

A Resurrection Like His

SPEAKER	Matt Ryniker
DATE	Sunday, April 5, 2026
PASSAGES	1 Corinthians 15; Romans 5; Romans 6; Galatians 2; 1 Thessalonians 4
MESSAGE	Begins at 1:25:11 in the service

THE BIG IDEA

Christianity is not a lifestyle, a vibe, or a fresh chapter in the spring. It is a union with the whole person of Jesus Christ — his lifetime of obedience, his death, and therefore his resurrection. You cannot take the parts of him you like and leave the rest, which is exactly why the empty tomb is not a loose end but the point.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ◆ When Paul defines the gospel he lists historical events, not attitudes: Christ died for our sins, was buried, was raised, and appeared. The gospel is centered on who Jesus is and what he did, not on us becoming nicer people.
- ◆ Good deeds are fruit of the gospel. Confusing the fruit with the gospel itself is, in Matt's words, a sad and depressing substitute.
- ◆ A large share of churchgoing Christians cannot say why Jesus had to be raised. We solidly get the cross and treat the resurrection as a positive way to wrap things up.
- ◆ If your soul simply goes to heaven forever when you die, the creed makes no sense — Jesus returns to judge the living and the dead, and we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.
- ◆ We were made sinners in Adam the way Levi paid tithes through Abraham — really, not by label. The same logic runs the other way in Christ: really made righteous.
- ◆ Christ's whole lifetime of obedience, manger to tomb, belongs to those hidden in him. Not a blank slate you then have to fill in yourself.

- ◆ Because we are united with him in a death like his, we will be united with him in a resurrection like his. That future hope disappears entirely in the ghost-paradise version.
- ◆ The church's unity is not a common project. It is a cosmic fact — one body, one head — and no outsider can take it from you, however hard they push.

► 1:25:11

Matt opened an Easter morning message by admitting he had to decide what to talk about, and that the honest starting place was a question most of the room had never quite answered. We know the empty tomb is a big deal. We celebrate it, we hide chocolate, we make the day special. But why? What is the deep significance of it, for Christianity in general and for you in particular?

1. Two answers that do not quite sit right

► 1:26:27

The first popular answer is new beginnings. Spring, a fresh chapter, an opportunity to clean out the garage — literally and metaphorically. On that reading, Jesus started his new chapter by being raised from the dead, got a new vibe, and inspires us to do likewise. Matt said this with a straight face and then admitted he was being facetious.

► 1:27:34

The second is more respectable and far more common: Jesus is our great example, and the goal is to become like him — kind, good, loving. This is not a fringe position. It is best-selling books, successful podcasts, whole movements boiling the faith down to being, as Matt put it, Jesusy. And if that is what Christianity is, then Easter is simply another chance to try again after a year of loving people badly.

2. So ask Paul what the gospel is

► 1:28:46

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you — unless you believed in vain.”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:1–2 ↗

► 1:29:49

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:3–5 ↗

► 1:31:03

Matt asked the room to notice what is on that list and what is not. No lifestyle. No manner of living. No code of conduct. No encouragement to try again. Paul lists things that either happened or did not happen — and adds purpose to them. Not a cold history lesson: *for our sins*, and *in accordance with the Scriptures*. He was born of a virgin or he was not. He died on a cross or he did not. He was raised in real life or he was not.

Will there be fruit from that in a person’s life? Of course. But Matt drew the line hard: “We don’t want to confuse the fruit from the gospel with what the gospel is. What a sad and depressing substitute.”

3. The heaven-is-my-forever-home version

► 1:33:36

Then the revised attempt, which Matt built deliberately as a house of cards: because of Jesus’ death we go straight to heaven when we die, and that is our forever home. The cross is why we go. And the resurrection is... important, for reasons. A loose end the authors of scripture tidied up so the story would end on a high note.

He cited survey data — take it for what it is — in which half of self-identified American Christians said the soul goes straight to heaven at death and that is the end of it. Even secular observers will tell you that is what Christians believe. Then he reached for what he called tactical cringe, a second-century voice, with the caveat that old does not mean right.

