

The Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Fall Gospel Meeting with Tommy Peeler November 2024

We are glad you're here tonight to worship the Lord, to study His Word with us. And I invite you to open your Bibles to Matthew 26. We're going to incorporate, Lord willing, some of each of the Gospels. But we may follow Matthew the most closely. I won't always stop and say it is in this chapter and this verse in Matthew. But we are simply trying to tell the story of Jesus tonight. Simply trying to tell the story of his death and resurrection, which is the very heart of the gospel message according to 1 Corinthians 15 and verses 3 and 4. And if this lesson does not go well tonight, it is my fault. But if it does go well, the speakers of this lesson don't deserve any credit because we're simply telling His story. We're telling what He has done to save us. But remember how it ties with what we've been seeing? God is great beyond our ability to describe, but we have sinned and separated ourselves from God.

God doesn't owe us anything, but he's given us everything. And tonight we'll see what he has given us in the death and resurrection to eliminate our sin, to make us right with him. In Matthew 26, around verse 6, Jesus was in the home of Simon the leper, and a woman comes to him with an alabaster vial of perfume and begins anointing his feet. Some of the disciples, began to complain this perfume could have been sold for a great price and the money given to the poor they said that the leader of that was Judas according to John's account and he said that not because he was concerned about the poor but because he would often take the money that was put into the treasury but Jesus says why do you bother this woman, she has done a good deed

She's preparing me for the day of my burial. And wherever this gospel goes, what she has done will be told in memory of me. Jesus calls two of his disciples. According to Luke, these are Peter and John. He tells them to go and prepare the Passover. As they go and prepare the Passover for Jesus, and his disciples are eating, he tells them he's desired to eat this Passover. Passover with them. But he has some heavy news during the Passover meal. He says, tonight, one of you will betray me. And they began to ask, surely it's not I, Lord? And they asked this. Jesus said, it will be one who dips his hand in the bowl with me. Now, I don't think that was a specific sign that

pointed to Judas as the betrayer I think it's saying that one who has eaten at my table and has enjoyed this table fellowship is going to do this treacherous act of betraying me but finally Judas asked is it I and Jesus said you have said it yourself as they're eating the Passover, he takes the bread of the Passover he said take eat and This is my body, which is for you. He took of the cup and says, This is a new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins. And I will not drink it with you until I drink it anew in my Father's kingdom. And the Bible said they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. Now, it was Jewish practice in that time.

to sing Psalms 113 and 114 before the Passover meal and 115 to 118 after the Passover meal. I would encourage you sometime to read those Psalms. Psalms 113 to 118 with a view toward the fact these were some of the last words that Jesus ever said when he was with his disciples. there is the line in those, I will not die but live and Praise your name. All of those things should have foreshadowed and foretold of the resurrection of Jesus. Around verse 36, the Bible tells us Jesus went to a place. This place is called Gethsemane. It's described as a garden in the Gospel of John and He goes to this garden and he is deeply troubled and grieved and tells his disciples, I want you to remain here and pray. And my soul is deeply grieved, even to the point of death. And he goes and he prays, my father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. But not my will, but thine be done.

let this cup pass from me. The Bible tells us that Jesus offered up strong crying and tears in Hebrews 5 verse 7. And I take it that it was this occasion. Luke's Gospel in Luke 22 verses 43 and 44 tells us that the sweat fell from Jesus as great drops of blood. Now does that mean There were simply huge beads of perspiration. Or does it mean that he was actually sweating blood as people have been known to do in times of extreme stress? I don't know the answer. But the sweat was as great drops of blood. He is offering up strong crying and tears. And he's begging the Father, let this cup pass from me. In the Old Testament, the cup was sometimes a picture of God pouring his judgments in a cup and forcing the wicked to drink it down recently sometime in the assembly you have read psalm 75 and psalm 75 verse 8 makes that kind of statement about the cup you see the cup as an instrument of judgment at the end of Isaiah 51 and Jeremiah 25 beginning around verse 15 but

But Jesus is begging the Father to show mercy. And He comes back from a time of prayer. And He comes to the disciples. And they are sleeping. And Jesus says, Could you not watch with me one hour? After all, when Jesus told them, the shepherd was going to be struck down and all the sheep would be scattered. All of them stated, especially Peter, Lord, if I die with you, I will never deny you and now all of them are asleep. Just look for how many times in Jesus final night the disciples failed the come short. Jesus does not. But Jesus goes away and basically the same prayer a second time, a third time. Each time he comes back finds his disciples asleep. Jesus had encouraged them.

