I am going to read to you from John’s Gospel and Chapter 20. John is one of the four gospels that records events in the life of Jesus.

And I want to record an event that happened on the evening after He was raised from the dead.

He was raised from the dead in the morning and two women found the empty tomb. They ran and told some of His disciples. Two of them came running and witnessed the empty tomb as well.

And one of the women, Mary Magdalene, went outside and saw what she thought was the gardener and said, “Where have you laid Him? The tomb is empty; where is the body?”

The man she thought was the gardener said, “Mary,” and she recognized it was Jesus.

But later that day - John 20:19:

“On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you!’

“After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

“Again Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’

“And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’

“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 said, ‘Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.’”

If I have a text that I am going to base what I have to say with you this morning on, it is the last part of that verse.

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Nobody here this morning saw the physical historical Jesus. I remember once talking with an illiterate man in Africa and he asked me if anybody was alive today who had been alive in the time of Jesus. He had little concept of where Jesus fitted into history.

But the answer to that is no. We were not there when the angels appeared to shepherds at His birth.

We were not there when water was turned into wine.

We were not there when Jesus healed the paralyzed man.

We did not listen to Him preach the Sermon on the Mount.

We did not see Him feed 5,000 people with 5 loaves and two fish.

We did not see Him walk on the water.

We were not there when He raised Lazarus from the dead.

We were not there when He hung on the cross.

And we were not there the morning the tomb was empty and He had been raised to life again. None of us were there.

There is an old spiritual – some you know it – and it goes like this:

*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*
*Were you there when they crucified my Lord?*
And then it goes,

\[ \text{Oh-oh-oh…(usually in tune)} \]
\[ \text{It causes me to tremble, tremble, tremble} \]
\[ \text{Were you there when they crucified my Lord?} \]

The next verse is

\[ \text{Were you there when they nailed Him to the tree?} \]
\[ \text{Were you there when they laid Him in the tomb?} \]

Last verse:

\[ \text{Were you there when He raised up from the grave?} \]

And the answer is no, we weren’t.

So why do we believe? Is it naivety on our part? Is it convenience, there is some vested reason why it’s good to believe this? Is it tradition - it’s good enough for our parents and good enough for our grandparents and we just keep it going?

Or is it conviction? But not just a cold objective conviction (yes, something happened one day), but is it conviction that leads to being experiential; we believe because something has happened as a result?

I read an article this week about a remarkable artist. His name is Esref Armagan. He lives in Ankara in Turkey. This article I read referenced a Discovery Channel program about him. So I looked on the Internet, having been fascinated by the article, and I found the program and I watched part of it.

And what is remarkable about Esref Armagan is that though he is a brilliant artist, he was born blind. Yet with his fingertips he paints beautiful pictures. I saw some of them on the Discovery program. He can draw trees magnificently. He could draw the ocean with surf and depth of field, which he has never seen with his eyes.

He can draw mountains, and there was a beautiful painting of a bird’s nest. He has never experienced the contrast between light and dark. He has never seen boundaries and horizons.

But he said in this program, “I don’t need eyes to see. I can see with my hands.” And you see him at work with his paint and he is just on his canvas moving his fingers around and producing these beautiful pictures.
There are different ways to see. And Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet who have believed.”

Interestingly, there are many who did see who didn’t believe.

There were those who saw many of the events of Jesus’ life and yet opposed Him.

There were those who saw the water turned to wine.

There were those who saw the feeding of the 5,000.

There were those who saw the raising of Lazarus from the dead. (And interestingly, they tried to kill Lazarus again.)

There were those who witnessed Him on the cross. There were those who witnessed the empty tomb. They didn’t believe.

Thomas was one of them. Thomas had been with Jesus for 3 years. He had seen all of those things. And yet there came a time when he doubted, and we know Thomas forever as Doubting Thomas.

But doubt is not the opposite of faith. Unbelief is the opposite of faith. Doubt can be a healthy part of a process of searching in order to come to conclusions.

And it is very likely there are some people here this morning and you have doubts. And I totally understand those doubts and I totally respect those doubts.

