

# Rejoicing that overcomes all Resistance

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to turn to our reading this morning, and if you'd like to turn with me to Matthew's Gospel in chapter 27. If you have one of our blue church Bibles, that's page 835.

And we're going to read together from the end of chapter 27 into chapter 28, so beginning at verse 62. Matthew's account of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we pick up where we left off on Good Friday. Next day, that is, after the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, Sir, we remember how that imposter said while he was still alive, after three days I will rise.

Therefore, order the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people he has risen from the dead. And the last fraud 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 a guard.

[ 1 : 17 ] 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 you be afraid? For I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He's not here, for he has risen, as he said.

Come, see the place where he lay. And then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead. And behold, he is going before you to Galilee.

There you will see him. See, I've told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell the disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said greetings.

[ 2 : 23 ] And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid. Go, tell my brothers and go to Galilee and there they will see me.

While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they dissembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, Tell people his disciples came by night and stole him away while you 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.

Amen. May God bless to us his word. May we hear, understand, learn, inwardly digest all that you have to say to us this Easter day.

And fill our hearts with following faith. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Jesus Christ was a great divider of men all through his earthly ministry.

[ 4 : 13 ] You can see that plainly if you read through Matthew's gospel that leads up to this very last chapter. And Jesus said it himself many times. He said, I've not come to bring peace, but a sword.

He divided people in his life.

He divided people in his life. And he divided people in his death. Around the cross you see both mockers and mourners. the scorn of derision from the mockers.

You can see it here in chapter 27, verse 39. The passers-by mocked him. Verse 41, the priests mocked him. Even the robbers, verse 44, mocked him.

But as well as the mockers, there were also those who mourned with sorrow, with great devotion, like the women here in chapter 27, verse 61, who follow on and are looking at the tomb.

[ 5 : 15 ] And of course, the message of the Lord Jesus Christ has continued to divide men and women ever since, and still does today. We were looking together on Good Friday at our service at how Matthew shows us so clearly that the death of Jesus shines the light into this world that overcomes all darkness, even the dread darkness of death itself.

And yet, the truth is, as Jesus himself said, sadly, men love darkness rather than light. And that's why so many, instead of rejoicing in the message of Jesus' resurrection, they reject it, they resist it. And so we have to be realistic. Those who proclaim the message of the risen Lord Jesus, still today, will also face not just rejoicing, but rejection.

And it's been that way since the very beginning. But you see, Matthew ends his gospel here in chapter 27 and 28 with an unmistakable message. There is no future for those who resist the message of Christ crucified and risen.

He's telling us resistance is futile. It cannot succeed in the end. And indeed, resistance is fraudulent. It simply does not stand up to scrutiny and to honest inquiry.

[ 6 : 41 ] Now, only those who meet the message of the risen Lord Jesus Christ with rejoicing can have a future. And they will have a future where all sorrow turns to joy.

All fear turns to great rejoicing. And that rejoicing overcomes all resistance as death is swallowed up in the life everlasting.

Do not fear, says the angel to these women in verse 5. Don't you fear, you who seek the Lord Jesus Christ, because he's not here. He's risen, as he said. The gospel is sure and certain.

And so your future is sure and certain. Just believe, he tells them, and you will see him. So I want us to look this morning, in between our hymns, at this message that Matthew gives us so clearly.

And he wants us to understand on this Easter Sunday morning. And it is a message of great realism, but of great hope. Look first at the resistance to the resurrection of Jesus.

[ 7 : 46 ] This first paragraph, verses 62 to 66 in chapter 27. Here Matthew wants us to see, doesn't he, the woeful futility of a world that resists the resurrection of Jesus and its message.

And he's telling us resistance is doomed. It simply cannot succeed against the power of God. Let's stop the resurrection.

That's what they're saying. That's the pathetic message of the chief priests and the Pharisees. With their seal on the tomb, with their band of guards and all their weapons and soldiers. But you see, Matthew exposes the reality that all such resistance, whatever the means, is utterly futile.

And he's also telling us, in fact, that it's motivated by an unbelievable enmity and by sheer prejudice against the truth. Staggering, isn't it?

On Good Friday, we looked at verse 54 here in chapter 27. And we saw that it was the great climax of the passion story. The soldiers around the cross, when they saw how Jesus died, and when they saw all that happened so miraculously, they were filled with awe.