Get up and pray. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. But this third time, he says, let's get up. Let's be going. Behold, the one who betrays me is at hand. But to some degree, they have lost the battle before they fought it because they haven't prepared for this spiritual conflict with fervent prayer. Did you notice in verse 47 of Matthew 26 that Judas is described as one of the 12? Judas was described that same way in verse 14. Judas, one of the twelve, went to the chief priest and said, what are you willing to give me if I betray him to you and they were willing to give him 30 pieces of silver. But he's described both in verse 14 and in verse 47 as one of the twelve. Now, it's not as if we've never met Judas before.

But the Bible is again trying to emphasize the treachery of Judas' act. As the Gospel of John says, it is one who has eaten my bread who has lifted his heel against me. And Jesus, Jesus is being betrayed by one of his closest disciples. And he has given them a sign. Whomever I kiss, he is the one. You hold him fast. And Judas comes up and Jesus said, Do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss? And the Bible tells us the disciples ask, Lord, do you want us to strike with the sword? But apparently, they don't wait for the answer because one of them draws the sword. We find from the other Gospels, this is Peter, and Peter swings the sword and cuts off

the right ear of a man named Malchus who has come to arrest Jesus now Luke's gospel gives us the detail that Jesus healed Malchus ear don't you think if you were in that company that had come to arrest Jesus that that would give you second thoughts that that would make you think maybe we're doing the wrong thing here and maybe Malchus' name is recorded for us because he did come to that understanding. I hope so. But the disciples didn't wait for an answer when they said, Lord, shall we strike by the sword? And Jesus tells them after Peter does, stop, put up your sword. Don't you know that I could pray to my father and he would send more than 12 legions of angels? Sometimes we sing a song, a good song,

He could have called 10,000 angels. But a legion consisted of around 6,000 soldiers, and 12 legions would have been around 72,000. He could have called a lot more than 10,000 soldiers. But my point is this. Jesus is not going to the cross out of weakness. Jesus is going to the cross in spite of strain. But he says, How then will the Scriptures be fulfilled? How will He fulfill all those pictures of a suffering Savior, of one who's wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities? How will He fulfill them if He does not go to the cross? But the Bible tells us that all the disciples forsake

Jesus and flee. Now, I want to state this really clearly because this is something you may want to write down if you're taking notes. But there are generally viewed as three levels of Jesus' Jewish hearings, some will call them, and some will call them just trials. But Jesus' Jewish trial has three stages.

Three stages. He will also later be taken to the Romans, and that will have three stages. I'm going to try to clearly define these. If I do not do that well, feel free to ask afterwards, and I'll make it very clear. If I don't state it as clearly here publicly. But the first stage of Jesus' Jewish trial was before Annas. Now, this is recorded in John 18, verses 12 through 14, and John 18 in verses 19 through 24. That is not recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It is recorded in John 18. Annas had been the high priest from 6 to 15 AD and had been removed from that position by the Romans. But because that position was supposed to be a lifetime position, some of the Jews still regarded him as the high priest. And Jesus is taken to stand before Annas. We don't read much about this trial, but we do know that during the trial, one of the soldiers' slaps Jesus and said, is that the way you answer the high priest?

Jesus is taken then to trial before Caiaphas or Caiaphas. Now this is recorded in all the Synoptic Gospels. This is recorded particularly in Matthew 26, verses 57 through 68. Caiaphas and the court with him made up of the elders and the chief priests were the Sanhedrin. You may have seen miscarriages of justice before. You may have seen guilty people being let free and innocent people being railroaded. You may have seen that, but there has never been a case of that in all human history that compares to this one. There was no presumption of innocence there. That was given to Jesus. Notice in Matthew 26, in verse 59, the chief priest and the whole council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus. The ones who are trying him are looking for false testimony. And they're looking for false testimony, verse 59 says, so they might put him to death.

So they have already decided that he is guilty. They have already decided that the sentence will be death. They're just looking for a charge to pin on Jesus. The closest thing they get to a real charge is the statement that I heard him say, I'm going to destroy this temple and raise it up again in three days. Now Mark's account tells us not even in that respect was their testimony made. Consistent. Their testimony was not consistent. But let me ask you just a quick just a second is that what Jesus said? I will destroy this temple and I will raise it up again in three days if you look at John 2, which records this statement, Jesus said, destroy this temple and I will raise it up again in three days. They were going to do the work of destruction.

