



CANYON HILLS

COMMUNITY CHURCH

Series: The Book of Mark

August 19, 2018

The Resurrection

Pastor Koby Orr

I'm going to ask you, as the offering buckets are coming around, to get your Bibles open to Mark, chapter 16. As you do that, I just want to admit out loud that today is a bit of a weird day. I don't know if it has been weird for you yet, but as the one who has been preparing to speak today, today is a strange day. The reason is because today, our passage takes us to the resurrection of Jesus.

An Easter message is something I always had hoped I would get to preach, but it's not something I anticipated happening this early, and it's certainly not something I anticipated happening here in August, and yet today, this is where we find ourselves as we go verse-by-verse through the book of Mark. We are at the resurrection, so let me be the first to wish you, I'm sure, a happy Easter on August 19, 2018.

The danger, when it comes to a topic like the resurrection, is that the life, death, and resurrection of Christ is something we talk about so frequently as Christians. It's something we talk about so frequently in church that oftentimes, it can lose some of its significance in our lives. Something that at one point in time brought us to our knees in humility and wonder becomes something we quickly take for granted. This is just the habit of our lives, is it not?

I mean, for any of you in the room here who are married, I want you to think back to the moment when you got engaged, the moment the person you were with went from being *a* person to being *the* person. In this season of life, we were meticulous. We paid attention to every detail to make sure our relationship went as smoothly and as perfectly as possible. Whenever we saw that significant other, we made sure we looked nice, dressed nice, and smelled nice, and the car was vacuumed out. We wanted to put our best foot forward at every opportunity.

Flash forward a few years into marriage. Now, on Saturdays, the husband's best foot forward is just wearing a shirt, because nothing accents the beauty of athletic shorts quite like a shirt. For the wife, a good day, a special day, is the day she decides, "Maybe today isn't a yoga pants day. It's a day to wear actual pants, because we might go out and see people."

We take for granted that with which we get comfortable. Any of you who are here who are parents... we see this play out. Kid number one... We are so attentive to every little burp and cry that comes out of that little body. We ask people to use hand sanitizer before they hold our babies because we'd hate for that delicate little body to get sick.

Flash forward to kids three, four, and beyond. I say this from experience. We look over our shoulder as our kid is licking the contents of a squeeze pack off the kitchen floor and we're okay with it, because in this moment, they're occupied. Some lesser parents might walk over and step on another squeeze pack just to keep them there for a couple of minutes.

This is the habit and the tendency of our human lives. We get comfortable with and take for granted the things we become overly familiar with. So, my hope for today is that for any of us, myself included, who have found ourselves in a place where we are getting overly comfortable with the resurrection of Jesus would find a renewed gratitude and commitment to living a life that not only acknowledges the truth of the resurrection but allows this truth to mark our lives.

With that, I'm going to ask you all to get to your feet as we read together in Mark, chapter 16, beginning in verse 1.

"When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?' And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.

And he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.' And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."

Heavenly Father, we are grateful for your Word and we are thankful for your truth. I pray that you'd prepare our hearts for the truth you have for us, God, that we would not be content to hear your words and go on living as we have always lived, but that we would hear your Word and allow your Word to change us, and that we would leave as people looking more and more like the image of your Son. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Today, my outline comes in the form of two questions that I think are important for every person in this room to answer for themselves when it comes to the resurrection.

1. *Do I believe the resurrection actually happened?* This might seem like a strange question to ask in a room full of people who have all come to church, but the reality is, in a room this size, there are many different kinds of people present. We have those who know and love Jesus and

absolutely believe the resurrection took place. We have those who believe it's true but maybe don't know why. It's just what they've always been taught.

Then, I believe there are people present here today who would say, "No, I don't believe this took place." So, I think this is a natural place for us to begin as we look at the resurrection, because here's the thing. If I do not believe Jesus physically rose from the grave, then there is no reason for me to allow this legend to impact my life in any way.

