



AUTO-SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Are we trusting Jesus to bear the wrath we've earned?

Love Your Neighbor, 1 of 7, March 31st, 2024

"Jesus alone makes peace."

1 John 2:1-11 by Michael Lockstampfor (@miklocks)

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[Music]

Good, well good morning to our neighbors welcome to you. I am glad to be here with you if we've never met before Or it's been a minute. My name is Michael and I'm one of the pastors here at neighborhood church you've already met Ryan and Just glad to be together with you.

It's already been a full morning. I'm a creature of habit, so doing anything slightly different and especially if we do something majorly different, like my brain starts to misfire a little bit. I don't know if you're like that.

Maybe that's a sign I'm getting older too. Not as old as past Ryan, but older. Hey! He had a birthday this week.

clears throat I don't know if you know this, if you haven't been around church a lot. One of the reasons why Easter is such a big deal is that actually all of the Christian faith hangs on the thing that we celebrate today.

The thing that we celebrate today, there's a lot of messages out there, the thing that we celebrate today is the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus came to earth, he lived a life as the Son of God.

and he was unjustly executed, and then raised again, came back to life, brought himself to life three days later, as he had said he was going to beforehand. If that didn't happen,

then church doesn't count for anything. And so if you're not around church a whole lot, you should know Easter, the reason why we sing loud, the reason why we're excited, the reason why we're celebrating is because if Jesus...

had not done this, there's no reason for us to be in the same room together. Everybody else would much rather be napping on a Sunday morning, myself included, right? And so if we're gonna get up and we're gonna spend time together from the different backgrounds that we come from,

it's gonna have to be something that changed the world. I'm realizing I did not, I typically will open ahead of time, but I didn't do that. Anyway. Anyway, so the resurrection is the hinge point of our faith.



And without the resurrection, Jesus' life is actually pretty tragic. I don't know if you've thought about that, but if we just leave the resurrection out, you're talking about a man who was born in poverty in a small but growing kind of rural community.

He became a popular teacher, but because he was so popular, he upset the establishment. established teachers, and they conspired together, they arrest him, they try him unjustly,

and they execute him. That's a tragic story, right? But it doesn't end there. He was executing his early thirties.

Without the resurrection, we'd consider his life to be tragic. Without the resurrection, we would consider his teaching to be invalid. Because one of the things he says is like they're gonna kill me and I'm gonna come back to life And if that didn't happen, then I've got some questions about everything else that he taught without the resurrection Is his his teaching would be invalid and without the resurrection then Christianity would just be a manipulative power construct like every other Corrupt religious pyramid scheme invented by men to control men If Jesus has not been raised,

our faith is futile, and we are still in our sins, and we are wasting our time. But the resurrection happened.

But God intervened. We have a reason to celebrate. celebrate let's pray together Our habit together as neighborhood churches to pray together.

I call it the disciples prayers Got a couple of different names and that projectors off on the back Which doesn't matter to y'all, but I'll be looking behind me So our habit is to pray together the disciples prayer the words are on the screen if you'd like to pray out loud with us But the thing that the thing that matters the most the reason why Jesus?

Jesus leaves this prayer for us because he wants it to shape our heart. So let's at the very least use your voice, but let's bow our hearts and let's pray together. Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread,

and forgive us our sins. our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

This is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. For our time together this morning I'd like to invite you to turn with me in your Bibles,

navigate in your Bibles to the letter of First John. There's gonna be towards the end of the book and when I find it, I'll tell you what page number it is.

In these Bibles, we've got these lovely blue Bibles that are probably tucked under the chair in front of you or somewhere nearby. And the text in these blue Bibles is big enough to be read from space and so that's why I use it to speak.

And it's on page 12. in the Blue Bible. So if you want to follow along, you can cross check what I'm saying. That's going to be helpful to you. The letter of First John and we're going to begin in chapter two today.