He was going to do the work of reconstruction. Destroy this temple, and in three days, I'll raise it up. And we know from John's account that he was speaking of his own resurrection when he said that. He's prophesying of this moment when he said that. But they used that as a charge. And the Romans even took the charge of desecrating a place of worship very seriously. But they can't even agree in this regard. The witnesses can't agree in their testimony against Jesus. So finally, the high priest just answered Jesus a question directly. He said, I adjure you by the living God. Are you the Christ, the Son? I adjure you by God. Are you the Christ, the Son of the living God? and Jesus said, I am. And you will see the Son of Man coming at the right hand of power on the clouds of heaven. Now, that passage, verse 64, Jesus is combining a couple of Old Testament passages. He's combining Psalm 110, verse 1. The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

And he's combining Daniel 7, 13 and 14, which talk about the Son of Man ascending to the ancient of days to receive a kingdom and glory and authority. Now, both of those passages, Daniel 7, Psalm 110, are triumphant texts which show the Messiah defeating his foes. This is striking. In what looks like Jesus' greatest defeat, He is alluding to passages that speak of his victory over evil. The high

priest, though, hears these words. And he tears his clothes. And he says, what further deed do we have of witnesses? You've heard the blasphemy yourself. And they began to spit in the face of And to slap him. with their hand. I'll tell you something, people. We're all outraged by a real case of injustice. This is how they treated our Savior and our Lord. They spit in His face. They slap Him. Now, the third stage of the Jewish trial of Jesus,

before this same group. It is before Caiaphas or Caiaphas in the Sanhedrin. And it's mentioned in Matthew 27, verses 1 and 2. When morning came, all the chief priests and elders conferred together against Jesus to put him to death. Now, you may say, what's the difference it's the same group of people. They do it after morning light. It may have been That it was unlawful for the Sanhedrin to try a case at night later it was and It may have been there may be in Acts chapter 4 verses 5 and 6 internal New Testament evidence that that was that was the case that they couldn't try a case at night, but they tried Jesus before Annas then before Caiaphas or Caiaphas in the Sanhedrin and then a third meeting before the same group in Matthew 27 in verses 1 and 2. But while Jesus is being mocked and spit upon and his claims ridiculed, his most outspoken disciple, Peter, is following him at a distance. And a servant girl, a that doesn't have... clout says you're one of his followers aren't you he says no I'm not the accusations become commonplace you're one of his followers even we find in John one of the relatives of the man whose ear he cut off said you're one of his disciples And his denials become more adamant until finally he is calling down curses upon himself saying, I don't know this Jesus of Nazareth. And I don't know how everything was situated. But one of the times that Peter made his most adamant third denial, the Bible tells us that Jesus turned and looked at Peter in Luke 22. And the cock crowed.

And Peter went out and bitterly. You know, there's some songs that I hesitate to sing, not because they don't have a good message, but because I don't know them. For example, They tried my Lord and Savior with no one to defend. Within the halls of Pilate, he stood without a I'll be a friend to Jesus. Am I going to stand and acknowledge him when all the tide of public opinion is going against him? and mocking his followers? May God help me. God help you to do that. But there are a couple of problems. Those are three stages of Jesus' Jewish trial. But there are a couple of problems with that. One, they don't have the power to execute anybody. That seems to be what's indicated by John 18, 31.

that the Jews do not have the power of capital punishment. But another problem is they have accused Jesus of blasphemy, and blasphemy was not an area that the Romans were greatly concerned about. Do you remember when Paul was on his second missionary journey? He was in the city of Corinth, the Bible says, for a year and a half, and sometime before that, sometime during that, The Jews drag him before the judgment seat of Galileo in Acts 18. And Jews say, this man, Paul, is encouraging men to worship God contrary to the law. And Paul is about to speak up for himself, and Galileo interrupts him. He says, oh Jews, if this were a matter of real crime, wrongdoing, I would be willing to put up with you.

