

Hope Church South Haven April 20th, 2025

Verified

John 20:1-23

Video – Easter daybreak

Hymn – Christ the Lord has Risen Today.

Prayer

Message

My first church – super passionate about missions. Church's calling to make this world a better place.

- One Sunday evening after a youth service I was confronted by two young men. They haven't eaten for days. They had no place to stay.
- A couple of young adults and I paid for their accommodation for a week. Bought them food. Gave them new clothes. Even got a job interview for the oldest brother.
- Finally discovered their real identities. Two drug addicts in their late twenties.
- I was scammed like a greenhorn!

We live in a world where identity theft, CYBERCRIME, **online scams**, bots and fake profiles are part of our everyday life.

To safeguard us trusting clueless people from these scammers, the **brainiacs of the social media platforms** came up with this answer – anyone older than 40 that knows what this is for?

GET A BLUE TICK.

- Indicates that the account has been verified.
- Confirms that it is a **real person**. The person is who he/she claims to be.

Cheap me...I still haven't done it. I'm OK to be the dodgy illegal immigrant stalking people on social media.

We live in a world with checks and balances in place to verify everything. Moving to the States – passports, visas, real ID drivers' licenses, diplomas, birth certificates...

Everything needs to be verified. Everything needs to be blue ticked!

Jesus lived with his disciples for **3 YEARS**. They travelled together. They had conversations upon conversations. **Laughed** together. **Cried** together.

For **3 YEARS** Jesus shared with them about God's new world.

For **3 YEARS** He showed them a new way of doing life. He **healed** the sick. Made the blind **see**. He **made friends** with the not-good-enoughs.

For **3 YEARS** He tried to prepare them for the cross.

- Thursday night they were left in shock. One of their inner circle betrayed Jesus. All of them ran away – except for John and the women. Imagine the intense **SHAME** they felt.
- Friday was two days ago. They saw the BRUTALITY and the DESTRUCTION at the cross. They smelled the sweat and the blood. They **experienced** the blood thirsty crowd.
- Jesus was beaten to an inch of his life. He was **nailed to a cross** between two criminals. Their leader and rabbi and messiah **suffered** a gruesome death.
- Imagine their feelings of **DESPAIR**. Their feelings of DISILLUSIONMENT. Their struggles of DOUBT.
 - ⇒ Did we waste our time?
 - ⇒ Did we follow the wrong rabbi?
 - ⇒ We sacrificed everything we know to follow him.
 - ⇒ And now he is dead.
- I imagine it was two days where minutes felt like hours and **hours felt like days**.

Verse 1:

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance.

John 20:1 NIV

- Mary Magdalene was not a prostitute. **Pope Gregory the 1st** made that mistake in the 6th century (591 A.D.).
- We discover in LUKE 8 how Jesus and Mary connected. He **casted 7 demons** out of her. From that moment she was a faithful follower of Jesus.
- Jesus was placed in Joseph's family grave just before sunset on Friday. The start of the Sabbath.
- Sunday morning was the first opportunity to visit the tomb and to mourn.
- Mary Magdalene was taking a huge risk going to the tomb. She was announcing to the Roman authorities that she was a follower of Jesus.

Verse 2:

So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

- Jewish people believed in resurrection. They believed that on the DAY OF JUDGEMENT, that God will **resurrect all faithful Jews** and that they would receive new bodies.
 ⇒ When someone died, they buried them.
 ⇒ One year later they will return and **dig up the bones** of their loved one.

⇒ They will **wrap the bones** in a white linen cloth and place it in a family grave.

⇒ They believed that God would use their original bones for their new bodies.

- Mary was distraught that Jesus' body was missing. She couldn't prepare his body for burial. They wouldn't be able to dig up his bones and place it in a family grave.
- This probably was the expectation that the disciples had when Jesus talked about his own resurrection.

In verses 3-10 Peter and John races to the tomb and finds that what Mary Magdalene told them was the truth. The tomb was empty. **Jesus' body was MIA.**

Verses 11-18:

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

At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.

Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' " Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

- Mary's tears – Jesus' death was a real for her. One of deep personal loss.
- MARY MAGDALENE becomes the **first witness of Jesus' resurrection**.
- One of the writers said: A woman became an apostle to the apostles.

