

Lord, You know Everything

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- [0 : 0 0] Let me pray for us as we look at God's Word. Great God, God of all the earth, thank you for your Word in John's Gospel about Jesus. As we now look at it, please help us to understand it and please change our lives like Jesus did for Peter.
- Please change our lives for your glory. Amen. Well, as Jimmy asked, is it a fizzer? A fizzer is a saying that means something has no real lasting effect.
- It's just a puff of hot air. It makes a bit of noise and creates a bit of excitement, but a moment or two later it's just forgotten about and doesn't go anywhere. Is it a fizzer?
- Let me give you an example of a fizzer. Some of you will remember back to the year 2000. Some of you may not have been born then, but those who know about the year 2000, cast your mind back.
- And in the 90s, it was worldwide knowledge that the internal clocks to computers had two digits to them. And so, you know, the year 1994 was 94 and 1995 was 95 and so on.
- [1 : 0 9] And the world freaked out when it was 1999 because when the year 2000 came and the clocks ticked over, the theory was that the computers, when they ticked over to 00, would trick themselves into thinking that it was 1900 when computers didn't exist and they'd just kind of implode on themselves or something or they'd just die.
- And there was worldwide panic about the Y2K bug. And so in the weeks leading up to New Year's, people were going to the supermarket stocking up on tin food and building bomb shelters and the whole, you know, in case a plane fell out of the sky because, you know, there was just worldwide panic about what would happen when it turned to the year 2000.
- And of course, New Year's Eve came and it was December 31 and at midnight the clocks ticked over and what happened? Nothing. Nothing happened at all.
- It was a total, absolute fizzer. Well, that's what we're asking tonight about the resurrection of Jesus in John chapter 21. Is it a fizzer just like Y2K?
- A puff of hot air, something that's kind of creates initial excitement and perhaps movement, but then doesn't go anywhere at all. Well, let's listen to the opening verses of John 21 and read verses 1 to 3.
- [2 : 2 9] After these things, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. He showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the twin, Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples.
- Simon Peter said to them, I'm going fishing. They said to him, we will go with you. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Now that seems like an anti-climax, doesn't it?
- After all that's led up to this point, in John's biography or gospel of Jesus. Since chapter 1, he's told us about how the God who made the world has come to earth in the man Jesus, how he's lived the perfect life, how he's demonstrated he's the man with God's authority and power by performing great signs and miracles and wonders, and that Jesus has come to die for the sins of the world, and he's been raised from the dead.

John's told us all these wonderful, spectacular, miraculous news, and then the opening verses of chapter 21 begin with a bunch of guys going fishing. That seems like an anti-climax after all that build-up and expectation, doesn't it?

Here they are, the disciples of the risen Jesus, going fishing. Well, let's keep reading. In verse 4, Jesus comes along. Just after daybreak, Jesus threw on the beach, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

[3 : 55] The disciples, yeah, don't recognize him here, probably not because of anything spiritual or supernatural going on, probably just because it's barely sunrise and he's 100 meters away, and he's just hard to see.

Then in verse 5, Jesus calls out, Have you caught anything? And they answered, No. So he said to them, Cast the net to the right side of the boat. And they do.

And what happens? Verse 6, They were not able to haul in their net because there were so many fish. And the beloved disciple, probably John, says to Peter, It is the Lord.

So this disciple immediately recognizes Jesus, and it's probably because this miracle parallels an earlier miracle, recorded not in John, but in Luke chapter 5. In Luke 5, Jesus tells the disciples to put their nets out into deep water.

And even though Peter complains that that's probably a waste of time because they've been fishing all day and haven't caught anything, nevertheless, he puts out the net and he catches a huge amount of fish. And in response, Peter calls Jesus, Lord.

[5 : 02] So it's kind of parallels going on with that earlier miracle and what Jesus is doing here. And as a consequence, the disciples who didn't initially recognize him, when they bring in the catch of fish, the penny drops and they recognize who he is.

And the beloved disciple says, It is the Lord. Of course, who else would it be? Who else has done that miracle before? So Jesus makes himself known to his disciples by his miracle.

And then in verses 7 and 8, Peter and the disciples, they head to shore. Verse 9, there's a charcoal fire with a fish on it. So Jesus kind of does a bit of a master chef, and he's cooked up brekkie for these guys.

If there was ever a verse in the Bible to justify a men's breakfast ministry, this is it. Verse 13, Jesus came and took bread, gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.

