

A Futile Cover Up

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[0:00] We have two scripture readings this morning related to our morning message and so we're forgoing our regular consecutive reading through the Old Testament. And when the centurion who stood there in front of Jesus heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, Surely this man was the Son of God.

Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses and Salome. In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs.

Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there. It was preparation day, that is the day before the Sabbath. So as evening approached, Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the council who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body.

Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead. Summoning the centurion, he asked him if Jesus had already died. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he gave the body to Joseph.

So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

[1:41] Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid. Let's turn now in our Bibles to the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew chapter 27, beginning in verse 62 and reading through 15 of chapter 28.

The next day, the one after preparation day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. Sir, they said, we remember that while he was still alive, that deceiver said, after three days I will rise again.

So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.

Take a guard, Pilate answered. Go make the tomb as secure as you know how. So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

After the Sabbath, at dawn, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.

[2:53] His appearance was like lightning and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here. He is risen. Then, just as he said, come and see the place where he lay. 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. Now I have told you. So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid, yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them.

Greetings, he said. They came to him, clasped his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee.

There they will see me. While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, you are to say his disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.

[4:07] If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated

among the Jews to this very day.

Three crosses were standing on Golgotha that day. Two of the crucified were still living. The one in the middle, Jesus of Nazareth, was already dead.

Already dead. That was unusual. That was unique. It was remarkable. Even Pilate himself thought so.

We read that when Joseph of Arimathea went boldly to Pilate to ask for Jesus' body to bury him, Pilate was surprised to hear that he was already dead.

Now, Pilate is no novice to crucifixion. It's estimated that during his ten-year rule in Jerusalem that he crucified over 10,000 Jews as he sought to stamp out that spirit of insurrection and rebellion against Rome that was often found in their midst.

[5 : 26] Pilate knew a bit about crucifixion. He knew how long it took for the slow, torturous death of the cross to drain the life out of the man.

It was slow on purpose. Not just anyone was given this. This was for the worst criminals. It was meant to be a slow, long, torturous death.

Sometimes they lingered for days on the cross before expiring in death. And it's this expert Pontius Pilate who was surprised to learn that after just six hours on the cross, Jesus of Nazareth was already dead.

And so he calls for the centurion in charge of the crucifixion and asks him, Is it true? Can he already be dead?

And once he verified it, he then gave him over to Joseph for burial. Now, Pilate's surprise at Jesus' early death does at least two things for us.

[6 : 32] First of all, it bears witness to the unique death of Jesus. The unique death of Jesus. Jesus died as no other man dies.

Or has died. How did he die? He dismissed his spirit. He laid down his life.

No man takes it from me. That's what he had said earlier in John chapter 10. I lay down my life only to take it up again. No one takes it from me.

But I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.

Now, both of those are divine prerogatives. It is as much a divine prerogative to lay down one's life as it is to take it up again. And so from the cross he cried with a loud voice, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.

[7 : 40] And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. He dismissed his spirit. Just like I might give up my pen to you and hand it over to you, Jesus, as he hung on the cross, handed over his spirit to his Father.

He was in control down to the very last breath, including the giving up of that last breath in death. That is a unique death. No one dies like that. How different, in that sense, from the death of mere mortals.

When Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis died, her son John Jr. stepped out of the townhouse to tell a sea of reporters that his mom had, quote, died with friends, with family, and with her books.

She died with dignity. She died on her own terms. I don't know exactly what he meant by dying on her own terms.

[8 : 44] But mortal men do not die on their own terms. They die on God's terms. It was Job who said it, Man's days are determined.

You, O Jehovah, You have decreed the number of his months, and have set limits he cannot exceed. Man's helplessness is nowhere felt more potently than in the face of death.

He can't evade it. He can't postpone it. He can't reverse it. Rebellious man does not like living in helpless dependence upon his Creator. He wants to be in control.

He wants to call the shots. He wants to be in charge right down to the last breath. And so we have today euthanasia, and we have doctor-assisted suicide.

Man's last desperate attempt to be his own God, to be in charge, to take the reins into his own hands, and to assert his own control even over the way that he dies.

[9 : 52] And so he says with his dying breath to God, I did it my way. I had it my way. To some, that is dying with dignity. Well, as much as man might like to kid himself, no man dies on his own terms.