But if this is about questions or names or about your own law, you look after that yourself. I am not going to be the judge of these kind of matters. Now, the reason I mention that passage in Acts 18, about verses 12 through 15, is because that shows us how the Romans regarded what the Jews described as blasphemy. The Romans do not want to get involved in Jewish religious squabbles. They don't want to do it. they don't want to do it and so what happens when they bring Jesus to Pilate, they can't just say he's guilty of blasphemy at the start instead in Luke 23 verse 2 they said we have found this man misleading our nation forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar saying that he himself is Christ a king now

Did Jesus say it was unlawful to pay taxes to Caesar? You can all read a couple of chapters ahead, whether it be Matthew, Mark, or Luke, and you can find out Jesus' answer when he was asked that question. But they accused him of being a king in competition to Caesar. And this is where John 18 tells us that Pilate asked Jesus, Are you a king? And Jesus said, Are you saying that of yourself? Or did others tell you that about me? And Pilate says, I'm not a Jew. Your own people have accused you. He said, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight that I would not be delivered to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not of this realm. I come to bear witness to the truth.

and Pilate says, what is true what is true little did he know that the way and the truth was right before his eye. What is true the world asked that question like nobody can know. Pilate asked it that way. We're studying about the one who is true. But right away, Pilate, first day of Jesus' Roman trial, says, I don't find any fault in him. I find no guilt in him. Well, the Jews who have charged Jesus become more insistent in their demands. Listen, he has freed up the people. all the way from Galilee. And Pilate hears what may be a way to get out of this. He knows Jesus is innocent. And so his second stage of his Roman trial is he sends Jesus, Pilate sends Jesus to Herod. And the Bible tells us, it's only recorded in Luke 23, that Pilate sends Jesus to Herod. Herod had wanted to see Jesus for a long time and see him do some kind of a miracle.

But the Bible tells us that Pilate questions Jesus, and Jesus... Jesus is silent before Herod. And so in the third stage of Jesus' Roman He stood before Herod. Pilate, point one. Second stage, he stood before Herod. But the third stage, Herod sends him back to Pilate. And Pilate, once again, says, listen, I don't find any guilt in him. I haven't found any guilt in him. Herod hasn't found any guilt in him. That's Luke 23, verses 14 and 15. Have you ever thought about how many people surrounding the cross found no fault in Jesus? Pilate says three times in Luke, three times in John, I find no guilt in him. Herod found no guilt in him. Pilate's wife, you remember what she said to Pilate? She sent him a message, said it had nothing to do with this righteous man. For last night I suffered much in a dream because of him.

Pilate knew he was innocent. Herod knew he was innocent. Pilate's wife knew he was innocent. Judas knew he was innocent. He threw down that silver he was given for betraying Jesus. He said, I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood. One of the thieves crucified next to Jesus would later say about Jesus, he has done nothing wrong. He knew he was innocent. That's five things. And you remember the centurion who saw how Jesus died? We'll talk about his words from Matthew in just a moment. But you know what he said in the Gospel of Luke, Luke 23, 47? He said, certainly this man was innocent. Why do all these characters, six of them now, that play pivotal roles in the story of the cross, affirm the innocence of Jesus? Because God is using their voices to remind us

that he is not on the cross for anything wrong that he had done, but for what we have done. Well, Pilate knows he's innocent. Pilate doesn't have a courage. It takes courage sometimes to stand up and stand behind someone that all the crowds want to see crucified. And Pilate has a way he thinks he can get out of it. He gives the people an opportunity. Do you want me to release to you Barabbas, who was guilty of murder and insurrection and attempt to overthrow the government? Do you want me to release for you Barabbas? Or do you want me to release for you Jesus? And they shouted, Release Barabbas! And he said, What shall I do with Jesus? And the crowd shouts back, Crucify him! Crucify him! Pilate shouts back,

What shall I do with Jesus? He asked, What shall I do with Jesus? And they said, Crucify him. He says, Why? What evil has he done? And the crowds don't answer that question. But they continue to shout, Crucify him. Pilate sees the way the crowd is going, and he takes water, and he washes his hands in front of the crowd and says, I am free of this man's blood. See to that yourself. And they

said, let his blood be upon us and our Words that some would live to regret, no doubt, when the Romans came by in 70 A.D. and destroyed that city of Jerusalem. The Bible tells us that Jesus was mocked. He was played with a crown of thorns.

he they pretended to worship before him bowing down and slapping him on the face and Jesus was scourged over the years there have been many movies made about Jesus about his death and resurrection, I'd always said that there will never be a movie that will portray scourging in all of its horror. Because if there was one, we couldn't bear to watch it. And behold, around 20 years ago, there was one that came close. And that scene I could not bear to watch. In scourging, a person was stripped of their clothing, maybe left with a small loincloth, and the wilt was brought down across their back over and over and over. Josephus said he saw people beaten till their bones and internal organs were visible. He saw people beaten, he said, until they died under scourging. And this is what Jesus experiences.

