

Is The Resurrection Real?
I Doubt It – Week 5
by Chris Famisaran

Let's begin with prayer. Father in Heaven Thank You, Lord, for another day of life Lord, thank You that we could be here together as a family. And as we look into the scriptures this week, Lord especially on very important part of not only our lives but the life of the world be with us in Jesus name, amen.

Six miles outside of Manila, lies a very peaceful but very big a very vast cemetery. Over 152 acres, gently rise from the ground and sit to memorialize the military dead from those who served in World War II in the Southwest Pacific Theater. The memorial park or a cemetery is designed so it's it's this big circle. Over 17,000 servicemen are laid to rest there, with Italian marble crosses and headstones. Inscribed are the names of all of these individuals who gave their life. People from every state of this union, Panama, Guam, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Australia, Canada, China, England, Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras, Finland, Jamaica, Burma, and Beirut. In 20 of these cases, two brothers lie side by side. And as you pass each stone, as you look at the names, you have to wonder how many wives, Mothers, Daughters, sons, have been able to visit these grapes, some maybe, a lot of them probably not. So far away, removed from their very own home. But there is still hope of reunion. The cross that covers each grave is the cross that covers sin, the cross that gives hope of the resurrection. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead came also through a man for as an Adam all die. So in Christ, all will be made alive. And then the greatest reunion will one day take place when those from every state of the union, California, Connecticut, Kansas, Alaska, Alabama, Montana, those from Panama, Guam, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Australia, Canada, China, Burma, England, Costa Rica, Honduras, Finland, Jamaica, Peru, will all be gathered together with many of their loved ones. And those brothers who lay side by side will live together in eternity. Amen.

Let's go to the book of John. And as we're going to read the book of John, I'd like to ask those deacons who I've asked already, they have something for you all, we'd like to give you that, you know, you can take whether put it in your car, if you want to frame it, go ahead. But as they go by, we're going to hand out cards that thankfully enough Bill has printed. So if you see him say thank you. But we want to give you this kind of as a token, especially on this very sub special Sabbath as a reminder of the goodness of God, of what God has done in our lives. Now let's go to John 11. It's something that we have already kind of discussed before, especially in our small groups and our I Am series. So I'm just going to kind of summarize a little bit before we get to the main point in verse 21. But for those of you who don't know what John 11 is about, it's a story of Lazarus. Many of you've probably heard of it, but just in case you don't. Lazarus had two sisters Mary and Martha and he and Jesus were very close friends. They were BFFs, best friends forever. And he got sick and so the sisters sent word And Jesus, who he's good buddies with, Lazarus tells the disciples, let's hold up, let's wait. And, and so he then says, this sickness will not end in death. Notice for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it. And it says here, now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. In fact, even in verse three, when the sister sent word, they specifically said, Lord, the one you love is sick. Now, he stayed two more days, and then he finally got up. And then they started to journey to Bethany, which I think I can't remember how far was it wasn't too far.

And then Jesus also then says, let's go back to Judea. And they said, But Rabbi a short while ago, the Jews tried to stone you and yet, you're going back. In the prior chapter, Jesus had another run with some of the spiritual religious leaders of the Jewish nation. It didn't go over well, so much so that they wanted to try to kill him again. Well, Jesus then continues, he says in verse 11, our friend Lazarus has falling asleep, but I'm going there to wake him up. The disciples are thinking, Well, Jesus, if he's asleep, just let him wake up, you know, maybe he'll get better eventually. But Jesus points out, Lazarus is dead. And for your sake, I'm glad that I was not there. So that you may believe. But let us go to him. Thomas, we'll come back to Thomas later, Thomas then says, Let us go so that we may die with him. I don't know if he's making this as a faith statement, or maybe he's trying to be a little cheeky.