He might think he's in control, but he's helpless before death. Not so our Lord Jesus. He does not die as another man helpless before death.

He really is in control. He really is calling the shots right up to his last breath. No one is taking his life from him. He is laying it down himself.

When he had suffered the full force of God's wrath for the sins of his people, when he had purchased by his blood the forgiveness and salvation of all that the Father had given him, when he had completed the work that the Father gave him to do, he cried, It is finished!

And though he had only been on the cross for six hours, his work done, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. He died as no one else dies.

[11:09] It was a unique death. But Pilate's surprise over the fact that Jesus was already dead not only shows us it was a unique death, it also bears testimony to the fact that it was a real death.

That Jesus really died. He died and was as dead as any other dead man. What is death? Death is the separation of the body and the spirit.

James said it in James 2, as the body without the spirit is death. You are a body-spirit creature and your body houses your spirit.

But when your spirit leaves the body, that's called death. As the body without the spirit is dead. That happened to Jesus on the cross.

He had given up his life spirit into his father's hands. And Pilate's surprise at how early this happened to Jesus presses the centurion on duty into the witness stand.

[12:15] And here's this toughened centurion then who's seen many men die. That was his job that day, you know. His job was to be sure that the convicted criminal got what he had coming.

It was the death sentence. And so his job was to be sure that those men died. That they were dead, dead. That's his job.

And he'd done it dozens of times before. And so when the centurion, Mark tells us, when the centurion who stood there in front of Jesus heard his cry and saw how he died, he saw his unique death, he said, surely this man was the Son of God.

He was right there. He saw him die. Some of you have been right there to see another die? You know they're gone. They're no longer there.

This centurion, having seen him die, he bears public witness to Pontius Pilate about the real death of Jesus. You add to this the testimony of all the other soldiers who were there gathered around the cross.

[13:32] And because the next day was a special Sabbath of Passover, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses, so they went to Pilate with their request. And they hastened the death.

They wanted the bodies taken down before the Holy Sabbath. And so the way to hasten the death of the crucified was to break, to shatter their legs.

That would not allow them to push up and get a breath. death. And so they would just have to slink down and suffocate. Death would not be long once the legs were broken.

And so they come to the first criminal and they shatter his legs. They do the same to the third, but the one in the middle, they see he's already dead. There's the testimony the second time.

And so they don't need to break his legs. He's not breathing. He's gone. And one of the soldiers takes his spear and jabs him in the side and water and blood flowed out.

[14:34] John gives testimony of having seen it. Witnesses over and over at the cross confirming the real death of Jesus. Not only was it a unique death, it was a real death.

You say, John, why is that important? It's important because if there's not a real death, you don't have a real resurrection. And you know, there's scholars that say Jesus didn't really die.

And that's how they deny the real resurrection of the body. He just swooned. The swoon theory. He just passed out.

But he didn't die. Oh, yes, he did. And our Bible is full of the witnesses. And it's not just Peter, James, and John.

No, it's centurions. James, soldiers. Everyone who saw him that day knew he was dead.

[15:29] It was Nicodemus and Joseph who took him down from the cross and wrapped him in burial cloths and laid him in the tomb. You have the testimony of the real death of Jesus.

Jesus. So, in this surprise of Pilate that he's already dead, we learn that Jesus had a unique death, that he had a real death.

And because of that, we know that it was a real resurrection from the dead. Now, the second thing we see is not only Pilate's surprise at his early death.

We see that the Jews had even more trouble keeping Jesus dead than they did getting him dead. Killing Jesus had been a problem for the Jews. They'd been trying to kill him for months and years. As early as John chapter 5, we read of them plotting to kill him. They wanted him. They had him in their grasp so often at different points. They had rocks in their hands ready to take the life out of him and somehow he slipped through their fingers.

[16 : 34] Ready to push him off the brow of a hill. And his time was not yet come. They wanted to kill him. They had a problem getting the job done.

Even at their own trial, they planted false witnesses to lie about him, didn't they? But the false witnesses couldn't agree as to what he had said. You see how every effort of theirs to try to kill him was being frustrated.

They tried to convince Pilate that he deserved to die. They had troubles with that. Pilate says, I find no fault with him. I don't find any charge worthy of death.