Verses 19-23:

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

John 20:19-23 NIV

- Jesus knew his disciples were scared. **Overwhelmed**. STRUGGLING WITH GUILT. About everything that happened. Their own failures.
- And He meets his disciples where they are.

- His first words to his disciples: Peace be with you.
- A peace that is not the absence of trouble. It's a peace that comes from a **deep understanding. A knowing that Christ is alive.**
- It's a peace that meets us in our fears. It's a peace that meets us **in our doubts**. It's a peace that meets us **behind locked doors** and closed windows.

These POST RESURRECTION MOMENTS is crucial to understand who the RISEN Jesus is.

- He appears in a normal human body – he is mistaken for a gardener. He shows them the marks on his hands and feet and body. He eats with his disciples.

Post-resurrection Jesus is fully man.

- He appears in a glorified body – He appears in a locked room. He disappears in the clouds at His ascension.

Post-resurrection Jesus is fully God.

Why is Easter Sunday important? Because Easter Sunday is verification Sunday! Blue tick Sunday!

Jesus is the Savior – VERIFIED.

- Jesus' identity as son of God was VERIFIED at his baptism.

This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.

Matthew 3:17b NIV

- Easter Sunday VERIFIES that Jesus is the Messiah. It CONFIRMS that He is the **Savior** **this broken messed up world** so desperately needed.

⇒ All the prophecies about Jesus **in the Old Testament**. **CHECK ✓**

⇒ All the promises that **Jesus himself made**. **CHECK ✓**

⇒ Taking all our sin and brokenness and evilness on his shoulders. **CHECK ✓**

⇒ **God abandoned**. Going to a place where He has never been before. Faced the reality of death. **CHECK ✓**

⇒ Defeating Satan and the **consequences of our sin**. **CHECK ✓**

⇒ Restoring our **relationship with God**. **CHECK ✓**

We are sons and daughters of God – VERIFIED.

- Easter Sunday VERIFIES that if you believe in Jesus – if you said yes to his invite to follow me – you are included in God's family.
- No matter how righteous you are...or how much you **struggle**...if you are faithful or **consumed by doubt**...if you really understand salvation...or still **figuring it out**...

- You are God's son. **You are God's daughter.**

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:16-17 NIV

I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.

2 Corinthians 6:18 NIV

We are sinners no more – VERIFIED.

- Jesus' resurrection shouts out the world that we are washed clean – **reborn, rebirthed, remade, reconciled, renewed.**
- The beautiful truth of Easter Sunday is that after the resurrection of Jesus, the New Testament NEVER USES the Greek word **ἁματωλός / sinners** to describe followers of Jesus.
- The New Testament only uses words like 'saints', '**holy**', 'beloved' or '**children of God**'.
- We may still struggle with sin. The Bible challenges us on our sins. But the word ἁματωλός / sinner is never used to describe our identity!

And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

1 Corinthians 6:11 NIV

Death is defeated – VERIFIED.

- Even though we struggle with death. Even though it hurts, and it feels so final.
- Easter Sunday means we don't have to fear death anymore. Jesus DEFEATED the **stronghold of death**.
- Jesus' resurrection VERIFIES that not even death can separate us from God.

He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

2 Timothy 1:9-10 NIV

- Jesus' resurrection means that no matter what happens after this life, **we will always be in God's presence**.

God's kingdom is here – VERIFIED.

- Jesus' resurrection VERIFIES that **God's new world has arrived**. A world where the words on the cross came true: Jesus is King!
- Already but not yet...
- Jesus' resurrected body is the start of the new creation.
- It challenges us that our calling is **not only to invite new people** into God's family.
- Our calling is to EMBODY GOD'S NEW WORLD in this messy broken world. To live in such a way that God's new world breaks through in everyday life.
- The reality that God's his new world is here, means that **nothing in this life is meaningless**. Nothing is insignificant. No emotion or connection or conversation is without purpose.
- What I do today. The way that I **live today**. Who I am today.
- It is IMPORTANT. It MATTERS.
- If I paint or **sing** or pray or **teach** or write or **nurse** or build or **do accounting** or am a homemaker for a living – my life matters in bringing God's new world to lost and the broken and suffering and the poor.

Resurrection Sunday means that **God's intervention in history is verified**. For that reason, we can sing.