

# Salvation is a Life [Pt1]

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[0:00] All right, good morning. It's great to see this lively crowd. You know, obviously, it's Easter.! And at Easter, we're celebrating life, right? Easter's all about life. So our house, we got a lot of life.

So my youngest grandchild was born on Wednesday here in Dubuque, and Benjamin has three older siblings. Thanks. Jesse's almost two. Jonah just turned five, and Sonny just turned six. So you want to see life? Come over to our house.

We'll give you some. You can take one home with you. It's crazy. And then my allergies are going crazy, so that tells me spring is springing. And we're seeing life. We're seeing the trees around us show more and more buds literally every day.

It's almost like slow-motion fireworks that are going on. We're surrounded by life. What we're going to talk about this morning is that salvation is a life. Not just is life, which is true.

Our life is in Christ. But salvation is a life. And what we're going to look at today is what does it mean to have this life that Jesus offers? And what is the scope? Where does this apply? Is this just something that we look forward to in heaven? And otherwise, we just live a life now, here, you know, making do, getting, you know, paying our bills, taking care of family, doing what we do.

[1:31] And so, but we just want to make sure that our account is good with God. Or does our salvation have meaning today in how we interact at work and how we interact with our families and how we interact with our neighbors? What is this life? Salvation is everything. We're going to unpack that this morning. So turn in your Bibles to John chapter 20. We're going to spend most of our time in the book of John. But turn to John chapter 20 toward the end of the book.

So I was thinking about some things this morning as I was driving into church. And it's really irritating to me as I'm driving in and some new idea comes to mind. It kind of throws a wrench into things. And all more, well, actually, for my entire life, since I came to Christ, the music surrounding Easter frustrates me. Because I think it should be full of horns, trumpets, and French horns, and volume. We are celebrating that Jesus rose from the dead. That should be excitement. I can remember years ago, I was leading worship at a church out in Colorado on Easter morning. And we sang the hymn. Some of you have heard me tell the story. We sang the hymn, up from the grave he arose. Now, in that hymn, the verses are very somber.

Low in the grave he lay, Jesus my Savior. Waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord. And then the verse, or the chorus, is up from the grave he arose.

Well, the congregation was kind of singing it like they were asleep. So I stopped and I said, are you listening to what you're saying? Are you listening to the words of this hymn?

If you are, we're going to start over and now we're going to sing it right. And they did the verse somber. Like it's Saturday, you're the disciples.

[3:36] Jesus died yesterday. Our hope died with him. And the chorus is Sunday morning.

Up from the grave he arose. And the congregation responded to the call. And we had to buy a new roof. It was fantastic. But you know, most Easter music isn't like that.

It's pretty quiet. As a matter of fact, one of the songs that you'll hear often is that we've heard for centuries is the Hallelujah Chorus. It handles Messiah.

Did you know that the Hallelujah Chorus is not connected to Easter? In that work of music? The Hallelujah Chorus is the triumph of the King at the end.

The music it handles Messiah around Easter is quiet. This morning as I drive, why is that? Because actually, if you think back, what happened when Jesus was born?

[4:41] A star was seen. That was seen globally. We know that because we know the three kings traveled a great distance to see this king that was forecast and proclaimed in the stars.

I saw a video this last week. I don't know if this is true. So take it with a grain of salt. But this pastor was talking about the fact that at the birth of Jesus, there is a journal that they found, archaeologists have found in China.

Chinese emperor was responding to the three hours of darkness on the day of Jesus' death. He had written about seeing the star.

He said, a son of God has appeared to mankind. And 33 years later, he wrote, that darkness is because that son of God died.

So we knew at the birth of Jesus globally that God had arrived. The angels appeared to the shepherds. Great news to all the people.

[5:52] Unto you a son is born. It was proclaimed. With great fanfare, kings and shepherds went to that manger to see the king.

But we don't see that at the resurrection. Jesus was quiet. He didn't announce himself.