I'm going to let him go. They had a hard time putting Jesus to death. They just pressured Pilate. If you let this man go, you'll be no friend of Caesar.

Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar. And finally, they just overpowered him with the numbers. The crowd chanting, crucify, crucify, crucify.

[17 : 36] And he gave in to their wishes. But it wasn't easy. And in that, God was showing that if he ever dies, it'll be on my terms and not on man's.

But now they had accomplished their aim. They finally had killed him. But now they had another problem, didn't they? A greater one.

One far more difficult, and that's how to keep him dead. Usually that's not a problem with men, is it? Someone trying to kill someone, once the deed is done, that's it. But here's a unique problem.

How do we keep him dead? Well, his friends wrapped him in grave clothes and laid him in the tomb, cut out of a rock, and then they rolled the big stone in front of the entrance and went away.

And it was then, when Jesus was dead and buried, that his enemy, still gloating over their victory, suddenly it dawned on them that they had another problem.

[18 : 38] We read of it in the scripture reading. They suddenly realized what he had said. Matthew 27, 62, and following.

The next day, after his burial, the one after preparation day, this is the Sabbath when these chief priests should be doing nothing. You remember their scruples about the Sabbath.

They throw them to the wind now, and they're meeting and they're conniving and they're coming to Pilate, carrying on business. Why? What's the problem? The chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.

Sir, they said, we remember that while he was still alive, that deceiver said, after three days, I will rise again. Interesting that the enemies of Jesus remembered his promise, when to all outward appearances, not even his own disciples remembered that promise, that after three days, I will rise again.

So, sir, we remember what he said. So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he had been raised from the dead.

[19 : 49] And this last deception will be greater than the first. You see their concern. Concern is not at all with real resurrection. That's not in the picture. Their concern is that they might deceive the people and claim.

And the last deception be worse than the first. What's the first deception? The first deception was that Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be Messiah. Claimed to be the Son of God, Messiah.

That was the first deception. But this latter deception would be greater than the first because it would give credence to his first claim. If they say that he's risen from the dead, see, he really is who he said he is.

And so the last deception would be greater than the first. So they're scrambling now to cover their bases.

How do we keep him dead? How do we make sure that there's not even a hint, not even the story can take flight that Jesus has been raised from the dead?

[20 : 57] All this concern was so unnecessary on their part, wasn't it? Because the disciples were not even thinking about his claim, as we just said, nor were they plotting some fake resurrection by stealing the body.

But watch how God takes their own conniving of his enemies and uses it to give fuller testimony to the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He makes even the wrath of men to praise him. So, Pilate says, take a guard. Go make the tomb as secure as you know how.

So they went and made the tomb secure. How? By putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard. Maximum security is their aim. And to make the tomb doubly secure, they used both a seal and a guard.

A guard would have been the band of probably Roman soldiers armed and supplied by Pilate. The seal would have been a cord that was covered by clay or wax that bore an official seal that was impressed in it so that as you had the stone covering the entrance, a seal was put between the stone and the wall of the cave so that if anyone moved that stone, it would be known it was tampered with, the grave had been tampered with, the breaking of the seal.

[22 : 25] There, they've got all their bases covered now. Surely no one will be tampering with the grave now as they've made the tomb secure. That's what it said. They've made the tomb secure.

And he who sits in the heavens laughs. The Bible says their futile attempts to make the tomb secure are about like a kid putting a piece of duct tape over a rumbling mouth of a volcano. He's going to keep it in, you see. They're going to keep Jesus in with this seal and with this guard. No one's going to steal him. We come to chapter 28 and read, after the Sabbath at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

The other Gospels tell us why they went to look at the tomb. They went to finish what Nicodemus and Joseph had not been able to finish. It was a hurry job in burying him because the Sabbath was coming.

So they come after the Sabbath with their spices to further anoint the body of Jesus. They weren't coming to the tomb to steal his body. They were coming to finish the burial.

[23 : 33] And on the way they started scratching their heads and asking each other who's going to move the stone for us? Evidently it was a large enough stone that they would have had problems with it and they were beginning to wonder how's this stone going to be moved away so we can get in and finish the anointing.

And the Lord you remember took care of the stone for them before they got there. We read in verse 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 and sat on it.

His appearance was like lightning and his clothes were white as snow. a violent earthquake no doubt broke the seal that had secured the tomb and one angel took care of the whole guard of Roman soldiers.