Okay, but keep this in mind. Okay. Now, of course, Lazarus has been dead for days by now. And when he goes to meet Martha, Martha greets him with Lord. If you had been here, my brother would not have died. I think Martha, we can probably identify with Martha at times where, Lord, you didn't show up in time when I wanted you to show up. Anybody experienced that? And then she says, but this is a great faith statement. But I know that even now, God will give you whatever you ask. Martha, I think she comes sometimes gets a bad rap. Because, you know, she's she's a between Mary and Martha. She's the one who needs to get stuff done. But she also makes a great faith statement where she says, Even though Lord, I know my brother's dead, I know that. Even now God will give you whatever you asking. And Jesus responds with her. Your brother will rise again. And she says, I know that you will rise again in the resurrection at the last day, and she's thinking like this general resurrection. But then Jesus then turns her statement and he turns it around. Now, let's make it a faith statement where he says, I am the resurrection, and the life. The one who believes in me will live even though they die and whoever lives believes in me will never die. Then he says, Do you believe this? And here? She responds. I think even more importantly, than even when Peter said You are You are the Messiah? She says Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world. I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God who is to come into the world. I love this conversation. It's one of my favorite conversations in Scripture. She believes in Jesus. She knows he can do anything. And it's interesting when he says Your brother will rise again. She she thinks of it as something Yeah. Okay. Something that's going to be in the future. But Jesus wants to change that and say no. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the resurrection in the life. I am the one who can bring back life. I am the one who will eventually will rise again. I will make those eventually in the future when we will all be gathered together. Now as time goes by the concept of a resurrection, that of something that has died, come back to life. When you look at our outer culture came without and not in, not in the church. There are many people who would be skeptical to this idea. dramatically, right? Fact, it seems like every day, it seems like it just there's more people trying to poopoo this idea of the resurrection.

And yet we live. We go through life, God has called us to believe, to believe in Him, and all that he has done and will do. It takes faith to believe in God and takes faith to believe in the resurrection. But I think it's something that in this verse, we have to remember that Jesus says, I am the resurrection and the life. And we have to believe as Martha says, Guess, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who's to come into the world. Being a believer, though, is getting challenging, more and more every day. Amen. Skepticism is running rampant. But you know, it's interesting to in Jesus day, you know, who were the strongest skeptics? The supposedly the spiritual religious leaders of the time, they are the most skeptical. Yet they probably also have the most to lose. But my friends, God doesn't want you to live a life of drudgery. God wants you to live a life that is abundant. God wants to resurrect your life.

Martha showed tremendous faith. May we believe as she did, even when it doesn't look so bright, because her brother hadn't been risen yet. Jesus had not told Lazarus to come forth. Now, eventually, for those of us who know the story, we know that Jesus runs into Mary, she has a similar response to Jesus, if you'd been here, my brother would not have died. And eventually, several verses later, he says, Lazarus, come forth. Whenever Jesus came across somebody who had either passed away or was short, he always healed them. Now, I'm not saying that here. Now God is going to bring back somebody back to life here, okay, because we're not God. But God is certainly capable of anything we know in the future. God will resurrect those our loved ones who are sleeping.

So let's fast forward last week, we talked about Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane where He was agonizing about what he was about to face. And shortly thereafter, as he was done praying, and he regrouped himself with the disciples, who shows up, Judas, and those who have come to arrest Jesus. And so Jesus, he's taken into custody. And for the disciples, what's going on here? This is not the plan that's supposed to happen. Why is Jesus going into custody? He's always managed before being arrested. And now he's allowing the authorities to come and take him away. He's arrested and he's falsely charged. He's taken before Annas, the father in law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest at the time, he wasn't taken to the local police and authority. Imagine what if we just said if he did something bad, we brought you here and we would judge you? That sounds horrible. Right? And it's here we find that Peter had said before that Jesus, I will never deny you that Jesus denies Jesus for the first time. As he's taken Caiaphas starts to interrogate him. They slap him up. They try to insinuate things to try to get him to lie to find a reason to put him away. And here Peter denies him a second and a third time then the rooster crows and imagine Peter's heart because he's trying to see what's happening. He's been trying to be so faithful and loyal, but yet he doesn't want to be seen because he doesn't want to be associated with Jesus because he feared for his life and eventually, as the rooster crowed, he took off. Jesus was by himself, alone and abandoned by those closest to him. Eventually, he's taken to Pontius Pilate, who can't find any fault with them other than Hey, you guys have your own disagreements of what you believe this shouldn't be on me. And yet the Jewish leaders and the people instigated, we want his blood. And Pilate absolves himself by trying to wash his hands and saying, Hey, his death. It's on you guys. And so on one Friday, Jesus is taken to a hill. He's placed on a cross, there he is hung and eventually dies.

