the remainder of our time, I just want to ask two questions. Why should you believe this to be true and what should you do about it? Why should you believe that Jesus really rose from the dead? And then if you do believe it, what should that mean to you?

So why should we believe that Jesus really rose from the dead? I just want to give you two reasons that I think Matthew offers us here. One is the testimony of the women. One of the reasons that I think that you should believe that Jesus really rose from the dead is the testimony of the women. Also of the gospel accounts, as we'll read here in Matthew, but also Mark and Luke and John, all of them tell the story in a very similar way. Now there's always some details that people like to focus on and which one was exactly right in the way that they put it. But they all tell the general same story and one of those parts of the story is that the women reached the tomb first. That the women who were followers of Jesus, people like Mary Magdalene, they were the first ones to reach the tomb and see that the stone had been rolled away. They were the first ones to see that the tomb was empty and that the angel says he's not here because he has risen. All of the gospel accounts, they were the first ones to meet the risen Jesus. Those ladies are then instructed to go and tell the disciples. You see in Matthew 28, this is in verse 5, the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell the disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him. See, I have told you." The first witnesses to the resurrection are these women who are followers of Jesus. They are instructed to go to Jesus's closest disciples and tell them. And on their way there, they meet the risen Jesus. In verse 9, Matthew writes, "Behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings." But Jesus is a funny way to greet people after he just rose from the dead, as if they should just be expecting to see you. Greetings." And they came up and took hold of this, and worshiped him. Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me." Jesus himself tells these women to go, and you be the ones to tell these 11 disciples, my closest followers that I have risen.

Now, you see, we as progressive people in 2024 in San Francisco, we hear this. We think, "Well, good on Jesus for giving this role to women and empowering women, especially on this last day of the Women's History Month. Good for Jesus to use women in this story and to power them in this way." But you have to recognize that in the culture that these people lived, that's not the way they would have read this. The testimony of women was always called into question. The

witness of women was not considered that credible as the witness of men in this culture. In fact, the long time, women could not be used as a witness in court because their testimony may not be legally binding. If you were reading the story, if it was constructed by these disciples who are wanting to come up with a good story of what happened to Jesus, you'd have to wonder why they placed women the first ones of the two. Why did the testimony of Jesus's resurrection begin with the witness of women? It seems like it would just throw the whole story into question. I mean, maybe you could think of the people in our culture who people would be most likely to discredit. People that if they tried to tell you what happened, people would say, "Well, were they really in their right mind when that happened?" Well, look at their history. Look at all that they've done. Could we really believe what they said? This is the same way that people would question the story that the disciples tell. If the disciples are making up a story, you think they might make up one that is more believable or more trustworthy than women. But yet if you've been reading the gospel accounts, you're really not surprised at all because Jesus was one to empower women, to show them the way that God really viewed them. He was the one to reach out to the outcast and to the marginalized. It was shepherds, lowly shepherds who were the ones who first witnesses to Jesus's birth. They were the ones to go out and share their testimony. Now Jesus uses women who would have been called into question to be the first ones to share that he has risen from the dead.

I think the fact that the women are the first testimonies of Jesus's resurrection is a reason you should consider believing that Jesus really rose from the dead. The other one is these disciples who write this story. What's interesting to me is the way that their lives are changed at this moment. So the second reason that I would offer you is not just the testimony of the women, but the transformation of the disciples. The transformation of these 11 or so men who are really close to Jesus. If you ever read the gospel accounts like we've been reading through Matthew's gospel account, you'll find the disciples are not usually presented in a very flattering light. The disciples are often very confused. They're often really misled. They often have really wrong motivations. They want to know who's going to sit next to Jesus in his kingdom. They're not worried so much about serving. They want to be served. I mean the disciples are very honest as they write these accounts of the ways that they were kind of struggling to believe. And even in Matthew, he closes out his gospel account. He speaks really honestly. You notice in chapter 28 verse 16, it says, "Now the 11 disciples went to Galilee to the black mountain which Jesus had directed them, and when they saw him they worshiped, but some doubted."

