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Pastor Jonathan Falwell

He Lives...Do You: No Fear

Scripture: Matthew 28:1-10

Summary: In this sermon, based on Matthew 28:1-10, Pastor Jonathan Falwell talks about living a life free from fear.

I had to coax them to keep going there. Sometimes you don't want the song to end. And what's really cool is that is a song that will never end because of what Christ has done for us. And so that is what we celebrate here. We did this song today very deliberately. It not only goes along perfectly with what we are talking about in just a few moments, but it also happens to be the favorite song of a guy in our church named Herb Crickenberg. I mentioned him a few moments ago, if you remember, in prayer. He's in the hospital. He was supposed to be here today. In fact, right down here we had a bunch of seats reserved for Herb and for his wife Kitty and for all of their family.

Some of their family I know is here today, but on Friday night Herb was taken to the hospital very sick, dealing with some serious issues. Ninety-five years old. But tomorrow Herb and Kitty will celebrate 75 years of marriage. [Applause] And so in celebrating 75 years of marriage we did this song; it's his favorite song; and I don't know if he is watching right now or not; I'm not sure, but I do know this: I know that his family is here and it's special to them, it's special to me. I love Herb and Kitty; I've known them since I was a kid; so we just wanted to do that in honor of a couple that has given us an incredible model for marriage in 75 years. So congratulations to them. [Applause]

That song is a perfect picture for what we're going to talk about today. In this couple of weeks where we're asking the question He lives—we talked about that on Easter—Do You? That's a perfect song, because what it does is it paints a picture of what's ahead. But you see even though we celebrate (and we all did a moment ago through that song) what is ahead, Christ didn't just rise from the grave so that we would have something to look forward to later. He did it so that we could be transformed now. And that's what we're going to talk about today. That's what we're going to look at in His Word today. But before we do, would you allow me to pray for our sermon today?

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the opportunity that we have to celebrate this incredible gift of salvation. The fact that you loved us so much that you sent your Son Jesus to die for us and

that He was buried and that He rose again the third day and because of that we have the privilege of knowing that because of Christ, not only does He live, but that we can live.

God, I pray that today as we open your Word that you would speak to our hearts, that you would transform those who need to be transformed, that you would renew in those who need to be renewed, that you would encourage those that need to be encouraged that you are still in control, that we are still firmly in your grip, and that you have us right where you desire us to be—in your loving arms. God, do that for us today. And Lord, if there is somebody here today that does not know you as Lord and Savior, I pray that this would be the hour, that this would be the moment of salvation for them. God, speak to their hearts today—right here, right now, and Lord, that because of Christ they will experience the gift of salvation today. In Jesus' precious name we pray, amen. Amen.

I want you to turn in your Bibles today with me to the book of Matthew. We're going to look at Matthew chapter 28. If you were here a couple of weeks ago, Easter, you would know that is the exact same passage we looked at that day. Now for a full disclaimer here, full disclosure, I was gone last week; I'm here today. I want you to know that even though we preached that passage in Matthew 28 two weeks ago and we preach it again today, it is not because I haven't prepared. It's done deliberately, because today we're going to look at this passage from a little bit different perspective.

Two weeks ago we looked at the supernatural part of that passage. We looked at the supernatural nature of that passage, that because of Christ, because He rose again, what doesn't make sense changes our lives. But today we're going to look at that passage from a different perspective, because today we're talking about this idea of living the resurrected life. We're going to talk about, in this statement of He Lives: Do You? we're going to talk about how we can live without fear. Live without fear.

Now I don't know about you, but that sounds pretty good. Now I'm not talking about your everyday normal, average, ordinary fear. I'm not talking about the kind of fear that if you're riding down the road and somebody pulls out in front of you and you're scared. I'm not talking about that. I'm not talking about fear of heights, those kinds of fears, those minor fears that we all deal with. I'm talking about those kind of life-altering, life-changing, death-grip kind of fears; the kind of fears that will keep us from living the kind of life that Jesus intended for us to live.

