

A World Without Graveyards
'HIS Story' SERIES - WEEK 2
Dan Burrell

Good morning Life Fellowship, and welcome to the most unique Easter service that you or I have ever been a part of as we celebrate Easter in the middle of the Corona virus pandemic. So happy resurrection day, and thank you so much for joining us.

As I was preparing for this Sunday service I realized we are truly in historic times, and I realize that this feels a little bit odd, because I have to tell you that Easter - resurrection day is my favorite holiday of the year. So I am a little disappointed that I don't get to see you face to face this morning. And I know that many of you are disappointed that some of the things you enjoy most about on this day, the worship, the time together as family, the traditions that we have kind of put in place around Easter, are not going to be there this year. At the same time I think this is a unique opportunity for us to get back to the basics, and to celebrate Easter as family in these unique circumstances. I think next year when we celebrate Easter together it is going to be a whole new level of excitement, with a level of appreciation that maybe we have lost over the years, because we kind of took for granted the way we previously celebrated Easter.

But you know historically - and kids I want you to kind of listen up because I am going to have you do something in a moment - but historically the way the church greeted each other kind of has an orientation and a tradition that continues for many churches, particularly on Easter. And it is the offering of what is called the Paschal Greeting. It was started in the Eastern Orthodox Church after the church of Jerusalem kind of grew up, and then it split eventually into the Western and the Eastern Churches. The Western Church was based in Rome and the Eastern Church was based in Constantinople.

The Eastern Church had a lot of Jewish roots in it so it was very much like the church at Jerusalem, so they would greet each other by saying, '*He is risen.*' And when they would say that, the person that they said it too would reply, '*He is risen indeed.*' And there were a couple of different ways they did this. One way of doing it was they would say, '*He is risen,*' and the other person would say, '*He is risen indeed,*' and then they would go up to each other and kiss each other on each cheek and the forehead. Three kisses which some think represented the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Well, we are kind of in this social distancing thing right now so we don't recommend that. The other way they would greet each other was to say, '*He is risen - He is risen indeed,*' repeated three times back and forth with each other. So we are going to do that while you are at home. Kids, I particularly want you to do this. I want you to turn around where you are and look at mom and dad. And we are going to do this together, we are going to say, '*He is risen.*' Kids, you will say that to mom and dad, and then mom and dad you can say back to them, '*He is risen indeed.*' Now if there are no children in your home, then just say it to each other. If you are by yourself, you can say

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it back to me. Okay, here we go. *'He is risen.'* *'He is risen indeed.'* *'He is risen.'* *'He is risen indeed.'* *'He is risen.'* *'He is risen indeed.'* Now it kind of seems like Easter and resurrection day again, doesn't it?

I am so excited to be with you this morning as we continue this series we set up for this month well in advance of the pandemic and the crisis with the things that were going to be unfolding. And we are going to continue our series that we call HIS Story. HIS Story is the story of Christ, it is the story of God and His plan for His creation, it is the story of what we know to be true in the universe that began with creation. And creation is where we looked last week. Pastor Ben began with the reminder of the first of the four great elements of HIS Story, and that was creation. Remember the four elements which began with creation, then it goes to the fall, then it goes to redemption and finally to restoration.

This week we are going to be talking about the fall. Now I have to tell you the way this worked out it would have been ideal if Easter Sunday had been the third part of the series where we would talk about the redemption of Christ. But I think also it is kind of important on this day that we do talk about the fall as well. And that is because without the fall there would have been no need for a redemption or eventual restoration.

So today we are talking about the fall and we are going to be in Genesis Chapter 3 in the Old Testament, and then we will go over to the New Testament and the book of Ephesians. One of the things I love doing, and it is probably because one of my degrees is in history so it has always fascinated me, is I always look forward to visiting historical sites. I have had this habit for years, and my wife was also a history teacher at one time so we have done this together, and that is when we go to an old graveyard we just like to walk through it and read some of the tombstones. In some cases there will be a little bit of history, other times it is just their name and the dates. But each tombstone, each grave marker represents someone.

My favorite national park is the Smoky Mountains National Park where there is a little area in the park called Cade's Cove. Many of you have probably been to it on vacation, as I was again last fall. I went there with my youngest son where we drove through Cade's Cove and stopped at several of the cemeteries and we would walk through and read some of the tombstones that were there. Many times these represented people who have long been forgotten. The only thing we can know about them is their name, the date they were born and the date they died. But every one of those tombstones represented someone who was important to God and important to someone else in their lives.