Why? Why? It dawned on me this morning because the work isn't done. The work isn't done.

What began at Jesus' death reached its climax at the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus will not be concluded until the suffering son of God is coronated the reigning king of the universe.

And then you'll hear a fanfare. Then you will raise the roof. We will sing it together. And this morning, I want to invite you to think about your relationship with that God.

[7:01] where do you stand before God? Like Jim was sharing, what would you say talking to God before the pearly gates?

We're going to address that question. So, John chapter 20, starting at verse 30. Therefore, many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, the book of John.

But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name. Let's pray together and we'll unpack this a little bit.

God, thank you for loving us so much that you sent your Son to die on the cross for us. He came as a baby, grew up as a boy, a teenager, became a man, showed us how to live in righteous relationship with you, and then died on the cross so that the sin that kept us from you was taken care of.

He took his punishment in our place. And now we can look forward to life, abundant life, because the resurrection proved that everything he said was true.

[8:46] When he said it is finished on the cross, you said amen and raised him from the dead. Help us live in light of that new life.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. So let's talk briefly what is the resurrection. Number one, it is the most well-attested event, well-documented event of antiquity.

Nothing of that time period is better attested to than that the man Jesus lived, died, and was raised from the dead. It's irrefutable.

It happened. It was a historical event. This isn't myth. The man Jesus was raised from the dead. It's documented irrefutably. It happened.

The resurrection is proof. It's proof that our sins are forgiven. Paul said in a couple different places, Romans 4, 1 Corinthians 15, that the resurrection of Jesus demonstrated that we had been justified, that our sins could be forgiven.

[9:51] He said in 1 Corinthians 15 that if Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, we are of all people most to be pitied. But he has been raised from the dead, and because he's been raised from the dead, we have hope.

We have a future. And the last thing that the resurrection does for us is it proves that all the promises of God, and you're going to see in a few minutes that they are extravagant. You may be tempted to think that can't be true.

That can't be real. That's not my experience. You're going to see the promises of God are extravagant. And the resurrection proves not only that God is willing to fulfill those promises, he is able to fulfill those promises.

Because the power, the power that raised Jesus from the dead is the power that is at work in those who call him Savior and Lord.

That power is at work in us. And I want to show you this week and next week what that means to have that life lived out through us. We have new life in Christ.

[10:53] The resurrection proves it. So the gospels, just a little bit of background here, there's four gospels. In Luke's gospel, in John's gospel, the author tells us clearly why he wrote what he wrote.

Matthew and Mark, it's not as clear. We have to deduce what their motives were. But Luke makes it really clear. He's writing to a person named Theophilus. We don't know if that was an actual person or if it's kind of a metaphorical person.

But his purpose in writing the book was to give a factual account to demonstrate that what the people, including us, had heard was true.

Luke is one of the premier historians of the first century. As recently as the middle of the 20th century, there was a lot of skepticism about the historicity of the Bible.

Can we really believe it? Is this stuff true? And Luke's gospel, interestingly enough, was the least trusted. Well then, in 1948, Israel became a nation and the infrastructure of the nation began to grow.

[11:56] And as they grew, because of all the history packed into that small geographic region, they kept tripping over archaeological sites over and over and over again. And what they kept finding was, doggone, here's another one that says, the Bible's true, the Bible's true, the Bible's true.

Pontius Pilate did exist. They saw over and over again proof that what was written is accurate. And it became, by the middle of the 1960s, early 1970s, that claims about life in the first century in the Holy Land, if it didn't square with Luke's gospel in the book of Acts, which Luke also wrote, we're not sure it's true.

Luke became the gold standard of how we evaluate our understanding archaeologically of what was being discovered. The Bible is reliable, it's true, and that was Luke's purpose in writing it. Now, John's purpose we see here. He very carefully curated specific stories for a purpose. Where Luke was laying it out from birth to death in very specific order, as close to accurate portrayal of the sequence of events as possible, John wasn't concerned about that.

