

Note: The sermon below will be delivered by the Rev. Caleb Kim on Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. at St. Andrew's Fenelon Falls and via Zoom.

Title: Speak Out About Our Faith in the Resurrection!

I want to begin this Easter sermon with an illustration about “Life after Birth.” ...I have a question for you, like the twins debated in that illustration. Do you know what happens after we die? This question has puzzled humanity for centuries. Like the first twin, some people believe there is no “life after death” at all. According to them, we live, we die, and that is the end. Life is only what we experience here on earth. Some avoid thinking, talking, or even hearing about death.

However, the subject of the afterlife is one of the most important topics in the Bible. Jesus Himself emphasizes the significance of our final destination. The length of our lives on earth may reach a hundred years for those of us in good health. During that time, we prepare for the future of our loved ones and ourselves and enjoy the precious moments God has given us today. There is nothing wrong with that. But as citizens of heaven, we must also understand God’s eternal blessing upon those who repent in Christ and trust the Holy Spirit. We are called to prepare for this ultimate life—our eternal home in Heaven.

The word “Creed” means “I believe.” When someone asks us what we, as Christians, hold in faith, we can begin our declaration with this remarkable statement: “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator... I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord... I believe in the Holy Spirit...” And we can conclude our assurance in the Triune God with this proclamation: “I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.” In this skeptical world, we, as followers of Christ, long for something spiritual deep within our hearts. We are searching for something eternal—something beyond merely being born, living, dying, and being buried in the ground. We were all made for something sacred, something far greater than this earthly life.

In our Gospel reading this morning, we encounter one of the most miraculous signs Christ performed: “the raising of Lazarus.” Mary and Martha had a brother named Lazarus. Their family loved Jesus, and He loved them. One day, Lazarus became ill, so they sent word to Jesus about his sickness. At that time, Jesus was in Jerusalem, less than two miles away from their home. They trusted that Jesus would come quickly to heal their brother. But for some reason, Jesus stayed where He was for a couple more days instead of visiting them immediately. When Jesus finally came to see Martha, He said, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). In other words, He was saying, “I am, right now, the Resurrection and the Life. Do you believe this?” Jesus wanted Martha to have faith in the resurrection in the present moment, not just as a future hope. Today, I want us to explore how Jesus calls us to embrace belief in the resurrection—right here, right now—and how we can apply these divine lessons in our daily walk with God.

Firstly, Jesus wanted Martha to keep listening to the Living Word of God. When Jesus saw Martha and Mary mourning over Lazarus’s death, He wept with them. He shared in their sorrow. He had deep compassion for them. But when He saw Martha struggling with

unbelief at her brother's tomb, He did not simply comfort her. Instead, Jesus addressed her doubt and reminded her of God's promise: "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" (John 11:40). The phrase "the glory of God" here points to the miracle Jesus was about to perform—the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Before even arriving in Jerusalem, Jesus had already explained to His disciples that Lazarus' sickness would not end in death, but rather would serve to glorify God's name. There was only one condition for Martha to receive God's miracle: "If you believe..." The Bible reminds us, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (Romans 10:17). On rare occasions, God may reveal Himself through visions, dreams, or extraordinary acts, strengthening people's faith. But most of the time, God draws us closer to Him as we hear His Word and seek Him in our daily journey of faith. Through the Word, we learn about the might of God, the mercy of Christ, and the majesty of the Holy Spirit.

That is why, in today's Gospel, Jesus continued encouraging Mary and Martha to hear the Word of God. Let us hear some of these scriptures again. "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" (John 11:3-4). "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to wake him up" (John 11:11). Notice Jesus' perspective on death. To Him, dying can be seen as merely sleeping. We do not fear sleep; in fact, we often long for it as a time of rest. Likewise, those who trust in God need not fear death. Once again, Jesus says: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die" (John 11:25-26). All of Jesus' words give us hope and encouragement, helping us to continuously put our faith in Him.

Please understand this: I am not suggesting that we ignore the challenges we face today. Life is hard. How many of us have played the game Whack-a-Mole? ...Our lives can feel much the same way. Just when we solve one problem, another arises. Like Martha and Mary, we often face multiple challenges at the same time. Some situations are difficult and require the guidance of experts, careful thought, and wise decisions.

