

Fil-Am Community Church

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Key Verse: Luke 24:5-7

WHEN JESUS OVERCOMES FOR YOU

“In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’” Luke 24:5-7

Something wonderful happened on this day about 2000 years ago. The Lord of life, the Lord of All, Jesus, came back to life, after being crucified and buried. Wonderful, actually, is an understatement because what it is is that it was powerful. The most powerful thing that the world has ever known for it was an event that has huge implications for each of us. You see, because Jesus Christ rose again, he overcame man’s greatest enemies, sin and death, brought into this world by the God’s greatest adversary, the devil. And because he has overcome sin and death, there is nothing that he would not overcome for you. Jesus says, *“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”* (John 16:33)

Folks, we are in the last part of our message series, “It’s a Miracle!” We’ve been talking about for the past weeks about the miracles that Jesus performed when he was on earth like turning water into wine, healing a blind man, calming the storm. And today, we’re going to look at the greatest of his miracles, his

resurrection from the dead. If this is your first time in this church, you just caught the best. We saved the best for last.

So today, we're saying "It's a miracle when Jesus overcomes for you!" Is there anything that you're going through which troubles you? Jesus says, "*Take heart. I have overcome the world*". (John 16:33)

Other versions of the Bible say, "Be brave! Be encouraged! Cheer up! I have defeated the world! I have conquered the world! I have power over this world!"

This morning, let me share with you three things about the resurrection of Jesus that will help you to live victoriously.

I. THE RESURRECTION PROCLAIMS THE POWER OF GOD

The message of Easter is that soldiers and seals and stones can never stop the plan of God. God marches on and his plan will be accomplished. We believe that because the tomb is empty and because Jesus Christ is alive. Amen?

I wasn't there. I didn't see what happened. But I believe in the resurrection with all my heart. Why do I believe?

You see, I wasn't there when the Germans surrendered in World War II either. But I believe we won and I have two good reasons for believing that.

First of all, through the years I have heard the testimony of those who were there and I have read their accounts. They fought the battles. They saw the victory achieved and they passed the good news on, and I believe them.

But I also believe because I realize that if we had not won that war our world would be greatly different today. We would not be a free country. We would be an oppressed people. Our society would be different. Our world would be vastly different if Germany had won that war.

I wasn't there when Jesus rose from the dead. But I believe it with all my heart, and I have two good reasons for believing that He arose.

First of all, I believe in the resurrection because eyewitnesses have told me that it is true. In [1 Corinthians 15:3-8](#) the Apostle Paul wrote, *“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve. After that he appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all He appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.”*

I believe it because the Apostle John wrote in [1 John 1:1-2](#), *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.”*

In other words, the apostle John is saying, "I want to tell you what we saw, what we felt, what we experienced. I want to tell you about Jesus."

But maybe more important than that, I believe it because our world is greatly different because Jesus is alive. In [1 Corinthians 15:14](#) Paul wrote, *“If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.”* Do you realize that that there would be no reason for us to meet this morning if Christ were not alive? Do you realize that thousands of Christian institutions and agencies across the land would not exist today if Jesus were not alive?

There is this cartoon of two Roman soldiers standing by the empty tomb. The stone was rolled away and one soldier was looking very worried because they had failed in their responsibility. But the other one shrugged and said, "Don't worry about it. A hundred years from now, no one will remember."

But a hundred years went by and people still remembered. And now, about 2,000 years later, God's people still gather and remember. And if the Lord tarries another 2,000 years, God's people will still be meeting to remember, because Jesus is alive and you don't easily forget something like that. Amen? And neither do we forget that sin and death have been conquered and victory has been won. Our world is different because Jesus is alive! Amen again?

II. THE RESURRECTION CHANGES THE WAY WE LOOK AT LIFE AND DEATH

The resurrection also changes the way we look at life and death. When God talks about death in the Scriptures he gives a different picture for a follower of Christ.

You see, the world in general is afraid of death. Many see death as the end of life. That's why they try to discover ways to prolong life, to avoid the unavoidable. But Jesus taught about death as just the beginning of life. In fact, he says in John 14:2-3, *"My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?"*³ *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am."*

Jesus promised his followers a heavenly dwelling where they will be with their Lord for all eternity. And that, in fact, is what the early followers expected. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, prayed while being stoned to death, *"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."* And others like him were able to face persecutions like being flogged and whipped on their backs, being thrown to hungry lions in the Roman coliseum, burned in the stake, put to death by the sword, and nailed on the cross like their Lord because of the hope of eternal life in heaven after death. They

knew that this world and everything in it is temporary. They were looking forward to a better world. And so, in Scripture, death is like going home.

You know, at the end of a busy day, isn't it wonderful to be able to say, "I'm going home." It is wonderful to be able to go home and relax, to feel the love and warmth of home, and to know that you have a share in all that happens there.

In my case, I feel kind of sad every Monday morning because I'll be away from my family for a few days.

On Tuesday, there's still a tinge of sadness but at the end of the day, I already look forward to the next day because it would be Wednesday.

When Wednesday comes, excitement builds up within me and I begin to put on a happy face again knowing that I need to just endure another day because Thursday is coming. And by Thursday, my heart is singing with joy because I know that in the evening I will be packing my bags and drive back home. The thought of being home with my wife and children just takes away all the feeling of aloneness during days leading to Thursday. Death is like going home. You don't mind the troubles, you're not affected as much as those who don't know Jesus, because you're looking forward to a better life.

Death is also like a graduation. I read the story of a preacher who recalled his graduation from Lincoln Christian College. It was a hot May afternoon and he remembers walking up on the stage and receiving his diploma from the president. He says, "He shook my hand and looked into my eyes and said, 'Now go into all the world and preach the gospel.'"