John's concern was to cherry pick and curate, if you will, specific stories to make the point that Jesus was fully God and fully man and that he died on the cross for our sins.

[13:27] John's gospel is very unique. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are very similar. There's a lot of overlap. John tells things from a different perspective with a different intent.

And his goal is that you would believe. That's my goal for you this morning. That you would believe. That you would be willing, if you haven't trusted Christ as your Savior, you don't even know what that means.

Like Jim was back in the day. Nah, I'm at church because someone has twisted my arm and I'm here and I don't like it. Pause for a second and just listen. What if it's true?

What if this is true? What difference does it make? John wrote to you. But he also wrote to us who are believers to ask the same question.

Do we believe this? Do we believe it enough to live it? To obey it? To see this life come out?

Because that's what he said. Verse 31, but these things have been written so that you may believe, two things, that Jesus is the Christ that he's the Son of God and that believing, so it's not believing by itself, but that believing you may have life in his name.

[14:44] Belief and life are associated in John's Gospel over and over and over again. I went through and read this week through the book The Gospel of John and counted, I think it was 33 or 34 different occurrences of the idea of life.

You all know John 3, 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him, so there's the belief, will have eternal life.

Belief and life always go hand in hand. So it's not just that we believe so someday we'll go to heaven and be safe, there's new life today. There's new life from the moment you accept Christ.

My experience was similar to Jim's. I accepted Jesus as my Savior as fire insurance. I didn't want to go to hell. And yet God said, well, you didn't read the fine print, buddy.

I'm going to take your whole life. Little did I expect at 14 that I would be here. And here I am. So I want you, whether you've accepted Jesus or not, to be open to examine your beliefs and say, what if it's true?

[15:57] And if it's true, what am I doing with what I'm hearing? So keep with me because we're going to move forward. So the first thing that Jesus wanted us to believe, that Jesus is the Christ.

Turn your Bibles to, keep your finger in John 20, but turn over to Isaiah 53. Isaiah 53 was a passage that caused real problems for the Jews throughout history.

And the reason it caused confusion is because they wanted their Messiah, this passage is one of the premier Bible texts about the Messiah, they wanted their Messiah to be a triumphant king, to kick butt and take names.

The Messiah that they were looking at in the first century, that they were looking for in the first century, they hoped would come, overthrow the Roman Empire, and install a Jewish empire in its place with the Jews in charge.

That's what they wanted. They wanted a triumphant king. They didn't like this passage I'm about to read to you. This is Isaiah 53, starting in verse 4. Surely our griefs he himself bore,!

[17:09] And our sorrows he carried! Well, that sounds good. That's a good starting point. Because that could apply to the king, as well as a suffering servant.

But wait, it goes downhill from there. Yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was pierced. He was pierced through for our transgressions.

He was crushed for our iniquities. The chasing, the beating for our well-being fell upon him. The punishment that we deserved, Jesus took instead.

That's what Isaiah is saying there. By his scourging, by his beating, we are healed. All of us, like sheep, have gone astray. Sheep wander us. They're not watched. That's us. All of us, like sheep, have gone astray.

Each of us has turned to his own way. But the Lord has caused the iniquity or sin of us all to fall on him. We're sinners.

[18:17] It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that we don't do the things that we want to do. We don't treat people the way we think we should. We certainly don't treat people the way we would like to be treated.

And all of those sins create an obstacle between us and God. We deserve punishment for our sin and we have no right to access to God because of our sin.

And yet Jesus, the Messiah, came to accept the punishment for the sins. He took them on himself. He accepted the full wrath of God, exhausted on him that we deserved. And if we believe that he is the Messiah, that work that was done on the cross, the wrath of God poured out on him is for us.

It's ours. In exchange, we get all of his goodness, all of his righteousness. 2 Corinthians 5.21 says that he who knew no sin, Jesus, became sin on our behalf.

[19:28] The things that we do wrong, Jesus took them. That we might have the righteousness of God in him. We receive and exchange Jesus' goodness.

All of it. Before God, all of your sins can be forgiven if you believe. So we believe that Jesus is the Son of God or that he is a Christ and we believe that he is the Son of God.

Jesus was fully God but he set aside the exercise of his power. He never ceased for a minute to be God but he became fully man and as the Son of God he had the power and the authority to be our Savior and as a man he was like us so he qualified to take the punishment.

As God he was sinless. throughout the Bible God demands sacrifice without blemish. No marks on it, no scars, no discoloration.

Sacrifice for sin had to be perfect. As the Son of God Jesus was perfect and then as a man he lived a life like we live and yet he did it without sin.

[20:44] He was tempted but he never sinned and because of that he was acceptable as a sacrifice for God. He was the Messiah he was the Son of God and when we believe in him what did John say?

And that believing you may have life in his name. So what is this life? What's he talking about?

Fasten your seatbelts. We are going to zip through the Gospel of John.

So I'm going to have you bounce around a little bit there'll be slides if you can't keep up that's alright because I want to honor time as well. So the obvious answer when Jesus was saying or when John was saying that your belief is so that you may receive life the obvious answer what I accepted when I accepted Jesus as my Savior was that when I died which I expected would be years in the future because I was only 14 that when I died I would go to heaven and what happened between my 14th birthday and whenever I happened to die which I expected to be in my 90s still do that that was mine to do that was mine to worry about but then I'd get to go to heaven because Jesus governed my sins pretty sweet deal that's not the complete picture not even close because if you live that way you're missing out on how to live the life that God designed for us as human beings that's part of the offer of the Gospel a few weeks ago over the last few weeks we've been looking at our mission and values and I pointed out the fact that there's two great truths

I share almost in every sermon one is that life is really hard in our family we say life is hard by a helmet but the other thing that's more important and equally true is that the Gospel is greater than you could ever imagine it covers everything and that everything includes our life now that's why I titled this sermon Salvation is a Life it's the outworking of God in us God's work in us to make us into the people he designed us to be so the outcome of our belief is new life it's the same kind of life that Jesus lived now another thing we talked about this last year as we went through the Gospel of Mark was that Jesus never used a cheat code now the younger set here knows exactly what I mean when you're playing a video game I used to play Madden football game

I turned on the cheat code and all of a sudden my running back could go zipping past everybody and I scored 100 points because the defense couldn't stop my guy because I put in a cheat code in video games cheat codes allow you to bypass all the dangerous stuff to get to the end to get to the pot of gold and a lot of times we think well Jesus must have had a cheat code he was the son of God so when he went into the wilderness for example he really wasn't tempted because he was God the devil really couldn't beat him and when he faced confrontation by the Pharisees or by the other people who lived in first century Israel well he wasn't really tempted to get angry or tempted to misbehave because he had the cheat code he's God no he set aside that power of God in order to experience life just like we do Jesus had the same tools at his disposal that you and I do he had the word of God he had the

[24:26] Bible he had the Holy Spirit speaking into his life he had prayer as a means to communicate with God the gospels tell us that he spent some full nights in prayer the day before he picked the disciples he spent the entire night talking to the father about who are the 12 guys that will be my primary guys Jesus had the same tools that we did he was tempted as we are yet without sin we can live a life that fits the design that God gave for us as we believe in Jesus that's critical we receive the same life that he had we can live the life that he has so what is that life I'm going to say this again you're going to be tempted to think that I'm exaggerating that what I'm saying is hyperbole it's not the promises of God in the

New Testament are extravagant and our disbelief our skepticism that no that can't be true keeps us from receiving what God is offering to us listen to the word turn off that skeptical part of your brain and listen to what Jesus himself said is true about the life that's being offered to you so the first point is in John 17 3 I've got a slide for that so you don't have to turn there actually I lied I don't have a slide so you do have to turn there it's only a few pages you can handle it John 17 3 the chapter of John 17 he is praying to the father it's the only time that we see Jesus actually praying the Lord's prayer he's modeling to us how to pray John 17 is actually the disciples recording for us John recording for us Jesus dialogue with his father and in verse 3 he says this is eternal life that they may know you the only true