First John chapter two. So First John is a letter, the fancy words epistle, you might have heard that around, but it's a letter that was written by one of Jesus's closest friends.

and his and somebody we call the Apostle John and he wrote it to encourage some folks who were really like questioning their faith. They had had a connection with Jesus,

they'd had a connection with a church or religious body and they just weren't sure anymore so he writes this letter to encourage them and he opens this letter as he's writing by stating that he's an eyewitness,

he's seen Jesus' life, his death, and his resurrection. So we're reading a letter from somebody who was there on the scene,

who stood beneath the cross, whom Jesus could have bled on, who Jesus could have sweated on as he was executed. Somebody who Jesus speaks to from the cross.

So he entrusts his mother to John, one of his best friends. friends. And so he opens his letter by saying, "I'm telling you, that which was from the beginning,

which we've heard, which we've seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands concerning the word of life. The life was made manifest and we have seen it.

And we testify to it and proclaim to you eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us." That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you.

We got a letter from a guy who was there who says I saw it happen. I'm telling you this is true. Jesus actually did change the whole world on that day. The selection that we're going to be reading together this morning though is actually from 1st John chapter 2.

We're going to work all the way through the first 11 verses but I'm going to take it in shock. chunks. So let's start with the first two verses, John chapter two, verses one and two.

First John chapter two, verses one and two. He writes this, "My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ." the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only,

but also for the sins of the whole world. We'll pause there briefly. When I read John, he's one of Jesus' closest friends, and I kind of just picture an old uncle sitting on a porch in a rocking chair,

just telling stories. He's like, "John has a way of when he's telling a story." story, he'll tell it in a big, big, big circle, and he will circle around the point all day long before he finally makes it. He just got this kind of rambling way of talking.

And the other thing that he does is he uses cute nicknames for people. In a different time when he's telling the story of Jesus' life, anytime he talks about himself in the story,



he says, "The disciple that Jesus loved." (clears throat) made up a name for himself. Jesus had 12 disciples, but I was the one that he liked the best, which I think is cute.

And here he opens up. He says, "My little children." He's coming from a posture of like, "Hey friends, family, my little children, "I care about you. "I'm not here to lecture you.

"I'm here to give you some kind of guidance "that's gonna be helpful." And he says his purpose is to prevent sin. I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

His purpose in writing is to prevent sin. I go no we came to church and now the pastor's gonna talk about sin. What is sin? Well sin literally means like if the literal word that it means it just means missing the mark.

If you're to picture a target it means you didn't hit the bullseye. Sin is is missing. the mark. It doesn't mean don't have any fun. Like, sometimes I think we hear, don't sin and we're like,

oh, well now I can't have any fun. I gotta put on, I gotta dress up a little bit and I gotta make sure that I'm clean and I gotta sit up straight and I gotta say my yes sirs and my yes ma'ams, otherwise I'm gonna get it on the back of the head.

Like, I can't have any fun. I gotta be prim, I gotta be proper. But just consider for a moment that God made a promise. like just assume God made everything.

And if you're not there yet, I'm glad we're here to have this conversation, but humor me briefly. If God made everything, he could have very easily made a very utilitarian world.

He could have met all of our needs exactly. We could have taken in nourishment that was just gray mush all the time. We could have had.

like black and white everywhere. But when God made the world, he made color. And the world is better for having color, right? Yeah,

yeah, my phone, I've got my phone set so that at 9 p.m. it turns to black and white. And you're like, why would you do that? I was like, as soon as it turns to black and white, I don't want to look at it anymore. I'm like, this is frustrating,

this is boring. I don't want to see that. Like, something about color. color makes our lives better. It captivates our attention, it captivates our imagination. When we look at art, often we're just impressed by the nature of how the colors work together.

And also, and also, God made food and gave us taste buds. Like, God could have met all of our needs exactly,

and he made donuts. The chocolate was the best. God's idea and so it's not God doesn't say don't sin because I don't want you to have fun like he's a creative God he makes things beautiful he makes things enjoyable but whatever sin may promise will ultimately lead to our destruction.