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With the advances in medicine that have taken place we don't see as many children who have died as you will find in an old graveyard. In years past many children died very young, sometimes at birth and other times in their first few years of life. It was almost a common thing, and when you go through certain cemeteries you will see multiple tombstones of children who died at birth, or when they were very young. And except for their tombstones many of them were forgotten. But all these children were important to God and all were important to someone else for the brief period of their lives.

And all of those lives had potential at one time. They had purpose, they had design, and they had meaning. Whether or not all of that was fulfilled in that life, whether everything that was hoped and dreamed for them was fulfilled or not, the great equalizer in every life, whether we live for two days, or we live for 92 years, the great equalizer eventually becomes the tombstone. And it is at that moment when this physical body dies.

You know we just celebrated Good Friday. And during that time I hope you were able to join us for our Good Friday service that we offered through streaming at Life Fellowship. Good Friday is when we remember the day that Christ died, the day that He was placed in a tomb, the day that they rolled the stone over the open sepulchre and sealed it. And there is such finality to that and there is such heaviness to that. If you have ever been to a cemetery you may have watched as someone was buried and how they put the dirt over the grave until it was completely covered. The circumstances of that just brings a period to it, an exclamation that says, *'This earthly life is now complete. It is now over.'*

So as I look at old tombstones in old graveyards I remember the truth of the gospel and I remember God's plan and intent, and I know this - we could have had a world without graveyards. We could have had a world without graveyards. You know last week Pastor Ben talked about the creation. And you know sometimes I like to just pause and think about what it must have been like at creation. First of all you had Adam and he was the smartest man that ever lived. And yet he fell. We know that Adam named all the animals, and we know that he had a divine interaction with God that made him unique from all other men who ever lived.

Then God gave him Eve and she was the completion of Adam. She was his helpmeet, his partner, his lover, his companion and his friend. God had specifically created Eve to join Adam in the garden. And how beautiful the garden must have been, how perfect it was, how God was reflected in everything that He had created for Adam

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and Eve's enjoyment. It was the epitome of God's creative nature that He had created for their enjoyment.

And yet we know that ultimately it would all fall apart. Had it not been for the fall, we would have had a world with no graveyards. There would be no hospitals, there would be no nursing homes, there would be no hospices, and there would be no pandemic. There would be no jails, there would be no rehab centers, there would be no divorce lawyers, there would be no department of child protective services, there would be no suicides, no murders, no robberies, no adultery, no hatred, no violence, no greed and no poverty.

Can you imagine a world that did not have all of those things? And yet we know that the world that we live in today has all of those. It is a world of brokenness. Scripture tells us that all creation groans with the heaviness and the brokenness caused by our sin. And when did that sin first occur? It occurred in Genesis Chapter 3. You know one of the favorite tactics of cynical agnostics and atheists is to try and blame God for the presence of evil in the world. And anything that is a consequence of evil, they want to just say, *'Well, why doesn't God fix that?'*

I saw this week an exchange that was going on between two people, and one of the parties was very blasphemous. And in reference to God he was saying some horrifically terrible things built on the premise that God should have kept the pandemic from happening and saying things like, *'What kind of God allows innocent people to die?'* And if you have done any debating, or dealt with apologetics, you know that there is this great debate tactic that people often use like, *'If God is all that He is supposed to be, if He is perfect and He is kind and He is merciful, why then can you not explain why there is so much evil and brokenness in the world?'*

The fact that evil remains in this world, by the way, is because God's timetable has never been our timetable. The evil that is present in this world comes from Satan and not from God. It is the consequence of the fall that we are about to read about and it is in this period of time in which you and I are living and in which civilization has occurred. This thing that we call history is from the time of creation to our current time, and until the end of time as we know it, and it is the time that God's mercy is in place.

It is this gap, this period of grace, during which He gives His creation an opportunity for redemption. He literally moved heaven and earth to make it so. The holiday that we celebrate this day is God's response to man's fall. It is God's reply to Satan's rebellion. It is God's solution to the problem of sin. And the fact that even though there is still sin, brokenness, pain, evil, pandemics and death in this world to this day, it is not a consequence of God's grace and power or a lack thereof, but it a sign of

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His mercy and His grace, because He wants to give us a chance to be redeemed and ultimately restored which is part of His grand narrative, a part of HIS story.