[ 8 : 58 ] And they said, look at verse 54, truly this was the Son of God. And yet here in verse 62, these men are unbelievably prejudiced.

These religious leaders, they're not content with just killing Jesus. They're still opposing him now as a dead body in the tomb. And yet they're mounting a pathetic rearguard action, aren't they?

It's doomed to utter failure and futility. Remember verse 51? One, the temple curtain is already torn in two from top to bottom. That means their whole temple is obsolete.

Their whole religious importance has been consigned to the dustbin of history, as far as God is concerned. And verse 52, the tombs are already opened.

An inescapable proof of the earthquake in history that changes forever this world to give it a future through the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. And yet these men are saying to themselves, we will stop all possible repercussions of this event.

[ 10 : 08 ] I mean, as if the disciples had any thought whatsoever of what they suggest here in verse 64. The disciples had scarpered long ago, hadn't they? They were hardly likely to mount some sort of commando raid now against the tomb and all the soldiers.

It's ridiculous. Is that really what the high priests and the Pharisees feared? Or did they actually fear something worse, that Jesus might actually rise from the dead?

Notice the very unlikely alliance here in verse 62. You see, the chief priests were Sadducees. That was the group that believed there was no such thing as resurrection ever for anybody.

The Pharisees, on the other hand, they believed very firmly in a resurrection at the last day. And so those two groups were very much at odds with each other all the time in the public life of first

century Palestine.

But here they are remarkably united by their sheer prejudice against Jesus. Remember Psalm 2 and how it speaks of those strange alliances in the world against the Lord and against His Anointed One?

[ 11 : 19 ] We live in a very fractured world, don't we? There's so much to divide people everywhere all the time. The United Nations is really a misnomer. But isn't it amazing the extraordinary uniting power of opposition there is when the opposition is to the Jesus Christ and to His gospel?

Why was there such unity here among these men? Well, it was because none of them wanted to contemplate the possibility that Jesus really could be raised from the dead because they understood what that would actually mean.

Look at verse 63. They remembered what Jesus said. How about rising on the third day? Now, if you look back, you'll find the only place in Matthew's gospel where Jesus spoke plainly to this group of men about that was back in chapter 12 where He spoke to them about something strange, the sign of Jonah.

What was His point there? His point was that resurrection speaks of judgment. And the men of Nineveh, said Jesus, will rise up on that great day and condemn the people of this generation. They will condemn you. Why? Because the men of Nineveh repented when God sent the word to them. But you haven't.

[ 12 : 41 ] And a far, far greater one than Jonah has been among you. You see, if Jesus was raised up, He would be their judge. They knew what His resurrection would mean.

And they remembered what Jesus had said to them at the end of chapter 22 where they questioned Him about being the Son of God. And Jesus quoted to them Psalm 110, speaking of David, prophesying about the Messiah who would sit at God's right hand and put all His enemies under His feet.

And they weren't stupid. They knew that they were Jesus' enemies. And they remembered what Jesus had said at His trial when He stood before them and said, You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the power coming on the clouds of heaven.

They knew what that meant. It was the throne of judgment and the day of judgment. They knew what a truly risen Jesus Christ would actually mean.

It would mean He was the Messiah. He was the Son of Man. And therefore, He was the judge of all mankind. And that was something that was just too terrible for them to contemplate.

[ 13 : 58 ] It might be too terrible for some of us here this morning to contemplate. But that's why they refused to believe it. And they determined that such a thing must never, ever become true.

It's amazing, isn't it? The things that people can refuse to believe because of what they would mean if actually they were true. Human beings have a great capacity for self-delusion.

And we've got a great capacity for colluding with one another in that delusion so that all of us can pretend things aren't true that are really true. That's why people won't go to their doctor, isn't it, when they've got growing symptoms.

And they fear that it might be something very serious wrong with them. They fear they might have cancer. So they won't go to the doctor because they don't want to hear the answer because they don't want it to be true. It happens all the time.

We hide from things because we don't want them to be true. And so it was with the resurrection of Jesus. You know, the great Edinburgh philosopher, David Hume, the 18th century philosopher and atheist.