Just one angel who had been in the presence of God and was still shining with the Shekinah glory of God like a lightning bolt from heaven or like the brilliance of snow and none of the guards stopped him as he made his way to the tomb and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

We read in verse 4 the guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. They did pass out they did swoon and here's where the swoon theory comes in.

[25 : 05] They were rendered unconscious by what they saw in front of them. So much for making the tomb secure. And so when they wake up we've told that some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened.

Now that's important. They told the truth. They told everything that had happened. We were sitting there. We were standing there. We were on guard when suddenly a violent earthquake shook us and an angel as bright as lightning and white as snow came down from heaven and went up to the tomb and rolled back the stone and sat on top of it and we couldn't resist him.

We couldn't move. We were frozen in fear. We couldn't even keep ourselves from shaking. In fact, we couldn't even keep ourselves conscious. We blacked out. And when we came to the tomb was empty.

They told the truth. They told everything that had happened. And so the guards sent to secure the tomb becoming the plan of God the first witnesses of the resurrection to his own enemies.

Jesus is risen. He is no longer in the tomb. Now here's where the Jews' attempts at keeping Jesus dead really start to come unraveled.

[26 : 38] They hadn't figured on real resurrection. Their plan was to stop a fake resurrection, the stealing of the body by the disciples. But real resurrection made their attempts at securing the tomb look silly.

And so the chief priests and these elders quickly convened a meeting to deal with this unexpected turn of events. We've got to act now or it will be too late is their thought.

And all the evidence you see all the evidence was pointing to real resurrection. This was a moment of truth a moment of decision for these rulers.

What will they do when confronted with the truth? The truth from undeniable eyewitnesses. Well their answer was that they would suppress the truth.

They would try to cover up the truth. And we ask why not just rather tell the truth? Kids it's easier to lie at the beginning but then it becomes harder to try to cover your lie.

[27 : 42] You've got to tell another one and another one and it gets real complicated and in the end you're found to be the liar anyway. Why not just tell the truth the first time? And we'd ask these Jews why not just tell the truth?

You know we thought that this Jesus of Nazareth was a charlatan. We didn't believe for a moment that he was really the son of God that he was our Messiah. He didn't fit our ideas of Messiah but we were wrong.

We have come to see by his resurrection that he is indeed the son of God Romans 1-3 we have come to see that he indeed has power to save us not just from Rome but from our greatest enemies of sin and death and hell we were wrong he's Messiah he was innocent and we murdered him he was the king of glory and we killed him why not just tell the truth?

Well it means they would have to face their sin doesn't it? it means that they would have to own their murder own their falsehood own their deceit and that would cause the Jesus crowd to grow and their own crowd to dwindle and their envy would not allow them to tell the truth their love of power and of the praises of men would not hear of it their pride and self righteousness would not stoop to such depths of confession of sin their independence and craving to control their own lives would not allow them to bow the knee to King Jesus you see men are slaves to sin and that's why even when confronted with the truth they'll turn their back on the truth and suppress it cover it up anything but face it and own it these men were slaves to their own sin and so they suppressed the very truth that could have set them free and they judged themselves unworthy of eternal life and instead of telling the truth they tell a lie and they buy with their hush money the telling of their lie by the soldiers they gave the soldiers a large sum of money we're told telling them this is what you're to say his disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep it'd take money and a lot of it to get a Roman soldier to say that because that's to admit that he had fallen asleep on guard duty and that was not a small boo-boo for a

Roman soldier that could mean his life not to worry not to worry we have money and if it gets to Pontius Pilate we'll pay him off as well so these Jewish leaders cough up a large sum of money to persuade them and also assure them that there's more where it came from enough to satisfy even Pontius Pilate lots of money does not prove God's presence and blessing upon a church the Jewish priests had plenty of money didn't they they had enough money to buy Judas they had enough to fill their courtroom with false witnesses they had enough to pay huge bribes to get the soldiers to lie for them and enough left over to satisfy Pilate if need be plenty of money and the religious system of a Christless Judaism but the glory had departed they had murdered the Messiah and there was no glory left and these were the same leaders who called