So let's look in Genesis Chapter 3 and we will begin reading in verse 1. This is the story of how we got in the mess we are in today after creation's perfection. The Scripture says: *"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"*

"But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die. God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths."

"And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?' And he said, 'I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.' He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?' The man said, 'The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.' Then the Lord God said to the woman, 'What is this that you have done?' The woman said, 'The serpent deceived me, and I ate.'"

"The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel.'"

You know there are going to be a lot of consequences to a lot of things because of Covid 19, things like economics, relational, political, and I also believe to the church. I don't know quite for sure how the church is going to look after we come back together because of some of the habits we have developed and because of some of the lessons we have learned. And in some ways it may be good, and in some ways it may be more difficult, but we know this that we are not going to be the same because of the

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monumental catastrophe that has taken place on this planet. We don't have any idea at all of what that future will look like.

Nor did Adam and Eve know what the future held for them when they chose to invite God's condemnation and judgment upon them for their disobedience. You know brokenness is tragic because of what motivates us and because of its consequences. It bears fruit every time and it is unforeseen and unforgiven. And again, had there not been a fall, there would be no graveyards, no hospitals, no jails and all of these things that we think about today as negative places.

One of the things that I think we need to remember as we read this passage is that often we are deceived by Satan. You know the Scripture tells us that Satan took the form of a serpent, and I believe that in this passage the serpent that was there for Eve was not anything like the serpent you and I see today. This is the time of the year that snakes start getting active after awakening from their slumber being cold blooded creatures. The cool weather kind of makes them lethargic, but now if you pay attention when you go for a walk in the park, or sometimes even walking across your yard, you are liable to see a slithery snake.

And anybody that knows me very well knows that sends me into a panic. I absolutely hate snakes, but I personally don't believe that this serpent in this passage looked like the serpent we see today. What we see today is a cursed creation, a cursed beast, and I think some of the fear and trepidation that many of us have toward them is part of the consequence of that curse. But whatever it was about that serpent, he was appealing for this moment of time to Eve. And he seduced her into believing that God didn't mean what He said, into believing that God could not be trusted, and into believing that God was holding something good back from her.

So as we look at this passage we see that this set into place a series of events that brought us to where we are today - death, pain, sweat, labor, brokenness, murder, crimes of all kinds, lust, passions out of control. And these are the consequences of the fall. And as we look at this primary event in human history, we see God's handiwork and we see His story. God created us perfect, and man messed it up. God created it so that we lacked nothing, and Satan diabolically marred it. And the best we see today in the world is still less than it would have been had it not been for the fall.

But we know that the story doesn't end there. We know that in God's grand narrative that there are two more things that will occur. The Scripture tells us about them. One of them has already occurred, and that is part of what we celebrate today. I am not going to get too deep into that, because first of all Pastor Ben is going to be

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teaching on that next week, and I don't want to steal his thunder. But also it is because I want us to think about the consequence of our sin.

When we think of Easter, when we think of the crucifixion and the resurrection, we cannot think of it apart from the fall of man. If it were not for the fall of man, we would not have needed redemption. We would not have needed to be restored with God. There would have been no need for a Savior, the Messiah, there would have been no need for a Calvary, or a crucifixion, and there would have been no need for a resurrection or an Easter Sunday.

I want us to turn real quickly in our Bibles to Ephesians Chapter 2 as we are going to look in the New Testament as well this morning. The Old Testament tells us the story of our fall and the New Testament reminds us that there was a fall, the consequences of that fall, and it also reminds us of the hope in God's story for His creation. So look if you would in Ephesians Chapter 2 and verses 1 through 9.

The Scripture says: *“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience - among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”*

This is such a great passage! And I want to unpack that a little bit because in it we have the tragedy of the fall, the lost opportunities of the creation that was marred, but we also have the hope of the resurrection, of redemption, and of eventual restoration before God. To fully appreciate the consequences of the fall, we have to acknowledge the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ, both as the remedy of the fall, and also for the hope that it provides. To fully appreciate the consequences of the crucifixion and the resurrection of Christ, we also need to study the fall.

