

The Resurrection- So What

by Francis Chan

The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking truth and being willing to accept it, even if it's different from what we currently believe, in order to know God's true character.

Duration: 33:59

Scripture: Jeremiah 29:13, Matthew 13:44, Luke 14:26-27, John 8:32, Acts 2:37-38

Topics: "Radical Discipleship", "Wholehearted Devotion"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the greatness of God and the need for a deep, consuming love for Him. It challenges listeners to be obsessed with God, willing to give up everything for the treasure of knowing Him. The speaker reflects on the importance of seeking truth about God, even if it challenges our current beliefs, and highlights the radical commitment required to follow Jesus, not just casually but with wholehearted devotion.

Transcript

We were singing that old hymn, How Great Thou Art, that doesn't sound like an old hymn when we play it. But, you know, that was the first time I really thought about those words. I mean, I've been singing that since I was a kid, thinking about the words, Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee, how great Thou art.

Like, from the core of my being, from the very center of me, I just want to scream out, God, You are so great. You know, I mean, is that in you this morning, where you're just, everything in your being just wants to scream out, God, you're so great, how great you are, how amazing you are. I mean, when you walk into this room this morning, are you crazy, absolutely crazy about God? Not, do you like God, do you believe in God, do you love God? Are you just crazy, consumed with Him, where from the very core of your being, you just want to scream out, God, how great you are, how great Thou art, how amazing you are, what a wonderful Saviour, because that's the God I worship.

To me, He's everything, He's absolutely everything, and there's no way in half an hour I can explain to you how crazy I am about God. And if I could have anything, if you said, Francis, you can have anything on this earth, I would say, you know what, I want the people of Cornerstone Church, the people that come here this weekend, to be madly in love with Jesus Christ. That's what I'd want.

I mean, if I could have anything, that's what I'd want. And so Easter, in a sense, is a stressful time for me. And a lot of the stress, I put it on myself, because in the years past, I've thought, okay, man, this is the week where the crowds come.

This is the week where a lot of people come that don't normally come to church. This is your one Sunday a year, and every year I think, well, maybe if I give a good enough sermon, maybe if I give a good enough message, then you won't be once a year Christians that kind of believe in God and kind of do the church thing. But maybe you'll actually fall in love with Him.

Maybe you'll just be crazy, consumed, obsessed with Him. If I just say the right things, maybe I'll talk you into it this year. And so every Easter, it's like, okay, come on, come on, what am I going to do, what am I going to say? And yet the thing is, is this year, I was studying what Jesus did when there were crowds.

I was just reading through the Gospel. It's a fascinating study. If you just read through Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, just look at what does Jesus do when crowds and visitors and everyone shows up, what does He say? And I'm reading through these passages, and I'm going, He's crazy.

He's doing the exact opposite of what I do. When the crowds came, Jesus didn't make things simpler and easy to understand. He made things confusing, more confusing.

I was reading in Luke chapter 8, Luke chapter 8, starting in verse 4, it says, while a large crowd was gathering, and people were coming to Jesus from town after town. So now people were traveling to come and hear Jesus, and large crowds were assembled. People that probably had never heard Jesus before, they just heard this reputation, this guy's doing miracles, all these people are following, let's go listen.

And they all show up. It's Easter. Everyone comes out, and while everyone shows up, Jesus comes out, and He gives this message.

He says, a farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path. It was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up.

Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil.

It came up and yielded a crop a hundred times more than what was sown. When He said this, He called out, He who has ears, let him hear. And that was it.

He walked away. I mean, do you get that? I mean, this is crazy. I mean, imagine this.

Imagine if I say, hey guys, it's Easter. Jesus came. He's going to preach for me.

And then you're going, no way, this is going to be awesome. Let's give a hand for Jesus. And He walks out.

Hey, everybody. And all He says is, there was this farmer. And he was throwing seed everywhere.

And some landed on the sidewalk, and birds came and ate it. Some landed on rocky soil and it sprung up, and the sun came out and killed it. Other stuff grew up in the weeds and the thorns and got choked out by the weeds and the thorns.

And then some landed on good soil and produced this crop. If you get it, you get it. If you don't, I'll see you later.

And then He just walks off. And that was His whole message. That was His whole message.

And He just walks away and goes, hey, if you get it, you'll get it. If you don't, you don't. And He just walks off the stage.

I'm going, that's nuts. That's what you're going to say when the crowds are there? Why? Why did Jesus do that? Well, it says in the very next verse. In verse 9. We'll put it up on the screen.

