



Christology-Part 10

The Significance of the Resurrection

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The significance of the resurrection. Turn in your Bibles, if you would, to Revelation chapter 1, verse 17. Revelation chapter 1, verse 17.

This is assumed, I think, obviously, in most people's minds, but you need to get your mind focused on it, stayed on it, and think about it for a little while. How important and how significant is the resurrection of Jesus Christ? What's at stake here with this? I mean, it is a seemingly anti-intellectual thing to believe in something supernatural, which we will deal with at the Bren Center. I mean, dead people stay dead. You know, that's usually how it works. And if they do come back, it seems it's on a table and a gurney for a couple hours, not on the third day. So what is this all about? Why is this such an important thing, if indeed it actually happened?

Well, Revelation 1, verse 17. We'll look at 17 and 18. That's what the F is for, as you remember.

Verse 17 says, "When I saw him, this is John now, looking at this appearance of Christ, he fell at his feet as though dead." John did, seeing Christ. "But he," that is Christ, "laid his right hand on me, saying, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, the living one.'" And this is 95, 97 AD. "I died, and behold, I am alive forevermore."

Now his hand is touching his shoulder, and he's having a conversation with someone we are identifying in Revelation chapter 1, the last book in the canon to be written. This is, you know, 60 years after his bodily resurrection claiming to be. And he's alive there touching him saying, "I died, I came to life, and behold, I am alive forevermore." And I have the connection here—we'll look at this later—"the keys to death and Hades." So there's a connection between his resurrection and what he's able to grant you as someone, a mortal person, that's headed toward death.

But here's the point: the whole foundation, the whole rock bed of Christianity is that Jesus is alive. That's not the foundation of Islam, they admit that Muhammad's dead. He didn't bodily resurrect. He's not playing any function in heaven in some bodily form. But Christianity is predicated on the fact that Jesus is alive. We don't really have a religious system without it.

So let's just start as broadly as we can think about it and say if Christ did not rise from—I'm sorry, if there is no resurrection—then Christ is dead. And if we're not going to believe the supernatural, then he lived and he's done and he's over. And even if you do believe in life after death, he's just in some disembodied spirit somewhere. But that's not what the Bible teaches. That's not what Christianity assumes. And I say assumes not because it's not proven, but because everything rests on that.

I mean, even when Jesus speaks to the disciples in the Great Commission, the assumption is He's now alive and He's going to be with them. He will see that I'm going to prepare a place for you, John 14. When I come back, I'm going to receive you. You're going to live with me. I am alive.



If there was no resurrection of Christ, then Christ is dead. And really, you should just recognize it's the thread that dismantles the whole thing. I mean, there is no Christianity without it. And that is the claim. And we claim today that Jesus is alive. That's a big deal.

Matthew chapter 16, verse 21, which is one of—what did I write down? One, two, three, four, five, six, seven—eight promises of Christ. But here's one that Jesus makes that is repeatedly made by Christ, and it is inscribed for us of things that Christ said and promised.

Here's how this verse goes, Matthew 16:21: "From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day raised."

Okay? This is something repeated in places like Matthew 17:9, again at the end of that chapter, verse 22. Matthew 20:17–19. Matthew 26:31, just to stick with Matthew there, and their corresponding texts, all the parallel texts. John 2:19–22. John 12:27. Those are the ones that I put down. Those are just some of the recordings, the inscriptions of what Christ said about him dying and rising again.

That's what we know of the teaching of Christ.

So if he didn't rise from the dead, the book that we have about what Jesus said—we know that Jesus, at least the character of Christ in the Bible—he's a liar. He didn't tell us the truth. That's not what happened.

I mean, you know, all this campaign about these atheists doing all this stuff, you've heard about that in the news? You know, at Christmas time, and that picture of Christ in a manger and the billboards in these big metropolitan areas say, you know, it's a myth. I'm thinking to myself, which is a big claim about a baby being born in Bethlehem, but if you had an empty tomb, all right, that's more of what I think would be a reasonable assertion from an atheist if he hasn't done the research.

But I'm thinking to myself, if it is a myth, then you're right. This whole book is filled with statements about a Christ who said He would rise, who doesn't rise, then the whole point of your main character—He's lying. It's not true.