So we are going to do both in this passage. As we look at Ephesians Chapter 2 we see the consequences of the fall. In verse 1 we see first of all that there was death, as it says we were dead in our trespasses. I want us to make sure that we understand that because I think sometimes when we think of Easter and we think of spring we think of

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new life, and that is important because we serve a risen Savior, and we celebrate His resurrection. But in order for Christ to be resurrected He had to die.

Do you understand that the consequences of sin, the Bible calls them 'the wages of sin,' is death? Death was not something that had to be, because we could have had a world without graveyards, but our sin brought about death, and death means graveyards. And that is one of the consequences, and we can't ignore that. We see the numbers unfolding on our screens every night as we watch the news and we see the death toll rise from the Corona virus. And as we see families talking about loved ones that have succumbed to this illness we remember that the Bible says there is appointed unto every man a time to die. And after that we will be judged.

And whether we want to ignore that, or deny that, or hide our heads in the sand, the fact is that if you are alive eventually physically you are going to die. But beyond that, before you know Christ you are not only dying physically but you are also dead spiritually. Our sin consequence is spiritual death, and you and I must experience a resurrection in order to go to that step of restoration we will be talking about in two weeks. In other words we are all dead men walking before we know Christ. We are dying physically and we are dead spiritually. The Bible tells us that in our sin we are dead, we are dead in the trespasses, we are dead in the consequences of our fall, and we are without hope except with God.

So we need to understand the tragedy of that. And you know it is easy to get mad, and sometimes people want to shake their fist in the face of God, and say, '*How could you let them die?*' But we are all going to die. Some die young, some die old, some die as a result of natural causes, and some die tragically, but every one of us at some point are going to face death. Why do we face death? We face death because of the fall. In God's story what was perfect was marred, what was not supposed to be occurred because of the fall. So there is death.

And then we see there was disobedience. Even in our sin we continue to commit those sins which are unworthy of God and His creation. And so we are the children of disobedience as the Scripture frequently calls us. "***The spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience,***" is what we read here in Ephesians. What does that mean? It means that just like Paul said, '*the things I am supposed to do I don't do, and the things I don't want to do I end up doing,*' you and I are going to continue to disobey because of the fallen nature that we inherit, and because of the fallen condition of the world. We are going to face day by day the temptations that lead us into disobedience.

The third thing we see here is decay. We know that creation is groaning. We know that the Corona virus, the common cold, and cancer, all of these things are part of

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the consequences of the fall. Unemployment, tragedies, tears, labor in childbirth, poverty, and hatred we see all around us, all of those were not supposed to be. This was supposed to be a world without graveyards. This was supposed to be a world without hatred. This was supposed to be a world without hospitals. But because of the fall, because of Satan's rebellion against God, because of Adam and Eve's disobedience to the known attributes and commands of God, we face these consequences.

So there is death, there is disobedience, there is decay and then we know there is depravity. There is wickedness and immorality and exploitation. And you even see this today in what is going on here. It seems like every time we think that people cannot become worse, they cannot become more depraved, we see they can find a way to up the game. I was reading this week about folks that are calling elderly people on the phone and saying, *'Hey, we have your government stimulus check that we are going to send you but we are going to need your bank account number.'* And people are unwittingly giving them their bank information and then they take all the money out of their bank accounts.

And you think, *'What kind of person does that to someone who is elderly or vulnerable?'* Well, it is an evil person that does that. And why are they evil? They are evil because of the fall. Sometimes we like to gloss over our own sins and say, *'Look at that. Man, that is just horrible. I would never be like that.'* But you know we all have been cooped up in our homes recently, and we all probably have had a few moments of tension between us and the kids, or us and the spouse, or maybe we are just plain frustrated. Maybe we are even frustrated with God at this point. There are those moments that temptation sneaks up on us, we succumb and we live out our worst potential. We live out our weak moments. We live out our own depravity.

And then we know that ultimately there is damnation. I know that is not something we want to dwell on during resurrection Sunday. But it is something that is very real because it is a consequence of the fall. Ultimately when this human body dies we will go into eternity. And eternity is either a place where we enjoy the restoration that God made possible at Calvary and through the resurrection, or we experience the damnation that comes with the death of our soul because of sin. And there is a dark contrast between eternal life and eternal death. And it is one that all of us have to come to grips with. It is a question that all of us need to ask.