► 1:35:06

Justin Martyr, on people called Christians “who say there is no resurrection of the dead and that their souls when they die are just taken to heaven”: do not imagine they are Christians. Matt used it to raise a question rather than settle one. What exactly is wrong with that picture?

► 1:36:05

The creed answers it. Our ancestors in the faith wrote that on the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures — lifted straight from 1 Corinthians 15 — and then kept going: he will come again in

glory to judge the living and the dead. Why, if we are all already home? Who is he coming back with? What is on his to-do list? And in the section on the Spirit: we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

4. We share in his life

► 1:37:50

The thread that holds all of it together, Matt said, is union with him. Three things we are joined into: his life, his death, and — because those two are his — a resurrection like his.

“Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.”

ROMANS 5:18–19 ↗

► 1:39:40

How does being made a sinner through someone else’s trespass work? Matt borrowed the argument in [Hebrews 7:9–10](#), where Levi pays tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham, centuries before Levi is born, because he was still in the loins of his ancestor. Trace every tribe and family of the earth back far enough and you arrive at one common ancestor. When Adam walks the garden, so does humanity.

► 1:40:11

The obvious objection is that this is not fair — nobody consulted us. Matt granted it and then asked the room to hold on, because the same unfairness is what makes the second half glorious. We were not falsely labeled sinners. We were *made* sinners, because in Adam we did it. Which means that by one man’s obedience the many are not slandered as righteous or stamped righteous with nothing behind it. They are actually made righteous. Christ’s body was broken open for the church so that we could be hidden in him the way we were hidden in Adam — and his whole lifetime of obedience, manger to tomb, flawless night and day, is credited as yours.

5. We share in his death

► 1:41:56

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

GALATIANS 2:20 ↗

Not that his death somewhere downstream produces a kind of secondhand death in us by example. We have joined the person. The Jesus who lived a perfect life is the same man who died, and you do not get one without the other.

6. And therefore a resurrection like his

▶ 1:42:35

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.”

ROMANS 6:3–5 ↗

▶ 1:43:33

“You are locked into this roller coaster of the whole person of Jesus Christ,” Matt said. “Locked in. You cannot have part of it. There’s no such thing as just baby Jesus or just cross Jesus. There’s only one Jesus.” There is no category of Christian who has received the death of Christ and must now go establish a righteousness of his own before the Father. That was included in the person, not sold separately.

▶ 1:44:38

“For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep... For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command... And the dead in Christ will rise first.”

1 THESSALONIANS 4:14–16 ↗

Dead or alive, we await the return of the king. That is the hope that gets quietly deleted when the faith is reduced either to a good example of how to live or to what Matt kept calling ghost paradise.

► 1:45:18

And then the contrast, stated plainly: “We are not primarily a company of people banded together with the same ambition to be great people, to do good. We are a host of peoples from around the planet, past, present and future, who are knit together by this profound mystery of being in union with the person of Jesus.” Would that leave marks on a life? Matt allowed it freely — the resurrection power of Christ leaving the fingerprints of God on who you are, of course it would. “But what a cheap and disappointing way to summarize the faith, that we are just sort of experiencing a new chapter in our lives, turned over a new leaf as it were.”

7. Which is why we are a fellowship before we do any fellowshipping

► 1:45:50

The call came with a promise attached: whatever is happening in your life, however the circumstances look, “you carry that treasure with you of being in union with the Lord of lords, the king of glory, your best friend and your savior.” If that lands, the response Matt named is the old one — repent and be baptized — with the reminder that the water is a picture of the real baptism, into the person of Jesus and everything that entails. Not just the parts we want to keep. The whole thing. And then, belong to a fellowship. Here or anywhere.

► 1:46:56

He was careful about why. The Bible does not hand us a chore called church attendance; it tells us not to neglect meeting together. Matt is a genuine believer in the local church — meals in sickness, driving across town in the middle of the night, protecting and supporting each other. But he refused to make that the foundation. The reason we have unity is that we are all in the same body, under one head, and that connects us to brothers and sisters worldwide, past, present and future. A body established by union with Christ rather than by common endeavors is one that no outsider can break up — not by attack, not by harassment, not by mockery or intimidation. “This union with Christ, it can’t be taken from you by someone on the outside... So why do we fellowship? It’s because we *are* a fellowship. We are his body.”