The reason he says don't sin is because he cares about us and he doesn't want us to destroy ourselves and choosing sin prevents us from doing it. from knowing God, from knowing his designs,

from trusting his character, and from living the best way that he meant for us to live. Think about it this way. You come up to a wall.



Let's say the brick wall is a tall brick wall, maybe it's concrete, and you just decide. Like, the wall's fine, but I don't like the way the dirt is underneath. And so I'm just gonna dig out all this stuff dirt underneath.

And you're free to do that. But when the wall falls on top of you, you don't get to blame the wall. Or the person who made it. You dug out the foundation.

So we receive from God a beautiful world that He created and we just start messing stuff up and we dig out the foundation and then we're yelling. But then we're mad at-- him when the wall falls down on us.

The consequence of our action that we might call it wrath, the wrath of our sin falls on us and we're mad at him, he says you dug out the foundation.

I didn't want that for you. But John writes to prevent sin knowing that it's going to happen. My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin.

But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father. Jesus Christ the righteous. Jesus is our advocate.

He is somebody who takes up our case. He takes our perspective and he intercedes on our behalf to God. And we have an advocate with the Father. somebody who goes and represents us.

He's like a lawyer that we hire. He's a case worker. He pleads our case to God. Jesus is our advocate. And more than that, Jesus is righteous.

He's not just an advocate. He's a good one. He's one that God would listen to. And so Jesus is our advocate. And He is our advocate. he is righteous.

He lived perfectly and God listens to him. But have you ever interacted with a lawyer that just like doesn't really seem to get your perspective?

Or have you ever asked somebody to, "Hey, will you go and tell them this?" And they get more mad at you when you've sinned that kind of mediator? What did you say to them? Well, I just said, that's not what I told you to say.

Didn't you care? Like, weren't you paying attention? Or have you ever-- I don't know. I hear about this. I don't have personal experience. But there are folks who have to get a lawyer from the government.

And those lawyers have just so much on their case that they can't even pay attention to what you are, because you're just a number and a stack of numbers. And so when they go to plead before the judge, they're like, yeah, I don't really understand what you're saying. Like,

they might be good at their job. The judge might be willing to listen to them. They might actually be pleading your case, but they're just not in it. That should not be the picture that we have of Jesus 'cause Jesus is our advocate,

Jesus is righteous, and Jesus is the propitiation. You say propitiation. Propitiation is, it's a fancy word, it's a technical, a,

that says that he is the one who takes the wrath of God. He is the one who receives in himself the consequence of the sin in full.

He's the propitiation. He satisfies the wrath of God. Where we dug out the wall,

Jesus let it fall out, fall on top of him, so that we would not be crushed if we would trust him to take it. He takes the wrath himself,

he satisfies the consequences that we have earned. That's the execution. But the demonstration that God accepted his sacrifice is the resurrection.

If there were something left to pay, Jesus would still be in the grave. If the payment wasn't completely satisfactory,

he'd still be dead. But if he paid the amount in full and the debt is empty, he's free to live.

He's free. to go there's nothing left to pay so are we trusting Jesus to bear the wrath that we have earned he says I've paid it in full there's nothing left you've seen me come back from dead from the dead I went to the table and I squashed it I drank it all the way down and there's nothing left will you trust me to bury the wrath that you have earned?

This is the most important thing that we could talk about today of all the things that we could talk about this is the most important and notice I'm asking are we trusting Jesus to bear the wrath?

If you have not or you are not trusting Jesus I'd say talk to him about it. Well as we continue on I hope I'll show you but like he's in the room He can hear your thoughts.

He can hear your words. And so if you say I don't I don't understand I don't really get Why you would do this? But I'm pretty sure that I can't bear the weight of the things that I've earned I Don't want the consequences of my actions.

I don't want the consequences of my thoughts. I Don't want the consequences of the emotional trends that I have developed in my soul. Will you bear the wrath for me?