God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent this is eternal life that you may know God the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent that word know is it is very important to pay attention to in English we have one word for know KNOW we can know facts about people we can know facts about history we can know facts facts facts we live in a season of a cultural moment where facts are everything probably to the detriment of our true understanding of how the world works or we can

know relationally the way I know my wife she knows me or we know our children we know our friends it's a rich word of relationship the Bible actually uses the word know even to include the sexual relationship between a husband and wife that's the context of John 17 eternal life is not that you know facts about

Jesus it's not that you've memorized John 3 16 or Romans 3 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God or Romans 6 23 for the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord those facts don't do you a lot of good eternal life is this that we can know God Jesus told the disciples in John 15 you are my friends I tell you what's going to be happening you are my friends that's eternal life it's a day by day intimate relationship with the God who created you that's eternal life and you know when it starts not the day you die actually whether you know Jesus or not you're an eternal being C.S.

Lewis wrote that look around you every person you see is an immortal the United States is nothing flash in the pan in eternity we'll think oh yeah the United States I remember yeah that country was around for 250 some odd years whatever I hardly remember it was such a short time we will outlive the creation itself because we are eternal we're made in the image of God we live forever!

[29:20] the life that we're talking about here this new life began the day that you accept Jesus as your Savior might be today and it's a quality of life that gets continually better forever forever our life gets better so that's the first thing it's rooted in and the core of it is your relationship with God and think of the most rich and rewarding friendship relationship you have in your life you can have that with God that's what he's inviting you into we just need to take advantage of it so secondly it's an abundant life and I'm just going to I'm not going to quote these verses just give you a couple references by the way these notes are on our website if you go to sermons and look my sermon notes are there Jesus talking to the woman at the well said you know if you knew who you were talking to you could ask me and I would give you living water living water the person who drinks the water that I offer of life welling up from within them that's life we have it's like a spring welling up in

John 7 Jesus took the metaphor even further it's like rivers of living water flowing out of us it's rivers of blessing it's rivers of fulfilling everything that we want in life which by the way that's what the gospel offers experts say that what humans want more than anything else is security and significance we want to be safe and we want to matter if you're walking with Jesus your life is safe in the best way possible now am I saying that you'll have no sickness you'll have a great house great car all that stuff no that prosperity theology has no place in the Bible what you will have is a life that is truly safe your soul your very being is safe forever in that relationship with God and your life will matter as those rivers of living water flow out of you you will share the life of God with other people and they'll be changed they'll be brought in and then in

John 10 10 Jesus said I give them life he's talking about his sheep I give them life and it's abundant! life think back to what I said about my house we've got four little kids bouncing off the walls think about the flowers blooming like slow motion fireworks we're surrounded by life that is what is available to you in the gospel a rich fulfilling meaningful secure life that's what's on offer here the gospel is greater than anything you could ever imagine and I'm not done turn to John 15 so a couple more pages back there is a slide for this one Jesus is talking to the disciples he just said to them I call you my friends and then he says them you did not choose me but I chose you that sentence could be said to every one of us

I choose you you need to respond to me and you answer the call you did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit and that your fruit would remain so that whatever you ask of the father in my name he may give to you this I command that you love one another that's those rivers of life the abundant life we will bear fruit that's a life of someday not soon I'll have great grandkids that'll be even cooler I wonder I told my son when my first grandchild was born Josiah I thought I loved you but dude I would throw you under a bus for this little girl his daughter so I wonder if I'll feel that way even more about the great grandkids I guess I have to wait to find out Jim what's the story to be seen yep to see these kids but that's our life to bear fruit so the life is relationship with

God it's an abundant life rivers of living water flowing out of us is a fruitful life it's a God empowered life turn back another chapter to John 14 this is all part of the last conversation Jesus had with the disciples truly truly I say to you make sure I got the right verse yep verse 12 truly truly I say to you he who believes in me the works that I do he will do also we're going to do we should be doing if we're believers in Jesus we should be doing!

