

Well, I was out in the foyer earlier, but I'm assuming Allen did a good job welcoming you. He is probably the best welcomer in Lawrence county. Would you all agree? Yeah. Yeah.

Did he also do my favorite thing about Easter? He is risen. Alan, I feel like grasshopper. You have learned from the master. I see people wearing ties that I didn't even know had a dress shirt.

So I am just really impressed with some of you guys out there. There's an Easter hat here today, too. That is crazy. Ladies, take note. Easter hats are always valued on Easter.

Wear one. It looks fantastic. Jeff Lampson had one Easter bond. Okay, very good. Very good.

I hope everyone's had a good, good morning. It came early at our house this morning. The boys have been on spring break, and so they've been used to sleeping just as long as they've wanted to sleep, and I've been happy to let that happen. Today, however, we had a 07:00 sunrise service that they were supposed to. Supposed to help at, and we rolled in at 07:01, technically.

All right. But just for those of you who roll in, about 1115, here, earlier is better, if you can arrange that. So we got a little grumpy. We got when the. When the knock came on this morning.

Hey, time to wake up. Time to wake up.

What time is it? What are we doing? I said we're doing sunrise service. Why? I go, I don't know.

We just do that.

I don't know.

I don't know how Easter sunrise morning started for the disciples, but I have a few guesses. The cross that Jesus experienced on Friday seemed to mark the end of everything that the disciples knew and loved about their life with Jesus. When they rolled the stone over his grave, it just put a period to the end of an amazing, amazing three years. No more long walks along the Sea of Galilee, just hearing him teach. No more fishing together off the shore.

No more chaotic, but exciting crowds pressing in to see a miracle. No more evening meals just enjoying each other's presence, where they just laughed and told stories and just hung out. All that was gone. And if you've experienced the loss of someone you love in your life recently, and there's many in this room that have, you know, that loss and grief hit at different times and in different ways. And, man, it can just be overwhelming.

And there's sometimes you just want to hide away and not deal with anything or anybody. And a lot of the disciples seem to have done just that. They hid away, hid away from the authorities. And mostly, I think they just hid away because they didn't know what else to do, and they couldn't really face anything else. I'm just going to say something real quick.

We have kids in the room with us this morning, and kids, I'm going to do my best to keep this somewhat entertaining for you, but adults, I love having kids in the room with us. It adds a level of energy and tension in my preaching that I actually enjoy. So if your little kids cut loose and run. I grew up pentecostal. Running in the aisles does not scare me at all.

So you could let them. They're fine. They're fine. Don't just let them get out of control. But it's all right.

It's all right. Just turn to someone and say, it's all right. It's all right. Okay. Back to the disciples hiding out in the room.

They've been there for a while. I don't know if you've been in a room with a bunch of guys for a while, the smell of dirty feet and sweat begins to be pretty overwhelming. They had sort of hid out there, just sort of licking their wounds, and all of a sudden there comes a beat on the door. Can I get someone to go, pow, pow, pow, kids, pow, pow, pow. And the disciples like, what is that?

And they go to the door and like, what time is it? And there's this woman outside the door, and she goes, you won't believe what just happened. They're like, what? That's how my boys do. What?

Jesus is alive. Huh? Jesus is alive. We'll come back to this moment in just a bit, but I'm going to tell you that the fact that Jesus is alive changes everything. Because Jesus is alive, we can have a new, renewed resurrected life as well.

In second corinthians, Paul writes this to the, to the christians living in Corinth. He says, therefore, if any person is in Christ, there is a new creation. Old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. Bam, bam, bam. Old things are gone.

New things are here today. If you're joining with us for the very first time, we want to extend the same invitation that if I've extended, and we've extended to hundreds of people before you, to experience the new resurrected life that Jesus promises because of his resurrection. I'm gonna pray, and then we're gonna dig into scripture. If you wanna go ahead and turn to Luke, you can do that. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this morning, this day of all days, to celebrate and honor what for christians is the mark of their new existence, their new life.

The day you rose from the dead and made possible now a new, resurrected life for us as well. May your words land on hearts that are ready to receive it in Jesus name. Amen. So the door opens. What?

Jesus is alive. They're like, what? So here's how Luke describes this moment. And if you'll just allow me, I'm gonna read it as if the women themselves are telling this story. Here's how it goes, guys.

On the first day of the week, I know you've lost track of time hidden away in this room, but it's the first day of the week. Today, very early in the morning, we took the spices that we had prepared and we went to the tomb, and we found the stone rolled away from the tomb. So we went in. But when we went in, we did not find the body of our Lord Jesus. And we were there wondering about all of that, when suddenly, two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside us.