[31 : 49] Jesus that deceiver we remember what that deceiver said and these are the ones who were so concerned about a greater deception about the disciples stealing the body of Jesus and now what are they doing they're spinning a web of deceit of their own they're quick to find the sin in others that's already reigning in their own hearts they deceive the people with their hush money so the soldiers took the money and told the lie that was put in their mouth his disciples came during the night while we were sleeping and stole the body away think about that for a minute there's a flaw there somewhere isn't there as there is often in any lie as presidents and rulers and all who have tried to cover up truth have ever found that it's hard to cover up the truth how do you know the disciples stole the body away if you were asleep when it happened how can you say that the disciples have stolen the body when you've just told us that you were sleeping when it all came down you see it was hard to kill

Jesus but they found it was harder still to keep him dead nevertheless Matthew 35 years later when he sits down to write his gospel tells us this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day 35 years after the death of Jesus wherever the gospel went proclaiming the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the lie of the Jews was not far behind that's just a story that the

followers of Christ made up they stole the body while the guards were sleeping hundred years later the Christian apologist Justin Martyr addressed the Jews in his dialogue with Trifo and he said you have sent chosen and ordained men throughout the whole world to proclaim that a godless and lawless heresy had sprung from one Jesus a Galilean deceiver whose disciples stole him away by night from the tomb end quote a hundred years later this story is still being circulated do you know it's still circulating today along with all sorts of other denials of the resurrection you know the latest the book the family the Jesus family tomb a Jew

Simcha Jacob Ovisi wrote a book together with James Cameron the producer came up with a Discovery Channel documentary The Lost Tomb of Jesus perhaps you've seen it advertised claiming that they found the tomb and Jesus bones in it near Jerusalem and therefore the physical resurrection of Jesus is a hoax it's just another but what we say it's just another attempt to keep Jesus in the tomb you see we must keep Jesus in the tomb and on their official website they refer to Matthew 28 the passage we're studying this morning they refer to this widely circulated report about the disciples of Jesus coming and during the night stealing his body and quote they say this we suggest this can be taken for the truth how is it that you have the bones in the tomb of Jesus sirs well it's because what was called a rumor in

Matthew 28 really happened and they came during the night and they while the guards were sleeping they stole the body of Jesus and they went over and buried it in a family tomb and that's where we found the bones recently the resurrection the bodily resurrection of Jesus is a pure hoax is their storyline and what do we see in all of this we see the futility of trying to keep Jesus in the tomb Peter said it on the day of Pentecost God raised him from the dead freeing him from the agony of death because it was impossible impossible for death to keep its hold on him you see this is what what makes Jesus so unique death keeps its hold keeps people in the grave doesn't it but it's impossible to keep Jesus in the grave impossible for death to keep its hold on him why because on the cross he destroyed death we saw it Friday night on the cross he destroyed death by dying for sin he suffered death which was the penalty for sin and death no longer has anything to do with him he's paid its price in full and so death no longer has power over him and all who are in him will find the same that death no longer has power over us because

Jesus conquered death we too will live Jesus lives and so shall I we sang to his praise his enemies might have succeeded in persuading many that with their bribes and their books that Jesus did not really rise but false witnesses do not keep Jesus in the grave do they false witnesses don't keep Jesus dead they only cover up the truth that he really is in fact alive and lies are all temporary they can only cover up this truth for a while it is hard to keep the truth down it has a way of popping up doesn't it and especially this truth the best they can do is hide the truth for a while because there's coming a great unveiling when this lie will be exposed for the lie that it is how will it happen Jesus the risen living Christ will descend from heaven bodily physically come back and every eye will see him even those who pierced him the scriptures say even those who lied about him saying he's not really risen he's still in the grave even those who write books about his bones being in a tomb over in

[38 : 30] Jerusalem! every eye will see him very much alive you cannot keep him in the grave death has lost its grip upon him and the lies will be shattered in that day your response to the resurrection really shows which side on this conflict of truth and lies you're on do you rejoice in a risen savior today is he your hope and trust that you yourself will live forever and ever one day because Jesus is your trust you trust him to take your sins away to suffer your death in your place then the resurrection day is a glorious thing but if Jesus is not your lord and savior and you're not serving him the resurrection is not such a hot thing with you you may not just say with them I don't believe Jesus rose again physically but it's not really comforting news to know that

