Topic: He's Still Working (Season of Easter, Lectionary C)
Scripture: Psalm 150, Revelation 1:4-8, John 20:19-31
Hymns: 8 Praise to the Lord, vu369 Jesus, Stand Among Us, vu642 Be Thou My Vision

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Let’s take a moment to pray…

Lord, before this world's days even began, your Word was in the beginning, and it was with you and it was you. The mystery of that brings us to our knees. Yet today you allow us to open your Word and know you better. So, we ask that you would give us eyes to see and ears to hear. Give us hearts open to your Spirit as we seek you. AMEN.

(SLIDE) Those last couple of verses from John's Gospel account sound like a great end, don't they? As if the authour was perhaps intending of wrapping up the story there in John 20:30-31 (SLIDE) "**Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name**".

You might even venture to say that this would be a great end to the entire Bible. This one verse is so cinematic, as if you've just watched an epic movie and you see Jesus walking into the sunset and this verse appears on the screen. If the resurrection of Jesus is the great victory that won it all, which John wrote just a few chapters before this...

Then this would be a great point to end the whole of Scripture on. We get all that great history of our forefathers in the faith from the First Testament, great books on living a holy life from the Torah, and how Israel became the nation of God's chosen people through the Prophets...

We learn the great songs of praise from the Psalms... woven through all of that are the bread crumbs of the Messiah, the prophecies of the One to come through David's line. A king, a Saviour.

Through the Gospel accounts we witness the Prince of Peace grow into the Saviour He was meant to be, perform miracles and preach the Good News of the Kingdom of God. Jesus comes to Jerusalem, palms laid before Him - hailed as a king.

He is betrayed, tried, crucified in the most cruel of ways... but rises again, reveals Himself to His disciples and others and then... "**Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name**".

That would make a very tidy narrative, wouldn't it? There'd be a lot less Bible to read, though. I mean, this verse (GESTURE) is not even the end of John's Gospel, he goes on for another whole chapter after this. And then there's Acts which tells of the Disciples and the early Church after Christ ascends.

Following Acts is Romans, one of Paul's very first letters and is written to the Christians popping up in Rome at the time. Then Paul starts writing letters in earnest... oh BOY can this man write. I'm not sure how he had time for anything else!

He writes to the Galatian church and its leaders, the church in Ephesus, the Philippians. He writes to the church in Corinth TWICE. Can you imagine getting a letter from Paul... (WAG FINGER) Now you Corinthians be good, stop being contentious with one another, cut out the immorality, get the Lord's Supper right... or I'll come down there with my rod (SLIDE of 1 cor 4:21).

And then getting a SECOND letter from Paul!? (SLIDE) Oh what trouble you must have fallen into! (SLIDE) He writes personal letters to Timothy, and Titus, too addressing how they can lead effectively.

James and Peter and John get in there with their letters and books on the mechanics of the faith, giving us a picture of how a Christian life looks like in a time of persecution and uncertainty.

And then there's Hebrews, ooooooooh Hebrews. Written so much like John's gospel with prose and beautiful, elegant words that interconnects the First and Second Testaments with Christ. And then, THEN you get to the end of Scripture with Revelation (SLIDE). The vision given to John while on the island of Patmos... during his exile. **That** is the end of Scripture, the end of the written word of God.

But there's something odd about Revelation... it is the end of the written word... but it's contents describe a time that has not yet happened, a time that will happen. A prophecy of the end of the world, and the beginning of the new life that awaits believers.

(SLIDE) "**Look, He is coming with the cloud, and 'every eye will see him, even those who pierced Him'; [...] I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord, who is, and was, and who is to come, the Almighty**".

(SLOW) Who is, and was, and is to come.

Now those are powerful words. Prophetic, pardon the pun. Now if you're following me here, and Heaven knows you should be, the point I am making here is that God is still working (SLIDE). You might look at that verse from John 20 and think that is a neat and tidy end to Scripture.

Literally, however, it is not. Christ, God, the Spirit... continue to work. John continues on to his 21st chapter, telling us about Jesus performing miracles. Christ appears to more and more people as the church expands in Acts. Paul encounters Christ and becomes prolific for writing to aspiring new Christian churches.

And as those letters and books wrap up in Jude, God continues to work in our lives. He answers prayer, His Spirit guides you in your day-to-day, He speaks to you through psalms and songs and events in your life, He suffers long with you, He pours out His love on you.

He is not a God who worked in people, sent His Son, and then \*POOF\* disappears. He promised to be with us, and He is with us, and He will be with us into the future. As proof He didn't just up and leave after He finished His work... God leaves us with a prophecy for the coming future. He promises life eternal, and so blessed are we that God then tells us exactly how that will come to pass.

(SLIDE) God gives us Revelation to remind us of the promised future. We have a keepsake, if you will, of His promised return so that in the darkest of moments, when all seems gone, when the world seems empty or too much to bear...

Look for God's promised future here in Revelation. (BIBLE and hold) And when you do, when you crack open this dusty tome of Scripture that most people avoid like the plague... you see God working, still. Yes, He is STILL working.

(EM) God is working on making this a reality now, and when it comes to pass He will be working to move us towards the fulfillment of His promise. The churches receive letters of warning. Trumpets, signs, begin to play out.

Calamity comes, for sure... and through all of this God is working. He will come on the clouds. He will retrieve His people. He's STILL working. (UP) He will raise the dead in Him. He will create a New Heaven and a New Earth.

He's STILL working! And sin and death and Satan and all the things that make us cry and weep will be thrown in the lake of fire! And when all of this comes to pass, God will be the light in our hearts, God will dwell in and around each person always. Forever. (PAUSE)

God is continually working for you, and for me, and for all His people. He hasn't stopped working for us since time began. Those clever moments where it looks like God is done, where words stop and put a nice little end on things...

Those are not the end. Not until God accomplishes everything He promised to do, because that's our God: a strong deliverer, a promise keeper, good and pure and loving and mighty. He's still working for you today.

He's working things for your good. Now, you may not always see it that way... that's for sure. Boy, when I look back to when I was sitting in that dead-end job as a call centre representative, totally raptured in the pits of depression I couldn't see God working for my good.

I saw the opposite. I felt the darkness closing in, my enemies were winning over me, it felt hopeless and like God wasn't even there. I can see Him now, I can see every little thing that happened and know that it was for my good because God didn't stop working.

And He's doing that in every life. In your life He's doing that. It doesn't matter your age, your station in life, your class, how much money you have or don't have. God is working for you. He is using your life to work for the life of others. He using other lives to work in yours.

You are His precious creation. You are his beloved child. He loves you PERIOD. As your great Father in Heaven He is going to work things for your good, I promise you that. And you may not see it right away. You may not see it for years.

You may go through suffering, and pain, and bloody near torture before everything unfolds and you see the promised glory. That's God working. You may feel bored, and misunderstood, or like you're not a good Christian.

You might not see big change, or life-giving miracles and wonder if God is even using your life to help others at all. And one day, I promise you... you'll be talking to someone and they'll tell you just how deeply the things you said or did hit their life. That's God working.

God IS working. God has BEEN working since the dawn of creation. God will CONTINUE to work until the end of time, the end of days. And He doesn't need your money, He doesn't need your car, He doesn't need votes, He doesn't need anything except your heart.

You give Him that... wholly and completely... and God will change the world with it... because He never stops working.