When Christ rose from the grave, He did so so that we could live without fear, and that we as Christ-followers should live without fear. But you'll know that I use the word *should* and the word *could* in those statement because, well, unfortunately many Christ-followers today live gripped in fear—not sure what to do about tomorrow; not sure if they are going to be able to make it; wondering if God is even there; wondering if God is going to deliver on His promises; wondering if they are going to be able to hold it all together. And we're faced with so many different conflicts and so many different crises in life, situations with the economy, situations with our bank accounts, situations with our jobs, situations with our families, situations with our homes, with our marriages, situations with our health, and we are so gripped by fear and so gripped by uncertainty that we're not really sure how to really live out the resurrected life.

Christ did not rise from the grave so that we could live in fear. He did not rise from the grave so that we would walk through life literally not living just existing. He rose so that we could experience life—and the scriptures very clearly bear this out—so that we could live life more abundantly, over the top. He promises in the book of Ephesians to give us more than we could even ask or think, that He would do for us what we can't even imagine. That's the life that God intends for us to live. So today we're going to talk about how we can live, truly live, and to live without fear.

Now let's look at Matthew chapter 28. And this passage you probably, if you were here on Easter, you probably will be reminded of this passage. It will be somewhat in your recent memory. You will pick up on some of the things that we read here together today. But let's read it together. Matthew 28:1. It says,

Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. [That's our memory verse from two weeks ago.] And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid."

Now you'll notice in this passage again, two weeks ago we talked about the supernatural elements of this passage. Today we're going to look at and talk about a couple of words that we find in this passage. Two words specifically that are found twice in this passage, and of course the word that we're going to talk about is *fear*. It says it twice in this passage. You kind of know it's setting the stage for what this passage is talking about.

This is on Sunday that first Easter when Mary came to the tomb. She came there, and of course as the passage tells us, as she showed up, something was different. As she showed up an angel appeared that rolled the stone away to reveal the fact that Jesus was no longer there. It talks about how the guards that were there were put there deliberately to protect the body, the dead body, of Jesus, to make sure that no one stole that body, to make sure that the disciples didn't come and take it away at nighttime to make people believe that He rose again.

The disciples were there to seal that tomb forever and ever amen. That's what they were there to do. But then the angel shows up; the stone is rolled away. They look inside; Jesus is not there. The passage tells us that the guards were struck with fear and they were like dead men. Then the angel talks to Mary and says, "I want you to go. Don't be afraid. This is a good thing. This is a

great day. Go and tell the disciples to go to Galilee. Jesus will meet them there. He is not here. He is risen. It's a party. It's awesome. It's incredible."

Mary and the other Mary ran to do exactly as they were told, and as they ran to do exactly as they were told, Jesus showed up on the street. He appeared before them, they fell on their knees, they worshiped Him, and He once again says, "Do not be afraid."

So today we're going to talk about this passage on how we can do what Jesus told them to not be afraid, to not live in fear. Now the scriptures—I've heard it said before, maybe you've heard it said before—there are 365 times in the Scripture where it says "do not worry" or "do not be afraid." I am here today as your pastor to tell you that's not true. That's actually not true. It's not in the Bible 365 times. It's actually in the Bible a little over 100 times where it says "do not worry" or "do not be afraid," "fear not." A little over 100 times.

Now there are about 400 times—and this is where the interesting thing comes in and this is where they get that 365 number from—but a little under 400 times in Scripture it tells us and reminds us "do not be afraid," "do not worry," "fear not," but also to remind us that God's got us firmly in control, that He's got us firmly in His grip. Lots of different statements that remind us of the power of God, and God's going to take care of us no matter what. So in essence, while it doesn't say that 365 times, it does say it almost 400 times, "Hey, God's got this."

Now it says that over and over and over again. Jesus Himself in this passage said, "Do not be afraid." Why? I think it's because He doesn't want us to be afraid. I think that's the reason He keeps saying it. I think that's the reason it keeps showing up is that He does not want us to live in fear, but yet we do, and every day we walk in fear and every day we are just like those guards who were there to guard the body of Jesus. We are like dead men. Dead men walking.