His disciples asked Him, what did that mean? And He said, the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to others, I speak in parables so that though seeing, they may not see. Though hearing, they may not understand.

Wait, why did He speak in parables? So that what? So the people that saw Him really didn't see Him. And the people that were listening wouldn't get it. Wait a second.

Because sometimes we think, well, Jesus spoke in parables because they're good stories and they made people understand it better. No, no, no, that's not what I'm doing. When I speak in parables, I'm doing it so that even though they hear me, they won't really get it.

So Jesus, you spoke in a way so that the crowds would not understand. You didn't want them to understand you. You wanted them to walk away confused.

Why? Why in the world would He do that? So that, see the disciples, so that the ones who really wanted it, they'd come after Him. Like the disciples, they're going, okay, I really want to know what you're teaching here, so explain that whole dirt thing to me. They wanted it.

And Jesus, those are the people I want to talk to. The people who really wanted it, the rest of the crowds, they can go home. I'm just going to give them a little story about dirt, and they won't get it, and they don't really care to know, so they'll just walk away.

But the ones who really want to know, they'll come after me, and they'll search out the truth. Jesus only wanted to speak to those who really wanted to hear from Him. It's a really interesting thought.

And He explains it in that very parable, because when He explains it to the disciples, He says, okay, the seed is like the Word of God. He goes, here's what it means. He goes, some people, I'll toss the seed out to them, and they're like the sidewalk.

They're like a path where some of you, the moment I mention Jesus, you're like, you know what? I don't need this. I don't need the God thing, all right? I'm just here for Easter, whatever. Just leave me alone.

You're like a brick wall. And He goes, so why would I go and water the sidewalk? I'm not going to waste my time with that. He goes, others are like the rocky soil where there's no root.

You know, it's going to spring up. He goes, those are the people who will hear the Word of God and go, yeah, I want Jesus. He goes, but the moment the difficult times come, they're going to deny me and go, you know what? How can there be a God if I'm going through so much pain? He goes, so forget about them.

He goes, in the same way, some of the seed is going to go in the thorny soil. He goes, what that represents are the people who want God, but they also want this other stuff, these weeds, these material things, these other relationships. And they're putting me on par, equal with all their other stuff.

You know, and so even though, you know, they may want God, they want all this other stuff too. And they want to throw me into the mix. You know what? And that's never going to grow.

So why would I water the weeds? He goes, but then there's good soil. See, and there's people who, man, they've cleared everything out of their life. And they go, man, I just want God.

And those are the people, man, I throw the seed there. I fertilize it. I water it.

And guess what? There's going to be like a hundred times what I planted. That's who a farmer is concerned with. A farmer is not going to water the weeds.

He's not going to water the rocks. He's not going to water the sidewalk. He's just going to water the good soil.

He goes, the rest is a waste of time. That's what Jesus was saying to the crowd. He's saying, look, I'm not going to waste my time with all of you.

Some of you don't want it. So I'm just going to go on a crazy story. And the good seed, they're going to come after me.

I don't have to worry about that. And that's what the disciples did. It's pretty crazy, though, because I don't normally do that.

And I was just like, that's wrong of me. I got to teach the way Jesus taught. Teach for those who really want it.

And the rest, don't waste your time. I mean, you wouldn't waste your time watering the ones that don't matter, the ones that are going to die anyways. My prayer is, for those of you guys who are heartened toward God, and you just look at this and you put a hand up, or those who think your other things are so wonderful, and you want to throw God with it, that God would change the soil of your heart.

And at some point, you go, you know what? God's greater than all that other stuff. And I want it, I want it, I want it. Not just kind of casually, I'll show up, and if I like it, I'll come again, maybe.

How badly do you want truth? Think about this. Do you hunger for what is true, absolutely true? Because I was thinking about this this week, and I thought, you know, a lot of times, honestly, I don't want truth. I just don't.

For example, I like salami. Salami. I grew up eating salami.

I come from an Italian family. And you guys thought I was German. But I, so I grew up, and I just, I don't know why, we always had salami in my house from mama.

And we, you know, just, I love this kind too, when it's just a big old bar, and you just cut off a chunk and peel that paper off and just gnaw on it. And so I eat it today. I feed it to my kids, my babies.

Everything, salami. And I was thinking about this this week. I have no clue what this is made of.

And I don't want to know. I so do not want to know. I've never read the ingredients.

I have no idea even what animal it comes from, if it's an animal, you know. And I remember, because remember that guy, Johnny Carls, who used to work here, and he grew up like on a slaughter farm, you know, in a slaughterhouse and did all that stuff. He goes, hey, I know how to make salami.

I'm like, I don't want to know. I don't want to know, don't tell me. Because I just want to live in my own little world and believe that this is good for me.

I'm just going to believe the little white specks are vitamins. And, you know, so that I can just enjoy this. I just want to enjoy it, okay? So leave me alone.

Don't tell me the truth about salami, okay? I don't want to know it. I don't want to know it. Don't ruin it.

And see, I believe. I believe that a lot of people are that way about God. They're just like, you know what, I just want to believe that God just is all loving and He would never hurt anyone.

Just let me believe that, okay? I'm happy with it. Don't give me truth. I don't want the truth.

I have a question for you, and this is for everyone. I don't care if you're a pastor. I don't care if you're an atheist.

I don't care how long you've been going to church. I don't care what walk of life you came from. I just want to ask everyone a question right now, and I want you to all think about it.

Don't just nod your head and immediately respond. I want you to think about it. And the question is this.

Would you want to know the truth about God even if it's completely different from what you currently believe? Do you really want to know truth? I just want to know the truth about God even if it goes against everything I was raised with, even if I grew up in a Christian church and the truth were different from what I believe, I just want to know the truth about God. Or do you want to just keep believing whatever you believe because you like it right now? I mean, what if it's not true? What if it's not true what is said at every funeral that ever happens? Oh, she's in a better place. What if that's not true? Do you want to know that? Or do you want to just stay in your own little world? You happy? I mean, how badly do you want truth? Because there's people who say, why, I'd refuse to believe that God would ever send anyone to a place called hell.

I refuse to believe in it. You refuse? But what if it's true? I still refuse to believe in it. You know why? Because most people's belief systems are based upon desire and not truth.

Let me say that again. Most people's belief systems are based upon what they desire, not based upon what is true. In other words, we believe what we want to believe.

Every once in a while, there'll be a person who pursues truth, absolute truth, and you can tell those people because they end up believing some things that they don't want to believe. One of my favorite lines from a movie of all time, Jack Nicholson. You guys already know where I'm going.

A Few Good Men. You want the truth? Sad, isn't it? You guys watch too many movies. You can't handle the truth.

Wasn't that a great line when his face, you can still see his face, you can't handle it. You know, it was just, oh yeah, you just got so pumped. You can't handle the truth.

What a great statement though. You really want the truth about God? Do you really? You really want it? Because Jesus said, John 8, 32, you shall know the truth. Okay, not as good as the other one, but that's all right, you know.

Jack, Jesus, you know. You see, Jesus, Jesus said, now you'll know the truth and the truth will actually set you free. Even though sometimes you don't, you kind of want the truth and you kind of don't, right? But Jesus says when you get it, when you get it, when you accept it, that's what's going to set you free.

I mean, let's just face it. Most people lie to you all day long, right? And they tell you what you want to hear. But isn't it refreshing every once in a while when someone tells you truth? Even though it hurts, even though you don't like it, it's like, you know what? I appreciate that person being honest with me.

You shall know the truth. The truth shall set you free. I used to think I could sing.

Then I got married and married Lisa, Miss Honesty. And she just flat out told me no. You can't.

And I go, but I've had people. I've had people tell me. They looked me in the face and said I have a great voice.

Singing, singing voice. And in fact, I had one lady refer to my voice as golden. Those were her exact words.

Oh, the one, Francis, the one with that golden voice. And my wife just looks at me and goes no. No.

And I remember one time I came home from church. I don't know if it was a funeral or whatever. I had to lead a song and while I was singing it and my microphone was actually on, I thought, it's pretty good.

Like my pitch, you know, I was on pitch, you know. I was like, no, I hit every note. I came home and I go, didn't you hear me? I hit every note.

She goes, it's not just your pitch. Even when you hit the notes, Francis, you're still not pleasant to listen to. Okay, that hurt a little bit.

But it was truth, you know. And I was like, okay, I accept it now. I'm not a singer.

And every once in a while, it's just good. And we have those people in our lives that are willing to tell us truth. You don't like it at the moment, but you go, okay, you know what? Thank you.

You don't care. You don't care about what I think. You're not just worried about my feelings.

You just laid out truth and that's what I love about Jesus. Jesus goes, you know what? Some of you guys are going to hate me. Some of you are going to crucify me.

But I'm going to tell you truth. I can't help but tell you anything else because I'm the way. And I am the truth.

And I am the life. I can't lie to you. I can't just tell you some things to make you feel better and tickle your ears so you go and you come back next week.

I'm just going to lay it out. You see, because I was looking. Then later on, Jesus gets another shot.

The first crowd, they left and go, forget him. He's crazy. He talked about dirt.

But later on in Luke, he gets another chance. It's like, hey guys, okay, Jesus messed up last year, but I brought him back this Easter. Okay, what are you going to say this time, Jesus? Okay, the crowds came back.

In Luke chapter 14, I'll put it on the screen. Luke 14, it says, large crowds were traveling with Jesus and turning to them, here's what he says. If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. Wait, that's your opening statement? Don't you want to butter him up? I mean, it's Easter. Just say, Jesus wants to be your friend.

That's how you start an Easter sermon. You don't look at a crowd and go, hey, do you hate your father? Mother? Wife? Kids? Don't bother. Just go home.

You hate your own life? Don't bother. I'm going to walk out those doors and there's a bunch of crosses out there. I may ask you to carry one up a hill with me and then we're going to get crucified together.

You still want to follow me? I didn't think so. I'll see you. I'm done.

See, I'd want to walk up here and go, okay, let me apologize for what my friend Jesus said. Okay? I mean, he didn't know. He says, hate your own kids.

I mean, he hasn't seen your kids. I mean, he's thinking about kids that aren't as cute as your kids. He didn't read your bumper sticker.

He didn't know you had honor students. I mean, your kids, okay? He's not talking about us in Simi Valley. I mean, this whole hate your own life thing.

Okay, I mean, some of you guys own your own businesses. You guys are important. I mean, so he wasn't talking about you.

Okay? He was probably talking about some people in a third world country. Not Simi Valley people, okay? Okay, he didn't mean that. Because Jesus said what he said.

Yeah, maybe he didn't know how important you were. Or maybe, maybe God really thinks he's that great. Let me tell you the truth about God.

God thinks that he is so great. So great. He thinks that he is so great.

That you should look at him and go, wait, I can be forgiven by you? I can talk to you, God? I can be loved by you? He thinks he's so great that we ought to take one glance at him and go, no way. Okay, anything. Anything.

Anything. I just want you. I don't care.

Family, whatever. I don't care. I just want you.

Pain, I don't care. You. God literally thinks that he is that great that we ought to take one glance at him and go, anything.

I just want you. Your son died for me on a cross. You love me like that? He paid for all of my crimes.

And you, you seriously would put your spirit, the spirit of God inside of me? Little pee on me? Dirt and nothing here on this planet? Me? You would put your spirit in me? Where do I sign up? That's what God thinks about himself. That's why he says statements like this. The Bible says the kingdom of heaven.

I'll put it on the screen. The Bible says the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. And when a man found it, he hid it again and then in his joy went and sold everything he had and bought that field.

Do you get that? The kingdom of heaven is like this treasure of God. I can have God. I can have heaven.

I can have him. That you look at that treasure and you don't even think about anything else. Of course, everything.

I gotta have this field. Whatever I had in the past doesn't even matter. You can have it all.

I can have this field. I can have this treasure. I can have God.

The Bible says that's what the kingdom of heaven is. It's reserved for those who are just obsessed with this treasure. That's what the kingdom of heaven is for.

It's for those who are so obsessed with this treasure, they say, you can have my family. You can have my job. You can have my life on that earth.

You can have my success, my name. What is that? I just want this treasure. And it's not for those who would say, yeah, I'd like a little God in my life.

If you could put a little God in my kids. And then they'll have some morality. And let me balance God with my other relationships.

Maybe I can fit Him in with everything else. The Bible says, you know what? If that's what you're trying to do, this isn't for you. The kingdom of God isn't for you.

The kingdom of heaven is for those who get it. I'm not trying to fit Jesus. Don't throw me in with your other relationships.

You're going to compare me, God, to mommy? You've got to be kidding me. You're going to compare me, God, to little Johnny? Come on. Who are we talking about here? He goes, look, if you don't hate your mother, father, wife, kids, children compared to me, forget it.

Forget it. Are you crazy? You know, I'm not going to apologize for Jesus' words this morning. And I know that some will walk away this morning and be so offended.

And that's okay. Because I would much rather offend you. And this morning, I've got to be honest with you, I am sorry.

I'm sorry because I feel like a lot of times I stand up here and I belittle God by begging you to follow Him. By saying, oh please, just squeeze God in. Maybe two Sundays a year.

Can you let Him in a little bit? Maybe value Him a little bit more than your kids. Maybe just squeeze Him in. Come on, come on.

Love Him more than your life. Please, please, please. Just a little bit more, God.

Come on, sing a little bit louder. Please try to come every weekend. Maybe even pray to Him every day.