At the same time, we must acknowledge Jesus, who is in control of every matter. No matter what difficulties we encounter, we need to go back to the Bible and listen to what the Word of Jesus says to us. He said, "I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live" (John 5:25). Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life, and He gives us the strength to overcome even the power of death. Jesus never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. So why do we stop listening? Why do we fall into doubt and discouragement? All we need to do is to keep listening to the Word of God and quiet all the other voices echoing in our minds. When we humbly do this, God can and will give us His wisdom and strength to overcome the darkness in our lives.

Secondly, Jesus wanted Martha and Mary to keep moving the stone—not only from the tomb, but also from their hearts. They believed that God would raise their brother Lazarus in the resurrection on the last day. Yet when we look at their responses to Jesus, we see that, in some ways, they showed a lack of faith in Him. They said to Jesus, "If you had

been here, my brother would not have died” (John 11:21). In other words, they did not fully trust the power of Christ’s resurrection in the present moment. We can easily identify with them because sometimes we say similar things: “If Jesus had been here, I would not have faced this difficulty.” In one sense, Mary and Martha were simply describing the painful reality they were experiencing. But, they forgot this truth: Jesus is omnipresent. He is everywhere, fully aware of every situation, and able to act in every moment.

When Jesus said, “Take away the stone” from the tomb, Martha responded: “Lord, by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days” (John 11:38-39). In ancient cultures, people sometimes believed that the spirit of the dead might return within three days if their gods showed mercy—but after three days, it was considered impossible. I am not certain whether the Jewish people of Martha’s time observed this exact belief, but one thing is clear: Martha and her family recognized the reality of Lazarus’s death. He had been dead for four days, and to them, it seemed final. Nothing could help in that circumstance. There was nothing wrong with Martha’s honest response. However, she did not include in her calculation the One who has the power to bring the dead back to life. To experience His resurrecting power, Martha first had to remove the stone from Lazarus’s tomb. The stone was not only a physical barrier; it was also symbolic. It blocked Lazarus from hearing the voice of the Creator. It blocked Martha from fully hearing the voice of the Resurrected Christ in her own heart. Taking away the stone was the first step Martha had to take. It was a step of obedience, faith, and preparation for the miracle that only Jesus could bring.

In a spiritual sense, moving something out of the heart can be an act of repentance before the Lord. The resources God can provide us are immense. To help us imagine His power, let us think about Lake Superior. It is the largest of the Great Lakes, and it contains more water than the other four combined—Lake Huron, Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, and Lake Ontario. Its total volume is about 2,900 cubic miles. That is hard to comprehend, so let me give you a comparison. If the entire world population of 7 billion people each drink half a gallon of water per day, it would take 2,348 years to empty Lake Superior. God’s living water is even more abundant than that. Now, imagine God’s huge resources are held behind a dam, and on the other side is our heart. God’s abundant water can flow to us through pipes that connect Him to us. But to receive His power—to hear His living Word—we must first remove the spiritual stones that block these channels. These stones can be anything that blocks our hearts in spirit: arrogance, bitterness, pride, unbelief, bad habits, hang-ups, or unresolved struggles. These obstacles prevent us from focusing fully on Jesus—the One who is alive and is able to intervene on our behalf in every circumstance.

So we need to ask ourselves: Is there anything that needs to be removed from our hearts to experience God’s unlimited power even in situations that feel hopeless and helpless? And let us remember: this is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing process—a lifelong journey—until we can say, like the Apostle Paul: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race” (2 Timothy 4:7). Every day, even every moment, we need to humbly kneel before the Lord and cry out to Him through sincere repentance and genuine faith: “I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief” (Mark 9:24).

Thirdly, Jesus wanted Martha to keep speaking out about what He could do for her. He demonstrated this in three ways: Jesus thanked God in prayer, trusting that the Lord always hears Him. Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" Immediately, the dead man came out of the grave, still wrapped in strips of linen. Jesus instructed the people to remove the grave clothes and let Lazarus go.