And in our fright, we bowed down with our faces to the ground. But the men said to us, why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen. Can we just repeat those last words, the words of the two men?

The angel said to the women, why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen. This is the question that we must ask ourselves. Why do we look for the living among the dead?

We try to find life. We try to find satisfaction in all sorts of experiences. I love to travel. Every time I take a vacation, I think, this is going to be the one. I've planned it.

It's going to be an amazing trip, and they always are amazing trips. But I can tell you at a certain point, I'm like, I am done traveling, and I'm ready to sleep on my own lumpy mattress. We look for it in pastimes and hobbies. We look for it in trinkets and toys. This new boat is going to be exactly what we need to make our life feel complete.

We've made it. When we pull that thing home at the backside of our truck, we look for it in our jobs, our careers. We look for it in our kids, getting our kids sorted out. Moms and dads. If you've got kids here with you, you know what a joy it is to see them actually in church.

Little glimmer of hope there. It's like, hey, I feel like these kids are going to be all right if they can come to church. Amen. Moms and dads. Yeah, maybe marriage, man, if my marriage was just better, things would really work out well.

And those are all. Honestly, none of them are bad things. Some of them are really, really good things, in fact. But all of those things have a beginning and an end. The travel exhausts, the hobbies begin to bore, the trinkets and toys rust.

The job disappoints, and even the good things, the spouse that you love so much dies. We know this, don't we? They pass on. And the kids that we finally get all sorted out, what do they do? Well, they move to Colorado and start a new life there.

Well, that's not what we planned. We were going to see our grandkids living right next to us, maybe even in the basement. It was going to be great. The kids move away. So to place our hope in those things, those temporary things, things that will pass away and out of our lives, well, we just.

It's a dead end, isn't it? It's looking for life among things that will eventually end. It's looking for the living among the dead. And so Jesus invites us, by the power of his own resurrection, into a life that only he can give. John tells us this.

Those who drink of the water that I will give Jesus, those who drink of the water that I will give will never be thirsty. The water that I give will become to them a spring of water gushing up into what eternal life. All this new life flowing from Jesus brings into our life's wonderful newness. And here's what it looks like when we begin this new life in Christ. We take on a new identity.

One of the perks of living around in a lot of different countries and places is that every time you go to a new place, you get to re sort of reimagine yourself. You get to reinvent yourself. One of the challenges of growing up in Bedford is that everyone knows your stuff. Some of you are friends with people you went to elementary school with. They know your stuff that can be good and that can be bad, because no one ever forgets the bad stuff.

And they get real judgey about it sometimes, don't they? That can become our identity that we get trapped in. We've always got judges ready to just pounce on that. Guilty. You did it back in second grade when you locked me in the boys bathroom.

You're like, I don't lock people in bathrooms anymore. Why are you still bringing that up? But our identity is tied to this stuff. We're guilty. Romans says this, though there is now no condemnation, no adjudging guilt of wrong for those who are in Christ Jesus, who live not after the dictates of the flesh, but after the dictates of the spirit.

The scripture says that when we say yes to Jesus, we are promised that God no longer sees us as we once were in second grade or in college. But he sees us through Jesus. He sees us as he created and designed us to be. He gives us a new identity, cleared of guilt and given a clean slate. Fear and shame.

We sing this song here. Fear and shame and guilt can return to the place they came from. Where do they come from? Hell. They can go back to hell.

Because I now belong to God. I know whose I am. I belong to God. I've got a new identity in Christ. All things become new, a clean slate and a new life in which to bring glory to God.

That's our new resurrected purpose. Or our new resurrected identity. We also have a new resurrected purpose. I wish there was a verse in the Bible. Maybe you've all looked for it like I have, where it says, hey, Tim, hey, Bill, hey, Bob, hey, Evelyn, here's your purpose now.

Now that you're in Christ. Evelyn, go do this. I've read the Bible several times through. I've not yet found that verse that says, tim, here's what I want you to do. But Jesus did give us some general principles about how this new life is to work.

Our purpose in. It says this in Matthew 22 37 38. He says, here's what you need to do. You need to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.

Okay? First purpose, love God. Second purpose. He says the second is its corollary, meaning they look a lot alike and they function within each other. He says this, the second is like it.

Love your neighbor as yourself. Someone said this, you love God and you love others. That's the purpose of life. Colossians, we just finished that series. Colossians tells us that we are to live a life worthy of the Lord and pleasing him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God.

And how we do that is being loved by God and loving others through God. Now where does the strength come to live in this new purpose? Well, it comes from a resurrection power. So we've got our new identity, we've got a new purpose, and now we've got a new, a new power. In Ephesians, Paul praises the believers would fully understand and grasp the kind of power that the believer now has through the Holy Spirit.