That's not what He wants us to do. That's not how He wants us to live. And so today I just want to kind of take this perspective out of this passage and look at a couple of different elements in this passage—basically two different statements from this passage, two different views of what it means to live the resurrected life. And the first one is the human view. The human nature that we find in this passage. The human nature that we find in this passage, again verse 4, "And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men."

Now the reason they became like dead men, obviously, is because they were there for a purpose. They had been placed there as a guard to watch over the body—we've already talked about that. They were there with a very deliberate job, to make sure that no one stole the body of Jesus, that He was dead today and He will still be dead tomorrow, and that body will still be there a week from now and a month from now and a year from now and decades from now, so that everybody will know that this guy who said that He would be killed but that He would rise again, that He wasn't able to do it because He is just like all the rest of us; He's just a man. That's why the guards were there.

Now you can imagine, then, when the guards showed up and the guards were there, doing what they were supposed to do, and then the angel arrives and rolls that stone away and they look inside and realize that Jesus is gone. You can imagine why they were like dead men; because in

essence, the Bible doesn't say this, but they probably were like dead men, because they probably were going to pay a pretty hefty price for the fact that they had not done their job.

Now it's interesting in the human perspective here, the human nature—which, by the way, all of us deal with, all of us struggle with—they were like dead men. They were living in fear because Jesus was not there, because they were not in the presence of God. I think there are a lot of people today, even a lot of Christ-followers today, that live a life that is gripped in fear because they don't sense and they don't see the presence of God in their life today. They are gripped with fear because Jesus isn't there—or so they think. That's the human perspective.

But what's really neat in this passage is that we get the resurrected perspective right after it, the resurrected nature of life, and let's look at that. We see this in verse 8. It says, "So they [Mary and the other Mary] went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word."

Now it's interesting that the word *fear* appears in both statements. It appears in the first statement when the guards were like dead men; they were scared to death, they knew that everything was over; they knew that there was no hope. But here, after the angel said, "You don't need to look for Jesus here. He has risen just as He said. He's not here. He's alive. He's going to meet up with you at Galilee. Go and tell everybody that Jesus is alive, that He's done exactly what He was supposed to do." Yet, it says that they ran with what? Fear? Now why is that?

Now I looked up that word *fear* this week. It's the Greek word *phobos*, and when you look up that Greek word to get the perspective, I looked at the Vine's Expository Dictionary this week, and I want to read to you—and it's a little lengthy—but I want to read to you the definition, the description of that word *fear* found in verse 8. So this word *fear/phobos* says, "of God; as a controlling motive of the life. In matters spiritual and moral, not a mere fear of His power and righteous retribution, but a wholesome dread of displeasing Him. A fear which banishes the terror which shrinks from His presence and which influences the disposition and attitude of one whose circumstances are guided by trust in God. Through the indwelling Spirit of God, a comprehensive phrase meaning the reverential fear of God will inspire a constant carefulness in dealing with others in His fear."

Now how many of you are completely confused by what I just said? Raise your hand. Be honest. Because I'm completely confused by what I just read. I mean you read that and it doesn't make sense. You've got to spend some time looking at it. But basically it is the idea that yes, fear means fear the way that we see fear, but in this use, in verse 8, it means fear in the sense of absolute reverence of the God who is here.

Did you catch what I read a few moments ago in that long description? It talked about a reverence of God, a fear of making sure that we do not do anything that will dishonor God, that you do not have that kind of fear if God is not alive. Yet, when this passage tells us in this resurrected life the difference between the guards who were in fear because Jesus wasn't there, Mary and the other Mary were now running with fear because Jesus was there.

Now think about the difference in that. Think about the difference in perspective, the difference in view of how we live our lives. Because there are people today who are Christ-followers today who walk through life each and every day gripped by fear, living in fear, wondering if God even cares, wondering if God is even there, and I know, I know there are people in this room that have mouthed those very words. Maybe not publicly but in your heart you've wondered does God care about me? Is God even there?