Agree with him that you're not able to stand before gone and ask him to make a defense for you. And the good news is the reason we celebrate is he says I'll take the case because I already have paid the price he promises that no one can take you from him the question is are you trusting I grew up in a church where they asked you all the time have you trusted trusted,

are you saved? Has it happened one time? And I grew up thinking, yeah, I think it happened once. I think I was there for that. I think I remember, and the thing that Jesus has shown me,

the more I've walked with him, is like it's a thing that starts one day. It definitely has a beginning, but it continues on. There's days where I think I know that God has forgiven me,

but I really don't feel like he's forgiven me. And there's and there's things that I've done that I need to return back to him and say I've really messed this up Can you forgive me as I already did? Are we trusting him?

Today because Jesus alone makes peace. I got my slides out. It's fine. The big idea for this morning If you take nothing else away Jesus alone makes peace.

Makes peace. I grew up in a really, really good family. I was blessed in a lot of ways, but one of the things that I learned was kind of how to be passive aggressive,

which means that we never really said what we were feeling. We always kind of talked and tried to triangulate with one another. And one of our high values as a family. we didn't ever we didn't ever say this But we all kind of knew it one of the high values for my family growing up was keeping peace.

I Can't say that because that'll make a man. We got to keep the peace. Oh I couldn't ask them for the thing that I actually want to ask them for because what if that's too much I got a I got to keep the peace Like that was a high value in our family Jesus doesn't keep the peace.

He's not walking on eggshells around the Father. He is making peace. I will pay the price to intercede on their behalf. They are with me.

Jesus alone makes peace. And Jesus makes peace for us with God. which is good news.

I don't know if you feel that way this morning. I'm kind of excited about it. Let's continue reading 1 John chapter 2 and verse 3. And by this we know that we have come to know him.

If we keep his commandments, whoever says I know him but does not keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word in him truly,

the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him. Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way which he walked. So as,

do I have a picture? I do have a picture. So as he says, if you know God, if you know Jesus, if you're trusting Jesus, then that's gonna change how you walk. Now, I don't think he's talking to me.

about, you know, you walk through the neighborhood after dinner. Like, he's not talking about, like, the way that you take strolls around the world. He's not even talking about, like, that Christians, when they walk,

we have a certain, like, step, a certain march that we have to march to. When he talks about, you will walk these things out. He's saying, you're going to, this is going to be the definition of your life,

the way you live. your lifestyle. And he even equates it to like abiding, abiding in God's love. It becomes your identity. If you say you know Jesus,

then he will have changed your identity. If we know Jesus, we are changed. We don't always use knowing in that way. Like if I were to say,

do you know Taylor Swift? Swift? Have you heard of her before? Like y'all know? Y'all don't know.

You've been in, I know, I know you have been in conversations where somebody has looked at you and said do you know Taylor Swift? And you said oh yeah, yeah, yeah, I heard of her before, right? Like we know, we know, we have a collective understanding that Taylor Swift is a human who writes music,



right? right? Like, and we've heard the songs and we know, we might be able to pick her out of a lineup. Like, if we saw a picture of her, we might be able to tell, right? But do you know Taylor Swift? Like,

do you have her number? My youth groups lie and that's points off of me. I'm sorry. (audience laughs) Hey.

You can know somebody. somebody and not know them. You can know who Michael Jordan is and not know who Michael Jordan is. And there are people who will say,

"Oh, yeah, I know Jesus," because they heard about him one time or they know some facts about him. Maybe they've even studied his teachings before. But if we know Jesus,

we are changed. This is a a deeper knowledge than like a Wikipedia fact sheet. Like Jesus is a historical figure. He's somebody who walked the earth and lived and died.

And I think his death, his resurrection are historically verifiable facts, but he did not stay in the history book. George Washington was a guy,

and George Washington did a lot of things in his life to set you guys up. So, that you could have life in this country. But George Washington doesn't want to be your friend. He can't be.

He's dead. Jesus says you will know me if you want to know that you know me then know that I'm changing your life,

changing your life in the room at work. today he's not dead he is and that's why we're here more than information Jesus causes transformation more than a philosophy Jesus is a person and more than a teacher Jesus is a present help in time of need he does not leave us to sort through life alone.