Here's what it says in Ephesians 1:19. That power is the same. That power that you have in you is the same as the power, the mighty strength that God exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at the right hand in the heavenly realms. That same power which raised Christ from the dead lives in you. The scripture says.

So to experience the newness of life, we've got to say goodbye to the old life. How are we going to do that? Well, we're going to do it through the power of the resurrection, this new resurrection power. With resurrection power, we can live the life God intended for us to live. Where old habits come under the authority of the word of Jesus, where old hurts come under the healing and the mercy of Jesus.

And old hang ups come under the authority of the mind of Christ. That Paul says, you have the mind of Christ. We begin to think differently. We begin to feel differently. We begin to heal in a new way, and we release all those habits and hurts and hang ups.

To Jesus, we say, lord, we give you permission, and we become accessories to what you're doing. We are going to do what you tell us to do. And when we do that, we become part of this. Laying aside the old life and walking in the newness of life. We've got a new.

A new identity, we've got a new purpose, we've got new power, and we've got new confidence. I love confident people. How many of you guys are confident? Yeah, one person back there. Two people.

Two confident people. We need resurrection confidence, guys. We need to live in resurrection confidence. Here's the deal. As believers, when we come into Christ, we no longer have to hope that we make it to heaven.

Oh, I tell you, I got an aunt who says, well, I hope I make it. Oh, Jesus, give her confidence. Give her confidence. Not in her goodness, not in her ability to get it all right, but confidence in the God who says, you are mine. This is the resurrection hope.

This is the resurrection confidence that it's not our strength, but Jesus. That is where our confidence is. First Peter, one three six says it this way. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he's caused us to be born again to a living hope.

Confidence through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable. It can't fade away. It's undefiled. No one can mess it up. And unfading, no one can slip it away from us.

It's kept in heaven for you, who by God's power, that resurrection power, are being guarded. Guarded. Protected, kept, nurtured, held. You're being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. I am confident in my eternal inheritance, not because of my power.

I mess it up a lot, but I am confident because of God's power. My power is useless in guarding me for eternity. Useless. But God's power is secure. We can trust in him.

If my hope is in the power of my own goodness, I am done for. But if I am kept by God's power, then nothing can remove me from my eternal hope. This gives me a resurrection confidence. So how do we access this? You may be in the room right now going, this all sounds really good, Tim, but how do I gain this new resurrection identity and purpose and power and confidence?

I am so glad you asked. You see, if we are looking for living among the dead, among the broken things of this world, even the good but broken things of this world, we are going to be lost.

I cannot find the living among the dead. I have to find the newness of life in Jesus. Here's how this works. The world we live in, the world we were born in, is a broken world. It didn't start out that way.

That's not how God designed it. God created a perfect place with a perfect purpose for people who would perfectly love him. But we disobeyed and we broke it. We broke the world. Sin is simply the choice to leave God out of the equation.

And many of us live that way with God out of the equation, with no respect for him or his word. So we have things like war and divorce and hardship, basically the evening news, all because we choose to do life without God. That doesn't mean we don't really try hard to fix it. We try to fix the brokenness with money and with working really hard or finding the right spouse, and we're going to do all the right stuff to try to make the world better. Maybe we focus on relationships, or maybe we're philosophers and we try to find the right philosophy, the lens through which to view life.

Maybe we're going to get really involved in doing good things in the community, or we're going to really pour ourselves into religion, and that's going to provide us with sort of a fix to what all is broken in our lives. The problem is that none of these things actually get people out of brokenness. They put band aids on it, but that wound is festering underneath there the whole time. They may help for a short time, or they may seem to help for a short time, but they never actually help people move beyond broken brokenness. Only God can do that.

Only God has the answer. God knew that nothing we could do by ourselves would get us out of this brokenness. But God loves us and didn't want things to stay that way. He didn't want us to stay in that place of brokenness. And so he sent his son.

This is the scripture we read this morning at our sunrise service, which started at 07:00 this morning lasted for about a half hour. All of you would have been welcome. Next year. Put it on your calendars. I want to put 300 seats out there and pack that parking lot.

I don't know where we're going to put the cars, but we'll figure that out. Here's the deal. God loved us so much that he sent his only son, Jesus, to the earth. Born of a virgin, we sang the song, lived a perfect life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead. Three days later, he is risen.

He is risen indeed. And when Jesus died on the cross, he took the punishment that we deserved for our sin. When he rose from the dead, he defeated sin and made a way for us to experience salvation. Salvation doesn't mean just that we get to go to heaven. That's great.