Can you imagine that? They see Jesus who they just know is crucified. I mean they see the scars on his hands and his feet, and they doubt it. I mean what is there left to doubt? You're seeing the risen Jesus. But they're very honest about themselves. Very honest whenever they tell us that Peter denied Jesus three times from the night that he was betrayed and arrested. Very honest about their struggle to understand and comprehend. But something interesting happens. After Jesus's resurrection, as Jesus ascends, the disciples are changed. The disciples move from being confused and not able to comprehend to quite able to comprehend. And not only to understand, but to articulate. The disciples become really eloquent and bold. I mean the same Peter who was just denying Jesus to a servant girl and even knew the man just a few days after Jesus's ascension stands before a large child and proclaims the gospel, calling the people out in their sin and professing the fact that Jesus is a Messiah who was risen from the dead. That same Peter who was so scared to say that he knew Jesus was a knight when he was arrested went on to die for his faith. History tells us that he was crucified upside down because he did not want to die in the same way as the Lord and Savior. What changes Peter from denying Jesus to preaching about Jesus to even dying for Jesus?

You can also think about a number of the disciples. I mean here they are on Holy Saturday and early Sunday morning. They're humbled to distribute together, probably afraid of what's going to happen to them. And soon after they see the risen Jesus and his sins, they're out preaching the gospel, willing to lay down their lives for faith. Even the apostle Paul who we read much from in the New Testament was one who was killing Christians and now he becomes a Christian, an evangelist, a missionary, and even dies for his faith. Why is this? I would have to say it because they truly met the risen Jesus and then they truly received the Holy Spirit that he had promised. This transformation seems to come as they see that Jesus really has been raised from the dead and then they have the spirit that Jesus had promised whenever he ascended. And the Bible says that that same spirit is available to all who trust in Jesus. That all who would trust in him received the spirit, the same spirit the apostle did, and that same transformation is available to each one of us. As it was just professed in these testimonies in the baptisms, the way that Jesus can change your life is available to you. You see this, these women who give testimony, these disciples who are transformed, they are I think reasons why we can believe Jesus really rose from the dead.

So what? If you really believe that Jesus rose from the dead, well what does it really mean? What does it look like for it to be the pivotal event of your life? Here's what I want to close just by considering this last question. What should we do about it? Two answers I'll offer you here that I think we see at the end of Matthew 28. If we really believe that Jesus rose from the dead, that we can trust in Jesus's current reign and continual presence. If we really believe that Jesus rose from the dead, conquering sin and death, that we can now believe in Jesus's continual reign, our current reign, and continual presence in our lives. The last few verses of Matthew chapter 28 are often referred to as the Great Commission. A lot of times we focus on what Jesus calls us to do as believers in this commission, but before we look at what Jesus calls us to do, I want you to notice the way that Jesus bookends this mission. He first says in verse 18, says that Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Do you hear that? All authority in heaven and on earth is now given to King Jesus. All throughout this gospel account we've been seeing that Jesus is fulfilling prophecies to reveal himself as the king. He's been talking about his kingdom and showing the ways that we are to live in his kingdom, but now Jesus says that as I've risen from the dead, I reign as king. All authority in heaven and on earth, that means everywhere. All authority now belongs to Jesus.

What a hope this can give you if you believe in him. To know that no matter who's in political power, to know that no matter what is happening in your job or in your life, that Jesus currently reigns, that all things that happen are under his sovereign control. Trust in Jesus's current reign and trust in his continual presence in your life. As Jesus calls his disciples to go and make more disciples, he ends by saying in verse 20, "And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age." Jesus says, "No matter where you go to which nations, no matter how long it takes to the end of this age, I will be with you." Now this is ironic because Jesus is about to ascend back to heaven and he won't be with him. This is where we come to find out about the Holy Spirit and his presence in our lives being so important. Jesus says, "My presence will be with you, not because for the last three years you've just been, you know, 11 disciples and some other followers walking near me, but now my presence will be with you because my spirit will be in you."

This is the promise to all who trust in Jesus even today, that Jesus's presence is available to you at all times. And the Bible says that with his presence comes his power. The apostle Paul says in Ephesians chapter 1, "The same power that arose Jesus from the dead is now available to those who trust in him." That means no matter where you go in life, his presence and his power with you, that as you go to work or to school, Jesus's presence and his power with you, that as you raise young kids or as you care for aging parents, Jesus's presence and his power with you, that as you sit in the doctor's appointment, where you walk alongside a friend or a family member who's going through a trial, Jesus's presence and his power is with you. You see, this is why this is not just an event in the past that made a difference in the world, but why it should be the pivotal event of your life. When Jesus got up from the grave, he gave us hope beyond this world. He gave us a foundation that can't be shaken and is available to you. If he rains over all and his presence is there with you, the one who is over all things is also intimately available to you.