Unfortunately, that kind of perspective, that kind of heart, it leads us to a place just like those guards, where we live our lives as dead men. We live our lives as if things don't matter, as if there is no hope, as if there is nothing to look forward to, nothing ahead for us. That we're not going to make it, we're not going to get there, we're not going to be able to accomplish, we're not going to be able to live. We live as dead men. Dead men walking. That is not living in the presence of a living God.

You see, Mary, when she ran out of that place, doing exactly what she was told to do, when she ran out from that place to go and tell the disciples that Jesus is alive, it says "with fear and great joy." Great joy because Christ is alive; fear because she knows that because He is alive she has absolute reverence for that God who is present right now.

It is impossible to live the resurrected life without recognizing that our God lives, that He is alive today, that He lives within us, and it is recognizing that presence of God in every moment that will help us to live that kind of life of absolute joy and a life that is absent of absolute fear. And so the human nature—God's not here, I'm scared. The resurrected nature—God is here and God is alive and there is great joy and there is fear of making sure that I live my life in absolute reverence of that living Lord.

Now in this passage I want to give you some practical statements of what makes the difference, because there has to be something that takes us from the first fear to the second fear. There is something that has to take us from that first part like the guards who are living as dead men and gets us to the place where we are running with great joy, which is what God intends for each of us. And it is found in verse 9 how the resurrection helps us live without fear.

It says in verse 9, "And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid.'" What's the difference? The difference is the presence of God. What's the difference between living as a dead man and running with great joy? The presence of a living God, of just simply knowing my God is here and He shall supply all of my needs, according to His riches in Christ Jesus.

There is a great story. I read a biography just this week of George Mueller. And George Mueller was a great, great Christian man, lived back in the 1800s. You may know the story. God called him to open orphanages and God called him to care for the poor kids of that great nation in the United Kingdom, to provide for them, to take care of them. He came out of Germany, came out from a very bad background, came out of a place where he was walking away from God, not living for God at all, and then God showed up and transformed him. And when God transformed him, He transformed him not only to simply know, "Oh great, I'm a Christian," but transformed

him in the sense of know that “my God is here and my God is with me and I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

And so he opened those orphanages, began caring for those children. And it’s interesting when you read the story of the life of George Mueller that the one perspective that you get, the one element of his life that is amazing, that is hard to understand in our human nature, is that he trusted God no matter what. No matter what the situation was, he believed God was going to show up and God was going to provide his every need.

There is one great story of when one day in providing for thousands of kids—and he never asked for money, he never did fundraisers, he never sent out direct mail, he never went on TV and infomercials, never asked for money—he just was going to trust God and God will show up when God wants to show up and provide the need. He believed that.

There was one morning that all the kids got up for breakfast as they did every single day, but this day was a little bit different, because George Mueller knew that when they got up that day there was absolutely no food in the kitchen whatsoever. They had no food to provide for the kids. Thousands of kids that every day they woke up believing that this man was going to feed us and he is going to take care of us, and yet that day they woke up and they didn’t know—only George knew and those who worked with him and for him knew—that there was absolutely no food to provide that day.

And so George got up in front of all of those kids, and as he did each and every day he began to pray. And he began to pray over the meal that they were about to eat, and he thanked God for the food that they were about to eat. He thanked God for providing the meal that they were about to have, just as each and every one of us do—hopefully we do—over our meals. George Mueller prayed and thanked God for that meal that God was about to provide, with all the kids sitting there thinking that in a moment all the waiters were coming out to serve them food.

But no. There was no food to be served. So as George Mueller prayed and thanked God and praised God for His provision and worshiped God for providing all the things that they needed, he got to the end of that prayer and said, “Amen,” and there was no food to be had. But all of a sudden, as soon as that prayer ended there was a knock at the door, and do you know what it was? A local bakery had decided that day to surprise all of the kids and made fresh bread for all of the kids, and they showed up and delivered it right after George Mueller finished praying for the meal that God was going to provide, and he had absolutely no idea that the meal was just outside the door. That’s faith, isn’t it?