Yet if I do believe Jesus did physically rise from the dead, then I have to admit and allow that everything in my life needs to change. So, I would caution you as you quickly reach for your answer to that question to slow down for a moment and be sure about what that answer might be, because the implications are great.

When it comes to the resurrection, the biblical, historical claim that Jesus rose from the grave, we really only have two options. Either this is a truth claim or it is a lie. I believe there are three claims made in our text that historically reinforce the validity of the claim that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead. If we take a moment and we remove our belief that this is the inspired Word of God and we just simply look at it as a history book, I think there are three claims that would make the case for the actual rising of Christ from the dead.

A. *Women made the discovery.* Verse 1: **"When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him."** Women were the first on the scene to discover that the tomb was in fact empty. Now, why is this significant? It's significant because in first-century Jewish culture, women were highly regarded in theory, but not so much in practice.

Women, I need your eyes on me here for just a moment. This is really important. What you're about to hear me say is the opinion of a flawed, sinful human government. It is not how God sees women. It is not how the Bible sees women. This is not how this church sees women. Most importantly...eyes on me...this is not how I view women. I need you to hear that, because when it comes to these kinds of topics, our hearing gets a little selective.

Dr. William Lane Craig is a well-known Christian apologist. He described the cultural climate toward women in this way. "Women were on a very low run of the social ladder in first-century Palestine. There are old rabbinical sayings that said, 'Let the words of Law be burned rather than delivered to women' and 'blessed is he whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female.' Women's testimony was regarded as so worthless that they weren't even allowed to serve as legal witnesses in a Jewish court of Law."

There are two things to take away from these statements. First, *this is not Koby's opinion, but rather that of a flawed, sinful government.* Are we on the same page? Secondly, *if this were a lie the disciples put together in an effort to dupe all of humanity, they likely would have gone with someone who was at least culturally reliable as their first eyewitness.* The claim that women made the discovery of the empty tomb would suggest that it actually happened, because that's not something that would have been made up.

B. *The tomb was empty.* Verses 5-6: "**And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here.'**" See, the tomb was empty. This is an uncontested historical fact. There may be some disagreement as to what happened with the body of Jesus, but both non-Christian and Christian historians alike will all agree on the point that at this point in history, the tomb was in fact empty.

I want you to consider this for a moment. If Jesus did not get up and walk out of the empty tomb, then someone had to move him. Those are our only two options. Still-dead corpses don't walk around. Something else to consider is if that's true, if someone did actually move or steal the body of Jesus, the problem is no one stood to gain anything from the resurrected Christ. Nobody.

The fact that Jesus wasn't in that tomb, from an earthly perspective, was bad news for everyone. For the Roman government and for the Jewish leadership, they didn't want Jesus walking around. They were trying to suppress Christianity at this point, not encourage it, and so if they had a dead body, if they had stolen the body of Jesus, they would have provided that body with the first available opportunity.

On the flipside of that, Jesus' disciples and followers also had nothing to gain from Jesus being alive, from an earthly perspective. They didn't get rich off of this claim. There was no promise of fame or notoriety. From an earthly perspective, all they got were beatings, torture, and eventual martyrdom. Jesus rising from the grave cost them everything.

In my own personal study this last month, I've been in the book of John and it struck me as I read the end that the disciples didn't even know he was going to rise again. They were just as surprised as everybody else. So, from an earthly perspective, the point is that nobody benefited from that truth. In fact, everyone lost much.

C. *Jesus was going to appear to others.* This is big. The angel told the women in verse 7, "**But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.**" This was a dangerous claim because it would be one thing for the angel to have told the women, "Jesus is not here. He is risen, but now he's in heaven, so you just need to trust me and take my word for it."

It's another thing entirely for him to say, "Look, Jesus is not here. He has risen, so I want you to go into town and he's going to meet you there." That's a verifiable claim. That is either going to happen or it's not going to happen. Paul actually expands on this claim in 1 Corinthians, chapter 15. Paul writes,

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep."