Do you trust in this? And so this is such a pivotal thing that we cannot keep this news to ourselves. So the last thing that I'll point to us is if we really believe that Jesus rose from the dead, we really believe that this is a pivotal event in all of history, that we must tell others about the risen king. If we really believe that this is where our hope lies, if we really believe that Jesus is the hope for the world, then we have to go and tell others about the risen king. Jesus says that he is reigning over all, he has authority in heaven on earth that he is with his disciples, he gives them this commission. It's a commission that guides every believer and every Christian. Should guide each one of us, should guide every church. Maybe you're new to our church. Our goal as a church would be to carry out the great commission that Jesus has given us. He gives it clearly here in verses 19 and the beginning of 20. He says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." This is what Jesus' followers are to be about. He's telling his followers, "Go and teach others to follow me." He's telling his disciples, "You are now disciple makers."

This is the call for each one who believes in Jesus that he has resurrected and now reigns as king is weird to go and to make other disciples. Tell them about King Jesus, that they might trust him and be baptized as these were here today. Don't just tell them about King Jesus, but teach them how to follow King Jesus. But at this point I would guess that it's one of the main areas where Christianity kind of bumps up against our culture today. You know, I think we live in a culture that would probably say, you know, listen, you as Christians, you're trying to believe what you want to believe, you should just kind of keep it to yourself. (Like you as Christians, you can get together and celebrate Easter and the Jesus

rose from the dead, but just don't come and preach it to me. Don't try to force your beliefs on me. This is a challenge because this is exactly what Christians have been called to do. This is exactly what our world often pushes back against.(...) Now I'll just admit, I think at times Christians have been probably unhelpful or even harmful in the way that they've tried to go out and evangelize and share the gospel and make disciples.( But I think even when Christians do it the quote unquote right way, as they follow Jesus and they love people and deserve them, I think sometimes they still get pushed back against this culture. And the one thing I would say is, I think one thing Matthew has taught us in the study of his gospel account is that while Jesus is coming and establishing his kingdom, there are many other kingdoms in this world. There are many other kingdoms that people are worshiping and living according towards. You don't have to be religious or a Christian to have something that you believe in, that you place your hope in. In fact, I would say that each one of us belongs to some type of kingdom. I think each one of us worships someone or something. Each one of us put our hope and our trust in someone or something. You know, think of a lot of us, Christians aren't the only ones out there preaching what they believe. I mean, it seems like you can't go a day in San Francisco without someone having some demonstration or protest to pronounce what they believe. It seems like we don't often go along without hearing what someone's ethics or values or morals are.

It seems like everybody is out there, I think, promoting their kingdom. I think Christians are called to do the same. But the difference is we have a hope and something that has truly happened. I truly believe the thing that separates Christianity from other religions and belief systems is not that we just have a better moral system or a better philosophy or anything like that. I think what really sets us apart is that we have good news, that something has happened, that Jesus got up from the grave. Our hope for the future, our hope for the present, is built on something that truly happened. It is placed in someone who truly lived and died and arose from the dead. Rather than just hoping that things will get better, rather than just placing our faith in some type of system or morals or philosophy, we have a risen Savior. We have an event in history that we trust in that gives us a hope for the future.

So Christians, I do believe that we are to go out to tell people about our risen King. We love to share good news, don't we? Let us share the good news of the gospel with those around us. We have something that has given us hope. Let us go out following the example of our King, not living according to the values of the kingdoms of this earth, but living according to the values of his kingdom. By making sure the first are last and the last are first. By serving the outcast and the overlooked. By loving all people as we follow our King, I think we will see people begin to follow our King. We've been given this commission to go out because we've seen in Matthew's gospel, Jesus is the promised King. He has come. He has lived the life that we should have lived. He has died the sacrificial death in our place. He has risen from the dead. He is currently reigning over all things and one day he will return. The Bible says that on that day every knee will bow before King Jesus and every tongue will confess he is Lord. Today we will confess he is Lord. Today we will be trusted to him as King.