

## Easter Sermon Just As He Said 2017

### Introduction to service:

I was laying in bed talking to the Lord last month when the Spirit brought a phrase from the resurrection story. I knew it was to be the theme for us at Easter, so I got up and read the story in Matthew 28:1-10. For the next hour one aspect after another of the theme “Just as He said” fell into place. Now I hope the significance of this little phrase will resonate throughout the service. We start with the responsive call to worship:

### Responsive reading:

**Luke 24:1** *On the first day of the week, very early in the morning Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.*

**Mark 16:3:** *Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?*

**Matthew 28: 2** *There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone...*

**Mark 16:4** *When the women looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.*

**Luke 24:3--6** *When they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them and say: why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; He is risen!*

All: “**He is risen just as He said**”

In that spirit of celebration we open with **Easter Song**.

Hear the Scripture: **Matthew 28:1-10**.



### Sermon: Just as he Said

This Easter Day it seemed appropriate to start with this quip: “Do you believe in life after death?” the boss asked one of his employees. “Yes, Sir.” the new recruit replied.

“Well, then, that makes everything just fine,” the boss went on. “After you left early yesterday to go to your grandmother’s funeral, she stopped in to see you.” GCFN 4/3/17 Life after death – the true or the false?

### The angel’s message

The context of Matthew’s resurrection account starts with this wonderful message from the angel who came down to Jesus’s tomb after the earthquake when Jesus had burst forth from the grave. He was a living proof of life after death, indeed.

The angel’s message reveals the kindness and purpose of God. First, the angel understands the women’s mission: “Do not be afraid, for I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.” V.5 God always knows everything about us – what we are thinking, what we are worried about, what we understand and what we do not.

And so, knowing the women’s bewilderment and confusion when they saw the stone rolled away from the tomb, the angel verified the facts: *He was crucified. He is not here. He is risen. (And for proof: “Come see the place where He lay.”)v.6*

**“He is risen just as He said”** – Jesus’ words are trustworthy. They are true. His predictions came to pass just as He said. And that’s the main point of the resurrection I want us to take away today.

But then the angel said: “Then go quickly and tell his disciples: He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.” v. 7 – When God reveals Himself to us, it is always so we can tell others. Go and tell his disciples the good news.

Actually this phrase “just as He said” is a refrain repeated about the Lord often in Scripture. In the book of Joshua we meet Caleb 40 years after he had first been sent with the other 11 Israelites to spy out the land of Canaan. As a young man of 40 he brought back a report that the Israelites were well able to overtake the tribes who lived there. But ten of the spies said there were giants in the land and walled cities and they couldn’t do it. So God sentenced the people to the 40 years of wandering in the desert before they crossed the Jordan under Joshua’ command. An entire generation died in the wilderness because of their corporate unbelief. But now in Canaan, about 5 years into their conquest, Caleb came before Joshua when he was 85 and asked for the land of Hebron. He said, “*I know there are giants there and walled cities but, the Lord helping me, I will drive them out just as he said.*” He believed God would give him the power to make the conquest because God had said he would. (Joshua 14:12) It’s that same confidence the angel gave to the women at the tomb. “*He is risen, just as he said, they told the women.*”

On that resurrection morning do you see the divine progression of God’s messages through the angel? Think of how this applies to our own lives: God meets us in our situation. He understands our actions and thoughts and feelings – even our confusion and fear. But He in the midst of those emotions and helps us understand the facts of what is true about Him and about the situation itself. (We often distort what we see and hear in our confusion.) He even provides tangible proof of some sort so we get the facts straight. Then He reminds us of His words and with those words ringing in our ears, He tells us to go and tell others.

So let’s focus on the little phrase “**just as He said**” from this resurrection account and see what Jesus did say and promise around the time of His crucifixion and His resurrection.

Five things to remember. He promised His peace; He promised His presence; He promised His protection; He promised His provision and He promised a place. These promises are all ours to claim today. They are available “**just as He said**”.

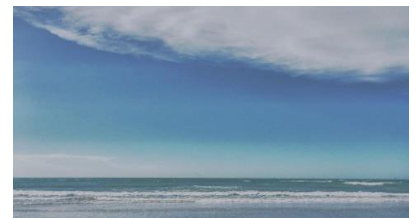
### **The immutability of Christ’s promises.**

Peace. Presence. Protection. Provision. Place.