► 1:48:03

Then the hinge he would not soften. One unifying idea, being joined into the person of Jesus: “That’s it, or it’s not the church. That’s it, or it’s not the gospel.” Being good people is nice — “don’t hate me,” he added, we are genuinely commanded to be kind — but kindness is not what the thing is about. “It’s about him, who he is, and what he’s done and what he will do.”

8. Who it is we are joined to

► 1:48:48

Matt closed on the person himself. God the Son, who took on humanity in literally every way but sin. “He knows about toenails and colds and viruses and stomach aches. He knows about family being weird. He knows about temptation, being tempted in every way but without sin” — tempted in every respect yet without sin. A high priest who can completely understand what you are going through, and who “is just as much God as the Father is God.”

► 1:49:32

“In his body is the perfect, perfect union of God and man,” Matt said, “with no flaw, no blemish, perfectly executed.” And that body is our covenant with God — a perfect covenant, because the union inside it is perfect. That is where our standing and righteousness come from, and why co-crucifixion with him amounts to good news rather than loss: the covenant of his body “is broken and open to us by grace,” and through faith we are allowed to join into the very person of Jesus, “with no stone left unturned, nothing left undone, nothing left out.”

► 1:50:31

You cannot take his humanity without his divinity, and the sentence makes no more sense reversed. Neither can you take the forgiveness and leave the rest: “Well, I plead his blood and so I’m forgiven. I have a blank slate. Now I have to establish my righteousness. What are we even talking about? There’s not parts of Jesus. There’s one Jesus.” He apologized for saying it ad nauseam and then said it one last time anyway: join into the person of Jesus, and the whole shebang is yours — both the kingdom and the king himself.

► 1:50:40

He did not finish with a summary. He finished by praying it — that the Holy Spirit would stir up faith in the room to embrace this truth about who God is, and “fill us with the joy and ecstasy of knowing you and being in union with you. Help us to grasp it and rejoice in it.” Then the prayer team came forward, name tags on, and the room was sent out to love and serve the Lord.

FOR FURTHER STUDY**SCRIPTURE IN THIS MESSAGE**

- 1 Corinthians 15:1–2
- 1 Corinthians 15:3–5
- Romans 5:18–19
- Hebrews 7:9–10
- Galatians 2:20
- Romans 6:3–5
- 1 Thessalonians 4:14–16
- Acts 2:38
- Hebrews 10:25
- Hebrews 4:15

FOR YOUR HOPE GROUP

1. Before this message, how would you have finished the sentence “Christianity is about...”? How close was it to one of the two summaries Matt described?
2. Paul’s summary of the gospel is a list of events rather than a list of virtues. What changes about your faith if the center of it is something that happened rather than something you do?
3. Matt argued that many believers cannot say why Jesus had to be raised. Try answering it out loud in your own words, and notice where you get stuck.
4. Where are you still trying to establish a righteousness of your own after receiving forgiveness — treating the cross as a blank slate you now have to fill in?
5. Matt said our union with Christ “can’t be taken from you by someone on the outside.” If our unity is a fact about Christ’s body rather than a shared project, what does that change about how you show up to this group this week?

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Matt Ryniker is Hope Chapel's senior pastor — his own description of the job — and reports to the church's governing board, who he cheerfully calls his boss. He and his wife Mandy have been held up from Hope's own pulpit as an example to the congregation. He spent a stretch of his working life as a public school teacher, and he still teaches the parent dedication classes where families commit to raising their children to follow Jesus — a theme that runs straight into this message.

Watch the full message:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KotBkd8QaB4&t=5111s>

These notes summarise a message preached at Hope Chapel in Austin, Texas. They are a reader's aid, not a transcript — scripture references link to the full passage so you can read it in context.