Then he continues, "I will never forget that, and I remember walking off the stage, clutching my diploma and thinking to myself, 'This really represents a lot of accomplishments, a lot of papers that were written, a lot of tests that were taken, a lot of things that were memorized. Years and years of study all represented in this one little piece of paper.'"

"I looked at my diploma and just kept looking at it. 'There is my name. I graduated. I did it!' Then I turned to the person next to me and said, 'Look at this. I really made it! Now let me see yours.'"

"He opened up his folder and it was empty. I asked, 'Where is your diploma?' He said, 'Well, I'm not really graduating today. I am just going through the exercises. I haven't handed in all of my papers, or taken all my tests. The school is giving me a few extra weeks. Then, if I have all my papers in, and if I have passed all my tests, then I will receive a diploma. But today I'm not really graduating.'"

The preacher thought to himself, "We studied together, we spent time together, and one graduates and the other one doesn't."

As I thought about this Easter message I wanted so much to paint a beautiful picture of an empty tomb and a beautiful spring day. I wanted to lift up the glorified Christ and say, "That is what it is all about."

But I am fearful. I am so fearful, people, that on an Easter Sunday I might paint a picture of false hope. And because the message of His resurrection is so wonderful, I might cause you to think that everything is all right – but it isn't, not for everyone.

You see, some people graduate and some do not. Some homes are peaceful, while others are not. Some marriages succeed, but others do not. Some banquets are occasions of joy, but some are not.

In the same way, while the cross is a blessing for those who come and accept its sacrifice, it is a curse for those who turn away and never acknowledge what is there.

The empty tomb is the greatest source of joy for those who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. But it is also the greatest source of judgment and condemnation for those who do not.

Which leads us to our last point which is

III. THE RESURRECTION ASSURES ME THAT I CAN CONQUER BECAUSE OF JESUS

Break every chain! That is what Jesus came for. He wants to break every chain that keeps you in bondage. He wants to set you free.

What is it that's keeping you in prison? You may not be afraid of death, not right now, but there's something you're afraid of. Something that you feel is more horrible than death. In fact, you'd rather face death than face your fears.

Fear can be paralyzing. It will prevent you from thinking straight, from doing what is right and proper, even from moving forward. Frank Herbert said, *"Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration."*

Everyone in this room is afraid of at least one thing. There's the fear of loneliness, there's the fear of people, there's the fear of inadequacy, the fear of being rejected, the fear of making mistakes, the fear of not passing a subject, the fear of losing control, the fear of your wife, and so on and so forth.

If you ask me what my greatest fear was? It was driving a car. You see, I'm a nervous person by nature and just the thought of driving a car made me nervous. Good thing in the Philippines there's an abundance of buses, jeepneys and tricycles. And so I didn't have to face my fear. Then, I went to Australia to work. I lived in the suburbs of Sydney and fortunately, they had a good network of trains and so I didn't have to drive a car. Then, the Lord brought me here to the US, in California! Of all places.

No good network of trains, limited bus routes, no jeepneys nor tricycles. But I survived because I lived with my sister and then with my parents and all of them knew how to drive and so I was just always a happy passenger. Until the Lord

relocated me to New Jersey. I was now by myself. Still single. That's when I faced my first real test about my fear of driving.

The reason I came to New Jersey is that there was this placement agency which set me up for an interview at Nabisco in a town called East Hanover. A friend of mine drove me to Nabisco and I passed the interview and then we went straight to the placement agency. The technical recruiter then asked for my driver's license to enter into their database and when I said I didn't have one, she looked at me with disbelief and said, "If I had known you didn't know how to drive, we wouldn't have flown you from California to here."

And I thought to myself, if I had known that Nabisco was situated in the middle of nowhere and that the only way to get there was by car, I wouldn't have flown from California to here.

To make a long story short, they had no choice but to enroll me in a driving school because they had committed me to their client already. And their instruction to the driving school was that they would teach me to drive no matter how many lessons it would take. That's when I realized God was engineering the circumstances to help me overcome my fear. In fact, my driving teacher is a Christian who was so patient with me and helped me the best way he could. All in all, we had 50 lessons. Just kidding. But I know it was more than 10. And when the driving test came, I already developed enough confidence that I passed it with flying colors. And I was so happy about it that I gave my teacher a \$100 tip. Just imagine how glad he was for receiving a tip like that.

And now, if you ride in my car, you'll quickly realize that I'm no longer nervous. But you'll be the one who'll be nervous. I used to have this little card posted on the dashboard that says, "Trust God, not the driver". My wife used to say that I'm the policeman's best friend because in New York, where we used to live, the cop would always escort me to the side of the road. But I've gotten older and

gotten a little bit wiser too. I haven't had any tickets since coming here to Virginia. Either I'm really improving or the cops here are nicer.

Folks, I conquered my fears because of God who actually conquered it for me. He led me and guided me and walked alongside with me as I went through my driving experience. Romans 8:31b says, *"If God is for us, who can be against us?"* Then, a few verses later, it also says, *"In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."* (Romans 8:37)

This morning, I'd like to encourage you that because Jesus overcame death, he could overcome anything for you as well.

You may be in a terrible situation at the moment. You're feeling afraid and it seems like your world is collapsing. Maybe your health is failing or someone you know is very sick. Maybe your finances are down and you're always thinking of the bills to pay. Maybe you can't get along well with your spouse or children or your boss or co-worker or just with anyone. Maybe you're faced with a dilemma and you don't know what to do. Friend, Jesus is here to overcome for you. He may not fix your problem right away but he can give you the grace to overcome your circumstances and give you comfort and peace in the midst of chaos. The Bible says, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*