Jesus appeared to more than 500 people at one time. At the time Paul wrote this letter, most of those people were still alive. To anyone who would say, "You can't point to Scripture to prove Scripture," Paul would say, "You're right! All of these people are alive. Go talk to them!"

In his book, *The Case for Easter*, Lee Strobel makes the point that if you were to take these 500 eyewitnesses, put them court, and give them each 15 minutes to testify as to what they had seen and to be cross-examined by the prosecutors, testimony would begin on Monday at breakfast and it would conclude with no breaks at dinnertime on Friday. It would be 129 hours of straight eyewitness testimony. That is a lot to explain away.

What drives this point even harder is the fact that it was at this point in time in history that Christianity exploded. If this was a lie, if people hadn't actually seen what they said they had seen, this never would have spread the way it did.

The point is if Jesus didn't actually rise from the dead, this was a bad lie. This was a bad lie. This is certainly not the kind of lie that one would tell and then die a horrific death to protect, which is how most of the followers of Jesus died. I mean, what did the followers of Jesus stand to gain? The truth of Jesus rising from the dead cost his followers everything.

I have four children: Dallas, Declan, Piper, and Paisley. A lesson we seem to be learning at this particular season in life is the difference between a good lie and a bad lie. I'm not talking about the moral quality of a lie. I'm talking about how there are certain lies you are more likely to get away with and there are certain lies that are more likely to be found out.

Three of my children (Piper, Dallas, and Declan) thankfully share this kind of propensity to tell the truth. When push comes to shove, when asked, they will tell the truth, even if that truth costs them something. I have one child named Paisley who does not share this same conviction. More than that, she has yet to put together what the key components to telling a good lie are. I genuinely pray she never figures this out, because that could be dangerous.

Here's an example. Paisley has this habit of stealing chocolate honey bars from our freezer in the kitchen. She loves them. She would eat them all day, and she has found way, if she can leverage her 2-1/2-year-old body at just the right angle, she can crank open the freezer and she can get to her buried treasure.

When confronted with, "Paisley, did you eat a chocolate honey bar?" her answer will be, "No." When pressed harder, "Paisley, are you sure you didn't eat a chocolate honey bar?" She will throw her 2-1/2-year-old arms up in the air, clearly offended that her character has been called into question, and she will proclaim with much enthusiasm, "No, I did not!"

But Paisley has a problem. She has chocolate all over her face. Her first problem is she clearly has no idea how much trouble she is in. Her second problem is generally, in this moment, she's still holding the chocolate honey bar wrapper, which is bright blue and clenched up in her little

fist. She's physically covered in chocolate. Oh, and everything in our history together suggests she lies about chocolate honey bars. Paisley is telling a bad lie.

Why am I sharing this with you today? I'm sharing this because I believe if Jesus did in fact not rise from the grave, this also would be a bad lie. What makes Paisley's lie bad? What's bad is the evidence is stacked against her. The evidence is literally all over her. In the same way, if Jesus had not actually risen from the grave, I believe it would have been one of the easiest lies in all of history to expose.

Yet since historic Christianity has made its case and provided evidence to support its claim, it has been the burden of secular society to provide proof and not theory that this did not happen, and 2,000 years later, no proof has been provided. No one has provided a still-dead body, and yet hundreds have seen and testified to the risen one.

We ask ourselves, *do we actually believe this event took place?* I think history would suggest yes, but I would caution you and ask you to be careful in how quickly you answer, because if your answer is yes, then I believe significant action is required of you.

2. *What should my response be?* If I believe the resurrection actually happened, what should my response to the resurrection be? If I believe this to be true, what am I supposed to do with it? Truth is supposed to affect us. It's supposed to call us into action. If Jesus really did rise from the dead, then everything in my life should be affected.

