

He Never Gave Up on You

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes that despite our failures, God never gives up on us and invites us to experience His resurrection power in our lives.

Duration: 18:59

Scripture: Mark 16:1

Topics: "Christian Life", "God's Faithfulness", "New Beginnings"

Description

Jim Cymbala emphasizes that despite our failures and shortcomings, God never gives up on us. He illustrates this through the story of the women at the tomb who were the first to witness the resurrection of Jesus, highlighting that even when the disciples faltered, Jesus was ready to meet them again in Galilee. Cymbala encourages listeners to recognize that Jesus is alive and accessible anywhere, not just in church, and that He offers endless opportunities for new beginnings. The message reassures that no matter how far we stray, God's love and mercy are always there to welcome us back. Ultimately, the sermon calls for a reconsecration to God's purpose in our lives, reminding us that we can always return to Him.

Transcript

Sometimes in life things go from good to bad to worse to horrible and then you learn in the midst of that a new hope and something about God that you never knew before. And I gave this title, I'm not good on titles at all, all the books I've written other people have helped me with the titles. I'm terrible on titles, sermon titles, book titles.

Someone else came up with fresh wind, fresh fire and fresh prayer, fresh faith, fresh bread, fresh Prince of Bel-Air. I've had them all. I can't think of any of them.

This one, that's a good title though. I yelled it out at my wife as she was leaving. I said, Carol, I got a title for a ballad.

How about this thought? He never gave up on you. Sounds like a sad country song, doesn't it? Bradley from South Carolina. He never gave up on you.

So let's just look at this little story and then that'll encourage us to just reconsecrate ourselves to God's purpose for our life. Mark, Saturday evening when the Sabbath ended Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother

of James and Salome went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus's body. So the Sabbath was over when the sun went down.

So they went and the stores were open. They got what they needed. Very early on Sunday morning just at sunrise they went to the tomb and on the way they were asking each other who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb.

But as they arrived they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside. And when they entered the tomb they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked but the angel said, don't be alarmed.

You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He isn't here. He's risen from the dead.

Look, this is where they laid his body. Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there just as he told you before he died.

Now the psychological, emotional reaction of the disciples to all of this is something that should bear some inspection by us. The women who were the ones who were seemingly the most faithful to Jesus, the disciples boasted that they would never forsake him but when he was arrested they all departed and there's no record of any of them being around the cross except probably John, the beloved disciple. But the women were there.

The women went first to the tomb. The women were the first to see him alive. The women were the first evangelists who went and told everyone he's alive.

He's alive. Praise God for women. How many say amen? I knew that it would make somebody clap, right? That's very interesting though how women played that part of loyalty and faithfulness to Christ.

So now they went to the tomb early in the morning. They were going to anoint him not to embalm him. They didn't do that.

They anointed him with something so that the stench of his body would be kept down. So they bought what they bought. They got what they got and they went there.

But then they realized who's going to roll the stone away from the tomb that they had placed there to guard it so that no one would rob his body and then claim he's risen from the dead. So they put a guard. They put a stone.

But God had taken care of all of that because with God nothing is impossible. They went there and they're looking and they see this young man who turns out to be an angel which goes to show that angels can appear in very human form at times. The angel said I know what you're here.

You're looking for Jesus from Nazareth who was crucified but you're looking in the wrong place. Don't look in a tomb for Jesus. He's alive.

He's risen from the dead. And that just in passing makes me think sometimes of the places we look for Jesus where he's not at. Some people have limited Jesus.

They limited him to a tomb. They thought that's all. They didn't realize he's alive.

And because Jesus is alive you can meet him anywhere at any time. On the subway, in your bed, in your shower, in your house, on the top of the roof, in the basement, walking to church. Yes you can meet him in church.

But how many people have limited their contact with Jesus to just church? I'm going to church so I can meet with Jesus. You don't have to go to church to meet with Jesus. How many believe he's alive everywhere we are? Ready to talk.

Ready to guide. Ready to speak. Ready to heal.

Ready to help us. Well that's been a problem with a lot of us. We limit Jesus to a spot and the angel is still trying to tell us he's alive.

Remember he's alive. He's not a dead subject to study. A lot of people know a lot of facts about Jesus but they have no fellowship with the living Christ.

They know about his birth. They know about his death. They know about his resurrection theoretically from the Bible.

They know about this and that and the apostles and the life of Paul. But they don't live with a consciousness that he is alive. That's why the Holy Spirit was sent.

One of the main ministries of the Holy Spirit was to give a perpetual awareness to us that Christ is alive. Without the Holy Spirit church becomes like a mausoleum, like a museum. It becomes like a cemetery.

You're studying about facts but there's no expectation, no awareness, no alive worship because to you he's not alive. To me he's not alive. But the Spirit comes and makes him.

He's alive. How many are so happy Jesus is alive today? Alive. Brothers and sisters he's alive.