He walks with us through the valley of the shadow of death. And if we have any hope, if we have any comfort in this broken world, we find it in Him. Jesus alone makes peace.

When we know Jesus, we follow Jesus. But he equates two words that we don't like to put together. so maybe just close your eyes for a minute.

I'm going to give you a word and I want you to picture other words around it, like what would the word cloud be around this word? Commandment. What other words come to mind when you think of the word commandment?

Rules. Keep. Moses, directions. directions, teaching.

What about stone? Stone tablets. What about obedience? That's the one that came to mind for me. Obey. I won't sing the song.

Obey. Okay? That's a collection of words, right? Okay, now do the same exercise, so erase the whiteboard in your head. head. Let me give you another word. Love.

Happy. Togetherness. Family. Compassion. Did I hear Jesus? Affection.

Relationship. Now, if you can call them both up, like, do those two things seem compatible? Those two word clouds seem like they're in the same same, like, storm?



It seemed like we got two whole different things. And Jesus says, and by this we know that we have come to know Him if we keep His commandments. Whoever says I know Him but does not keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in Him.

But whoever keeps His word in Him, truly the love of God is perfected. There's something about that. Keeping the commandments that's an expression of love.

When we trust Jesus, He guides us to make what He cares about what we care about. And He says,

in a different place, Jesus says, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Eugene Peterson was a real famous pastor and wrote a couple of things,

but primarily his heartbeat was a pastor. He once said about this verse, "Jesus as the truth gets way more attention than Jesus as the way." way.

Jesus as the way is the most frequently evaded metaphor among Christians. We like a Jesus, I'm ending the quote, but we like a Jesus that forgives our sins and we're even okay with learning things about God's perspective,

but not that he would ask us to change how we live, not that we would have a different practice because of what we know. No. The final test of life is not what facts we know about Jesus.

The final test of life is how we will live because we know Jesus. Jesus will forgive our sin and he will continue with us so that we can live like him.

Thank you for watching. One of our core values as neighborhood churches, we put Jesus first. We put Jesus first. And when I say that,

I think oftentimes I think of Jesus first as like number one on the checklist. Think, okay, Jesus first, that means I came to church on Sunday,

first day of the week, went to church on Sunday, checked that off first. Got it, now I can go do the rest of my list. Or, okay, I'm waking up in the morning, I'm gonna pray,

maybe I'll even pray the disciples prayer, I'll pray the disciples prayer before I even, like do anything else before I get out of bed, before I even have time to curse, I'm just gonna, I'll start there, check that off the list, now we're good for the day.

Jesus first is not number one on life's checklists, it means that he is the lens we see in our lives. other activity through. So how does trusting Jesus' forgiveness reshape who we are and how we live?

Jesus alone makes peace. He makes peace between us and God. And the good news is, we can know Jesus and we can walk with Him. He is willing.

He is willing to walk with us. He's willing to walk with me. First John chapter 2, I'll begin in verse 7. "Beloving, I am writing you no new commandment,

but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. At the same time, it is a new commandment that I'm writing to you, which is true in him and in you,

because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light and in him there is no cause for stumbling.

But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness and does not know where he is going because the darkness is blinded his eyes. We read together from Mark chapter 12,

and background of the story, there's a group of people that are really just trying to trip Jesus up, they're not fans, they want to catch him in his words and so one of them goes up and says,

"Hey Jesus, what's the greatest commandment? Like what's the most important thing? Of all the religious things that we could do, what's the most important thing to do?" He says, "Oh that's simple, you should love the Lord your God." "with all your heart, your soul, your mind, your strength." Oh yeah,

cool, cool, yeah, love God. That's a good commandment. That's a good one to follow. I like that one, that's good. He says, "Actually, the second one is like it." Jesus can be a little bit extra. So let me give you one more.

The second one's like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. All of the scriptures are summed up. up in these two commandments.