pre-crucifixion. The Bible does not describe in detail the physical effects of crucifixion because people in that day knew it. Josephus said during the Jewish wars against Rome from 66 to 70 AD that it seemed like the Jews, the Romans were going to run out of peace which to hang them all. That those people knew what crucifixion looked like. Whatever you think about capital punishment in our country, you have to acknowledge this. That as we practice capital punishment is meant to take the life of the victim as quickly and as painlessly as possible. Crucifixion was the opposite of that, where it prolonged the sufferings of the person that to the highest degree, prolonging their suffering, their agony, delaying the moment of death, increasing their shame and anguish. It was a horrible death of physical pain. It a death of physical pain. And it was a death of shame. Remember how Hebrews 12, 1 and 2, says Christ was crucified, despising the shame, despising the shame.

It was a shameful death from a Roman perspective. The Romans exempted their own citizens from crucifixion except in the most extreme cases of treason. They would not let one of theirs be crucified. When the Romans let a man be crucified, they were labeling them as trash, not fit to live. So from a Roman standpoint, crucifixion was shameful. Jewish standpoint, crucifixion was shameful. The Old Testament made the statement in Deuteronomy 21, verses 22 and 23, cursed is the one who hangs on a tree. Now, in its original context, that is not a statement of crucifixion, about crucifixion. But the Jews made that connection. There are some writings in the Dead Sea Scrolls that make the connection between Deuteronomy 21, and people who were crucified. And for the Jewish Messiah to die on a tree under God's curse was baffling to the Jews. That's why Paul says, we preach Christ crucified to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are saved, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God. It was a death,

physical pain. It was a death of social stigma. And yet still, as Jesus is dying, his enemies do not let him alone. But they continue to insult him now my friend think about that. If you had come upon, if you were come upon a horrible, a horrible accident upon the interstate, And it was obvious that the people were hurt so badly and their bodies were so mangled that they were not going to live. And you see someone stop their car and they get out and they start taunting these people who are dying. Wouldn't you feel compelled to say, be quiet. Leave them alone. They've suffered enough. But Jesus, even in dying, shameful, painful death. His enemies still insult him. He saved others. He can't save himself. You come down from the cross and we'll believe in you. And Jesus was silent through all that mockery except to pray, Father, forgive.

for don't know what they're doing. Darkness engulfed the land from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, noon to 3 p.m. Jesus cries out in a loud voice, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? The crowd, some misunderstand his cry and think he's calling for Elijah. Some say let's see if Elijah will save him. Some give him some wine on a sponge and he drinks it to cry out again with a loud voice

perhaps saying it is finished. And gave up the spirit. The earth began to shake and began to split. The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And the centurion and those who were with him say, certainly this man was the Son of God. I want to pause here just a moment. And I'll make two points. We could make all kinds of lessons in the cross. And it is amazing if you read the New Testament or when you read the New Testament carefully.

to look back at how many times the Bible ties certain instruction, commandments, or examples to the cross of Christ. It is a focal point of the biblical story. But one of the things the cross teaches us, it teaches us how hideous, how horrible, how ugly sin is. There are some ugly pictures of sin in the Bible. If you're not familiar with Ezekiel 16 or Ezekiel 23, you may read those chapters and just see the ugly picture they paint of sin. Or 2 Peter 2, verses 20 through 22. And the ugly picture that it paints, like a dog returning to its vomit or a sow that was washed to its wallowing in the mire. Those are pictures of how ugly sin is. But... If we were to take an innocent child and beat them and whip them and nail them to a tree until they expire, that would be too horrible for any of us to watch. And it just shows how horrible everybody else's sin is, but how horrible my sin is.

We should never become proud or arrogant understanding what it took to save us from our sin. So the cross of Christ teaches me the horror of sin. The cross of Christ teaches me, too, the of His love. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life. There's a statement, the first of the Gospel of John. It says, The law came by Moses, but grace and truth through Jesus Christ. I sometimes think I've misunderstood that at points, and I think other people have too. I've sometimes looked at that as saying that, or maybe people have looked at that as saying, well, there really wasn't grace in the Old Testament. Look at that closely. There's grace from page 1 of the Old Testament. In Genesis 1, when God creates everything, Psalm 136 presents that as a picture of God's loving kindness. Grace is present in the Old Testament from Genesis 1. And it really reaches...