But if they are honest doubts (not prejudiced unbelief), as you explore them, they can lead you to understanding and conviction.

There is a Peanuts Comic strip when Charlie Brown is talking to Lucy as they walk home on the last day of school term.

And on their way home, Charlie Brown says to Lucy, “Lucy, I got straight A’s; isn’t that great?”

And Lucy, in her typical fashion, shoots a sideward glance at Charlie Brown and says, “I don’t believe you Charlie Brown. Unless you show me your report card I cannot believe you.”

There are some things, you see, that don’t fit other things that we know.

I want to give you three areas of doubt regarding Jesus Christ and in particular, the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And I think without manipulating Thomas, I think we can recognize that all three areas of doubt were probably true of him in this story.
There is rational doubt - that is, intellectually.

There is emotional doubt. There are reasons why our disposition of heart causes doubt.

And there is volitional doubt. That is, our will is set against the evidence.

Let me talk about those three things. There is rational doubt. For many people, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a major historical problem. Of course it is because we live in a physical world and this physical world is subject to physical laws. And the physical laws that we know say dead men don’t rise.

A man might be resuscitated, his heart having been stopped maybe for three minutes or so. But this is a man who has died as a consequence of one of the cruelest forms of death; has been pronounced dead. And then just to verify, a sword has been thrust into His side and blood and water separated from each other; a sign of death has come out of His veins.

He has been buried and left there for at least 36 hours. And then the evidence is His tomb was found to be empty and He appeared alive and spoke to people; on one occasion 500 people at the same time.

Now that’s an assault on our natural rational process of thinking. That defies physical laws. But what if there are other realities beyond the natural?

What if this world is a creation of an intelligent God who made laws to cause our universe to function predictably and well? But because He created them, has the prerogative to alter them, to change them, when He might want to.

In other words, if there is a natural order, can there not also be a supernatural order, which by definition is not natural, where the God who created those natural laws intervenes?

You know when things are outside of our experience, we often think they don’t exist; they are not real.

When I was at school in England, I learned my times tables (I don’t know if they still learn them now – I think they don’t – you know, 1 times 2 is 2, 2 times 2 is 4, 3 times 2 is 6, 4 times 2 is 8, and then it goes on…whatever the next one is). And it goes up to the 12 times table when I was at school, and the biggest number was 12 times 12 equals 144.

There was a schoolgirl one day that was asked the question, “What is 13 times 13?” And she said, “Don’t be so silly; there isn’t such a thing!”
You know we can live within a framework that we know, that we understand. Outside of that, “there’s no such thing, come on!”

Maybe there is. Maybe the resurrection of Jesus Christ violating the physical laws, as it does, is one of those moments when the God who created this world stepped into His world to accomplish something that otherwise would not be accomplished.

You see there are certain things about the Christian message, which are unique, non-repeatable; nothing else equates with them. And there are two things in particular.

One is the identity of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was not just a street preacher made good. The ball got rolling and began to gain momentum until He became the biggest thing the world has ever known, and boy was that a fluke! He happened to be in the right place at the right time at the right moment, with the right thing, and the current took it where it went.

No, the identity of Jesus Christ is not as a street preacher made good, but that He was uniquely the Son of God, co-equal as the Son with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, as a Trinity of the Godhead, not a tri-theist three gods, but three yet one.

And Jesus Christ was part of the Godhead. And Christianity is unique because of who Jesus Christ is in the first instance. And the second thing, unique in that what He did – He died, He was buried and He was raised again to life. Not to demonstrate, hey, this is obviously pretty good, but that in His death, in His burial, in His resurrection, He was accomplishing something that we will see in just a moment.

You see most of the world’s religions are based on philosophical propositions. That is, they say, if you want life to make sense, you want life to work, you need to know this, this, this and this; live in the good of these things and life will work for you. That’s what most religions consist of.

Four of the major religions of the world are personality based. They are based on certain individual people. Judaism regards Abraham as its father – he is the father of Judaism. And Abraham lived and died and was buried alongside his wife Sarah, who had pre-deceased him.