But you know what’s really cool about the story is that even though that’s amazing, and you can imagine—I can just picture George Mueller. We have kind of put those great leaders of yesteryear up on a pedestal, these guys are amazing, incredible, I could never live a life like that. We do that, right? I just happen to believe, and when I get to heaven I’m going to ask him, because I think when the knock came at the door and the bread came in, I think George excused himself from the room and he went down the hall into a corner, into a private room that was away from the kids, and he probably screamed, “Yeehaw!” He had to have been, you know human nature, he had to have been blown away by God.

But you know what's cool? God wasn't done yet, because not only did God provide all the fresh bread that morning, but right after they started serving all the bread, you have to have something to drink with all that bread, right? Well, there came another knock at the door, and when that knock came at the door it happened to be the local milkman who was coming down the street with the milk cart and the milk cart broke down guess where? Right in front of the orphanage. He came to the door and said, "My milk cart broke down. I can't fix it with all the weight of the milk on there. Can I give you all this milk so I can fix my milk cart?" And so he provided fresh milk for all the kids that were there in the orphanage.

Now I'm going to tell you something: there is a difference in the way that George Mueller lived and in the way that a lot of us lived. Because you know the one thing that George Mueller did not have that in our lives is pretty prevalent? George Mueller had absolutely no capacity in his heart or in his mind to believe that my God is not going to supply my needs." George was not able to believe that. He knew that God was going to do it. He knew it, he knew it, he knew it. He wasn't worried about it. And the stories go on forever and ever talking about all the different things that God provided right at the last second, right at the last moment. Right when it seemed that all hope was lost, God showed up and God provided.

Now what he had is what so many of us lack. It is absolute, incredible, unbelievable, unwavering faith in that kind of a God. And until you live with that faith, it's really kind of hard to live that resurrected life. So this passage tells us that when Mary was running out, doing exactly what the angel told her to do, that God wasn't done yet. Because she had been told Jesus is alive, and so she went with great joy to tell the disciples He's alive, and then Jesus did what He's done for so many of us. Jesus Himself showed up and said, "Hey, here I am. Don't be afraid."

Living without fear causes us, requires us to know that God will show up exactly when we need Him to show up. Now today I just want to end with five quick things, five quick statements of how, practically, what we can do to make sure that we're living with that kind of faith, that we're living that kind of life, that we're living that kind of resurrected life, not as dead men. Five things. You can jot them down or you can pull them off the app. They're on the notes on the website or on the app. Five practical things that we've got to do.

If we are going to live the resurrected life, the first thing that we have to do is we must recognize who He is. You have to recognize that Jesus is. John 14:6, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, the life. No man comes to the Father except through me." You know what He's trying to tell us there? He's trying to tell us He is the only way, and until we recognize that truth we are not going to be able to live the resurrected life.

The world will tell you today that there's lots of different ways to heaven. We're all working to the same place. We're going by different paths and different ways, but we're all working to the same place. We'll all get there one day. Let me just tell you something: We are not all working to the same place. There are not many different paths to get to heaven. The Bible says that Jesus is the way, the truth, the life, and no man comes to the Father except through Him. Period. [Applause] And until you recognize that one truth, everything else is not going to matter.

We have to recognize who He is. The second thing we have to do is we've got to accept His authority. Accept His authority. In a few minutes we're going to read from 1 Corinthians 15 to close our service today. When we read that passage you'll get a real clear picture of who Jesus is and His authority.

The third thing: we must seek His wisdom. That is through Bible study and prayer. It is impossible to experience the resurrected life and the resurrected Jesus in our life every single day unless you are seeking, learning, reading, talking to that same resurrected Christ every single day.