And you know sometimes we like to deny the bad news. I am this way. I am a procrastinator and sometimes I find myself getting frustrated because I haven't filed my taxes yet. Whenever the president came on and said we had until July to file our 2019 taxes, I was like, *'Yes!'* Even though I am committed to doing it on schedule I procrastinate things that I don't want to deal with, that I don't want to think about. I

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don't want to think about having to write a check for my taxes. I don't want to think about having to go through all those receipts.

And some people are that way about life. *'I don't want to think about when I am going to die. I am young and healthy, and I will deal with that when I get closer to it.'* As if we had a guarantee that we will have time to deal with it. And the bottom line is this - the Bible says there is a time for every one of us when we are going to have to stand before God and give an account of what we did with the truth of God's Word, with the restoration plan that God presented for us.

So we need to be cognizant of the fact that a failure to plan, a failure to consider, a failure to receive Christ as our Savior may ultimately lead to a point of damnation where there is no hope, where there aren't any second chances beyond the grave. And so God in His mercy has given us this time in the midst of all this evil and all this brokenness and all this confusion, and He mercifully says, *'I am going to wait. I will clean this mess up eventually and destroy all that is broken. I am going to provide fresh opportunities and a fresh creation, but until that moment even though it means that there is going to be some pain, some suffering and consequences of the fall still around, I am going to wait.'*

And I want to say to you this morning as you are watching this, He is waiting for you. If you don't know Christ as your Savior, He is waiting for you to take this opportunity, this invitation that He has given you, by the authority and the power that was presented and confirmed at His resurrection to receive forgiveness of your sins from the God of the universe. That is the message of Easter. That is the message of the resurrection. That is the message of the empty tomb. He is powerful enough to redeem you and He is powerful enough to save you. And in the midst of all this brokenness He is waiting for you. Will you respond?

So those were the consequences, those were the fruits. The offspring of Satan is this - death, disobedience, decay, depravity and damnation. But here is a fact that we need to remember - we will never fully appreciate the wonder of the resurrection until we acknowledge the tragedy of the fall. You know the fact is Jesus would not have had to suffer and He would not have had to die if we had not fallen. But He did that for our sin and for our rebellion. And for us to recognize and appreciate the wonder of the resurrection, the fact that God Himself died for us, the great gift that was poured out at Calvary, we need to understand that it was our sin, our rebellion, our brokenness, our depravity that required that. And that is a sobering reality.

I would also say this - we will never fully appreciate the grace of God at Calvary until we accept the depravity of our own condition. So many today want to diminish their sins. And the reality is this, *'Your sin bothers me but my sin I am cool with.'* It is

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the guy you see at the grocery store who goes up to the toilet paper aisle and it is empty. And he is yelling, *'These greedy people take all the toilet paper so what is the rest of us supposed to do?'* And about that time the clerk comes out with a big case of toilet paper that he puts on the shelf, and this guy grabs twelve packages in his cart and runs to the checkout line. He hates other people's sin, but he is okay with doing the same thing he hates in others.

That seems to be human nature. That is how we are. But at some point we have to realize that we are all broken, we are all messed up, we are all fallen. And our depravity alone was enough to send Jesus to the cross and to make Satan celebrate. Every time we sin it is a score for Satan. But the score was absolutely obliterated at Calvary and at the resurrection.

We will never fully appreciate the miracle of the resurrection until we realize the desperation of sin's consequences. You see we were damned and doomed because those were the consequences of sin, but because Christ broke free from death, He did something that no one has ever done before and will never do again by conquering death and rising from the dead. Unlike any other deity claim that has ever been made, Christ is alive. *'He is risen - He is risen indeed.'* And because of that, we understand the miracle of the resurrection and the desperation of our condition apart from that.

Satan's diabolical plan throughout the Old Testament narrative was to disrupt the Messiah's coming, to bring about His death and then to prevent His resurrection. But what Satan could conceive in his mind to disrupt, God always had an answer for, and His plan was fulfilled at Calvary and on resurrection morning. We will never fully appreciate the patience of God until we experience the transformation of the gospel. He is waiting for you. And you know when you trust Christ as your Savior there is that moment of freedom that comes with that. You will never forget, it will never diminish in importance, and it is the most wonderful thing you can ever experience.