[34:27] people to invite them into an intimate relationship with the father to sacrifice whatever it takes to draw them in truly truly I say to you he who believes in me the works I do he will do also now here's the crazy part in greater works than these he will do because I go to the father we just have more time but we get to do the works of Jesus in the relationship with God as we're experiencing his life we develop

Christ likeness we become like him and as we ask him for things the things that we ask for are the things that he delights to give I might think I would really like a Maserati that Maserati sports car that's a sweet vehicle you don't need a Maserati your Hyundai!

Tucson is fine okay Lord you're right what I'd really much rather have is to be able to share the gospel with people truly this is far more to me than a Maserati to share the gospel with people and have them say I want that I want that I want the life of Christ I want what he's offering and Jesus promises that as we pray those prayers if we obey his commandments which fundamentally is to love one another that we will do the works of God so in relationship with God we have abundant life we have a fruitful life we will do the very works that Jesus did empowered by God it's not on us I don't have the skill the wisdom or the strength to do what God asked me to do neither do you it's God working in us and through us it's a God empowered life and finally fifth it's a life like Jesus John 14 6 Jesus said I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father but through me that was the first verse I ever memorized I wasn't even a Christian yet and I didn't understand what I was memorizing this I think is the most important statement in the New Testament because Jesus is revealing his identity and how his identity impacts us so we think of a way like if you said John how do I get to your house I would tell you the way go maps and you will follow those directions but I'm not the way I'm telling you the way Jesus is literally the way it's not facts and then we have relationship with God backing that up no it's the other way around we see the way embodied in

Jesus and we know how to get there I am the truth truth isn't a collection of statements no truth is a person Jesus Christ you want to know it's true you look at him that is truth that's the bedrock of all truth is Jesus himself and he is the life John opened the gospel verse 4 John chapter 1 in him was life and the life was the light of men Jesus embodied he is life that is what he is to us and that's the one who is living this life through us so if you believe you have that life that's the life that's on offer so what does that mean what's that mean for us turn your Bibles over to Galatians 2 20 so if you're not familiar!

[38:57] with your Bible you'll be turning toward the back of Galatians is the next book chapter 2 is after chapter 1 you probably got that figured out so Galatians 2 20 I have been crucified with Christ it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me on the cross if you have put your trust in Jesus if you have believed that he is the Son of God if you have believed that he is the Messiah that his death was in your place you were literally in God's eyes crucified with him and then you were raised to new life when Jesus was raised in the resurrection you were raised to new life I have been!

crucified! with Christ nevertheless I live but not me Christ is now living his life through me as we go in obedience as we read his word to develop the relationship with God as we pray as we interact with each other as a community of believers we enter into that relationship with God and he literally lives his life through us do you remember earlier I said I was frustrated by Easter music it's kind of mellow and I think it should be triumphant that there's fanfare Jesus birth there's fanfare and his coronation as the king at the end of time there's actually fanfare now can you guess what the fanfare is it's you it's me as we follow in this life obedience to

Jesus we walk into a space Jesus is there Jesus is literally there John told the disciples where I send you I am there we are the fanfare we proclaim Jesus everywhere we go and if you pay

attention you're surrounded by people surrounded by people who want to know what it is you're proclaiming why are you different tell me about your life step into that space answer that question let me tell you about my Jesus Messiah the son of God I trusted in him let me share him with you and invite them to join you in the family of God let's pray together Father thank you that we have life in

Christ that you live through us that it's your will to touch the world through us God thank you that it's entirely of you not us it's your strength it's your wisdom it's your direction help us to live that way help us to learn how to live life in intimate relationship with you I pray in Jesus name amen