In the Scripture, I've already told you, over 100 times the Bible tells us not to worry, not to be afraid. There is a reason it's there. We've got to seek for Him, look for Him, follow Him. George Mueller, again a great statement that I read in that biography that talked about. Later in life, he made this statement. I want you to listen to this statement. It said, "In later life, George Mueller lamented that 'owing to his neglect of God's Word, he remained so long in scriptural and spiritual infancy, with its ignorance and its impotence.'"

You know what he was saying? That when he was a young Christian, a baby Christian, he didn't begin reading God's Word. He didn't spend time in prayer. And later in life he was so disgusted with himself because he missed out on so much power of having the presence of God in his life because he didn't dig right into God's Word and spend time in prayer. Later in life he did that, and the stories are endless of what God did.

There are people here today that are experiencing ignorance and spiritual infancy because you are not experiencing the presence of God in your life through the study of the Word of God and through prayer. Change that today. it's a practical thing; it's an easy thing. Read it today.

Next thing, fourth thing: We must cling to His presence. We have to have a desperate need for God. We have to run after Him, grab ahold of Him just as Mary did when she fell on her knees and wrapped her arms around His feet. She didn't want His presence to end because she was so overjoyed with His presence. That's the kind of heart we have to have.

The last thing: We have to celebrate who He is. That means living a life of worship. That means living a life where not only do we recognize who He is, first of all, but we celebrate who He is. That we are amazed and absolutely in awe that there is a God in heaven who loves me so much that He allowed His Son to die for me. Let's celebrate it.

I want to read this passage and then we will end today. First Corinthians chapter 15. Don't miss the statement of this passage, because this gives us a picture of what the resurrected Christ is going to do in our lives. It says in this passage in verse 20,

"But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died. So you see, just as death came into the world through a man, now the resurrection from the dead has begun through another man. After that the end will come, when he will turn the Kingdom over to God the Father, having destroyed every ruler and authority and power. For Christ must reign until he humbles all his enemies beneath his

feet. Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised as the first of the harvest; then all who belong to Christ will be raised when he comes back. And the last enemy to be destroyed is death. For the Scriptures say, "God has put all things under his authority." (Of course, when it says "all things are under his authority," that does not include God himself, who gave Christ his authority.) Then, when all things are under his authority, the Son will put himself under God's authority, so that God, who gave his Son authority over all things [and I want you to listen to these last few words] will be utterly supreme over everything everywhere.

Living the resurrected life helps us to see and know that the God that we serve, the Christ that we love, the Christ that has saved us, the Christ that has changed us, the Christ that has transformed us will give us the ability to overcome anything. Do you know why? Because the Bible tells us that our God is utterly in charge over, complete authority, complete control over everything, everywhere. So do not be afraid. Do not fear, because Jesus lives. The question today is do you?

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the promise of your Word. We thank you for the power of your Word to transform us when we so desperately need it, to take us at a time of weakness and frailty, a time when we are so overwhelmed by the stuff of life and it infuses us with an awareness that you are in control, that you are in charge, that there is nothing to fear because our God is in control.

God, I pray right now in this moment for the people that are hearing my voice that haven't experienced that kind of power. God, I pray right now, speak to them right now. Change them right now. God, people who need to accept you as Lord and Savior, right now speak peace into their lives and their hearts and help them to recognize that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life; the only way, and that today, this moment they will come to know you.

With our heads bowed and with our eyes closed, in the quiet of this moment, the silence of this moment, I know that there are people gathered in this room right now that have never experienced the gift of salvation, have never experienced what it is that Christ came to do for you. And what Christ came to do for you is to deliver you from where you are to where He desires for you to be. Where we are, Romans 3 tells us, is we're all just sinners in desperate need of a Savior. We've all fallen short of the glory of God. Romans 6 tells us that because of that sin we deserve death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

You see, Christ died on the cross, was buried, and rose again so that we could experience new life in Christ, and so I'm begging you right now, right now, that if you've never accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, today, in this moment, would you just simply do what the Scripture says? To believe in your heart that Jesus died and rose again, to confess it with your lips that He's God's Son, and you will be saved.