Let's look again in Ephesians again as we close as there are several truths there that we absolutely need to remember about God and His nature. In verse 4 it says, ***"But God."*** Those two words are some of the most precious words to the believer. All of the things that were talked about in verses 1 through 3, the brokenness, the carrying out of the desires, the prince of the power of the air, all of those things were at full bloom, and then it says, ***"But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which He loved us."***

Understand this - one of the facts about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ is that it was the ultimate demonstration of how much God loves us. And then He gives us a fresh shot in verse 5 where it says, ***"Even when we were dead in our trespasses, He***

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made us alive together with Christ.” And then there is this punctuation statement there that says, *“By grace you are saved.”* Because of God’s grace you get a fresh shot at life which is a great promise.

Then look at verses 6 and 7: *“He raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”* For all eternity we are going to benefit from the resurrection of Christ. For all of these things we will be sitting with Christ in high places. We will have a brighter future than we have ever imagined because of the resurrection. As tough as things may be - you may have lost your job, you may have lost a loved one to this horrible illness, you may be living in fear and anxiety and uncertainty right now - but understand that if you know Christ as your Savior this morning you have a future that is brighter than any you could have ever imagined. This is just the preshow. This is just the anteroom into the great hall of God’s presence. Don’t despair, don’t give up, don’t be overtaken by anxiousness and worry, but celebrate what lies behind the next door.

The last thing in verses 7, 8 and 9 says this: *“So that in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”* And in that we are safe in Him no matter what, because we didn’t earn it, we didn’t purchase it, we didn’t have to do one thing for it - Christ did it for us. All we do is yield. All we do is submit. All we do is repent. All we do is accept passively what God has done for us. No one gets to Heaven and says, *‘I knew I was getting here because I earned it. I worked hard for it.’* No one gets to boast about what they did to get to Heaven because everything that was needed to be done for you and me to get to Heaven was done at Calvary and through the resurrection. And God, in that while we were sinners, sent Christ to die for us.

On the other side of the grave was the resurrection. On the other side of this life there is Heaven. On the other side of this pandemic there is a fresh opportunity to appreciate all of that which God has given us, the joy of our salvation, and the hope of our future. You know we could have lived in a world without graveyards, but we don’t. We could have lived in a world without sickness, but we don’t. And the reality is today for many who don’t think there is any hope, we want you to know that there is. And that hope is in our resurrected Savior, Jesus Christ, who loves you, died for you, and rose again on the third day. What we do have is the best future anyone could imagine, indeed a future that does not have graveyards.

**A World Without Graveyards
'HIS Story' SERIES - WEEK 2
Dan Burrell**

If you do not know Christ as your Savior, may I invite you today to trust Him. If you have questions, here is what I would like for you to do. I would like for you to just send us an email at media@lifecharlotte.com and tell us how we can get in touch with you. Give us your phone number or your email address and we will send you information, or we will give you a call. And we will share with you what the Bible says you need to know in order to have eternal life. Maybe you don't have a Bible, then we will give you a Bible. Maybe you don't have anyone to talk to, then we will call you. We will arrange an appointment as soon as you are able to come. But what we want you to do is to know the great hope of a resurrected Savior.

This is a great day. *'He is risen - He is risen indeed.'* We celebrate that and we hope you will do that all day long. And in the midst of uncertain times, in the midst of some isolation, today let's come together as the family of God, even separated by distance but united by His Spirit, and thank God for all that He has done, by what He made possible because of the resurrection. Let's pray together.

Father, we love you and thank you for your Word. Thank you that there are no graveyards in Heaven. Thank you Father that in spite of the fall you have given us hope. And on this Easter Sunday morning we celebrate all that you have done for us, all that you have promised for our future, and for the fact that you took that which was broken and loved us anyway. And Father, we are so sorry for our sins that required you to die for us. We repent of those and Father, help us to live holy lives, lives that fill the potential of the perfect creation that you intended for us. And we look with longing to the day when you will wipe away the last marring vestiges of our sin and our sin nature. Until that time let us walk in the Spirit, let us serve you faithfully, and let us have hope in a fallen world. For it is in Christ's name I pray. Amen.

The preceding transcript was completed using raw audio recordings. As much as possible, it includes the actual words of the message with minor grammatical changes and editorial clarifications to provide context. Hebrew and Greek words are spelled using Google Translator and the actual spelling may be different in some cases.