[ 15 : 05 ] He refused all idea of the miraculous. He completely dismissed the resurrection as irrational, therefore it was impossible. And yet it said, you know, that the enormous obelisk that sits on top of his grave was deliberately purposed by him so that should he have been proved wrong, there would be no possibility of him rising from his grave on the great day of resurrection.

I mean, how utterly ridiculous. As if you could put the strength of a great big piece of Edinburgh stone against the power of Almighty God.

But that's what these men are trying to do here, you see, with their seal and with their guard on the stone. And there's enormous irony in Pilate's words in verse 65. Make it as secure as you can. How secure? Secure enough to stop the power of Almighty God who alone can raise the dead. That's secure? And so this crazy pantomime unfolds.

They all troop off to the tomb. The priests and the Pharisees sealing the tomb with their seal of office. Stamping all their religious authority. No one dare touch this tomb.

[16:12] And the soldiers, a guard of the utmost force, all to guard a dead body and a tomb that could hardly be opened anywhere with an enormous stone in front of it.

And against the mass ranks of the opposition, look at verse 61. A couple of weeping women. It's utterly farcical, isn't it?

And it's deeply, deeply ironic because their whole purpose, according to verse 64, was to make it impossible for their disciples to come and steal the body and therefore start a rumor.

But if you look down to chapter 28, verse 13, that is precisely what they themselves then put abroad. Tell the people that the disciples came at night and stole them away.

The very thing that they feared becomes their only possible argument against the truth of what actually really and truly happened. And yet at the same time, their high security measures only serve, don't they, to make the evidence for the real truth even more absolutely certain.

[17:19] There was no possibility of a body-snatching enterprise really happening. What is Matthew's message to us as he records these things for us?

He is saying that the world, no matter all the alliances against God and his anointed son, the world cannot ever stop the power of God at work.

Cannot ever stop his plan of redemption for this world. Not ever. Resistance to the risen Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely futile.

Yes, there will be unbelievable enmity. There will be blind perversity because the message of Jesus, risen from the dead to judge the world, is a terrifying one for many.

It speaks of judgment from a unique throne for this whole world. But you cannot stop the power of God with stones and guards and religious seals.

[18:22] Remember Acts chapter 8? When the persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem and they were scattered all over the place, what happened?

Everywhere they went, they proclaimed the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus. People believed and the church grew and grew and grew and spread. The blood of the martyrs has always been the seed of the church from the very beginning.

You cannot stop the gospel of the risen Jesus Christ. Not with military power or with state power or with any physical means. It is utterly futile to think you can.

What you will do is you will serve the purpose of God. Because as the psalmist says, even the wrath of man will praise Him.

What an encouragement, don't you think, to the first readers of this book of Matthew? Persecuted believers scattered throughout the ancient world in the first century. What an encouragement.

[19:20] What an encouragement today to believers all around the world who are persecuted. Sometimes by soldiers of hostile governments or by the horrors of ISIL in the Middle East or by hostile religious authorities.

Some of them calling themselves the Orthodox Church, but actually in many countries those very people persecuting the true believers in Christ. And what an encouragement to you and me this Easter morning as we look around in our culture which is intent increasingly on eroding Christian truth, squeezing out Christian morality in our society ever more and ever more aggressively.

Friends, Matthew is saying to us, be of good cheer. The gospel of the risen Jesus Christ cannot be prevented that way or any way. Resistance is futile.

It can only ever in the end serve the plan and the purpose of God. So let's pause with that thought as we sing a great hymn of triumph of our risen Savior.

Up from the grave he arose as the victor over all his foes. Do take up your Bible again and turn once again to page 835, Matthew 28.

[20:40] It's important that you see what Matthew's saying not just what I'm saying because if I'm not saying what he's saying you mustn't listen to me. But if I am saying what he's saying then you must listen.

And Matthew wants us to see not just the woeful futility but indeed the willful fraudulence of a world that resists the resurrection of Jesus.

In verses 11 to 15 here he's telling us that resistance to the truth is simply dishonest. That it can't stand up to proper scrutiny. What these verses tell us is that having failed to stop the possibility of the resurrection the priests and the elders now have to change tack.

So what they say is let us silence the proclamation of the resurrection. Again Matthew exposes just how dishonest how fraudulent such resistance to the truth really is.

it is just not rational it is just not scientific it is just not honest to resist the truth of the gospel. And again he's showing us that that resistance is motivated by a hatred of the truth by prejudice by perversity.