You can live days without a living Christ. Trust me I've done it. Without a living Christ.

Just a historical Christ in your head. Just a biblical Christ in su cabeza. But what God wants is to live every day.

He walks with me and he talks with me and he tells me that I am his own. And the joy we share as we tarry there no another has ever known. So he's alive.

And Satan is always trying to make us to live in the consciousness that he's a historical figure and he's not alive. The Spirit is always working against Satan to make us aware he's alive. Right now you could talk to him.

Like when you leave the building and you go home and you turn the key in your apartment or your home. Just remember as you turn that key. I'm gonna remind you now.

He's alive as you turn that key. He's watching you turn that key. You can talk to him if you need him before you go to bed.

You can talk to him. You don't have to say oh I gotta go back to church. I gotta call a pastor.

I need counseling. You can get counsel from Jesus right tonight. Come on one more time.

Let's say amen. Why so much of a weight of counseling and work with pastors and look they have their place. But why there's an overwhelming load on them is because so many people have historical Christ.

Not a living Christ. I mean let us be real. Who would you rather talk to? Me or Jesus? Hey don't say that so loud.

No of course Jesus. But for a lot of people it's no I gotta get to a pastor. Right? Why? Because he's not alive to them.

When he's alive who would you rather talk to? Who would have more wisdom? Who could do more for you? Who could counsel you better? In the early church when they were under persecution or in right now underground church in China. What do you think they're just calling up pastors and going to see him? No they have to have a walk with Jesus. Because he's alive.

He's alive. That's why pastors are inundated. Some people we need to see.

That's how God uses counselors and pastors. But a lot of people we shouldn't even be talking to anyone. First talk to Jesus.

First talk to him. He might give you the best advice right quick. He will give that best advice.

Through his word. By his spirit. They find out he's alive.

They go back with the angel's message. Go tell the disciples and Peter to go ahead to Galilee which is north from where he was buried. The northern part of Israel.

Samaria was in between. Judah, Judea in the south. Samaria and then the north was called Galilee.

Go up north to Galilee and he'll meet you there like he promised. But you see that to us all these years ahead and knowing the history of the church it's like whoo he's alive. He's alive.

He's alive. That's not what they were thinking. They were thinking oh no he's alive.

Because on the night that he was betrayed he told them all you're gonna fail me. And every single one of them. Not just Peter.

Read it carefully. They all swore we'll never forsake you. What do you think we're gonna be three and a half years with you? And then throw you under the bus when you get in trouble? Peter said I'll die with you.

These are the guys I'm not sure about but you can trust me. And all of them said the same. And then once he rested in all that melee and chaos in the garden of Gethsemane they all fled.

Peter ended up same night denying them three times. They were all gone. Where was Matthew? Where was Nathaniel? Where were all these people? They saw him walk on water.

They saw him heal the sick. Saw him raise the dead. Heard him teach.

Who can we go to Lord but you they had said. They had seen him do everything. And when crunch time came they were nowhere.

Total absolute abject failures. So when the women came back and said he's alive there might have been first a glimmer of can that be so? There was. Jesus upbraided them because of their unbelief.

They wouldn't even believe the women. One of the reasons why they didn't want to believe the women is they didn't want to have to see him again. Because that's human psychology.

That's the way we are. When you disappoint someone you love and you know who has loved you and you've let them down. Who wants to see him again? Now that they know how weak you are.

And he foretold it. He said no you're all gonna desert and Peter you'll deny me three times before the the rooster crows to register that it's a new day a morning. And they said no no and now yes yes.

And then they saw him die. Then they lost their hope. And now they're ashamed of themselves.

I not only failed him, the worst possible scenario ensued. He's gone. And now what is this? He's alive? What do you mean he's alive? What? He wants to see us? He wants to see us? I'm not so anxious to see him.

Because I know what he's gonna say. He's gonna do pow-pow. He's gonna say Peter, James, John.

So what's up? Where were you? Don't you remember at dinner when I was talking? You didn't listen to me. No you knew everything. You knew everything didn't you? You knew what you're gonna do.

You know how strong you were. So now what do you have to say for yourself? That's what I'm sure. That's a human reaction.

Even though they had known how gracious he was. But listen what the women said to them. They said this angel said go meet him in Galilee.

You know what Galilee was to them. That's where he first called them. That's where he started with them.

In other words the angel was saying you might have given up on him. He never gave up on you. You listen you might have failed him.

You might have made a disaster of the whole thing. But guess what? He's not throwing you away. He wants to start over.

He's gonna grab you. He's gonna bless you. He's gonna take you back to the very beginning where you started.

You know that song Andre Crouch wrote? Take me back to the place where I first found you and loved you and trusted you. Jesus not only gives another start. He gives 2,000 starts.