And you can visit the grave of Abraham today in Hebron, on the West Bank, and it’s occupied. Abraham’s corpse (what’s left of it) - his bones are there. No claim has ever been made for the resurrection of Abraham.

Buddhism founded in the 5th Century by Buddha. The record of Buddha’s death says this: that his death – and I quote it – quote a translation of it:
in other words, he is dead, dead. Nothing whatever remains behind. When he died, he died, capital D, died, dead, gone. That’s what they say about Buddha.

They cremated his body. There is some dispute as to where the ashes were put. There are two places in particular people go to commemorate the life of Buddha by the fact that his ashes were sprinkled there, but nobody is absolutely certain.

Though in Sri Lanka there is a tooth of Buddha you can go and see if you really are interested. But no claim has ever been made that Buddha rose from the dead.

Islam was founded on the teaching of Mohammed. He died in 632 A.D. at the age of 61, probably as a result of poisoning a short while earlier.

His tomb is visited today by thousands of pilgrims in the city of Medina. In fact it is what makes Medina what it is. It is here that Mohammed is buried. No claim was ever made that Mohammed rose from the dead.

Jesus Christ relatively died as a young man – approximately 33 years of age. He was buried. Nobody knows for sure where His tomb was because at the time it wasn’t considered important.

There are two claims to His tomb in Jerusalem today – one within the city walls, one just outside the city walls. I have been to both and they are both empty, because although He was buried, on the third day He was raised again from the dead.

This is the claim that was made at the time and it is not just one of the many tenets of belief in the Christian gospel; it is the indispensable fact of the Christian gospel because Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:14:

“If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.”

In other words, he says if Jesus Christ has not been raised from the dead, the best thing we can do today is finish this service early, go and get a good lunch, sell the building and give it away to something useful.

But we are totally wasting our time if Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead. Because it is not that we say, “What happened to your leader? He died. He-he. What happened to ours? Do you want to know? He was raised. Ha, ha, we’re better than you.” No, no.
But the very substance of the Christian life, the very substance of the gospel requires a living Jesus Christ to make it work. That’s why, if you examine the teaching of Jesus carefully, you will find it was very self-centered.

By that I mean, not that He was an egotist, but His teaching was centered on Himself. That without Him there would be nothing.

You see other leaders have come along and said things like this: “I will show you the way.”

What did Jesus say? “I am the Way.”

Others said, “I will teach you the truth.”

He said, “I am the Truth.”

Others said, “I will show you how to find life.”

He said, “I am the Life.”

Others said, “I will feed you bread.”

He said, “I am the Bread of Life.”

Others said, “I will give you shepherds.”

He said, “I am the Good Shepherd.”

Others said, “I will switch on the light.”

Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world.”

In other words, take away Jesus Christ; there is no way, there is truth, there is no life, there is no bread of life, there is no shepherd, there is no light, there is no door.

His invitation when He preached was this: “Come to Me.”

What next?

“Abide in Me.”

When He met with His disciples on one occasion at a crucial moment in His three years of ministry with them, He said to them, “Who do you say that I am?”
He did not say, “What do you think of My teaching? Hey Peter, how would you rate the Sermon on the Mount, huh? 7 out of 10? 8 out of 10? 3 out of 10? Come on.”

No, He didn’t say that.

“Hey John, what do you think of my parables – you are going to write a gospel – you’d better put some of these down because they are good aren’t they?”

No, He didn’t say, “What do you think of My teaching?” But “What do you think of Me?”

Because you see the Christian life is dead if Jesus Christ is dead. And this is what sets Christianity apart in its uniqueness from every other philosophy or religion that exists. And so the question is not, “Well that was impressive He rose from the dead. Did He or didn’t He?”

No, the question is “Is Jesus Christ alive today - alive today?”

There are rational reasons why people doubt. There are emotional reasons why people doubt as well.

You know sometimes our moods or our passions or our hurts work around within our own hearts and they express themselves masquerading as factual doubt, but really they are expressions of the way I feel.

