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[ 0 : 00 ] If you have a Bible, if you'd like to turn with me to the book of Job. We're thinking of the risen Saviour this morning.

We're going to go back to Luke 24. But this text that's found in one of the oldest texts in the Old Testament is quite remarkable in its prophetic meaning.

Listen to what Job would say in chapter 19 and verse 23 and following.

Quite remarkable. He says this. This man suffering in pain with no one to comfort him.

And yet he finds comfort. These words. Oh that my words were recorded. That they were written on a scroll. That they were inscribed with an iron tool on lead.

[ 1 : 10 ] Or engraved in rock forever. I know, he says, that my Redeemer lives. And that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

And after my skin has been destroyed. And in my flesh I will see God. I myself will see him.

In my own eyes. I and not another. I and not another. It seems to me necessitate how my heart yearns within me. Yearns for that moment.

In the future. This man's hope. And the God who raises the dead. Who raised his son from the dead. Our living, victorious Lord Jesus Christ.

let's pray Father as we come to think on your word this morning help us to not just hear it but to obey it take it in make change our hearts transform us grant us deeper assurance of our future hope in you and even bring us to see and believe in you for the first time that you are indeed the only true and living God of heaven and earth and that there is no other help us in that we pray we ask for your spirit's grace and help in Jesus name Amen well I don't know why you're here this morning I know why I'm here because somebody asked me to turn up this morning and speak to you you might be here because you're here for the first time and it was very kind of your wife to ask you to come to church this morning or maybe you're here because you're inquisitive about what goes on in Whitby Evangelical Church or maybe you're from another church this morning and you're seeking to find out what this church is like compared to your own or maybe you're here to meet friends or to meet family or maybe let's hope not you're here to meet me

[ 3 : 21 ] I hope you're not here for that reason in fact I hope you're not here for any of those reasons you see we are here I am here and you are here to meet Jesus in fact not just to meet Jesus but to bow down and worship him and that can be awkward he can be awkward he said some very very hard sayings and difficult things for us to come to terms with if we are going to bow down and worship him I haven't come to bring peace he said but a sword unless you hate mother, father, brother, sister you cannot be my disciple unless you are born again you cannot enter the kingdom of God hard sayings and it wasn't just hard sayings either he said some he did some very very amazing and unexpected things too all those money changers in the temple soon found out what he thought of them if you know the story he went into the temple overturned the tables of the money changers and drove them out saying my house is a house of prayer and you've made it a den of thieves he took a coin from a fish's mouth and said whose inscription is this and they said

Caesar's and he said render to Caesar the things of the Caesars and to God the things that are God's and here how awkward is this passage that John read to us because Jesus wasn't in the tomb on the third day he'd gone he was no longer dead but alive again he's raised from the dead and you say well I can I can handle the teaching of Jesus yeah I like some of the things he taught and I can even come to terms with the fact that he died on the cross and I can even come to terms with the fact that he died on the cross for sinners yeah fine fine fine but this is stretching it too far now you may be you may be thinking that this morning here's a an event that challenges us right at the bottom of what we believe about things what's called our world view the way we see the world

we all have a world view a world view is the picture in our heads of how the world is it's built up from our experiences so we've all experienced the sun rising and that's become part of our world view the sun rises and we've all experienced the finality of death enough in fact that it too becomes part of our world view the dead stay dead so what do we do when some eyewitnesses say there's been an exception when there's a clash between our world view and witness well either we're going to let the witness of the bible challenge our current world view we're open to the possibility that this did really happen in which case our world view needs expanding or we let our current world view dismiss the witness of the bible we say can't have really happened my world view doesn't allow it to happen therefore it didn't happen where are you where are you this morning

I heard this story I heard this story of a guy called Paul he once looked after the neighbours many pets while they were away and the first day Paul went around to feed them he took his dog with him for the walk and he'd done all the indoor pets like the goldfish just coming out to do the rabbit and he saw the dog with the rabbit and its mouth looking very dead so Paul thinks what am I going to do confess or cover up what would you do and he went for cover up he decided to find a replacement rabbit thankfully it was black wasn't like it had any distinctive markings trailed round various pet shops and he found a reasonable match bought it popped it in the hutch day after the neighbours got back they phoned him sort of call he'd been dreading so he said hi hope the pets are ok and they said they're fine thanks we just wanted to ask about the rabbit and Paul's heart sinks we're just a bit surprised when we found it in the hutch