And I beg, and I beg, and I beg. And you know what? I am so sorry for that. Because I feel like I've screwed up many times up here.

Because I cheapen who God is by begging. Because there's a God in heaven that actually believes He's so great that you should be the one that's begging. He actually sees Himself as so great that we should be on our faces going, please, please, let me have You.

Let me have You. Please, give me this treasure. Anything, anything.

Please God, I want You. That's how God feels. That you should be the one begging.

Not me. I'm not begging on behalf of God. I worship a great, amazing God whose love is so fascinating.

His love is so beyond the love of your wife, your kids. And we're talking about God who loved you so much He gave His one and only Son on that cross. I'm talking about a treasure so great that if you dare put Him on par with your other relationships and you're wondering, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know.

You know what? Forget it. Go home. Because my God is an awesome God.

And I love Him. And I'm crazy about Him. And I am sorry, God, if I ever belittled You.

So I don't apologize for His words. I apologize for mine in the past. If I've ever made God sound like some guy up there, some scrawny little loser that's begging you to follow Him.

Because that's not the way Jesus taught. He says, You want Me? You come after Me. You want Me? Man, then you come after Me and you find truth and you seek after truth.

It's always been this way. God says, You'll seek Me and you'll find Me when you search with Me with all your heart. Not when you casually seek after Me.

When you kind of go, Yeah, yeah, alright. I'll take you. No, no, no.

You're not going to find Me. You're going to find Me when you seek after Me with all your heart. Do you really want the truth? Do you really want this treasure? Do you really want this God? See, the truth is He is a free gift.

It's not like you're working for Him. It's just He's a free gift. He goes, But I'm only going to give it to you if you don't go, Okay, yeah, I'll take that gift.

Throw it in the garage with all my other treasures. He goes, No, I'm only giving you this gift if you're willing to give everything up for it because I'm that valuable. And that's why when Peter preached in that early church, that first service, and the people heard the message, they go, What? Jesus? He was on that cross? He was suffering for me? He was paying the penalty for my sins? That was the Son of God? He paid for me? And then He died and He rose from the grave and conquered death so I don't have to fear

death anymore? And the people said, Where do I sign up? It's as if they were cut to the heart and go, What do I need to do? And Peter goes, Repent? That means turn from the way you've been living? That's right.

That old life? Forget it. It's done. And then get baptized.

He didn't say, No, no, come over here and let me sprinkle you. Let me splash a little God on you. No, He used the word baptize.

The word baptize means literally immerse. To dip. That's what baptize means.

Go and immerse yourself. Go down in that water. Go in there and say, You know what? I am dead to that old me.

I'm coming up to a new life. I'm done with that. Go in that water and say, You know what? I believe Jesus died and He rose again.

And it was crazy. That was literally crazy to do in that day and age because it was not popular to follow Jesus. And the moment a person publicly went in the water, they had people watching.

They had people in the synagogues that said, Okay, you know what? You're following that Jesus. You're no longer welcome. They had family members going, You're going to go after that Jesus? Get out of my face.

They had people that said, Hey, look, that guy just got baptized. Let's kill him. And these people go, Go ahead.

Kill me. Kick me out of the temple. Kick me out of my house.

I got this treasure, man. I got this treasure, and I'm going to immerse myself in this treasure. I don't care.

Do you want the treasure that badly? How badly do you want God? Because He's only going to come to those who really want Him. That's what Jesus wants, following Him. So if this morning you go, Well, I want God, but I'm not going to get baptized and get my hair all wet.

You know what? Don't, don't, don't, don't. I wouldn't want you to do that. Well, I'm supposed to go to breakfast afterwards, and you know, my car's going to get all wet.

You know what? Yeah, you better not. That's more important. Well, it's more serious than a little breakfast.

I could get, you don't understand my family. They'd be so, you know what? No, your family. Your family.

You guys, this is the way Jesus taught. Or maybe you're like me, and you go, You know what? You want me to jump in that thing? I'll cannonball into there. Whatever.

Whatever. I just found a treasure that's so stinking amazing. Whatever.

That's the God I worship. He thinks He's great, and I do too. We're going to have the worship team come up, and we're going to worship my God.

My God. We're going to worship Jesus Christ, the greatest treasure ever. And maybe this morning, you're going, You know what? I want that treasure.

You can have it today, regardless of what you've done. That's the crazy thing. See, it is a free gift.

You don't have to get good enough. You don't have to work your way up to it. Jesus, I'm available to you if you want it.

It's a treasure. Here it is. You want it? You ready to give everything up for it? Then you can have it.

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