Our thinking becomes very subjective and we think what we want to think, we avoid what we want to avoid, and sometimes we interpret Christ through our moods, through our history, through our experiences of life.

There is an interesting statement in the Old Testament by Isaiah, one of the prophets. He talked about those who he said (I quote), “will be ever hearing but never understanding, be ever seeing but never perceiving.”

Now he says there are going to be folks – they’ll ever hear but never understand, they’ll be ever seeing but they will never get it. And he says why: because their hearts have become calloused, hardened.

In other words, this is not a rational issue now; it is a dispositional issue, if you know what I mean by that – an attitude of heart, a disposition of heart. Because then he says their hearts have become calloused; their ears are dull; their eyes are closed.

Otherwise, if their hearts weren’t calloused, they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn and be healed. But
something has gone on in their hearts that has created this disposition that won’t accept.

That may have been true of Thomas. Thomas was not in the room on that first Sunday night when Jesus appeared to the rest of the disciples.

They all saw Him; they all spoke with Him. He said to them, “I am not a ghost. Don’t get confused about this. I have flesh and bones. Touch Me and see.” And they had done so.

Now all the disciples – you remember the atmosphere – Jesus had told them He was going to die. They didn’t believe it and when He did die, they ran away and hid. They ran away before He died.

They were still in this place on Sunday night with the doors locked for fear of the Jews we said, because “the Jews have got Jesus; now they are going to get us – the Sanhedrin, the leaders of the Jews.”

They have all been in the same boat. Now they have seen Him. They have touched Him. And Thomas comes home and they say, “Thomas, we have seen the Lord!”

And Thomas wasn’t there, and maybe he resents that he wasn’t there. “Why didn’t Jesus appear to me as well?”

Can I be very direct? There may be some of us here this morning and your wife is a Christian; you’re not. And it has got to the stage where it would be a loss of face if you were to become a Christian because you have dug your heels in. And the issue is no longer Jesus Christ; the issue now is your pride.

Your husband is a Christian and you’re not. Maybe this Easter Sunday morning you came with him – it’s good for the marriage – but you are missing because your heart, you’re missing something, your heart has been set against.

Maybe your kids – maybe some of you here – and your daughter, your son, became a Christian. And you know you’re the parent; you’re supposed to be teaching them and they have come home and they are trying to teach you now and in a very subtle way your heart has become, in the words of Isaiah, calloused, it’s become hard. Your disposition has become such that you can no longer see it clearly because your pride again is at stake.

Maybe you have seen a Christian and you didn’t like the way they lived. Or you have seen a church that hurt you. And now Jesus Himself has gotten lost in that hurt and it’s your heart now which has become calloused.
This is not a good reason to doubt, because you see, when you see but don’t perceive, you are blind. When you hear but don’t understand, you’re deaf. And you have become deafened and blinded to the issues.

Thomas may have been exactly in that situation.

A young man in this church was telling me on Thursday night that he was talking to someone (I think it was the previous night) who had been a Christian but who was turned away from God because of something that he is interested in that is not part of what God would have for him. He has turned away, and he said to my friend, he said, “I believe Christianity is true but I don’t want to believe it.”

If he is here this morning, can I say a word just to you? You are a fool. Truth does not conform to what you want and you might be closing your door, your mind and your heart to the greatest thing on earth.

There are volitional reasons as well as emotional reasons. By that I mean that the will becomes involved. In fact that quotation I just gave you of that young man was really that. It was the will, though because the heart had become calloused.

This actually was Thomas’ problem because in Verse 25 Thomas says,

“Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side” (listen to this), I will not believe.”

Do you notice that? He didn’t say, “Unless I put my fingers into the nail marks in His hands, and my hand into his side, I cannot believe.” That would be primarily a rational issue. He is struggling. (“How in the world can this be?”)

No, he says, “I will not.”

At the trial of Jesus, the highest authority amongst the Jewish people were the Sanhedrin Council. They did not have the authority to sentence somebody to death, so they recommended to the Roman governor, Pilate, that he put Him to death. He did have the authority to do so.