I'm going to pray a simple prayer, and right now in this moment if you want to meet Him, if you want to experience that gift, would you just pray this silently with me right now?

Heavenly Father, I thank you for loving me. I thank you for dying on the cross for me. I know I don't deserve it, but I thank you for doing it anyway. I know I'm a sinner. God, forgive me of my sins. I believe that Jesus is your Son. I believe that He died and that He rose again. Save me today. Change me today. Transform me today and help me to live for you and in you for the rest of my life as you give me the power to do it. In Jesus' name I pray.

With our heads bowed and with our eyes closed, if you prayed that prayer around this room right now, no one looking around, would you just be honest? If you prayed that prayer and you meant it from your heart to God's heart, with no one looking around, would you just slip your hand up right now? Just around this room if you prayed that prayer. I see a hand there. I see a hand there. Two hands over there. One over here. Any in the back? Just keep your hands up. I see two hands over here, three hands over here, four hands over here. One in the far back, way back. Any in the balcony? Just raise your hands right now? Any in the balcony? I see one in the back. Awesome. Awesome.

God, I pray right now for every person who just raised their hand. God, I pray for the impact and for the life change that you have just started in their lives because of Christ. God, we thank you for saving them right where they are, changing them right where they are. God, we thank you for what you just did. God, I pray that you would just give them power and strength and encouragement, peace to begin to live that kind of life that you desire for them. And God, we'll give you praise in advance for what you're going to do.

And for everybody else here today, I know there are some Christians here today that have gotten away from God. You're not walking with God, not living for God. Maybe you've gotten to the place where you're living like a dead man, like that passage talks about. Maybe today you just need to come to this altar in a moment, kneel here and say, "God, I want to live the resurrected life. I want to live in power and peace." Maybe you need to come down here and kneel and say, "God, do that for me today." Maybe you want to come down and pray for a family member, pray for a friend. Maybe you want to come and join our church or come for baptism.

For those of you who raised your hands a moment ago, would you do me a favor? In a moment when we stand and other people are walking forward, would you be willing to walk forward and come down? Our pastors are here right now. They're coming all across the front, men and women counselors are here. Would you be willing to step out and come down here? The Bible says that "If you will confess me before men, I will confess you before my Father. But if you deny me before men, I will deny you before my Father."

And so today maybe you just need to come and confess, "Yes, I'm a follower of Christ now." We've got a book we'd love to give to you, a Bible that we'd love to give to you. Free of charge. No strings attached. Nothing that you have to do. No sealed in blood or anything. We just want to give you a Bible and a book to help you begin to live out what it means to live as a Christ-follower.

We're going to sing through just one time the song "Heart of Worship." As we stand right now, I'm asking you and encouraging you to step out right now, come to the front and allow us to talk with you for a moment. Let's stand together and sing here today.

Extra Audio

I'll sing the first verse for you and see if you remember, all right?

C'mon, sing the next verse with me everybody.

Great singing, everybody. I'm alive because He lives. Fits so well with our sermon series, doesn't it? He Lives—Do You? I was thinking about this in the first service. There's a big difference between existing and really living, and those of us who really live, we do so because of the grace that we've experienced in our heart, but also because of the hope that we have for the future. I love that little chorus. It say, "I'm alive, I'm alive, and the song that I sing is the song that never ends."

Aren't you thrilled to be a part of a worship experience that's just getting started down here? Because there is going to be a day when we join with the saints and the angels and our holy Father, with Jesus at His right side, and we will worship for eternity. That old hymn says, "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow...because I know He holds the future." God holds every breath of your future in His hands, but He also holds your salvation in His hands, and He will not let you go. So if you know Christ this morning, we have a hope that is not just temporary; it's eternal.

Revelation chapter 7 says, "After these things I looked and behold a great multitude which no one could number of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, and they were standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands. And they were crying out with a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb! And all the angels stood around the throne, and the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and they worshiped God, saying, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever and ever, amen!'"

Keywords: Matthew 28:1-10, living the resurrected life, resurrection power,