[ 21 : 57 ] these men in front of us here they're faced aren't they with blinding evidence with clear proof and yet in their wickedness they suppress that truth instead they take refuge in this preposterous story about body snatching which they themselves had made quite impossible.

They had called Jesus an imposter verse 63 they said that any talk of his resurrection would be a worse fraud than his claim to be the Messiah.

But in fact their fraud is shown up to be even worse than their crime in putting the Son of God to death. They still resist him they still reject him even when they're faced with undeniable truth reported to them by these soldiers.

Verse 11 they heard it all notice first hand witnesses these soldiers had no reason to lie of course not their lives depended on this but no these men did not repent not even then there's no admission oh we were wrong we have crucified the Messiah no there's no contrition there's no prayer oh God forgive us forgive us our terrible sin and what we see in these verses is just hardened unbelief and that's expressed in this willful fraudulence to fool themselves but worse verse 13 to fool all the people that they could tell the people this story tell them this unbelievable tale of grave robbery I mean it is so obviously preposterous that's why they have to pay the soldiers so much a sufficient sum no doubt it was a very large sum don't you think it would have to be just imagine these soldiers trying to tell this story to people right so let's get this clear you whole squad of tough hardened soldiers you were overpowered by who was it yes a bunch of unarmed theology students right okay and most of them were women right yeah oh oh oh oh oh we were asleep you see yes come off it you were asleep on duty you know the penalty for that come on pull the other one anyway if you were asleep how did you possibly know what happened how do you know who came and stole the body

I mean it's just ridiculous but it's amazing isn't it what people will believe when they don't want to believe an uncomfortable truth and that's just reality we believe what we want to believe we are experts at willful fraud and self deception but what's worse here is the willful deception of others tell the people these lies first lest the disciples actually go and tell them the truth even the resurrection even the plain evidence it forced upon them had not changed these people remember what Jesus had said to them back in Matthew 23 woe to you woe to you scribes and Pharisees hypocrites because you shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces you will not enter yourselves but nor will you lie to enter those who are trying to enter you stop them they denied themselves but worse they denied others the truth of eternity because because they so loved this world and its treasures and its religions they wouldn't let go of the power of the influence of the reputation the self satisfaction that was theirs which is something that you simply must do to embrace the truth about the risen Lord

[ 25 : 54 ] Jesus Christ because if it is true then he alone is the judge he alone is the Lord of all men he alone calls every single one of us to bow down to him to obey him to follow him to be directed in our lives by him and no one else to be transformed by him for a whole new world for his kingdom everything about our life has to change if it really is true that Jesus has risen from the dead that's what people don't want today or that first day and that's why many people resist the truth about the gospel of Jesus Christ that's why they resist the truth about a real physical genuine resurrection because it brings an earthquake to the world and an earthquake to our lives that we simply don't want and we can't tolerate a real live Jesus Christ who must be bowed down to who must be obeyed and so the soldiers get their cash and the religious establishment keeps its kudos and they're united in resisting the truth of the gospel it's a terrible indictment isn't it and it's terrible that ever since throughout the history of the

Christian church it's so often been the same and still is the same today the religious establishment so often in a quid pro quo relationship with the secular world around happy to give anodyne platitudes to order in order to keep some recognition some kudos in society a society of course that's very happy to hear stories about a dead Jesus and a silenced Jesus nothing to rock the boat nothing to threaten anybody too much nice wistful thoughts about what Jesus might have said or might have done about such and such a situation but a society that is utterly implacably resistant to

and opposed to a real risen Lord Jesus who actually speaks with authority and tells us plainly in words that must be obeyed what we must do what we must think how we must live and who demands a unique loyalty and a unique worship turning aside from all others a society will not accept that and a church that wants to have recognition can't accept that but

Matthew says that's the way it's been since the very beginning the sons of those who murdered the prophets the sons of those who put Jesus on the cross they're still wearing ecclesiastical robes all around the world today they're still refusing the plain truth of the gospel replacing it with a gospel of mere memories with an impotent Jesus with a powerless Jesus the Jesus who has no real authority to rule his church but therefore of course with a Jesus who has no power no power to save no power to raise from the dead no power to give life everlasting nothing but Matthew says to us you see fear not whether that resistance comes in the form of secularism and its armies or whether it comes from theological radicalism or liberalism it is all a willful fraud and it is all sheer dishonesty it's based on an unbelievable enmity and blind prejudice a refusal to believe plain evidence so plain the blind could see it no fear not says

Matthew the gospel of the risen Lord Jesus can't be stopped that way either not ever there will always be of course resistance to the gospel of Jesus just because Jesus said you cannot you cannot serve God and mammon the world's things the gain of this world and the gain of this world holds the human heart in a vice like grip we know that it's true whether it's riches whether it's property whether it's power influence whatever it is for you and me the influence is very very strong the grip of these things in our hearts is so powerful and so many will choose rather to believe a lie to reject God and the call of God to obedience despite all of the evidence because we want to hang on to what is ours friends Matthew is telling us we need to see that for what it is it's self deception it's willful fraud it's suppressing the truth and it's willfully futile it has no future

I hope you can see Matthew's message very clearly this Easter Sunday morning and even more importantly I hope you can see the heart of his message where he tells us an alternative way of the victory which is unquestionably with those who will not suppress the truth but those who embrace the truth who don't resist it but who rejoice in the message of the resurrection that's what the heart of his message is right here in verses 1 to 10 of chapter 28 but before we look at it let's sing again a hymn that tells of that true transforming joy of that first Easter morning at the empty tomb see what a morning gloriously bright with the dawning of hope in Jerusalem one more time please open your Bibles at Matthew 28 and we're going to look at verses 1 to 10 the very heart of Matthew's message where he shows us the wonderful future for those who don't resist but who rejoice in the resurrection of the

[ 31 : 52 ] Lord Jesus Christ he's saying to us in these verses see the power of the risen Jesus see what real Christian faith is see what real belief actually looks like it's not a leap into the dark but it's a recognition of the blinding light of truth in the reality of Jesus Christ physically risen from the dead in total contrast to the rejection of the message that's based on enmity that's based on prejudice here Matthew shows us real faith rejoicing in blinding proof in undeniable evidence proof which is seen of course by both the women and the group of soldiers and it's reported by both these group of witnesses but to the one it's the stench of death and it's resisted absolutely to the other it is indeed the fragrance of life eternal and it's rejoiced in with great joy

Jesus had spoken hadn't he all the way through his ministry of a new world the world to come and verse one here speaks not only of the dawning of a new week but really does speak of the dawning of a new world because heaven has broken into earth to shake it to change it forever with an earthquake and the angel who came at the very beginning to herald the birth of the Savior now appears again to herald the great triumph of the Lord Jesus it's wonderful isn't it to see the effortless sweeping aside of all these enemies of the pompous religious seal to prevent the resurrection swept aside rolled away and the soldiers verse 4 sent to guard to make sure nothing could transpire on the ground like dead men you can't help thinking of psalm 2 the one who sits in heaven laughs he laughs them to scorn and surely all heaven is laughing and clapping and applauding

I love verse 2 just look at it why is it there why do we have that detail surely angels don't need to take a rest the stone is rolled away and the angel sat on it the stone sealed with all the solemn authority of the Jewish establishment none dare touch this stone by order of the temple and it shoved aside and here's what God thinks of the stone his angel is resting his backside on it and we're meant to laugh that's why it's there do you think this stone and your puny decrees and your

soldiers can frustrate the power and the plan of almighty God and the power of the risen Lord Jesus Christ you're deluded I wonder I wonder if in the last day David Hume's obelisk will be cast aside and he'll wake up and see an angel resting his backside on it David you were badly mistaken and certainly on that day friends there will be embarrassing exposure of the whole world of all the flimsiness all the foolishness all the apparently weighty defenses trotted out by the wise by the learned against the possibility of the truth of the risen

Lord Jesus Christ all those PhD theses all those clever books and articles all those documentaries on the TV all those cynical speeches and on that day too they will be like the soldiers paralyzed with fear and dread of the resurrection which is fearful to all enemies of the great king of glory because the king who rules on high will rule the nations as psalm 110 says he will shatter his enemies in pieces like broken pieces of pot read psalm 2 read psalm 110 Jesus said these are telling you about me and about the future don't make any mistake the Lord Jesus Christ will rule and he will put his foot on every enemy no wonder the world hides from that truth we don't want it to be true it mustn't be true let's close our eyes to that truth but