Jesus is alive and that he's coming back why because he's coming to judge the world in righteousness and to judge the peoples in his truth and Paul went around preaching this message of the good news of Jesus and the resurrection and he said to some philosophers on Mars Hill God commands all people everywhere to repent and you see that includes you whoever you are all people everywhere God now commands you to repent you're going your own way you're living for yourself you've turned your back on King Jesus this living Lord you're living for yourself you're not following his commands you're not trusting in his work and righteousness you're living the way you want to live and God commands you to repent that is to turn around forsake your sin and to come to

Christ and to cling to him for mercy but he doesn't leave it there he says if you don't repent I have a judge for you listen to how he puts it God commands all people everywhere to repent for he has appointed a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he is appointed he has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead you see if the judge is in the grave we need not fear if the judge is dead and still bones in a tomb there's no fear for the day of judgment the one that God has chosen to be the judge of that day he's dead but if he's alive then I'm going to stand before him someday and give an account of my life to him and be consigned to hell or heaven eternally that's another matter and you see if Jesus is not your

Lord and Savior this morning the thought of him being alive and well and returning is not all that exciting to you how does the resurrected Christ affect you this morning are you ready to meet him do you do you meet him and worship him this morning or do you feel uncomfortable the fact that this Jesus is alive you see this is a moment of decision for you we saw that the Jews had a moment of truth when when faced with the truth what would they do would they confess their sins and own the truth no they suppressed it now you've been confronted with the truth again you've heard again the truth of Jesus Christ and his death on the cross for sinners and of his resurrection to life real resurrection and he's gone into heaven he's coming again now what are you going to do with the truth you see there's many people

I saw the numbers this week on a survey that was taken there's hardly anybody in our country that doesn't believe Jesus rose from the dead they all want to sign on to that one maybe some of them if you ask them do you mean his body rose they'd say no I just mean the spirit rose but everybody basically maybe 14% 7% it was a small figure that denied the resurrection of Jesus so you see the point this morning is not do you say I believe Jesus rose from the dead hell is full of people who believe that Jesus died for sinners and rose on the third day the devils believe that and tremble but they do not love that savior they do not worship that living lord they do not submit their life to him they do not trust in him they know he's alive they confess the truth but they do not walk in the truth it's not enough to say this morning

[43:54] I believe in the resurrection of Jesus have you trusted in this Jesus is he your lord have you turned from your way and come to him and ask him to forgive you your sins to work in you by his resurrection power that heart to obey him and to walk in his ways how sad that people would deny the resurrection it's the only hope that sinners have isn't it the savior who conquered death by dying on the cross and rising to newness of life how sad that people do not come to this savior why did he rise from the dead well he he's alive and mighty to save he ever lives to save those who come to god through him what a good news this gospel is why deny it why suppress it why try to ignore it why go on your way when life eternal life is before you in Jesus Christ we enjoy don't we after a long winter seeing the first new burst of life in the spring even so we enjoy after seeing our savior's death on the cross seeing with the eye of faith our savior rising with newness of life and he offers you that life you can have a new life my friend are you sick and tired of your own sinful way are you sick and tired of being a rebel against god are you tired of trying to cover your guilt and ignore it are you ready to come clean with god then come and welcome to a new life Jesus offers new life he rose from the dead and has life in himself offers you his own life come and receive him and believers rejoice that Christ has indeed died your death in your place that he really did die it was a real death it was real resurrection and because he lives he's able to save completely those who come to god through him because he always lives to intercede for them are you making use of your risen savior you coming to him often with your sins dear believer you bringing your problems to him you bringing your frustrations your doubts your fears your sin everything to him he lives for you he ever lives he's in heaven for you he's entered into heaven on your behalf he's there to plead your cause to answer your requests let's make use of his life for us and prove by our lives our

God you have made our hearts glad by your deeds by this great work of our savior taking our sin upon him and bearing it to the place of judgment bearing all that we had coming to us for our sins even the death that we deserved under your wrath and curse and then rising the third day to show us to show the world that he indeed had triumphed!

sin and hell and the grave we thank you that that gospel is being preached the world over we thank you that Jesus is receiving praise would you receive the praise of each heart here that we would bow in fresh worship own you as our God and King have dealings with you our living Lord thank you for such love and thank you for such power and all on our behalf for God's glory and our good we praise you in Jesus name amen amen