Yet here's the problem. The problem for us as Christians is we have this sinful tendency of compartmentalizing our lives. We have this box over here, which is for our God stuff. It's for our Christian stuff. Then, we have this box over here for everything else: our work life, our home life, and our friendships. We don't ever let the two mix.

We have our church box, which is filled with the time we spend here together on Sunday mornings, and maybe our Life Group, and then we have this other sphere in which we live, devoid of the truth of Scripture. We have allowed ourselves to acknowledge these things to be true while not allowing them to penetrate the other six days of our week.

I think we see the evidence of this all around us. I mean, why is it that we see sex outside of marriage run rampant, both inside the church and outside of the church? Why is it that men and women who bear the image of God find themselves in marriage counseling for treating each other shamefully? Why is it that the divorce rate among Christians directly reflects the divorce rate among non-Christians?

Why is it that children are abandoning the faith and they're pointing to their parents' faith as the reason why they want nothing to do with Christ? Why is it that we struggle with fear, worry, anxiety, and anger, just like the rest of the world? May I submit to you that it is because we have become so good at acknowledging these things to be true with our minds while failing to allow those things to truly penetrate our lives?

This is why we as a church believe so strongly in biblical counseling. I wish you could hear and see all the stories of the couples who have made the decision to stop just speaking about what they believe to be true and start living what they believe to be true. That transforms lives, yet the world looks at us and they call us hypocrites, and they're right.

There's an element to this where we will always be perceived as hypocritical, because the standard has been set at Jesus. We know who we're supposed to be, and yet there's no way we're going to actually live up to that standard. The world will always see us to a certain degree as hypocritical. However, there's another part you and I have to own, and that is the part where we've allowed these things to be things we know to be true and will say we believe and yet fail to live out in our daily lives.

Paul writes, in Colossians 3:4, "**When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**" Question: *Is Christ your life, or is he just an add-on?* Church, here's the thing. If we actually believe the resurrection took place, then Jesus must be the center of our lives. Why? Because if Jesus did in fact rise from the grave, then it means his death actually paid for our sins, and this is life-changing news.

In 1 Corinthians 15:16-17, it says, "**For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.**" Church, we can't miss that. If Jesus did not rise from the grave, then he is not who he said he was, and it would be foolish for us to put our faith and trust in someone who is a liar.

Scripture says one day we will stand and make an account before Holy God for every word we've said and everything we've done. We need to remember in that moment that every breath we've taken, from the moment we were born to the moment we die, is a direct attack on the holiness of God.

Isaiah 64 tells us that in our sin, even our most righteous acts are as filthy rags. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, then on that day, when we stand before God, we will have no one to advocate for us. We will have no one to cover for us. We will bear the penalty of that sin and we will be cast out into eternal torment in hell, where a million years into our existence, we are no closer to relief than the day we arrived.

Church, the only reason why that is not the destiny of every single person sitting in this room today is because Jesus came and died and we believe he rose again. Church, if Jesus rose from the grave, everything changes. It means he actually did take on the wrath of God that was stored up for us so we could find peace with God rather than war with God, mercy instead of punishment, grace instead of damnation, life instead of death, and eternity with God rather than eternity separated from God.

Church, if that's something that excites you, if that's something you're thankful for, I need to hear you say *amen*. Amen! We owe Jesus everything because without him, we are nothing. This is why this truth should affect every aspect of our lives. With every thought we think, every word we speak, and everything we do, we should be living lives marked deeply by the resurrection.

Our lives should be a blazing offering of gratitude for all that Jesus has done. Church, if we would only let this truth penetrate our lives, everything would change. I mean, at the end of the day, what else matters? What could possibly be more important than the resurrected Jesus and the salvation of our souls? If we would live resurrected lives as a church, I think our church would look a lot different.

Here are just a couple of examples of what I think would change if we were living a resurrection life.

A. *We would share our faith boldly and with a sense of urgency.* I mean, how could we hold this truth in, something that has so radically changed us? Do we share our faith when given the opportunity, or do we stay silent because it's better to be liked by someone than rejected, even if their eternity hangs in the balance?