Love your neighbor. We together, as neighborhood churches, just a couple of months ago, we did a whole series that we called "Following," talking about how do you love the Lord your God with all your heart,

with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. I'm completely lost. There we go. And so, if you've got questions about, like, how do I love God? Like, then I've got good news. I've got five whole weeks.

of messages and material that you can digest. But as what we're starting together today is a new series on that second commandment, that follow-up commandment, love your neighbor as you are now.

'Cause the words here from John are real stark. They're real hard to hear. Whoever says he's in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness.

If, if there's... still that resentment and that anger, you're in danger of the light being put out. When we trust Jesus,

He guides us to make what He cares about what we care about and He cares about people. Now I am of the opinion that life would be much simpler without people.

people and work would be easier and Bills would be less But Jesus guides me to care about what he cares about and he cares about people and says if you say you love me If you say you know me and you don't keep my commandment my commandment is to love your neighbor is yourself There's a problem something here is broken.

John here in chapter 2 is saying brother. If you say you love God, but you hate your brother. And if we've been around for a minute, you'll know that we use neighbor all the time.

But I think this passage will help us to get a better definition of what our neighbor is, because we like to think of our neighbor as like everybody. And sometimes in neighborhood church, when we say we're invited. our neighbors to meet and follow Jesus we assume that all of our neighbors are people who are not following Jesus or don't know who he is but here he's not all neighbors are strangers not all neighbors are

strangers people you don't know yet there are neighbors in your home and not all neighbors are far from God God wants us to love the stranger.

God wants us to serve the neighbor. God wants us to seek and to save the lost. But he also wants us to be defined by our love for one another. And sometimes the hardest people to love are the people who claim to love God and don't do a very good job of that.

Siblings are fun, sometimes. I'm told that we appreciate our siblings more the older we grow.

I would say that's true, especially now that my sister's not in the room. The things that we fought about when we were younger, we don't really fight around a lot.

anyone, sometimes. Whoever loves his brother abides in the light,

and in him there is no cause for stumbling, but whoever hates his brother is in the darkness, and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he's going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

Where does John get off making such a harsh statement? Where is this coming from? I'm just gonna scroll back up and I'll read you something I've already read you before.

My little children, I'm writing these things to you so that you may not sin, but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sin.

sins and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. I'm really grateful and I'm really thankful for a Jesus who will forgive my sin and if I'm really like honest I kind of get it.

I'm a pretty nice guy. I can convince myself that that, yeah, it makes sense that Jesus would want me in his family.

You can too. Very rarely will we make the case that, yeah, no, like, God shouldn't come and get me. I'm really comfortable with the Jesus who will forgive my sins, and I'm less comfortable with the Jesus that will forgive the sins of the person who hurt me. me. But the one who forgives your sin and has paid in full received and satisfied the wrath for the sin of the world died not only for your sin but for the sins of the whole world.

If he's the propitiation for your sin he's already satisfied God's wrath for anyone else's. else's. Jesus alone makes peace.

Jesus makes peace between us and God and the good news is we can know and walk like him. Jesus alone makes peace with our neighbors,

the ones that are close, the ones that are close enough to stab us in the back and the ones who are far away. The peace with God means we love other people.

The good news is that we can be reconciled to one another. The good news is that if the peace with God is reconciled to one another, we can be reconciled to one another. Jesus has paid the price for the sin of the whole world,

then I don't have to make anybody else pay. As we prayed together,

the disciples' prayer, he phrases it in a way that you can't weasel out of. Do you notice? Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors?

That assumes that I've already forgiven them. There's many a morning I pray that and have not yet forgiven the way I ought to. But we can be reconciled to one another through Jesus.

Jesus alone makes me feel better. with our neighbors. And I think he puts it in that disciples prayer because there's something about our human relationships that highlight our actual connection to God.

I like to convince myself that I can be connected and have a good relationship with God and it doesn't matter what anybody else is doing. But he says our human relationships reflect how we are loving God.