And when Jesus was talking with the Sanhedrin Council, they said to Him this in Luke 22 and Verse 67 (if you want to read it sometime). They said,

“If you are the Christ, tell us.”

And Jesus answered,

“If I tell you, you will not believe me.”
In other words, “Your mind is made up for whatever reason. Whether the reason has an emotional source, whether the reason is a hardness of your heart, whether the reason is it’s irrational, if I tell you, you will not believe because your will (volitionally); you are set against believing.”

I find it interesting how Jesus and the other disciples dealt with the doubt of Thomas. There is no record they tried to argue with him. All the evidence is they did nothing for seven days. Jesus did not appear for seven days to Thomas – that’s a long time.

The big event was Sunday morning. We hear about it Sunday night – wow! “I need to see Him too.”

All day Monday - nothing. All day Tuesday - nothing. All day Wednesday - nothing. All day Thursday, Friday, Saturday…and seven days later, it says in Verse 26 - at least it says there,

“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.’”

You know sometimes we need time to adjust our mind, to adjust our disposition, the deal with the hardness of heart. Jesus gave Thomas seven days. And then when He appeared to him, His response was,

“Put your fingers here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side.”

What was He doing? Well, of course, on the one hand He was giving evidence it was the same Jesus that was crucified that is alive again; but that’s not the main point.

It’s not just that, you know, this has been a bad week but everything is fine now because the previous Monday, Jesus came into Jerusalem on the Sunday (you remember we celebrated Palm Sunday and everybody sang Hosanna in the highest and He had come into the city on a really high wave.)

And then He had gone to the temple, turned over the tables and things started to go downhill from there until you know, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday; by Friday they were crucifying Him. Saturday He was buried. Sunday, rose again from the dead.
So this Monday we are back to where we were last Monday. Phew! We got out of that one! It is not a question that this simply reversed that effect, that this reversed the fact He was crucified. “So who’s laughing now, huh, the Sanhedrin or Jesus? Ha, it’s Jesus.”

No, that’s not what it is - something much more profound than that. He showed them His wounds. You see inevitably death must precede resurrection, obviously.

But spiritually, theologically, it was the death of Jesus that made the resurrection what it is because in His death, the wounds of His hands and the wound of His side represented what Isaiah had written about years before when in Isaiah 53:5,6 he said (writing about Christ in advance),

“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

“We, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

In talking about the events of Jesus, he takes every event – His piercing, His bruising, His punishment, His wounds, all the agony of the cross; Isaiah says it’s our transgressions, our iniquities, it is we who are healed, it is we who are reconciled, it’s the iniquity of us all that was laid on Him.

You see the cross of Jesus Christ is not a martyrdom of a good man, misunderstood. The cross of Jesus Christ was the offering of Himself as a perfect sacrifice, as your substitute and mine, to address the justice of God that says the soul that sins must die, which leaves you and me without hope.

But He who was sinless offered Himself and said to His Father, “Father, Charles Price deserves death. I don’t. And so I can be his substitute.”

Men and women, boys and girls down through history deserve death. He, the perfect One could be their substitute. By His wounds we are healed.

“Thomas, look at My hands. Not just look at them – Thomas, touch them. My side,” (where a sword had been thrust into His side before they took Him down from the cross), “Thomas, feel it.” By His wounds we are healed.

The resurrection vindicates the fact that the Father accepted the sacrifice of Christ as our substitute. But more than that, now that He is alive, He can impart not only the gift of forgiveness – that would simply clean out the mess but leave us like a vacuum – but to fill that vacuum with Himself and come, by His Holy Spirit, to live within us. So that now we live in the power of the risen Christ in us, changing us.
We will never understand the resurrection and its meaning until we understand the cross. “Look at My hands and My side.”

John Piper is a pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis. He tells the story of going to visit a lady from his congregation who had dementia and she was in a nursing home. And I read to you the conversation as John Piper records it.

*Hi Elsie, I’m Pastor Piper. Do you remember me?*

No.

