



Covid-19 FBC ANNOUNCEMENT 7.0

15th April 2020

Greetings FBC church family, we're glad to be joining you today, and trust all is well with you.

For 20 centuries, the world has wrestled over the truth of these seven powerful words: "He (Jesus) is not here; he has risen!" Despite the fact there was in history, and documented in the bible, eyewitness testimony that this man, Jesus, crucified on Calvary, taken down from the cross, placed in a borrowed tomb with a heavy stone positioned in front, and on the 3rd day - as he said he would - gone, risen in bodily form. Despite this, many choose to dispute and deny this truth. Many have and will not believe.

Many put their faith and trust in gods (small g) when ironically it takes so much greater faith to believe Jesus doesn't exist, than faith that he does. Jesus is the only one to have done what he did yet we put our hope in far lesser things. What is it, that obstructs us from believing?

The greatest attacks on Christianity have been against the resurrection. The cornerstone of Christianity. If Jesus rose from the dead, then Christianity is true. If he did not, then it is false. It is that simple.

(C.S. Lewis) "You must make your choice. Either this man (Jesus) was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God"

The space between Jesus and his resurrection being true...(space) and not being true, is believing and then deciding what to do with that believing. Even though the person of Jesus and what he achieved is clearly so much more than the resurrection, his resurrection is a defining event.

In fact, we all have a decision before us, to continue to put our faith in him, putting to practice in life what it means to follow a resurrected Lord. Let me take you to John Ch. 20, from v.24...

Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

"We have seen the Lord" the disciples tell Thomas...You know what it's like when you're itching to give someone great news and you deliver it full throttle enthusiasm, and the other person just aint getting it...

It's like Thomas says: "no, you guys are having me on, I want to see something, I want to see proof, that it is Jesus, before I will really believe"

A week goes by. One wonders about the unrecorded detail of the conversations among these guys in that week and what Thomas was thinking about.

I love the way John put's what happens next (v.26) *"Jesus came and stood among them"* No dramatic entry, there he was, there, in person! What the story doesn't give us is the look on Thomas' face.

"Put your finger here, your hand here... "stop doubting and believe". Thomas then acknowledges "My Lord and my God"

What you'll notice here is that Jesus is not giving Thomas a hard time about the fact he needed to see to believe, but he is saying you believed because you physically saw me. Blessed are those who never physically see Jesus, nor make faith in him dependant on seeing him. But will trust the word, trust he is who he says he is and, believe.

Notice how quickly Thomas moved from doubt to belief. Irrespective of the level of doubt we may have about God, that has no bearing on the fact we can turn that to belief. We may feel so distant from God, but he is only an "I believe" away.

John was there, we can take his word for it. *"we have seen with our eyes...our hands have touched...the life appeared we have seen it and testify to it and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and has appeared to us"*

You, today, can be 100% certain that Jesus is real; he lived, died and rose again, and he continues to show us every day he's real. This is a season to remember Christ, to celebrate. A time to be grateful and to worship! A time to re-evaluate our lives in light of the fact we follow a resurrected Lord.

John's gospel would encourage us that Jesus' sacrifice, death and resurrection must count for something! So we are encouraged, urged to live in light of the truth His resurrection. We believe in a risen, resurrected Lord. What does that mean for us in this Lockdown space? I know some of you are hurting, frustrated, grieving. I do not doubt for a moment he is with you, near you, with us in our bubbles, with us in our ZOOM gatherings, he is near, he is present by his Spirit. Maybe we can borrow from Thomas' declaration: "My Lord and My God"

Update

- Many of you will have seen the news article either on Stuff or in the paper regarding events of Good Friday. I want to acknowledge the elder's awareness of it, and that we have been, and are working on an appropriate response. In due course we will communicate the essential aspects/any updates to you.
- A number of our small groups are now meeting by ZOOM, I want to encourage you to connect in with one of these. Talk with Derek G about your options.
- We're hoping to commence ZOOM prayer gatherings this coming Monday, more information contact Louise M.
- Please send in an updated photo of yourself/yourselves to the office
- Want to encourage you to tune in for this Sundays online service. More Easter reflection, Scripture readings, and Aidan Sami will be sharing his testimony...can't wait, going to be awesome!
- If you have a recipe to contribute to the FBC Cook book, please send that in to Gaylene M
- Communications. Have an urgent grocery or pharmacy run – we have a system set up ready to serve you. We're asking that ALL calls please go to Gaylene Morgan through the office phone (07-8555 469).

*In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all, here in the love of Christ I stand (In Christ Alone – CCLI #3350395)*

Blessings on all
Ross and Karyn

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