Everyone, save for the beloved disciple and Jesus's Mother, is gone. Imagine being Jesus forsaken in many ways. Yeah, Jesus, even on the cross instructs to the beloved disciple, please take care of my mother. Even in Jesus suffering, he was looking out for others. Now, he calls for a drink, and finally says, It is finished. He bowed his head and he gave up his spirit, and he died. Later, he's taken down and he's buried, and we find ourselves on Sabbath, imagine the headspace then, of the disciples. Why did Jesus allow himself to be taken in? He could have called on 10,000 Angels, a legion of angels. But no, Jesus was faithful to the plan of salvation, which required him to be a sacrifice.

Sabbath passes and Sunday morning, John 20. Let's go to John 20. All right, we were all right early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark. So dawn was starting to break. Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. Can you imagine what's going through her heart? I'm sure her heart probably skipped a beat. Her stomach started to think about oh, what's wrong? Where is he? So she came running to 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. And Simon and the other disciples started for the tomb. Both were what? Right? They didn't just walk over

there. Their hearts probably were beating super fast. What would they have done with him? But the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb. First he bent over he looked in it, and at the strips of linens lying there, but did not go in and Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. The beloved disciple, he checks it out. Okay, let me check it out. And Peter doesn't care. He goes, runs in full bore. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' body, the cloth was still lying in his place separate from the linen. Finally, the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went inside he saw and what had to say he, what he believed, they still do not understand from scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. Can you imagine that they still didn't quite get that they didn't know that the plan of salvation was such that Jesus would be resurrected. And then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

And eventually, now John 20 is broken up into four sections. So this is Scene one, okay, Scene one, the empty tomb, seem to enter Jesus and Mary Magdalene. Now, Mary was outside the tomb and she was what? She was crying. Did Mary love Jesus with all of her heart? Right? A beautiful, beautiful relationship that they had it was something that she owed Jesus so much, and she cared for him she was crying. And as she bent over to look into the tomb, she saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus had been. One at the head and one at the foot, and they asked her woman, why are you crying? And she says, they've taken my lord away, and I don't know where they've put him in. And at this she turned around and saw who there. Jesus standing there, but she didn't recognize it was Jesus. And he says to a woman, and when he says woman, it's not like woman!, it's a term of endearment. Woman, why are you crying? Who is it that you're looking for? Thinking that he was what? A gardener. Right? She said, Sir, if you had carried him away, tell me where you have put them in, I will get them. She doesn't care. She wants to take care of Jesus. She wants his body to be respected, to be cared for properly. And then Jesus says, Mary, and she turns she when she hears Jesus voice when she hears her name, she recognizes that voice. And she turns around and she cries out Rabboni, which is Aramaic for teacher, and he says, Hey, don't hold on to me, for I have not ascended yet to the father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them I am extending to my Father and your Father, to my God, and my and your God. Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with news I've seen the Lord. And she told them that he had said these things to her.

One little side note, I really love the passage that, who does Jesus first appear to and sends us the first evangelists to go and tell that he has risen? Mary, does Mary have a great past? She has a crooked past. A very humiliating past probably. And yet Jesus chooses her to be the emissary to go and tell the disciples that he had risen. And so she goes, now the other gospels, some of them, they still could not believe even in this midst. They were uncertain, they are doubting.

Third seen Jesus appears to his disciples. And on that first day, on the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leadership, they thought that they may be taken away as well and crucified. And yet we find here, Jesus infiltrates that room. He came and he stood among them, and he said, Peace be with you. And after he said this, he showed them what his hands and his side and the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord and he said, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, I'm sending you and with that, he breathed on them, you said received the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone sins, they will be forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.

That is scene three. Imagine you're hiding now. You don't know yet quite what's going to happen. Potentially your life is at stake. And Jesus appears out of nowhere. And to prove he has to show his

hands and he shows his side of where he'd been pierced. Now, not everybody was there. So here we enter scene for Jesus appears to Thomas. Now Thomas also known Didymus, the one who said, Hey, let's go with Jesus. One of the 12 was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to Him, we have seen who we have seen the Lord. And Thomas gets a bad rap. Because he's known as what? He's known as the doubter, right? Thomas can be a hater. Thomas is not a hater. Thomas is not a doubter. He's simply asking a common question that probably many of us would also ask because, guess what we have senses to we have eyesight, we can hear, we can touch we can smell we can taste and he's he wants to scientific he wants to be able to see. So he says, Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, which all the other disciples had been fortunate to have experienced. And put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side. I will not what? Oh, it's Thomas doubting. So a week later, imagine now Okay, everybody says, Hey, we've seen Jesus and Thomas is like, y'all saw him a week ago. A week later, his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them this time. He says, Peace be with Jesus says, Peace be with you. And then he goes to Thomas. All right, goes to Thomas. He says, Put your finger here, see my hands, reach out your hand and put them into my side. Stop doubting and what the leave Thomas said, My Lord and my God. And the way that it's worded, is in a way that is similar to the Roman Empire. And it's here John is intentionally saying that his allegiance is to Jesus, my Lord, and my God. And then Jesus says, because you have seen me you have believed, blessed are those who are not seen, and yet, have believed.

Now for those of us here, okay, Jesus died many, many years ago, we have not literally seen the hands or his side. And keep in mind the context of this too, because John is writing to who? He's writing to the second generation of believers who had never been able to see Jesus never been able to shake his hand, never been able to give them a hug. In many ways we can identify with these believers that John is writing to, he says, because you've seen me you believe, but blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed in many ways. I think Jesus is also speaking to us here.

So what can we take from this? The story these stories, some, some things, number one, is God. Jesus takes the initiative Hey, man, because of Jesus did not take a take the initiative, we're going down the wrong road. Imagine if Jesus was not around, how long do you think the earth could have gone? Jesus takes the initiative. And the beautiful thing is our God is not an absent God. God's love is greater than we could ever imagine. Jesus was here and then Jesus also, God gives us the blessing and the gift of who the Holy Spirit. Now, like the disciples, we sometimes you know, we often demand physical proof, okay, like I indicated here we have, we have five senses, eyesight, hearing, touch, taste, smell, we want to actually literally see the proof.

But Jesus responds with to believe in order to believe and understand the resurrection, you have to believe in something that though you've never been able to maybe physically see, touch, smell. You have to believe in me, and trust in me. Now, one thing I will note, though, I think one of the biggest things that we can take away from is did the did the resurrection happen? I think so. Because why would there be an empty tomb, there's no point in having an empty tomb. The disciples are not going to try and go rescue Jesus, because it's been heavily guarded. And Rome was trying to stomp out the ability of having another king, somebody to threaten, no, and the Jewish leaders, they don't want to have anything to do with Jesus, they're gonna want to make sure that he stays in there. I think one of the biggest proofs that we can have is the fact that Jesus rose again, and the tomb was empty. Amen. But yet, Jesus says we must believe it takes a lot of faith to be able to believe in something that we can't see, touch, smell or hear. Andreas Kostenberger says, believing is better than seeing if we could see