*I am from Bethlehem Baptist Church – your church; do you remember the church?*

No.

At this point John was pretty sure the conversation had come to an end. Then he remembered something he had been reading in his devotions that morning. He said,

“*Elsie, do you remember Jesus?*”

“Yes, yes, I do.”

“*Elsie, do you know that one day some men took Jesus and beat Him and spat on Him.*”

Elsie got a horrified look on her face. And she said,

“*Oh no!*”

“*And then these men placed a crown of thorns on Jesus’ head and then they made Him carry a heavy cross.*”

And with that horrified look, Elsie whispered,

“*Oh no!*”

“*Then they stripped Jesus and nailed Him to the cross and Elsie, they killed Him.*”

And by this time tears streamed down Elsie’s face. She closed her eyes and she shook her head. And John said,
“And Elsie, do you know that Jesus let them do that because He loves you and me so much, He was willing to die for us?”

And John Piper says Elsie opened her eyes. Her face began to brighten and she said,

“Yes, that is the kind of thing Jesus would do, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it is the kind of thing Jesus would do. It’s the kind of thing Jesus did. It is what Jesus did.

“Thomas, look at My hands, nail-pierced hands. Touch My side. Thomas, it’s because I died and I have been raised to life that you now can find life, spiritual life.”

And the response: Verse 28:

“Thomas said to him, My Lord and my God!”

The response was not, “Okay, I believe it.” That response won’t do anything for you at all. We need to believe it but it’s “My Lord and my God!” It’s a response of surrender.

And Thomas surrendered. When you call anybody Lord, which means Master, it’s a response of surrender. “My Lord and my God!”

And some of you here this morning, some of you listening on television or by radio, you have never made that response to Jesus Christ and you have always wondered why Christianity seems this kind of distant, remote, unreal thing. And you wonder why it is other people seem to get so excited, because they know Jesus Christ and you don’t.

But you can do so. What happened that Sunday night a week later, when he said, “My Lord and my God”, that Thomas went on to become the great apostle to India. It’s not in the New Testament but reliable tradition tells us that.

Martyred on what is now called Martyr’s Hill in the city of Chennai because he discovered that the Jesus whom he had seen do many wonderful things, in His death was not just a victim of injustice, but in His death was bearing the sins of the world. And by His resurrection could administer the forgiveness and administer the new life and administer the Holy Spirit to men and women, boys and girls so that they too could come alive in a way we never can apart from Christ. Because He is the life – “I am the Life” He said, His life in us.

And as we come to a close I am going to ask if there be some of you here this morning. You may have been here many times; you may be here for the first
time; it doesn’t matter. But you know you’re a little bit on the outside of this and you feel right now as though your nose is pressed against the window and, you know, “how do I get through to it, how do I experience Jesus Christ?”

God is drawing you; it’s His prerogative to do that. And this morning you need only say, “My Lord and my God, I recognize You, I surrender to You, I thank You for dying for me and I ask You to come and live within my life as my Saviour and my Lord.”

There are going to be some folks here at the end of the service. I am going to ask them if they would come right now and stand here at the front. They are people who are going to be available to talk to you. If you would come now so that you have a moment to get into position and people know who you are.

And there are those of you who are here this morning and you are saying, “What do I do about this?”

These folks would love to pray with you and help you come into that certainty that Jesus Christ, who was raised again that first Easter Sunday, is still alive. And by His Holy Spirit will come to live within you and impart life, strength, purpose and meaning.

Let’s pray together. I am going to ask you to close your eyes. And there are some of you who need to pray these words with me. I am going to pray just sentence by sentence. There are no special words; these are just words that will help you to articulate as God is drawing you to Himself.

Lord God, I thank You that You love me (would you pray that in your own heart quietly) and that You sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, for me. He died for me. He carried my sin and failure in His death. And thank You He was raised again to life - is alive today. I ask You to forgive me of everything that has kept You out of my life. I confess my sin to You. Thank You for forgiving me. I open my heart to You. I ask You to come and live within me as my Lord, my Saviour, my God. Thank You for hearing my prayer.