

Easter 2025

Victory Life Church, Durant — Sunday, April 20, 2025 (Easter Sunday)

Scripture

Today is Easter Sunday, the day we celebrate the most significant event in all of human history. One of the accounts of this day comes from the Gospel according to Luke. It says,

Luke 24:1–6a (ESV)¹ But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ² And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵ And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead?” ⁶ He is not here, but has risen...

Introduction

“He is not here. He is Risen.”¹

This is the news that turned the world upside down.

Today, we are going to look at the question the angels asked the disciples right before dropping this bombshell announcement.

Why do you seek the living among the dead?

In July 1999, JFK Jr. took off in his private plane with his wife and sister-in-law. The night was dark, and the conditions were hazy. Not certified for instrument-only flight, he relied on how the flight *felt*. But as he flew into the haze, he became disoriented. He began a series of curious maneuvers: He climbed and descended. He sped up and slowed down. Just a few miles from his destination, Kennedy lost control of the plane, and it crashed into the ocean, leaving no survivors. How does something like this happen?

The events of the crash were studied, and the conclusion was that a “graveyard spiral” had occurred. A “graveyard spiral” is when a pilot gets disoriented while flying through clouds or darkness and starts turning without realizing it. Thinking they're flying straight, they pull back to fix it—but that actually makes the plane spiral faster toward the ground. During a turn, the angle got sharper and sharper, and the plane started to dive towards the ground in an ever-narrowing corkscrew. [*Think of when you drain a tub.*]

Why didn't Kennedy stop the dive?

Because he didn't even know he was in a dive. The plane would have *felt* perfectly level until it was too late. Which elicits a question for us:

¹ On the evidence for the resurrection can be found here: <https://youtu.be/c42t0OvNDSc?si=VoxXDJLuLkKNOPi>; and here: <https://youtu.be/5znVUFHqO4Q?si=N-6cx5W4pPW1BGaH>

How do you know if the path you're on *is* true, or just *feels* true?

Some of you are fully aware that your life is spiraling out of control. Others are thinking... "If it were spiraling out of control, I would know it."

Have you ever been 100% convinced of something only to find out later that you were wrong?

For others... things are pretty good, but there's still a nagging question:

Is there more to life than *this*?

This is what we've been talking about in our recent series "The way of Jesus." The good news of Easter Sunday is that:

Jesus didn't just come to save your *afterlife*; He came to save your *whole* life.

We all have desires, deep internal longings, that we want satisfied. The natural human condition is to satisfy them *on our own terms*. This search puts us on a particular "path." We are all on a path in our lives, seeking for a true and meaningful life.

Why do you seek the living among the dead?

This question isn't just *rhetorical*. It's *revealing*.

"Graveyard Spirals"

This question reveals a pattern: we are looking for life in things that can't give it. ("Paths")

These are all paths that *feel* true:

- Looking for life in *happiness*. (instant gratification)
- Looking for life in *winning*. (success, possessions)
- Looking for life in *control*. (safety, dominance)
- Looking for life in *distractions*. (victim, apathy, numb)

► "Your pursuit sets your path—and that path shapes your life."

These paths that *feel* true are built on assumptions that are lies in reality:

- What *feels* good *is* good.
- Life is a *game* to be *won*.
- The world is *unsafe*, you're on your own.
- Life is *pointless*.

These paths are all built on "self," on assumptions that *you* are the *master* of your life. This is what the Scriptures call "sin." Eventually, each of those paths ends in a "graveyard spiral."

Romans 6:23 (NLT) For the wages of sin is death...

Why do we seek the living among the dead?

When we circle back to the tragic crash of Kennedy's plane, the technical reason the plane crashed was that he didn't keep his wings level. But his fatal mistake didn't begin in the air—it began before the plane ever left the runway at takeoff, when he chose to fly into the dark without learning to fly with and trust his instruments. He let his *feelings* guide him, not the *truth*.

How can you tell if your life's path will lead to *destruction* or to a life that *endures*?

Rather than just explaining this in the abstract, I want you to hear the story of a precious follower of Jesus from our church. This is Lola's story.

[VIDEO: Lola's story.]

There is another path that does not lead to a graveyard spiral, a way that builds a lasting life; a new way, a new life—the way of Jesus.

Romans 6:23 (NLT) For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift** of God is **eternal life** through Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Way of Jesus

The message of Jesus is that he came to reveal a new way, the true way of living. We call this "eternal life." This is not primarily about your afterlife, but your whole life lived the way God intended a flourishing life. Jesus' death on the cross was not a result of his own fault, but his death was on *our* behalf.

Romans 5:8 (NLT) But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to **die for us** while we were still sinners.

We all have gone the way of sin, the way of being the master of your life. Each of the paths we choose ends in a "graveyard spiral." Jesus took upon himself humanity's graveyard spiral by being nailed to a cross.

In Luke 24, the women show up early Sunday morning at the grave. This is the place where all paths lead, right?

No matter how much power you gain, how much pleasure you've experienced, no matter how much control you think you've mastered, no matter how much you have wandered or wavered, no matter which path in life you've taken—all paths end here: the grave.

We would have assumed this about Jesus as well. That's how it's been for all people for all time—except *this* time. The cross was Friday. Today is Sunday.

Why do we seek the living among the dead? He's not here. He is risen.

How do you know if the way of Jesus is *true* and not just one more graveyard spiral? The proof is the resurrection.

But the resurrection is more than just *proof*. It's also a *path*.
You don't have to keep looking for life in dead places, the "living among the dead."

John 14:6 (NLT) "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

- ▶ What *feels* good *is* good. — **Truth:** "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." (John 18:12)
- ▶ Life is a *game* to be *won*. — **Truth:** "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35)
- ▶ The world is *unsafe*, you're on your own. — **Truth:** "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep." (John 10:11)
- ▶ Life is *pointless*. — **Truth:** "My purpose is to give [you] a rich and satisfying life." (John 10:10)

- ▶ **John 3:16–17 (NLT)**¹⁶ "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him."

Conclusion

So what does that mean for you? Each "path" promises life...but ends in a death spiral.
Here's the good news of Easter: the tomb is empty. He is not here — He is risen.

What that means for us is that when we trust in Jesus and surrender our lives to him, his cross becomes our cross, and his death becomes our death. His resurrection is not just an *event* to *remember*—it's a *new reality* to live in. The way of Jesus is a new life, resurrection life.

Are you ready to step out of the *spiral* and into the *story* of resurrection?

Why do we seek the living among the dead?

Whatever spiral you've been in — whatever path you've been chasing, today is the day to stop flying by *feel* and start trusting the *truth*. Resurrection isn't just something to *believe* in. It's something to *live* in.

He's not here. He is risen. And because he lives, you can too.

Salvation call: **Surrender**.