This was the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. And at the end of these verses, it's contrasting the opening verses, where the disciples were far away from Jesus, concerned with their own business.

[6 : 13] But where are they now? They are close to Jesus and attentive to him. So this is contrast. And I think there's two things to keep in mind as we read verses 1 to 14.

Two things. Firstly, they remind us that Jesus really has been raised from the dead and appeared to his disciples. Now that might sound fairly obvious in light of the earlier appearances in chapter 20.

But what John is doing is adding testimony upon testimony to the resurrection of Jesus. He's like an expert lawyer, bringing in witness after witness to prove his case.

John is laboring the point that Jesus physically and bodily rose from the dead. In chapter 20, he appeared to Mary Magdalene and the disciples. Just the 10 because Judas had died and Thomas wasn't there.

Then a week later to Thomas and the disciples. And then now this appearance at Lake Galilee. John wants his readers to know that Jesus really, really did rise from the dead and was seen by eyewitnesses.

[7 : 16] You know, it wasn't a blink and you'll miss it type of event. No, there were multiple eyewitnesses over a period of 40 days who saw him, who touched him, who spoke with him, who even ate a meal with him in verse 13.

So John wants to testify beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus rose from the dead by recording here yet again one more appearance of Jesus. Just in case you weren't persuaded by the first few.

So that's the first thing. And the second thing is that John is reporting history. Did you notice the, I guess, random but also specific details littered throughout this passage?

The place of the event, verse 1. The names of the witnesses, verse 2. The time of day, verse 4. What happened to the net?

In verse 8. What kind of fire it was? Verse 9. And the size and number of the fish, verse 11. Do you notice all these little specific details?

[8 : 16] Why are they here? Why doesn't John just say they caught some fish and went on and did what? Why does he spend so much time telling us about these little throwaway details like that there were large fish and there was 153 of them?

That's just so random, isn't it? Well, it's because John is giving an eyewitness account to an historical event. This passage and the New Testament Gospels are filled with the kinds of details that you'd expect from hearing an eyewitness tell what they saw.

It's why Christians believe God's word, the Bible, is reliable history. Because the New Testament accounts are filled with all these kinds of details. Concrete, specific details that an eyewitness remembers about an historical event.

So as we leave these verses 1 to 14 to now look at Jesus' conversation with Peter, let's remember that John has taken us from what initially seems to be a bit of an anti-climax to the resurrection to actually take us to an extraordinary experience of Jesus demonstrating his power again and yet another resurrection appearance to eyewitnesses.

And now the passage turns to Jesus and Peter. In these verses, Jesus not only reassures Peter of his place among the disciples, but he also tells him about his future.

[9 : 36] So let's read verses 15 to 17. When they'd finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? He said to him, Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

Jesus said to him, Feed my lambs. The second time he said to him, Simon, son of John, do you love me? He said to him, Yes, Lord, you know that I love you. Jesus said to him, Tend my sheep.

He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? So Jesus' conversation with Peter first deals with his past.

Notice that as you read that, three times Jesus asked Peter about his love for him. And it brings to mind Peter's threefold denial of Jesus. Back in John chapter 13, before Jesus was arrested, Peter boldly confessed that even if everyone else left Jesus, he would die for him.

He would be so loyal to Jesus that he would lay down his life for his master. But Peter did deny knowing Jesus three times that same night, which John reports in chapter 18.

[10 : 46] Peter, who so quickly confessed he would die for Jesus, so quickly abandoned that loyalty when the pressure came. He just buckled and caved in. But before we point our finger at Peter to rebuke him, we need to remember how often we have done a similar thing.

Just how easy it is to deny knowing Jesus when we face pressure or rejection for our faith. I'm sure we can all think of times when either God conversations at school or work, perhaps at uni or with non-Christian relatives or family, when those conversations have come up, and just how easily it is and how often tempted we are to be embarrassed about our faith, perhaps change the topic of conversation altogether, or even deny being Christian.

It can be so easy to confess Jesus publicly at church or at CU or at youth group, but outside of Christian relationships and groups, you know, at school or at TAFE or work, or perhaps with friends or family, when a comment or a criticism about Christianity has been made, how easy is it not to say anything or to change the subject, to avoid embarrassment or being ridiculed?

Many years ago when I bought my first car, that was a \$2,000 absolute bomb. I shouldn't say that. I thought it was pretty good. And I shouldn't say bomb. You know, I should say it had character. Okay?