When I think of the immutability of Christ’s promises – what I can bank my life on – what we can know as God’s realities no matter what the circumstances or our feelings – I think of 2 cor. 1:20. “*No matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘Yes’ in Jesus Christ. And so through him the Amen is spoken by us to the glory of God the Father.*” As we go through each of these 5 promises - Peace. Presence. Protection. Provision. Place – I hope we also can say Amen to each one to the glory of God the Father.

### **Peace.**

John 14:27. “*Peace I leave with you. My peace I give unto you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*” I know many of us here are going through or have just gone through or will go through circumstances that cause us fear or worry or even dread. Our minds are filled with anxious thoughts. Jesus was facing his imminent crucifixion. It was a horror to him, the sinless Son of God, to take on all the guilt of the whole world and be a sacrifice for our sins. That separated Him from the Father (Mt. 28:46). He had even sweated tears of blood as He wrestled with the darkness and evil before him (Luke 22:44). But, knowing all that, He granted His peace to His disciples. For me this peace is pictured in a scene from the ocean. When the ocean is very quiet, the waves still lap in onto the shore. I sat for many years at Sam’s beach and thought about the inner tranquility of the heart that’s possible because of God’s faithfulness. And this is a picture of that scene. God’s peace can sustain us no matter what our emotions or thoughts or



circumstances tell us to the contrary. *My peace I give to you.* It is true, "**just as he said.**" **Amen? Amen.**

### **Presence**

This is why I put Presence next. In evil, conflicting, suffering times, we need the assurance of Jesus' presence. He can carry us through our worst times. He walks with us through the valley of the shadow. He is with us in all the ways we are called to live out our part of His heart for the world. We know this because He promised to be with them after He gave the disciples the Great Commission to *go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all I have commanded you.* That great task before us as a church is bookended by 2 promises, actually: "*All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go...And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age*" (Mt.28:18-20). We step out in faith to obey this great calling because it will be **just as he said.**" His presence will go with us.

Let me give you a practical example of what this looks like in a true story:

"Dale Hahn once encouraged his son Cory at his tee ball and Little League games. Dale continued to cheer Cory on all the way through high school, often playing catch in the driveway and working on Cory's swing. All of that dedication paid off. During his senior year at Santa Ana Mater Dei High School, Cory received California's distinguished "Mr. Baseball" award. Cory declined a \$300,000 salary offer from the San Diego Padres so he could hone his skills at Arizona State University on a full scholarship. And just like those early tee ball days, his dad was still his biggest fan and most devoted coach.

But Cory's future plans shattered during his third game at Arizona State. As he was sliding head first into second base, Cory broke his neck. Today he's a C5 quadriplegic, paralyzed from the chest down. He has limited use of his hands and arms. The kid who once led his team to a high school championship by pitching five perfect innings, making an over-the-shoulder catch, and hitting a long home run, now battles to eat hamburgers, wash his hair, and wheel to class. Cory says, "My goals don't take days anymore, they take weeks, they take months." But, as always, Cory is able to stretch toward those goals from the broad shoulders of the guy he calls Pops. "There were times I would wonder, what's better, being dead or being like this?" Cory says. "But then I look up and see my dad and think, *If he can do it, I can do it.*"

When Cory moved back to the Arizona State campus to continue his studies, Dale moved into an extended-stay hotel down the street. Together they get Cory ready for his daily classes. Each day brings a little more independence for Cory. Recently, they celebrated that Cory was using his once-lifeless hands to wash his own hair. Cory is also able to feed himself only after countless days of practicing with his dad. "It was really messy," Cory said, "but we did it." Together they drive to campus in Dale's truck, where they go from a street parking spot to Cory's first class, with Cory wheeling himself most of the way. Dale says, "I see all these college kids running and skating across campus, and then I see Cory just chugging along in his chair, the world moving past him ... and I am so, so proud of him." "We live for the little victories," Cory says. "We're a team." After lunch, they go to a gym for therapy, and then his father might drop him off at a Sun Devils baseball practice or game before taking him home for the night. Cory will hang out with friends until about 11 P.M., at which point his father returns to his room to lay him into bed and put the television on a timer and slip out with a simple, "Good night, buddy." "When you're a dad, you're a dad forever," Dale says. (*Adapted from Bill Plaschke, "Cory Hahn is still part of a team," Los Angeles Times (posted 2-28-12)*)