Great heights on Mount Sinai in Exodus 34. The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in loving kindness, forgiving transgressions and sins. That's the way God is pictured. Yes, the Old Testament is full of God's grace. But why in that statement, the law came by Moses, grace and truth by Jesus, the cross of Christ. is such the preeminent display of the grace of God, the mercy of God, the love and kindness of God, that it eclipses everything that had gone before. It is not to minimize God's grace in the Old Testament, but to magnify God's grace in Jesus. Now, my friend, if you've ever at a moment doubted, that God loved you and sometimes in times of crisis it is easy to doubt that if you doubt that God loved you look at what it took to save you to save me and look at what God went through to say that look at what he went through

Several years ago, this story appeared in a Reader's Digest. Healthcare workers had come to a poor country of the world. Right upon their arrival, they found a young girl, around five or six, deeply in need of a blood transfusion. so they gathered around those who were, they gathered those who were around and they explained the situation as best they could. And they asked if there were any volunteers to give this girl blood. One young man about this girl's age, about five or six, nervously raised his hand and put it down and Raised it again, and they went to talk to him, and he's crying. He's very emotional, but he says he will give blood for this guy. As he lays down, and they begin taking his blood, and they begin trying to make this transfusion, long after the pain should have stopped, the boy was still crying uncontrollably.

The health care workers tried to calm him and tried to ask him what's wrong. Are you hurting? In the difficulty in conveying and learning the language, somehow, he had gotten the idea from these workers as they had expressed it that in giving blood for this little girl, he was going to die in the process. and they said, no, you're not going to die. You're going to be fine. But they were amazed.

Why is it you would give blood for this girl thinking you were going to die so that she could live? And he said, Because she is my friend. And the article closed with a quote from the Bible. John 15, 13. No greater love has a man than this, but that he lay down his life for his friend.

I'm always moved by stories of people, and there are many who their life so that others might live. Jesus, who was not subject to death in heaven, came to this world to become subject to death, to die, so that you could live. I could live. God loves us. and desires us to go to heaven. I try to say this every time I go in a meeting. God wants you to go to heaven more than you want that for yourself. And God wants your children to go to heaven more than you want that for them. You might say, well, what verse could you go to? Just by the very verse that God is greater than us, His love is greater than ours, And yes, I think both of those things are true. God loves you, and God wants you to be saved. But we can't stop the story with the death of Jesus. Because when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, we find from John's Gospel...

joined together to bury the body of Jesus to anoint His body. Luke's account tells us that the Sabbath day was approaching and so they didn't finish all they wanted to do with anointing the body. And everybody noted carefully where this body was and what was going on because the women were intending to come back after the Sabbath passed and finish the work preparing the body of Jesus for burial in the meantime the enemies of Jesus go to Pilate and said sir we remember that while this was alive the deceiver said after three days I'm gonna rise again and we need to set a guard around the tomb and make it as secure as we know how so that no one comes and steals the body Pilate says you have a guard

make it as secure as you know how they set a seal upon the stone the only job these guards have is to make sure that nobody comes in and steals the body of Jesus and that no one gets out of that tomb alive that's an easy job it's an easy job or it would be in every other case but early on the first day of the week the women start going to the tomb, and they ask themselves in Mark 16, who's going to roll the stone away? Well, they get there, and lo and behold, the stone is already rolled away. And so they just go into the tomb to finish anointing the body of Jesus, and he's not there. And suddenly angels appear, and they say,

Why are you seeking the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen. Remember how he told you these things? And they run and they tell his disciples. And his disciples, Peter and John, are going to run to the tomb. But his disciples viewed these words as nonsense. And they would not believe. Now I want you to think about this. These men... originally heard the story of the resurrection from those women who had been to the tomb these men heard this and then once is they're not they don't believe it's just nonsense these men came to die for their faith in Jesus they became convenient for all of you particularly for those of you who are younger If you come to a point where you think about, is real? Is Christianity true? Can I really build my life on this? Do I need to forsake what I've been taught all these years? Go back and study the resurrection of Jesus. And the more you study it, the more you will be convinced, I believe, that He indeed rose from the dead.