It had lots of character. I went out and bought a couple of those Christian bumper stickers, you know, the fish type ones that bad drivers have. So I had one of those. And when I went to get my first car service, I felt physically sick because I suddenly realised that my car would be in the shop with the non-Christian mechanic, and I wondered what he would say to me or about me because of it.

[12 : 34] So I just felt afraid because he was this rough Aussie bloke, and I didn't know what he thought about Christians, but he probably thinks that we're weird. And I felt embarrassed. And so at first I thought the stickers were cool because nobody challenged me on it.

But all of a sudden when I had to face someone who would challenge me on it, I felt embarrassed and I took them off. So I wonder if there's been times for you when you've been embarrassed about being a follower of Jesus, perhaps awkwardly avoiding a conversation so it won't come up, or perhaps outright denying him to avoid being humiliated.

I think we can all think of times, or at least a time, when we've done that in one form or another. So before we rebuke Peter and think, you foolish disciple, what were you thinking?

I think we need to reflect on the fact that we're often more like Peter than we like to admit. And most of us aren't even facing death for our faith. Yet even though Peter did deny Jesus, Jesus in these verses assures Peter that his denial is not the final word on their relationship.

He allows Peter to declare his love for Jesus. And if Peter or any other disciples were in doubt at all about Peter belonging with them, Jesus clearly reaffirms him.

[13 : 55] So in effect, the conversation is like a reversal of the three denials. And Jesus even assigns him a place of leadership amongst the disciples. So that's an encouragement to us, isn't it?

Although we are often like Peter and make mistakes, our God is a God who's rich in mercy. There is no one who is too far gone, who's made too many mistakes, or too sinful to be forgiven, if they turn back to God trusting in Jesus.

Being part of God's people is a gift from God. It's not something that we've earned or deserved. It's only because God is rich in mercy and he forgives. So like Peter, we know because Jesus rose from the dead, we too can have confidence and assurance that our sins have been paid for.

Whatever our mistakes or failures, whatever sin we might be ashamed of, either in the past or perhaps one we're struggling with now, they've been dealt with at the cross by Jesus' death.

And his resurrection is the guarantee of our forgiveness. So that's Jesus addressing Peter's past, forgiving him, restoring him. And now the passage concludes with an invitation and a warning about Peter's future, again in verses 15 to 17.

[15 : 08] In response to Peter's declaration of love, Jesus gives three commands, to feed his lambs and to tend his sheep, in verses 15, 16 and 17.

And don't worry about the different wordings for each one. They all essentially mean the same thing. They capture that same idea. Jesus says to Peter, feed my sheep. But Jesus is not talking about literal sheep.

Earlier in John chapter 10, Jesus calls himself the good shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. But he's not talking about fluffy, cuddly animals. He's talking about people.

So his sheep are people. Notice that the sheep belong to Christ. He says, feed my sheep. That is, they are his people. Not somebody else's, not Peter's.

Even after his resurrection and his ascension, they still belong to him. And even though Jesus is handing over responsibility for leadership to Peter, ultimately it still comes under Jesus' authority and his lordship.

[16 : 12] The fact that Peter is called to tend, or literally shepherd the sheep, will mean various responsibilities. Teaching, caring for, training, growing, even protecting Jesus' followers.

And we see this later in the book of Acts, after Jesus' ascension. In the early chapters of Acts, Peter is at the forefront of gospel ministry. He's a teacher, a preacher, an evangelist.

He tells people about Jesus, and he's a key leader in the church of Jerusalem, making and growing disciples of Jesus. And the New Testament also contains some letters that Peter wrote to churches, called 1 and 2 Peter.

And these letters encourage believers to be loyal to Jesus in the face of suffering, from persecutors, and also from false teachers within the church. So we can see that Peter does just what Jesus asked him to do.

He's a shepherd, he's a pastor, a leader of God's people. And this instruction here is given in the context of Peter facing suffering. So verse 18, Jesus predicts that Peter's hands will be outstretched, and he'll be led where he doesn't want to go.

[17 : 25] In other words, he's going to face martyrdom. But Mark is going to talk more about these verses next week. But for now, these verses tell us that Peter is to leave fishing behind, and to be on about his master's business.

And if we look at the book of Acts, we see Peter doing just that, as a preacher, a teacher, as a shepherd. So is the resurrection of Jesus just a fizzer, like the Y2K bug, all hype and no action?