That's a ways away. For most of us, salvation means today we can begin to live in this newness of life as we come to in our service, what we call a time of communion, where we

take the bread and the cup. Many of you maybe have come from traditions where you call it something else, the Lord's supper or the Eucharist. We call it communion. Here.

Here's what I want you to challenge yourself to think on as we share in this time. Maybe you're living in this place of absolute beauty and perfection. You're experiencing the fullness of God. When someone knocked on your door this morning and said, hey, it's time to get up, you're like, he is risen. And your heart responded, he is risen indeed.

And that is fantastic. And I'm so glad you're here worshiping with us. But maybe you woke up grumpy and said, what? What day is this? Where are we going?

What are we doing? Maybe you're living in a place where brokenness is pretty much your everyday experience, and maybe you're working really, really, really hard to make it better, but it's exhausting and it's not working, and you blame yourself. But can I just tell you, don't blame yourself because you can never fix it, no matter how hard you try, it just is not going to work apart from Jesus. And so if that's you, I invite you to simply come to Jesus. Come to Jesus, confess your mistakes and brokenness, accept his forgiveness, be baptized into his family, and begin living in this new identity, this new purpose, this new power, this new confidence again.

Corinthians says, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. Knock, knock, knock. It's here. Let it in. The old has gone, and the new is here.

In fact, maybe you'd like to pray with me right now. Something. I watched Billy Graham the other day, and he was preaching to a crowd down in Louisiana, pouring down rain, people under tarpaulins and umbrellas to come out and hear the word of God spoken. And I'm thinking my word. I don't know if there was the forecast of a drizzle in the air, I'm not sure we would fill an arena with people wanting to hear the word of God today.

So I don't want to. I don't want you to leave here where it's dry and there's no drizzle on your head. I want to pray, and if this is your desire this morning, I just want you to pray with me. You don't have to pray out loud. You just have to pray.

And then afterwards, I want you to come and talk to me and tell me, okay? Because we want to baptize you. We want to bring you into this family that God has created for. Here's the prayer. Let's just close our eyes.

Let's just pray this. Jesus, I have tried with all my might to fix my life, but it's not working. The harder I try, the worse it seems to be. I cannot do it alone. I need you, Jesus.

You know all my bad choices. You know all my horrible decisions. You know how I've tried to play God in my life to try to fix it. I'm sorry for all of that. I'm sorry for leaving you out of the equation.

I want to invite you to come in and do what only you can do. I want a new and fresh life. I know I can have it if I put my trust in you. So right now, I invite you to take control of my life, forgive my sins, and help me to begin to take the next step of obedience, to talk to someone, to be baptized, to become part of this new life that you're creating, not just in me, but in this entire community. Thank you for loving me and welcoming me into this new life.

Now, if that's your prayer this morning? I want you to talk to me after the service. As I said, I also want you. And this is a touchy subject for those of us within the christian church tradition. But if this morning you've said, I am wanting to trust Jesus with my life, I'm saying yes to the Lord Jesus.

And this morning, one of the first things we're going to invite you to do is to share in this time with us these elements that we're going to pass. The bread and the cup. If you're unfamiliar with this, let me explain what's going to happen. We're going to pass some elements. A piece of bread and a little cup.

That bread signifies the body that Jesus was willing to offer in our place. It's the body that was crucified on the cross. When we take that bread, we say, lord, I acknowledge that you did what I could not do. You took punishment that I deserved, and I thank you for that. And you can take the bread, that cup.

The Bible says that that cup signifies a new promise that God makes a new covenant. He makes with us, a covenant that is not dependent on me anymore. I accept it. I say yes to it. But it does not depend on me being a special kind of person.

It just depends on me saying yes. And God says, if you say yes, then I make a covenant, an everlasting covenant with you. So this morning, if you said yes to Jesus, then know that God has said yes to you and you can take that communion with us afterwards, if you've taken communion with us, I want you to be baptized quickly. There's no need to delay this. In fact, I bet we could get some water going pretty quick.

Is there water in that baptistry?

There is water in that baptistry. Look at that. I feel like the Lord has set this up. I did not plan that at all. But that's the invitation.

I'm going to pray. The elements are going to be served. You listen to the Holy Spirit and then you talk to me. Okay? Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day where we get to experience and rejoice in the resurrection life of Jesus.

This morning, Jesus. If there are any here that have not responded to that, I pray that this morning would be the day. They say, I am ready to trust my life to you. Lord, thank you for

your gracious goodness to us. Goodness we are undeserving of, but goodness we are deeply grateful for.

We pray and give thanks in Jesus name. Amen.

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