And there's no other way you can even explain the survival of Christianity without it. Christianity would not have gotten out of the first century. Do any of you know, you can raise your hand if you know who? Simon bar Copa You know who that was? Anybody raise their hand? Anybody know that name? Okay. We do have one, at least. And there may have been others who were to raise their hand, but he came 100 years after Jesus. He claimed to be the Messiah. He had, and he has a quarter of a million followers. We even have, from a cave, what we think was his own name. And you don't know who he is. You know why you don't know who he is? Because when he died, everybody forgot him. Why didn't it happen to Jesus? Why are there still all over the place...

In this land, in this area, places built in the name of Jesus or in honoring Jesus. Why? Because Jesus rose from the dead. And even people like James and Paul, who weren't believers at the time of Jesus' death, they were convinced. And they gave their lives for it. And because he did overcome death, we can overcome death. I am the resurrection, the life. He who lives and believes in me shall never die. What are you going to hold on to when the doctor tells you, I'm sorry, but there's nothing else we can do? Where are you going to go? Boy, the world's here. that you're going to seem trivial at that moment. Even the election is going to seem trivial at that moment. But the resurrection is going to mean everything, isn't it? And Paul said, we can say, oh death, where is your sting? Oh grave, where is your victory? I love the statement that one

popular author made when he said, if you want to know how to behave at a funeral, don't look to Jesus for an example, because Jesus interrupted every funeral, he attended by raising the person from the dead. And he can interrupt ours and interrupt our stay in the grave. Oh, death, where is your sting? Oh, grave, where is your victory? A teacher a teacher the first day found out she had a severely handicapped student. He was about 12 years old. Most of her second graders were around six to eight years old. This boy was around 12. He was severely limited. And she tried to be patient, but he was slow. He spoke at the wrong time. He acted in strange ways. He got on her nerves. So she called his parents, and she tried to put the best possible light on it, but she said, really, you need to take Jeremy out of school. He's just so much older than the other kids, and she's trying to say it in the best way, but her parents, the boy's parents started to cry and said to the teacher, listen, there's so few things in life Jeremy enjoys, and...

This school is one of them. We hate to take it from him. The teacher thought to herself, I can do better than So she determined she was going to work with the parents. Sometimes when Jeremy had difficult assignments, she was going to call them up and get them to help him with them. And he showed some progress. But it was near the end of the school year. and it was in a place in the country where the seasons changed, and in the spring, things that were dead came to life, and she gave each of them a large plastic egg, and she says, your assignment is to put something inside the egg that shows dead things coming to life. And all the students were listening to this. After all, that's fun homework. All the students were listening...

But Jeremy's blank stare told the teacher that he didn't understand a word she said. And she made a middle note. I'm going to call his parents when I get home. Well, when she got home, there were all kinds of things to do and all kinds of chores around the house. And she needed to fix supper and she needed to get some things ready. And lo and behold, she forgot all about calling Jeremy's parents. The next day, after they'd done the other assignments, the children brought their eggs, and they laid them on the teacher's desk, and she would open one of them, and she would say, Oh, you did so well with the assignment, and this shows so good. It shows dead things coming to life. And it said, Who brought this egg? And a student would raise his hand, and she would praise the student. And this went on through several until finally she opened one

Totally empty. And immediately she remembered Forgot to call Jeremy's parents. And she didn't want to embarrass him. And so without saying a word, She loved the egg aside. But he wasn't gonna let it die so easily. And he said, But teacher, you didn't say anything about my egg. And she said with disgust, as teachers can, Jeremy, it was empty. To which he responded, and so was the of Christ. the teacher was so overwhelmed with this piece of brilliance from this handicapped boy, she didn't know what to say. And when she just said, well, Jeremy, why was it empty? And he said, because evil men put him to death. But God raised him from the dead. she was overwhelmed to the point of tears. As that story is told, and it's told as a true story, as the story is told, that summer, that boy passed away of multiple handicaps and problems. But in remembering what he had done,

Each of his classmates brought their plastic egg and laid them on his casket. The because the tomb of Jesus is empty, one day the tomb of all who put their trust in Jesus will be empty. And we can shout and talk death, oh death, where is your sting? Oh grave, where is your victory? My friend, tonight we've not told you what to do to be saved. Lord willing, we'll talk more about that tomorrow night. But from a line from tomorrow night, when you see all that God has done to save you, I hope your response is like what we'll see tomorrow. See, there's water. What hinders me from being baptized? I hope you'll come as we stand and sing.