He gives 2 million new beginnings. How many have found that in your own life right? Wave your hand at me. I mean we mess up and we're almost afraid to see him.

We know he's alive but that's not even comforting. I know that's been in my life. It drives you away from the Word of God.

It drives you away sometimes from church. Why do you think people when they fall into sin or they get discouraged they don't come to church? Why? They don't want to meet him. They don't feel they're

worthy.

They feel he's gonna give them correction and rebuke and Satan's whispering all that stuff. But the angel is saying no he's not done with you. He knew you would mess up before you messed up.

He already knew that. But go back to Galilee. Galilee that's when it started.

That's before all the failure. Before everything. He wants to go back and start again with us? Yes.

He never gave up on you. He's amazing. I've given him 10,000 reasons in my life to give up on me.

Anybody here with me? Never gave up. Never gave up. Satan is a liar.

If you're here today and you feel like it's too late. I missed my moment or I've messed up too much or this happened that happened. Oh I was involved in something you don't want to know about Pastor.

I'm ashamed of it and all of that. I'm telling you he's saying to everyone here today go back to Galilee. Go back where you started.

I don't care if it means go back to Trinidad when you were nine years old. Go back in your heart to where you were a childlike faith and said Jesus help me. I need you.

He'll start with you right there. I'm so glad he doesn't throw people away. The world.

Listen. Oh my goodness. Mercy.

Compassion. You think you're gonna find that in this world? Oh no. I don't know what newspapers you're reading or what you're watching.

There ain't an ounce of mercy or forgiveness anywhere out there. But with Jesus it's always. I knew you would do that.

Yeah. But I still love you. Still gonna use you.

No I'm not worthy. But it's not about you. It's about me.

My love is greater than your mess-up. My strength is greater than your weakness. Oh praise God.

Let's close our eyes. Anybody here feels a call to do things for God on the mission field as evangelist, prayer warrior, as something and the enemy is trying to just put you down by you missed it. You failed too much.

You haven't responded. You've been a mess. You haven't grown properly.

You're not where you should be. Negative. Negative.

Negative. Negative. Look what you are.

It's all over and God is saying to you no. Tell them Jesus is going ahead of them. Notice he's gonna go ahead of you.

The Bible tells us to follow him. But in this case he's gonna go ahead of us to a place. Not just following him by example.

He's going to a place of consecration before us. So I'm gonna wait for you. Now just get there.

Just come there and meet me. Didn't I tell you I would meet you? Notice what the angel said. He said he would meet you in Galilee before he even died.

So he knew how the whole thing would spin out. Now he's gonna keep his word. Now you respond to that and just come and say God you know everything.

I'm not making excuses. I don't even think about my past. My past is a mess.

If Peter would have thought about his past and the disciples about their past, how would they have ever ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit? Forgetting those things that are behind. Come on. He's saying get up.

Let's move. Let's do this. I'll be with you.

If you're here today and would like us to lay hands on you and pray for you, because of your relationship and what you sense God is saying and doing in your life, which we don't need to know, we just need to know that the Holy Spirit is speaking to you tonight. Two of you or 200? It doesn't matter. Just come up out of your seat.

We're gonna end with more prayer where we just yield our lives to the Lord. Thank you. Come.

Thank you. Pastor, devil's trying to just bury me with doubt, discouragement, not good enough, not smart enough, too young, too old. No, not enough education.

Not enough this. Not enough that. Messed up too many times.

How many times did you give in to that besetting sin? And now that I'm really surrendered to the Lord, he's just saying, too late, too late, too late. It's over. It's not over.

Not over. Jesus is saying, I'll meet you. I'm not done.

I never gave up on you. Maybe somebody here has been living like you're denying Christ, just like Peter. You actually have lived like you denied Christ, and now you're ashamed of it.

But God knew that would happen too. And he's saying, I love you. I'll help you.

He hideth my soul in the cleft of the rock. You know how he hides us from every accusation of the devil, every discouragement, every bit of condemnation. The enemy's always trying to just press in.

Am I right or wrong? And there's a place in God where we just rest in Jesus, and he hides us. Lord, we thank you for your love. Oh, Jesus, your love, your faithfulness, your mercy, your gentleness has made us great.

Thank you for my brothers and sisters who have gotten a fresh start today. They met you in Galilee. You took them back.

They went back to where they first found you, believed you. And our mistakes and our mess-ups, what we've done to ourselves, what other people have done to us, we say goodbye to it all. Because now we have Jesus with us.

We're gonna walk with you, Jesus. Thank you for taking our hands again fresh. Don't let anybody be discouraged.

Don't let anybody believe that lie that you gave up, you've done with us. You never gave up on me. I praise you.

Can we give God a hand clap of praise that he never gave up? We thank you for a beautiful night. Thank you, Lord. Thank you, Jesus.

Get us home safely. And everyone said, turn and give somebody a hug.

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