So consider, how do our human relationships reflect our connection with God? If we only have one heart, and it's full of hate towards everybody we're around,

if it's full of cynicism and anger and hostility, and we're just constantly trying to make people pay for what they said to us, and we turn to God and say, "You are blessed. What's the...

is it coming out of?" You only got one. The good news is that he's the propitiation. He gives the ability to wash it clean.

Now you're like, "Okay, Mike, I get it." You're the preacher guy. You've got to say nice things. It's Easter morning. It's Sunday morning. Great. Heaven, glory. I got it. I got all the things you said.

You checked off all the boxes, we can go home now, I got my Easter dress, it's fine, fine. Listen, listen, listen. Y'all know, many of y'all know, I don't just come here to do this on Easter, like this is how I try to live my life.

Like this is not just something that I'm gonna proclaim one day and then forget about it, the difficulty is it's hard to live out. It's easy for me to tell you, you oughta love your neighbor, it's hard for me to love mine.

But there's hope. This is not pie in the sky. Maybe one day we'll all eat rainbows. Like this is not something that is far away. The word says the darkness is passing away.

Whatever the news wants you to believe, the word says the darkness is passing away. It cannot win because the true light is already shining.

shining. He is not dead. He is alive. And if he is alive, then so can we live. And so can we forgive.

And so can we love. And so can we confidently receive what God has in store for us. And that's not to say that we're just sweeping sin under the rug.

That's not to say that the ways that people have hurt us are okay. We're not just gonna forget all about that. Sin has caused and is still causing horrific situations but Jesus' resurrection makes peace.

And if it were just an old book, I don't know that I'd have much confidence in it but I know he's changed my heart. And I've seen him, him shine his light in the lives of other people and I could tell you stories but I'd get in a lot of trouble so I'm not gonna do that I probably wouldn't be able to do without crying so just one more thing and then we'll be done.

Walk into a room you turn the light on Was the source of the light? It's a light bulb, right? Okay. Walk into a room. You want to make it darker?

What's the source of the darkness? There is no source It has no power if the light is already shining the darkness is is dead.

And if we continue to act as though the darkness is winning or we need to go to battle with the darkness, like, then we have not quite yet understood the implications of the resurrection that the true light is already shining and the darkness is passing away,

Jesus alone makes peace. Let's pray. God, you know how easily I'm distracted, you know how easily I'm discouraged,

you know how easily I'm offended, and I'm reminded of the example that you have set before us, that you left riches and honor and glory to be born into poverty,

to grow up in a quiet small town. and to work with your hands, to know what it is to wake up with a sore back, to teach and to show and to speak and to try to love people who would not listen and did not care what you had to say,

to bring a blessing to somebody and for them to curse you in return. to say what's true and to literally be crucified for it,

for your closest friends to turn on you and leave you, for one whom you trusted to betray you and sell you out. Or you do not you do not encourage us and instruct us in these things in the hypothetical You have lived them You are able to sympathize with our weakness And that's why we turn to you You alone have the power of Life You alone have the power to make peace So God,

I pray you'd be doing that today If there are our hearts that are hearing my voice And they know they've been separated from God.

They don't have that connection. God. I pray that you would bring peace That that war would be put to rest rest pray that there are folks who would trust you to make peace between you and them maybe for the first time today maybe renewing an old commitment today and Lord as you're doing that miracle work would you and your grace make peace between us and those that we have to live with?

Those who have wounded us? Lord, I thank you that you don't give them a free pass. You don't let them off the hook. That you've paid the penalty in full.

There's nothing left. Help us with this, it's beyond our comprehension. And sometimes it's beyond what our heart can bear.

Thank you that you're gentle and you're kind. I pray that you'd help us to love you. If there's anything I've said this morning that's just been my own opinions,

God, I pray those things would be quickly forgotten. But Lord, I pray that your word would stand firm in our soul. Would you not let us get away from it?

Would you not let us shake it off? We thank you in Jesus name. We pray (gentle music)

[Music]