Well, not at all. Rather, the resurrection changes everything for Peter. It changes his past. That is, it guarantees his clean slate, his right standing with the Lord.

He's forgiven of his sins. And it changes his future as well. He's called to leave fishing behind, and to go and lead the disciples. The resurrection of Jesus for Peter changes everything.

In fact, if you don't believe in the resurrection, how else do you explain such a dramatic change in a person like Peter? How else can you explain it? He goes from being a coward who denies Jesus to being a public proclaimer of Jesus.

[18 : 34] In fact, in the book of Acts, he even looks at the people who handed Jesus over to be crucified. He looks them in the eye and says, the one you've crucified, God has raised from the dead, and we've seen him.

That is bold. That is bold preaching. I don't know anybody who preaches like that. That is a huge change, isn't it? The resurrection of Jesus changes Peter so much that church history tells us, just as Jesus predicted, Peter died for his faith.

His loyalty cost him his life, and he didn't give in. That is incredible. That is unbelievable. Unless he was indeed an eyewitness to the risen Jesus.

There's no other way to explain how someone like Peter can be changed. A person's attitudes, behavior, their whole life changed by the resurrection.

But that's Peter. What about us? What does the resurrection of Jesus mean for us? Let me finish with three things for us. Firstly, because of Jesus' resurrection, we know that life is no longer ordinary.

[19 : 42] By that I mean that the resurrection of Jesus changes the way that we look at everything, whether it's work, money, relationships, school, death, everything.

Because of the resurrection of Jesus, we no longer think like our culture that believes we're simply here to eat, sleep, reproduce, and die. That's in essence what our culture believes we are here for.

To eat, sleep, reproduce, work, die. In light of the resurrection of Jesus, we think differently. With the resurrection of Jesus, we know that there is life to come.

In fact, in Jesus, we see what that life looks like. This life is not all there is. For Christians, we know that Jesus has been raised from the dead. And one day we will be raised too.

Our bodies will be like his. And because he's been raised as Lord and Judge, we will one day give account to him. And this is radically different from what our culture and society believes.

[20 : 48] You're here, you're born, you die. That's it. Actually, we're going to be raised and we're going to live forever. And that changes how we live now. See, the Bible says that we who believe in Jesus must no longer live for ourselves, but for him who died and was raised to life again.

We're no longer to live for ourselves, but for him who died and was raised to life. That is Jesus. The risen Jesus is our Lord now, so we no longer live for ourselves.

If we work, the Bible says, we are to work as to the Lord, not selfishly or competitively like the rest of our culture, being as materialistic as we can, as though this life is all there is.

Instead, because Jesus is our Lord, if we work, then we work as to the Lord, honoring him in what we do, being salt and light in our workplace, working hard with integrity and using the gifts that he's given us.

If we study, then we're to study as to the Lord, not to be competitive so we can put others down by the good marks that we might get. No, if we study, we're to study as to the Lord, because the risen Jesus is our Lord now.

[22 : 00] Now, if we're facing death or caring for someone facing death, then we can be comforted by the hope of the resurrection, Jesus' resurrection and his promise to raise those who have died.

Some years ago, one member of the 10 a.m. congregation, an older man who was suffering terminal cancer, he would regularly come to church and I'd see him and I once spoke to him before the service saying, how do you feel?

And he looked at me and he said, well, you know, the doctors asked me that and you know what I tell them? He said, my Lord rose from the dead and he's going to raise me as well. So I'm fine.

What about you? And then he laughed. And that just struck me so much. That is a completely counter-cultural response to suffering, isn't it?

He said, my Lord was raised from the dead and he'll raise me. So I'm just fine. What about you? So because of the resurrection of Jesus, his defeat of death and his promise to raise those who have died, there is hope.

[23 : 08] And I hope and pray that God will make me like this man from the 10 a.m. service if I face death so that I'll be full of hope and joy as well. Friends, because of Jesus' resurrection, everything changes.

Our attitudes and relationship to everything changes. Everything from work, money, sex, death, everything changes. If Jesus stayed dead in the grave, then it doesn't matter how we live.

He has no claim over us and it doesn't matter how we live in the world. But if Jesus rose from the dead, then his claim to have authority over us is true and therefore how we live matters.

Now that doesn't mean that we escape everyday realities of life, you know, paying bills and the mortgage or having jobs. The Bible doesn't tell us to escape those things.