Paul wishes he'd chosen more carefully just that it died the night before we went away and the kids insisted we bury it at the bottom of the garden and we're trying to explain to them how come Sooty's back in his hutch and there's only an empty hole at the bottom of the garden you get the point don't you all experience says rabbits stay dead though dogs will be dogs and dig them up again and all experience says dead people stay dead except for here and what Luke is doing is turning our world view in this passage upside down he is going to persuade you by the soul of his spirit he's going to be patient and he's going to be careful that you see and believe in Jesus

Christ risen from the dead now before we look at the witnesses what do we mean by resurrection in this ancient text Luke boldly states the same Jesus who really died on the cross outside the city wall of Jerusalem for our sins the Jesus who truly gave up his spirit who didn't as was the custom have his legs broken because he was already dead whose death was certified remember by an expert in death by crucifixion the Roman centurion the leader of a Roman death squad this same dead Jesus body buried in an unused tomb returned to physical conscious life three days later never to die again and you see that last phrase is very very important Jesus said this about himself I am the resurrection and the life he said he who believes in me will live even though he dies and he who believes lives and believes in me will never die now this resurrection of Jesus is not what happened to Jairus' daughter or Lazarus or the widow of

[11 : 26] Nain's son because these three that Jesus brought back to life then died again Jesus rose from the dead never to die again but to live in the power of an endless life and that's what's so incredible and that's why Luke brings these three witnesses in this passage to bear on this belief this truth to persuade you and to persuade me that this is really what happened and the three witnesses are these there's the women there's the stone and there's time and memory and I want to look at each three in turn this morning first of all the women verse 1 on the first day of the week very early in the morning I'm looking in Luke 24 the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb the women and in verse 10 we're told this it was Mary Magdalene Joanna Mary the mother of James and the others with them who told this to the apostles there are some of the women who are the women well there's

Mary Magdalene there's Joanna there's Mary the mother of James if you go to Matthew 28 one you'll find there's Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph is also mentioned and if you go to Mark 16 one you'll find Salome is mentioned and if you go to John 20 verse 1 you'll find Mary Magdalene is mentioned again so this group of women were at least four maybe more the others with them Luke 24 10 but that's not what's so strange what is so strange is that all four accounts of the resurrection of Jesus Christ put these women as the first eyewitnesses of the empty tomb because this is so counter to the first century culture and legal practice in Jewish legal practice at the time women were considered to be unreliable witnesses the testimony of women was never admitted in court and never called to trial so who believes them here in fact in verse 11 the disciples say that their words seemed like nonsense maybe that's a bit of

Jewish male prejudice popping up at the same time in Romano Greek culture women fared little better and yet the scholars tell us that Luke is writing here to a Gentile audience and still he mentions the women as the first witnesses of the empty tomb and of course at this point our critics come along and maybe you're thinking maybe you think like this they say you know you just can't believe these women of course the Bible Luke they've all got it wrong about the resurrection resurrections do not happen once you're dead you are dead credulous naive first century people impressionable women without the benefit of modern science they'd believe anything they believed the resurrection happened but we know better so our critics say we know what really happened the church evolved a belief in resurrection took around a hundred years convincing people and the belief that the Messiah rose from the dead was established and the powers that be in the church the bishop said we better write up the accounts of the life of

Jesus have him raised from the dead that way we'll be able to be kept in power and after all there's no more powerful a man than a man risen from the dead to live forever we better have it written down and that is what our critics say is how the gospel accounts of the resurrection came to be written years years after the event there's one huge problem if you believe that if you want to stay in power you wouldn't put women as the first eyewitnesses of the empty tomb no one would have believed that in the first century no one believes women and what women say in the first century you wouldn't have them in the story you'd have written Peter James and John finding the empty tomb no the women Peter James and John would be credible not the women so there you see there must have been there a really really good reason for the women being placed in the account all four accounts of the resurrection of Jesus and of course there is a cast iron reason for them being there in the account it's that they were really there oh yeah the writers of the four gospels couldn't not that they wanted to get round the fact that there were these women first at the tomb maybe they were there were people who tried to persuade them when they were writing the accounts of the resurrection that they shouldn't put the women as the first witnesses maybe there was great pressure on them to do that but they didn't they wrote that the women there turned up at the tomb and found the stone was rolled away and you see all that needed to have happened in the first 50 years after the resurrection was that someone had to sort of walk down the street knock on the door and speak to Joanna or to

Salome or to Mary Magdalene and say tell us it all over again what really happened on the third day what you found at the tomb when you got there and how exciting and exhilarating and electrifying it must have been and maybe Salome's grandchildren or maybe Joanna's children would come to their mum or their grandma one day and say mummy grandma tell us again what it was like when Jesus was raised from the dead and they would say it again and again and again and again until the day they died repeating forever and ever for everybody here that they were the first witnesses of the empty tomb thrilled that Jesus was alive and if Luke had dared to write or John had dared to write or Mark had dared to write or Matthew had dared to write that John and Peter found the empty tomb first then those women had gone up to them and contradicted them straight up you got it wrong guys we were there first if you want to know if I want to know what the

[18:09] Russian convoys were like in the second world war all I have to do is sit down with my dad and he'll tell me what it was like because he was on them he's still around he's 88 and he'll spend all day telling you about the Russian convoys he will he was there and so were these women have they persuaded you are you convinced by their witness do you believe they said the stone the women the stone the 1930s the journalist Frank Morrison wrote a book about how he came to faith in Christ through a belief in the resurrection of Jesus called his book still in print here it is who moved the stone here's Faber and Faber's recent reprint who moved the stone well who did move the stone who moved the stone away because when the women got there it had been moved it had been put in place and sealed and some Roman soldiers had been stood against it to stop the stone being moved who moved it well the women rolled it away too weak couldn't have done that the disciples they were too scared demoralised

Luke 24 that second bit we didn't read in Luke 24 tells us about how on the same day Jesus meets these disciples on the road to Emmaus and they're demoralised and scared and they're still talking in the past tense about who Jesus was he was a prophet verse 19 powerful in word and deed in their minds he's not alive at all he was a prophet but he's gone the Roman soldiers but what would that achieve for Rome the last thing Rome wanted was a rival even a dead rival to Caesar of course that's what happened and Christians went to a martyr's death for their faith in Jesus as Lord so

who's left well the angel the angel the angel yes the angel actually that's what the ancient text tells us Matthew 28 2 the angel rolled away the stone and sat on it how wonderful is that and don't miss that's the point isn't it the account is so understated it's not written as if it were a myth there are no wild things happening in the accounts of the resurrection it's so ordinary it's so reserved there are no lightning flashes there are no explosive effects there's no CGI there's no balls of fire there's no appearance of weird or large creatures the account is a far cry from Jason and the Argonauts or the clash of the titans or the other myths of the ancient world it's so down to earth that the angels dead cool he sits on the stone been there done that got the t-shirt thanks guys but remember you might forget it if it's not what you believe that Luke's account is actually earth shattering in its implications for you and for me and for the whole of human history it breaks all the rules in the science textbooks dead men will rise one day never to rise again in history Jesus is the first fruits of a new creation of the resurrection to come for all who believe in him the account is so understated for the magnificent victory that the bible says it is it's like the account of the crucifixion isn't it really there's more details in the crucifixion account of course the seven sayings of

Jesus from the cross the scourging the beating the thieves and some preachers will all add detail won't they that isn't in scripture to make it more graphic and bloodthirsty almost than it's presented to us by the holy spirit but even with more detail the account of Jesus crucifixion is still restrained because it's really about what you do not see the seriousness of sin and the suffering heart of our savior and the depths of the father's love love for each one of us for you and for me the father freely gave up his own son for us all didn't spare him at all but gave him freely and willingly to the cross no neither the crucifixion nor the resurrection are myths they really happened there was no need to say too much because everyone at the time in the city of Jerusalem in the budding church in politics in religion

Herod the chief priest Pilate Pharisees Sadducees everyone who mattered in Jerusalem knew the truth whether they acknowledged it or not there was no body of Jesus in the tomb because Jesus was alive again never to die anymore and just think of those Roman soldiers that were put on guard at the tomb what would they have said having seen the angel appear and to roll the stone away all the garrison of legionnaires in Jerusalem would know what had happened wouldn't they just stone was rolled away to let us in to see that he is not here he is risen do you believe it you trust yourself to this one who lives forever can take you through the portal of death into the world beyond because he's been there before third witness time and memory how long was Jesus in the grave in the tomb the earliest account of the resurrection is not a gospel account it's in 1

[ 24 : 45 ] Corinthians Paul's letter to the church at Corinth chapter 15 it's written about 20 years after the event of the resurrection and 1 Corinthians 15 1 to 3 puts Jesus three days in the tomb using the Jewish method of inclusive counting Friday Saturday Sunday as the disciples on the road to Emmaus say in Luke 24 21 it's the third day since these things happened the third day and it shows us that Paul Luke and others are speaking not of a myth but a historical real event and the disciples and the women ought to have been expecting that of course their memories ought to have been alert to what was going to happen Jesus would be only three days in the tomb Luke 24 6 he's not here he is risen remember said the angel how he told you while he was still with you in Galilee yeah he did three times actually when they and then 24 verse 8 says then they remembered his words and what were those words here they are

Luke 9 22 the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders chief priests and teachers of the law and must be killed and on the third day be raised to life mark 8 31 he began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders chief priests teachers of the law and that he must be killed and after three days rise again mark 9 31 the son of man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men and they will kill him and after three days he will rise and mark 10 34 and the son of man will be betrayed to the chief priests teachers of the law they'll condemn him to death they'll hand him over to the gentiles who'll mock him spit on him flog him and kill him three days later he will rise not once at least three times on the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem Jesus affirms his death and his resurrection the disciples and the women didn't get it they just didn't get it they didn't see what he was saying till now now now they do something you see something something or someone was going to have to break the grip of Judaism on these people these disciples were staunch Jewish believers it was not going to be easy for them to turn over and believe in a risen Messiah it was impossible as it is for you or me to

believe in a risen Messiah nothing like a resurrection of a Messiah was ever envisaged in Jewish thought maybe at the end of time maybe there might be a resurrection of true Jews but not a single person not one person on their own it's just too much to take in for the Jewish thinkers that's why Thomas has to see the risen Jesus for himself you see from their earliest days these Jewish men were brought up to believe that making up a new religion tantamount to lying against God and perverting God's revelation and risking the damnation of their souls to hell yet seven weeks later seven weeks later they're prepared to risk all for the sake of Jesus they're stood in Jerusalem preaching Christ is risen why why such a transformation the only explanation for that and the history of the Christian church for the last two thousand years is this that the risen

Christ has broken open our view of the world Jesus risen has turned our world view upside down they knew that he had done what he said he would do he has died on the cross for them and three days later been raised to life never to die again and they're ready to give him everything and you see if you believe this about Jesus that's the only option open to you that if you believe he is risen from the dead like that disciple Thomas who wasn't there when Jesus first appeared to the disciples when he appeared again he was there like Thomas you will say my Lord and my God when you see him when you believe in him you will bow down you will worship him with every fibre of your being and you will say my Lord and my God and you will give everything to him and you won't mince words with him you'll so love Jesus as to thrust and expel every idol from your heart you'll sing Lord help me to tear that idol from your throne and worship only thee and those words will mean something to you you'll see you'll have found you'll have found if you believe in him what all the tales and stories of men are looking for the silver cord the elixir of life the kiss that wakes the dead the glory of God the ultimate reality the path to eternal life and the salvation of the soul it's all here you'll have found someone to forgive you to deal with all those regrets the past the skeletons in the cupboard those times when you wouldn't even forgive yourself for what you did the hurt and the pain and the suffering and the sorrow that you feel deep deep down and you feel you can't do anything about here's life itself ready to transform you and deal with you and welcome you home you see you'll have found in him if you believe in him an acceptance that you're finding no one else justified in Jesus

[ 30 : 56 ] Christ a great difficulty so many people I see in school where I teach and in the church our church at home is the great difficulty is people accepting themselves for what they are and accepting one another for what they are our past haunts us the things we've said and the things we've done and we wish we'd never said them and wish we'd never done them there's no peace but here's one who didn't just die for our sins but rose to prove that he'd done it raised for our justification raised to accept us and he will he'll accept you as you are warts and sins and all he said so listen as we finish he said this come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I

Jesus will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I meek and lowly in heart and you will find rest for every soul God grant you that God give you that we pray in Jesus name let's pray Father we thank you that Jesus is alive that he can meet us right where we are in the mess we're in in the difficulties we're in in the trials we're facing in the events that trouble us in the week to come in the family problems that we've got to deal with when we leave this service in the issues that at work are going to pummel us and challenge us and stretch us and demand everything of us and more Father we thank you that there is the life in him he is the life the way the truth and the life and his strength is enough for us may we turn to him and believe in him and trust in him and give ourselves to him and say with Thomas my Lord and my

God and know his strength and his help and his grace and his empowering and his blessing taking us through the most difficult of circumstances the most challenging of events even death itself this great conqueror of death and this we pray as we give ourselves to you now and renew our devotion to you our Lord and Saviour Amen and now may the God of peace through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus that great shepherd of the sheep equip you with everything good for doing his will may he work in you what is pleasing to him through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever Amen

I that Amen