I submit to you that that has been what has weighed on my heart all week. That is the thing the Lord has pointed out to me over and over again, saying, "Koby, are you paying attention?" Are you living for the glory of man or are you living for the glory of God? See, our answer to this question will reveal to what degree we have allowed the resurrection of Christ to mark us.

B. *We would give generously.* We would give generously to strangers, friends, church, and missions because we would see our finances, our money, as a tool to build the kingdom of God, not as a tool to build our own comfortable kingdom here on this earth.

So, the question for us today is...*Do we give until it hurts or do we give when it's convenient?* Do we see the needs of other people and the needs of the church and the kingdom of God as more important than our own? Our answer to this question will reveal to what degree we've allowed the resurrection to mark us.

C. *We would be church contributors, not church consumers.* We would look to serve in any way we could, giving of our time and our talents, because it's literally the least we could possibly do in response to the Jesus who purchased us with his own life. We just heard the appeal earlier today. We need help in children's ministry, and that is hard work.

If the first thing that came to your mind was all the reasons why that can't possibly be you, then I think you have to ask yourself the question...*Is this about me or is this about the kingdom? Am I just going to invest in me or am I going to invest in kingdom lives?* Church, is Canyon Hills merely our Sunday morning tradition or do we see it as our opportunity to build the very kingdom of God in Bothell, Washington?

Our answer will reveal to what degree we have allowed the resurrection to mark our lives. So, I ask again, what will your response to the resurrection be? Right now, I want to take a moment and let's step out of the future and step into the present. What would the resurrection call you to? What would it ask you? How would it ask you to respond in this moment, before we even walk

out of this room? As I see it, as we answer these questions, we as a people have four choices. Four options, four responses from which we can choose.

First, *we can do nothing*. We can do nothing. We can walk into this room not believing this to be true, and we can walk out of this room without being changed, but if that's you, I would beg you to go into that decision with your eyes wide open. The Bible says there is a day coming when we will stand before God Almighty and we will make an account for our lives. In that day, our only hope is Jesus.

It doesn't matter what you think should be true about God. It does not matter what you want to be true about God. What matters is who God actually is and what that God expects of you. The choice is yours, but if you choose to reject Christ in this life, the Bible says he will reject us in the next, so I pray that would not be your decision in this place today. I mean, if that's you, I pray that your response will be the second response.

Secondly, *we can turn and repent*. Our God is a loving God. He is a merciful God. He is a clear God. He has laid out clearly what his expectations for us are and he has given us the opportunity to call on him and turn to him. It says anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. There's nothing magical or mystical about putting your faith in Christ. It's simply turning away from your sin and saying, "Jesus, I need you to help me. I need you to save me."

I pray that today, if that's you, this would be the day of your salvation, that you would not put it off, because we are not guaranteed a tomorrow. You are not guaranteed an hour from now. You are guaranteed right now. Do not gamble with your eternity.

Thirdly, *we can rededicate our lives to Christ*. This has been a burden on my heart all week as I've prepared for this message, because I believe the modern American church is plagued by people who would claim Christianity without actually living like Christians. Maybe you're one of those people sitting here today who can say, "Look, I have known a lot about God. I have known about the resurrection. I have refused to allow that truth to change me though," and that needs to change today.

Today is the day to put that stake in the ground and say, "Today is the day I begin loving the Lord with all my heart, soul, and mind, and I am going to allow him to control every aspect of my life. My work life and my home life, the relationship with my spouse, my child, or whatever it may be." The only thing standing between you and making that kind of decision today is you.

Jesus said, in John 14:15, "**If you love me, you will [obey] my commandments.**" It is time to look at your life and ask the question, "Has my obedience testified to a relationship with Jesus or has it not? I pray that today would be a day when nominal Christians put their stake in the sand and become disciples.