But because Jesus rose from the dead and his Lord over us, then we must no longer live for ourselves, but for him who died and was raised to life for us. In all of our life, we live for him.

[24 : 14] That's the first thing. The second thing is that the resurrection changes our past. Our record of sin that once stood against us was nailed to the cross and paid for by Jesus in our place.

Now, we may have doubts about whether or not we belong in God's family. We may still experience shame or guilt about previous sins, perhaps even a sin in the present.

But Jesus' resurrection guarantees for us that his death paid for our sins. So we're not to look to ourselves, our performance for how we stand with God or even try and make ourselves feel forgiven.

We're to look at Jesus and trust in his death and resurrection for us that he has paid for it all. And lastly, the resurrection of Jesus gives us confidence for gospel ministry.

Peter was called to take a position of leadership in the church. He did that as an apostle. Some people are given that responsibility, pastors and teachers and leaders. And reality is our world needs more.

[25 : 23] Our world needs more full-time gospel workers in churches and universities and high schools and so on. So in one sense, the resurrection of Jesus is the basis to consider perhaps changing careers, perhaps leaving secular work, to train for full-time gospel ministry and then doing it.

But the New Testament assumes that that's not for everyone. Some Christians, they should consider it and no doubt there are people here who are already doing that. But while the role of a pastor or shepherd over a church is a role that's given to some Christians but not all, there's a wider ministry that all Christians can be involved in.

The risen Jesus in Matthew 28 commands his followers to make disciples of all nations. And that command also applies to us. Whether we're seeking to be a pastor or a Christian union staff worker or not, it's for all of us, those of us with jobs, those of us that are retired.

We're all to make disciples of all nations by teaching people to obey Christ. So rather than asking, should I or shouldn't I be in full-time ministry, the question really to ask is, where am I making disciples?

As a parent, are we teaching the Bible to our family? Is that a ministry you do with your family? Pray together and read the Bible to make disciples of your own family.

[26 : 49] Is that where you're making disciples? Are there opportunities for you at work? Are there value in secular work in and of itself? But because the risen Jesus has given us the command to make disciples of all nations, are we taking opportunities at work to talk to our colleagues about Christ?

Perhaps when they ask about the weekend, you know, what did you do? That's a great opportunity to talk about Christ. Instead of saying, well, not much, we can say, well, if Jesus never rose from the dead, then I'd have nothing to do.

But because he rose from the dead, I spent Sunday night thinking about how there's more to life than work, sex and death. See, I've just given you an intro. Like, that's all I need to say. What can I say? I'm a giver.

Now, or you're at uni with a friend or perhaps at school. Perhaps take a lunchtime to read the Bible once a week with a friend in a study group or one-on-one.

Perhaps join a sports club as a way to make non-Christian friends, to build friendships and relationships and to be able to share the good news of the hope we have in the risen Jesus. That's why Holy Trinity is running an evangelism training course to encourage and equip all of us to be able to talk to people in ordinary situations about Jesus.

[28 : 04] Why? Because the risen Jesus has commanded us to make disciples of all nations. So, hopefully you see the resurrection of Jesus is not like the Y2K bug that was just a fizzer.

Jesus' resurrection changes everything. It changes the way we live now because He's Lord over us and He tells us how to live. It changes our past and His resurrection is the rock-solid guarantee of the forgiveness of our sins.

And the resurrection of Jesus changes our future. For some, it's the invitation to change careers and to consider going to gospel ministry full-time to proclaim Jesus to the world.

But that's not for everyone and there's no second-class Christians either. The risen Jesus actually commands all of us, whether young or old, rich or poor, retired or employed, He commands all of us to have His priority and to make disciples of all nations.

And we can do that wherever we are. We just need to start doing it. So in light of Jesus' resurrection, everything has changed for Peter and for us. So let's encourage each other to live in light of Jesus' resurrection.

[29 : 16] Live not for ourselves, but for Him who died and was raised for us. Let's pray. Risen Lord Jesus, thank You that You have all authority in heaven and on earth.

Thank You for revealing Yourself to Your disciples. Thank You for revealing Yourself to Peter. Thank You for the certain hope we have of Your resurrection and also ours.

Please help us to live for You and not for ourselves. And please help us to look forward to the day when You return, You raise the living and the dead and You gather us to Yourself.

And Lord Jesus, we pray all these things in Your name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen.