placed as the cornerstone of God’s building. Whatever historical situation gave rise to this Psalm, it also paints a picture for us of the miracle that God would perform in Jesus. While rejected by his own people (John 1:11), God chose Jesus as the cornerstone upon which the church would be built. Truly the Lord’s hand has done mighty things. So how do we respond to these things? Paul provides direction in Colossians 3:1-4.

**Colossians 3:1-4**

In Colossians 2:20, Paul reminds the believers in Colosse that they had died with Christ to the principles of the world, which were external and man-made. Then, in Colossians 3:1-4, Paul says, "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." Paul reminds us that through faith in Christ, we not only die with him, but are raised from the dead with him as well. What does that mean? First, it means that we should seek and set our minds on the things above—on heavenly things. Through faith in Christ, we have been born again into a new life to work its way into our lives. By God’s grace, we can discipline our minds to be perfect and instantaneous, which is why Paul tells us to actively seek the things that are above. While God is actively working this new life into us, he also calls us to respond by actively seeking this new life. People miss this in two ways. Some think they can save themselves by seeking heavenly things and living a good life—by making good choices. Others recognize they can’t save themselves, but they’re perfectly happy not only to let God save them but to be completely passive in their growth as though God asks nothing of them. Instead, we should recognize that God has done what we could not do, but also that he now asks us to seek the things that are above. Rather than seeking the things below, whether the secular things of wealth and power and pleasure, or the religious things of self-righteousness and admiration by others, we are to seek the things above like holiness of heart, joy, righteousness, love, patience, self-control, peace, gentleness, kindness, goodness, and the like—qualities of the heart that naturally express themselves in right behavior.

We should also, Paul says, set our minds on things above, not on earthly things. Of course, it’s impossible to seek the things that are above without thinking about them. And while we cannot control every thought that comes into our mind, God has given us the ability to disciple our minds to think about the things we set out to think about. One of the ways, then, that we respond to the gift of having been raised with Christ to new life and living with him in the heavenly realms, is to set our minds on heavenly things. In Romans 12:2, Paul says, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” By God’s grace, we can discipline our minds to be set on things above. We can do that most easily not just by reading Scripture, but by thinking about our lives and relationships and culture and church and pandemics and everything else through the lens of Scripture. Whatever the case, the resurrection of Christ should cause us to set our minds on things above. And here’s the great news in all of this: “when Christ, who is our life, appears, then we also will appear with him in glory.” Someday, the reality of the resurrection and our currently hidden life in Christ with God, will no longer be hidden.

**Conclusion**

One, if you have never had your sins forgiven and do not have the hope of eternal life with Christ, God provided a way through the death and resurrection of Jesus. To receive that gift, you must simply acknowledge your sin, trust that Jesus died to pay the price for that sin, and ask God to forgive you and wash you.

Two, Scripture itself predicted both the death and resurrection of Jesus, which gives us confidence in God’s sovereignty over history and his promise to return for us, his people. The Old Testament bore witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus hundreds of years before it happened. To be sovereign is to be able to predict and picture the future and then make it happen no matter who or how many oppose what you’re doing. God is sovereign over history. He is sovereign over death. He is still sovereign over our lives.

Three, as a result of being raised with Christ, we should seek and set our minds on the things that are above, where we are hidden in Christ with God. God has done what we could not by sending Jesus to pay the price for our sins and raising him from the dead. However, his action not only requires a response of faith from us, but also a continuing act of faith, which includes seeking the things that are above and setting our minds on things above. That’s how he brings this new life to bear in our lives as we wait for him to perfect us in eternity.

Four, the resurrection of Christ, who is the King of kings, should be celebrated and declared and rejoiced in. And that’s how we’re going to end our service, by declaring together the glory and splendor of our victorious king.
Jesus Raised (vv 3-10)

John 20:3-10 says, “So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)” Then the disciples went back to their homes...”

When Peter and the other disciple heard Mary’s report, they also took off running for the tomb. Presumably John is the other disciple who had been one of Jesus’ closest friends and was present at the crucifixion. John loved Jesus, and since he’s ostensibly writing this story he’s simply being humble both about the fact that Jesus loved him in a special way and that he was much faster than Peter in a foot race. While he beat Peter to the tomb, he didn’t go in. He glanced inside to see the linen strips and then waited for Peter to arrive. Peter, on the other hand, did what Peter was wont to do: he charged straight into the tomb and surveyed what he saw there: the linen strips that had been wrapped around Jesus’ body, and the burial cloth that had been spread around Jesus’ head, which was neatly folded up and set to the side.

Finally the other disciple went inside as well. The text says quite straightforwardly that the other disciple “saw and believed.” John compares the response of these two disciples: both of them saw the same thing and yet only one of them believed. They were both working with the same set of data—the stone that had been rolled away, the absence of Jesus’ body, the strips of linen and the burial cloth—yet yet one of them believed and one of them didn’t.

The faith of the “other disciple” was particularly remarkable because, John says, the disciples had not yet understood from Scripture that Jesus had to be raised from the dead. They didn’t understand that according to Scripture, the story of Jesus was not yet complete, that Scripture actually foresaw and predicted that Jesus would not only die, but also rise again. After looking around, Peter and the other disciple returned to where they were staying.

Before we move on, let me quickly make two points. One, John’s description of the two responses of the two disciples is a reminder that genuine faith is far more than a logical conclusion we draw from the evidence. It’s not that evidence doesn’t matter. It’s simply that evidence isn’t enough to lead us to faith. Nor is evidence enough to sustain our faith. In fact, Hebrews 11 tells us, that faith is the act of believing to the point where there is a gap between what seems to be the current state of the evidence and what we believe to be ultimately true. It is, “being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see” (Hebrews 11:1.).

While there are numerous and solid reasons to believe in the resurrection of Jesus, belief is a matter of faith.

Two, the other disciple’s faith that Jesus had been raised from the dead is especially remarkable because none of the disciples had yet understood that Scripture predicted the death and resurrection of Jesus. In other words, they didn’t know that the resurrection was even a thing. Two passages of Scripture are worth noting. First, Mark 8:31 rec-ords Jesus’ salvation. Second, I Corinthians 15:21-22 speaks about death and resurrection. It says, “Jesus then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.” It’s clear that Peter at least understood what Jesus was saying about death, because he rebuked Jesus for talking about it.

Then in Luke 24, Jesus appears to two of his disciples walking on the road to Emmaus. Without recognizing Jesus, they poured out their grief and disbelief concerning the events of the crucifixion. It was like an episode of Undercover Boss where Jesus went undercover, played dumb, and asked his disciples about the crucifixion and tried to get an idea of whether they were thinking about a possible resurrection. When it was clear they didn’t get it, Jesus said: “25How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” 27And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:25-27). The crucifixion of Jesus wasn’t a failure of God’s plan, but was itself God’s plan. But it wasn’t all of God’s plan. Through the death of Christ, our sins were atoned for. Through the resurrection of Christ, we have the hope that we will be raised to new life as well. Today we look backward and rejoice because of what God did. However, believers in the Old Testament Scriptures looked forward to what God would do. One example is in Psalm 118, which we’ll turn to now.

Psalm 118:14-17, 22-24

In Psalm 118, the psalmist cries out in anguish to the Lord, who answers him and sets him free (v 5). He knew that the Lord was with him and therefore he was not afraid (v 6). He knew that the Lord was his helper and that he would ultimately triumph over the enemy (v 7). He knew that it was better to take refuge in the Lord than trust in man (v 8). Psalm 118:14-17 then says this: “The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. 15Shouts of joy and victory resound in the tents of the righteous. The LORD’s right hand has done mighty things! 16The LORD’s right hand is lifted high; the LORD’s right hand has done mighty things!” “I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the LORD has done. Dropping down to verses 22-24, we read this: “The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; 23the LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes. 24This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”

In the ancient world, stones were taken from quarries and carried to work sites where they would be fitted into the building under construction. The most important stone was the cornerstone because the stability of the whole structure depended on it. In a wild turn of events, the stone that had been rejected by the builders was chosen by God and