Matthew is telling us here this morning friends it is true and it's a message that strikes fear into the hearts of a world that is at odds with God but look at verse 5 this is the wonderful thing no fear no fear for those who seek the Lord Jesus don't you fear for I know that you seek Jesus no fear just a promise a promise of glory a promise of a great future notice the focus on the evidence the blinding proof in total contrast with all that denial with all that prejudice verse 6 he is risen as he said his words are true come and look see where he lay with your own eyes there's evidence before you there are ear witnesses of everything Jesus promised and now there are eyewitnesses of everything that has come to pass as he said and Matthew and the other gospel writers are transparent they are clear as is the apostle Paul there were hundreds of witnesses of the resurrection those who told the story at the risk of their own lives at the cost of their own lives to tell what they saw because faith is not a leap into the dark faith is a response to clear undeniable evidence proof of an utterly miraculous resurrection from the dead which can only be denied if you prejudge it as being impossible or if you can't take it because you can't tolerate the thought of the implications of it being true which are just too frightening and notice verse 7 the resurrection has to become a message you must go and tell and it is from day one a message that also divides the world the soldiers go and tell theirs is a reaction of fear and it leads to a denial of the truth makes money for them but it brings great darkness to their soul and to others but the women verse 8 they go and tell and as they do their fear turns to great joy and it becomes a declaration of truth and it becomes a message to the whole world to bring light in the darkness to banish the fear of death you see where they are told to go in verse 7 they are told to go to Galilee

[ 39 : 07 ] Galilee of the Gentiles as Matthew calls it at the beginning of his gospel in chapter 4 he quotes doesn't he from the prophet Isaiah in Galilee of the Gentiles the people walking in darkness have seen a great light for those dwelling in the shadow of death on them has the light shined and now you see from Galilee of the Gentiles of the nations resurrection life and its message was to be spread to all nations with a promise of a future and the light of life everlasting and the death of darkness and death forever through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and that's a message that demands not resistance but rejoicing great rejoicing and that's what faith is friends it is it's just receiving and rejoicing in the truth about the risen Lord Jesus rejoicing in the message of hope that it brings to us into this world that's what these women did they believed and they were filled with joy and they ran to tell others because it's a message that once you've understood it has to be shared of course and as they did look at verse 9 behold

Jesus met them and they know him and they know him beyond all doubt now to be the one who in all the world is to be worshipped that is the true God and Lord of all friends Matthew is telling us so plainly here in this Easter passage that the only future for this world the only future for you and for me is in receiving and rejoicing in the message of the risen Lord Jesus and if you're a Christian disciple here this morning he's saying to you don't fear be realists yes many will oppose the message of course but rejoice verse 10 you see is as true today as it was then in this sense it's when we go and tell the world of the person of the risen savior that people will have their eyes opened and will have their lives lit up from fear to joy as rejoicing overcomes the resistance in their hearts and they find in Jesus Christ the light of eternal life the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes that's what you see right here and it's still true today and if you this morning don't yet call yourself a Christian if you are not a follower of Jesus Christ

there is a promise here right in front of you for every one of you this morning as well if you will put aside prejudice enmity and if you will seek

Jesus Christ who was crucified if you believe the evidence if you will trust in the gospel of his risen power then he will reveal himself to you Jesus will not reveal himself to those who are only seeking satisfaction for their pride and hubris never but he will reveal himself always to those who seek the satisfaction of their spiritual poverty and hunger and their thirst for meaning for life you seek him that way then he will fill you with the joy that banishes all fear and with the rejoicing that will push aside all resistance in your heart and your life and he will carry you also into his glorious future behold Jesus met them and said greetings and they came and took hold of his feet and worshipped him they worshipped him and Matthew says this

Easter morning to every one of us worship him worship him Jesus Christ risen from the dead amen let's pray almighty God who through thine only begotten son Jesus Christ has overcome death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life we humbly beseech thee that as by thy special grace enabling us let us put into our minds good desires so by thy continual help we may bring the same to good effect through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with thee and the Holy Ghost ever one God world without end amen I .