Fourthly, *we can worship*. If you are sitting here today and you have met internally everything I've said with a yes and an amen, then church, this is something that is supposed to get us

excited. We started this day off by singing resurrection songs. We are going to finish our time together today by singing resurrection songs.

This is what worship is, is it not? It is testifying to whom God is and what he has done in our lives. We who were once dead in our trespasses and sins have now been made alive together with the resurrected Christ. What could possibly drive us to more passionate worship than that? So, I'm going to ask you all to get to your feet right now. I'm going to ask you to bow your heads and to close your eyes.

We are going to go to our God in prayer together as a body of believers. Would you bow your heads and close your eyes with me? I'm just going to ask any of you in this room who are believers, would you just take a moment and thank God for sending Jesus to live, die, and rise again so you could have a hope and a future? Would you do that now?

Now, would you take a moment and just ask that the Lord would show you any areas of your life you need to submit to him? Any areas of your life you have locked the resurrection truth out of? As he brings those things to mind, would you confess them and ask him to step in and bring that area of your life into a place of obedience? Let's do that right now.

Finally, would you just pray that the Lord would not allow us to take for granted in this moment the gift that has been given to us, but that the Spirit of God would drive us to worship in light of the resurrection? Let's do that together.

Lord, we come before you today as those who were once lost, but are now found, as those who were once far off, but have now been brought near by the blood of Jesus, and as those who were once objects of your wrath, but are not objects of your mercy. We, who were once your enemies, but are now your friends, God, we thank you for sending Jesus, your only Son, to live the perfect life we could never live and to die the death we deserve, and for raising him up from the grave three days later so we would have a freedom and a hope forever. God, may our worship now be a passionate response to this truth. In Christ's name we pray, amen.

[Song]

The moon and stars they wept
The morning sun was dead
The Savior of the world was fallen
His body on the cross
His blood poured out for us
The weight of every curse upon him

One final breath he gave
As heaven looked away
The Son of God was laid in darkness

A battle in the grave
The war on death was waged
The power of hell forever broken

The ground began to shake
The stone was rolled away
His perfect love could not be overcome
Now death where is your sting?
Our resurrected King
Has rendered you defeated

Forever he is glorified
Forever he is lifted high
Forever he is risen
He is alive, he is alive!

The ground began to shake
The stone was rolled away
His perfect love could not be overcome
Now death where is your sting?
Our resurrected King
Has rendered you defeated

Forever he is glorified
Forever he is lifted high
Forever he is risen
He is alive, he is alive!

We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah
The Lamb has overcome

We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah
The Lamb has overcome

We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah
The Lamb has overcome

We sing hallelujah
We sing hallelujah

We sing hallelujah
The Lamb has overcome

Forever he is glorified
Forever he is lifted high
Forever he is risen
He is alive, he is alive!

[End of song]

[Song]

O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise his name forevermore
For endless days we will sing your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

Then on the third at break of dawn,
The Son of heaven rose again.
O trampled death where is your sting?
The angels roar for Christ the King

O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise his name forevermore
For endless days we will sing your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

He shall return in robes of white,
The blazing Son shall pierce the night.
And I will rise among the saints,
My gaze transfixed on Jesus' face

O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise his name forevermore
For endless days we will sing your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise his name forevermore
For endless days we will sing your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise his name forevermore
For endless days we will sing your praise
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God
Oh Lord, oh Lord our God

[End of song]

Female: It has been such an incredible time getting to worship our resurrected Jesus together. You know, you may have walked in this place not knowing Jesus as your personal Savior, and maybe you want to change that, or you have questions or you need to talk through whatever you're going through in life. There are going to be people up in front who would love to pray with you and talk with you.

I know that first step can be scary. I know just making that move can really draw on some nerves, but don't miss this moment. God has you here for a reason, and you were made with a purpose and it is good. We're so thankful that you're here. We're so excited to worship with you next week, so have a good rest of the week.