everything if we could know everything. Would faith matter? No, because we already can see and know. We truly believe it takes faith, to accomplish anything greater for something great to happen and already has to be, you have to believe in it. Like all of the big companies that are out there, Apple, whatever. They believed in the possibilities, and along the way, they came across a lot of skeptics, a lot of haters. And still were able to overcome those differences. Far be what's even greater is the fact that the cross, Jesus has risen again. And we put a huge emphasis on Friday. I'm not detracting from that. It is important. I think the bigger thing is that Jesus rose again on the third day, because on the third day, not only did Jesus die, anybody can die. But Jesus, as he says, I am the resurrection in the life. Jesus literally resurrected Himself and has the power to grant life and to resurrect Amen. So we can have confidence that God as well, I believe this too, that God not only wants to resurrect, but also restore, and not just in the future, but now God wants you to have a great future and a great hope. God wants you to have an abundant Life and to rejoice. I love Easter. And I believe it's a time of a reminder of what God has done. But I think God more importantly wants us to rejoice in what God has done. So let us smile. Let us be appreciative. Let us go with confidence that Jesus has saved us. Amen. I want to read something to you real quickly. I found that this week when a branch writes, its Easter Week, a collection of days where Jesus was arrested, torn, down, degraded, crucified, laid to rest in a tomb and brought back to life. In the span of three days. We rejoice over dead things coming back to life.

But wait, just wait just a little longer. There's something more to the story. Jesus died on a Friday they killed him intentionally before sundown. So the Jewish people will be ushered into Sabbath unable to do anything but wait, to mourn, to wonder, to grieve and to pause. Imagine the headspace that the disciples were in on Sabbath. And on the Sabbath people were forbidden from doing even the smallest things. They couldn't even go stand by the tomb. They couldn't make themselves busy or distracted. They had to sit with the sorrow and ponder it, to face it, to live with it. Not know that a Sunday was coming. Jesus could have rose from the dead instantly. That could have been the story but God carved out space for Saturday or Sabbath, where faith was shall amend many question, Where is God in all of this?

The fact that there's a Saturday wedge between the day of the crucifixion and the Day of Resurrection is proof to me that we love God who was close to the brokenhearted close to the wedding, close to the ones walking a path of uncertainty and turmoil. It's okay if your suspect your faith is suspicious ended in Saturday right now. God is close. He is kind. He is in the chaos. God mourns with you. He grieves with you. God sees you and your hopefulness. And when you have no hope to speak of God is not fazed by your exhaustion. He's not asking you to get stronger. He's bending low and whispering. I will fight for you. You need only be still my love. Saturday is not the end of the story. Sunday is coming.

So hold tight. So my friends, may you go with faith. May you go with courage. And if your courage is weak right now, if your faith is weak, know that God does love you. God does not throw away the doubters. Because even the doubters, were still there in that room, right before Jesus showed up. Amen. So may God be with you. John 20:29, just want to reiterate, because you have seen me you have believed Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed. I believe in the resurrection as well because of what God has done in my life and what God can do in your life. That is the greatest testament of faith and that God has risen. So we can have confidence that God can own not only resurrect, but also restore.

So today, where are you struggling with doubt in your life today? Where are you struggling with doubt in your life today? Right now I want to take a moment I want to pause. And so for our action step I want to give an opportunity for those who would like to commit to recommit or to affirm your faith by seeking God and prayer to lead to guide and to shape you into the follower. God has called you to be.

Let's pray. God today is a high point. It's one of the best weekend's of Lord the reminder of who you are and God, you have overcome death you have overcome sin. And Lord, you rested on the Sabbath. May we find peace, joy, confidence, strength, courage and love and empathy from you especially on the Sabbath day as we rest. The Lord tomorrow as well, may we reflect on you? How much you've done for us? May we be grateful but Lord as well may we rejoice, may our hearts be overflowing with your love, and that Lord, if possible, give us an opportunity to share you with others. Lord, there may be some here who've never had the opportunity to commit their life to you. And so Lord, we want to say for those who who are sitting here and never had that opportunity to just say Lord Come into my life to lead, shape, mold and guide me. Maybe there are some here Lord who have strayed, but want to have a desire to recommit their life. God be with them. As they also say, Lord, please come back into my life, to lead to guide to mold. But ultimately, Lord, I want to have a relationship with You. And Lord, for those who are faithful, affirm those Lord as they also continued to be led to be guided to be molded, and to be shaped by you. Lord is our greatest desire to know you more every day, affirm us guidance. And above all, Lord, help us to be the faithful followers that you've called us to be here in Downey and wherever we are. In Jesus name. everybody said, Amen."

Grace and peace, everybody.