Christ's presence with us is like Cory's Dad – always there, always buffering us in our weakness, always making possible what we cannot do on our own. And His presence is promised until the end of the age. **Just as He said. Amen? Amen.**

## Protection

Thirdly, Jesus knew the fierce tactics of Satan to *steal, kill and destroy* Christ's followers, (Jn.10:10) so He prayed for our protection - three times, in his high priestly prayer. He said to the Father: "*I will remain in the world no longer but they are still in the world. Holy Father protect them by the power of your name (Jn.17:11)...While I was with them I protected them and kept them safe by the name you gave me(Jn.17:12)...My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one*" (Jn.17:15). I don't think we will know until we get to heaven all the ways Jesus has protected us in this life. But when we face the repeated assaults of the enemy in our mind or circumstance, when we feel like a besieged city, (Ps. 31:21) we need to know it can be **just as he said.**" We have a God who has pledged and prayed for our protection. He is our shield, our defense at our right hand, our ever-present help in trouble (Ps. 3:3, 7:10, 28:7, 33:20, 115:9, 119:114, 144:2). He will protect us and bring us through to victory. **Amen? Amen.**

## Provision

Fourth, He protects us and gives us His peace and presence through the provision of the promised Holy Spirit. He told the disciples "*It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you, but if I go I will send him to you. ...When He comes, He will guide you into all truth. He is the Spirit of Truth and will be with you forever. The world cannot accept him because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him for he lives with you and will be in you...The Counselor, the Holy Spirit will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*"(Jn.16:7, 13, 14:16-17). And it has been **just as he said.**" The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth does help us understand the deep things of God (2 Cor.1); He will reveal our sin to us day by day so we can confess our sins and keep close to God(I Jn.1:9-10); He has testified with our spirit that we are God's children (Rom.8:16) He has taught us how to pray (Rom.8:26-27); He has filled us with God's mighty resurrection power so we can work "*with all the energy He mightily inspires within us.*" (Eph.1:19, Col.1:29)

How many of you remember your life before you came to Jesus Christ? For me, as a moral, "religious" teenager doing good works in the inner city, I knew nothing of the Holy Spirit. I only had my own strength and personality and vision of help for that community. But it wasn't enough. That was true for Zerubbabel in the Old Testament as well. He was commissioned to rebuild the temple but he couldn't possibly do it with the enemies all around him and a series of impossible circumstances until God gave him this word. "*Not by might, not by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord.*" Then Zerubbabel could do something amazing for his people by the power of God that came upon him.

For Christians, the provision of the Holy Spirit is to dwell within us. The Spirit is the One who makes the Christian life possible—in fact, miraculous. As Ephesians 3:20 says, "*Now to Him who is able to do **immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us.***" Through the Holy Spirit, God provides grace upon grace to us, giving us everything we need for life and godliness (2 Pet.1:3-4) and the miraculous good works that reveal Christ to our unbelieving world. "***It is just as he said.***" **Amen? Amen.**

## Place

And finally, Jesus promised a place. "*In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am*" (Jn. 14:1-3). This is the promise of our future with Christ forever after our death. He has prepared a place **just as he said.**"

It is this promise that holds believers as they go through the valley of the shadow of death. It is their confidence and their security. Jesus has prepared a place in heaven for each of us and He will come back and take us to himself.

I've told some of you the story of a teenage friend of our children when they were teenagers. He contracted a fatal form of leukemia and despite bone marrow transplants and everything possible to save him, he was hovering on the brink of death in an isolated hospital room when he was 16. He was in a coma at the time, but his parents were with him. Suddenly, he opened his eyes, sat straight up and with a shining face said clearly, "Jesus, you have come!" Then he fell back on the bed and died. It was **just as Jesus said.**" Jesus came for him. That's my confidence as well. **Amen? Amen.**

The resurrection happened. **Just as he said.** No matter that evil seemed to win at the time. Evil was actually defeated on the cross (Col.2:15) and Christ rose triumphant – **Just as he said.**

In the context of his crucifixion and resurrection Jesus promised His Peace, His Presence, His Protection, His Provision of the Holy Spirit, and His Place so we could be with Him forever.

How have you experienced these realities in your own life beloved? You can trust Him no matter what the circumstance because these promises are true. It is **Just As He Said. Amen and Amen!** Let us pray.

Because He Lives,

We can have:

His Peace

His Presence

His Protection

His Provision

A Place with Him forever



Dr. M.L. Codman-Wilson Easter 2017