In the Old Testament reading for today, God asked the Prophet Ezekiel to do something very similar to what Jesus would later do in the New Testament. During Ezekiel's time, the Babylonians had invaded Israel. God's temple had been destroyed, and many Israelites were taken captive to Babylon. Ezekiel was among them, called to share God's Word during that dark and desperate period. To convey the hopelessness of people's circumstances, Ezekiel used the powerful metaphor of "dry bones." The people of Israel cried out to God, "Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off" (Ezekiel 37:11). As I reflected on this part of Scripture, I thought about what could symbolize dead bones in my own life. Each of us can relate to this image. When we look at the valleys of our lives—our relationships, our health, our finances, our dreams, or the lives of our loved ones—we may sometimes see dry, lifeless bones, situations that feel hopeless and without life.

At that time, as Jesus asked Martha, "Your brother will rise again... Do you believe this?" (John 11:23-26), God similarly asked the Prophet Ezekiel: "Son of man, can these bones live?" In this scripture, the bones are described as very dry, symbolizing a situation that had been desperate for a long time. Ezekiel might have thought, "No, God. It is impossible. Dead is dead." But instead of responding negatively, Ezekiel humbly said: "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Even though he did not fully understand how God would bring life to the bones, Ezekiel trusted that nothing is impossible with God. Then God commanded him to prophesy to the bones. By faith, Ezekiel spoke aloud what God instructed him: "Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord... I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin. I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord" (Ezekiel 37:3-6). Even though Ezekiel might not have fully understood how it would happen, he faithfully spoke God's prophecy again: "Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord... My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel" (Ezekiel 37:12-14). While he was speaking, there was a sudden noise, and the bones came together. The dry bones became a vast army of the Lord. But it was not just a miraculous performance> The people of Israel also experienced that God Himself opens graves, restores life, and fulfills His promises, even bringing them back to the Promised Land.

Someone once said, "What we say or what we prophesy is what we are going to become in our future." There is a deep truth here: our words often reflect our faith and shape our reality in partnership with God. So, the question is: Do we speak only about how big our problems are, or do we talk about how big our God is? Our words carry power. They have the ability of life and death. If we want to experience God's best, we must speak aloud about words of victory in faith. Some of us may be thinking, "That sounds good, but what

if I do that and nothing happens?" That is understandable. Sometimes we have been waiting for God's answer for a long time, and it can feel discouraging.

I have shared before the story of Satan's garage sale... He answered, "Discouragement and Doubt—and no one knows these are mine!"

While meditating on this part of the message, I was struck by the divine questions posed to both Martha and Ezekiel. Jesus asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" God asked Ezekiel, "Son of man, can these bones live?" God was pleased with Ezekiel's obedient attitude toward His commands. And Jesus was also pleased with Martha's response: "Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world" (John 11:27). This morning, we must ask ourselves: What would be our response to the questions the Holy Spirit is asking us regarding the fulfillment or revival of our dreams and the dreams of our loved ones? ...When we look at God's ministry in the Bible, we see a pattern: every miracle is accomplished through people who boldly spoke to God in prayer and proclamation. There are over seven thousand promises of God recorded in Scripture for those who put their trust in Him, pray according to His will, and proclaim these dreams and visions in their daily lives... So let us return to the question and apply it to ourselves: "What if I asked God for these things—and they happened in my time!"

Today, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, is the living God. And now, Jesus is asking each of us personally the same question: "Do YOU believe this?" Believe what? That Jesus is truly the Resurrection and the Life... that whoever lives by believing in Him will never die. God is asking us, "Can these impossible situations be transformed? Can what seems dead or hopeless be made alive and possible?" Not only on Easter Sunday, but every day, we need to remember whom we serve and respond with faith. We must reclaim the resurrection in our lives and speak out this proclamation: "Yes, Lord, I do believe with all my heart that You will turn these challenges into steppingstones through which I can experience Your mighty power and merciful grace... And I believe that the Triune God will give me the body of resurrection and eternal life when I am called to live with You forever. Amen!"

**In this sermon, I have drawn from messages based on the texts, Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 11:17- 27.*