1 Corinthians chapter 15, verse 15. If Christ did not rise from the dead, then He's dead, obviously, but that's a big deal because our religion is predicated on a living messiah. Christ is recorded as saying he was going to rise. If he didn't rise, then he's lying. If you believe the reports that that's what he said, then he's a liar. If you don't believe it, at least the book that we have about Christ, our main character in the story, is lying.

1 Corinthians 15:15. It's about 20 years after Christ rose from the dead. Here's what Paul says. Let's get context, verse 14: "And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is hollow. It's in vain. It's for nothing. And your faith is for nothing, because we're having faith in a resurrected Christ. And we underline this: are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then even Christ has not been raised."



And let's put it this way—letter C—the apostles are all lying. That was the whole point of their preaching. In the book of Acts, that's what they constantly said. They didn't preach without talking about a resurrected, bodily resurrected Christ. So the message of the apostles is filled with lies, as Paul readily says. If it didn't happen, then we're all liars.

And that's just super important for us, for people that want to find a middle ground. Either we believe our critics and we say this is a horrible book that talks about something that didn't happen, whose main character keeps talking about something that didn't happen, with a bunch of preachers that start a movement talking about something that never happened—it's a big deal. You can't really have a middle ground on this. You can't be neutral.

As long as you're in 1 Corinthians 15, drop down to verse number 17. Verse number 17: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you're still in your sins. Then those also have fallen asleep," that's a euphemism for death, "in Christ, have perished. It's done. That's all there is. They live, they die. If in Christ we've hoped—we've hoped in this life only—if it's all about hoping in something for this life and has nothing to do with the next life, then we of all people are most to be pitied."

Letter D: Then your sins have not been canceled.

That's the point. You're still in your sins and if you die, that's it. There's nothing, you're done.

If the point is—and again, the Jewish assumption was you are going to meet your maker—if you're going to meet a holy maker and Christ hasn't taken care of the sin problem, then you're dust. You're in big trouble before God. You'll incur not only the first death, but the second death. So you're still in your sin. Sin is still a problem. Sin has not been canceled out.

Okay, now, with faux pas over my shoulder, letter E. If not, then Jesus is not the Christ.

Two important passages I want you to look at. We'll spend a little time here. Isaiah 53, because it's such a great text about the resurrection.

Letter D; Sin has not been canceled. Your sin has not been forgiven. You are not forgiven.

Isaiah 53. Context here is the suffering servant, which if you talk to modern Jews who want to look the other way on one of the most obvious messianic psalms which clearly was taught by the rabbis as a messianic psalm before Christ, but then since the Jews didn't want to admit this was Christ, it was turned into, well, the suffering servant here is the nation of Israel. But this is about Christ, and there's some things here that are so bizarrely stated you really can't do anything with it but assume that there's a reference to the resurrection here.

Isaiah 53, verse number 9: "And they made his grave"—You put someone in a grave when they're dead,—"with the wicked, and he was with a rich man in his death." Even if you know a little bit about the passion story, you know that he's crucified between two robbers. He's killed as a common criminal,



but he gets a nice grave that's hewed out for rich people. Joseph of Arimathea lent it to him for the weekend. He was ready to give it up for the whole thing.

But anyway, he's with a rich man. "Although he had done no violence," here's somebody who's innocent, "there was no deceit in his mouth." That's certainly not Israel, certainly in the context of Isaiah. Israel's all about doing those things. That's why Isaiah is preaching against them, just to speak to the modern Jew who wants to deny this is Christ.

Verse 10: "Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him." See, he was crushed and put in a grave. "He was put to grief, and his soul, when he makes his soul a guilt offering"—what you do with a guilt offering when you take it to the priest is you kill it. The priest kills it with his hand on the head of the animal. So that's what happens to guilt offerings. They're killed.

Now take a look at this in the rest of the verse: "He shall see his offspring. He shall prolong his days." That's in a sentence about being killed as a guilt offering—already talking about his grave, talking about him being crushed—but he's going to prolong his days, he's going to see his offspring, "and the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." How does that work if you're put to death and now you're living? It's called the resurrection.

Verse 11: "Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied," the Father, "and by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous," which is what the book of Romans is all about, "and he shall bear their iniquities," substitutionary atonement. That's what the lambs were sacrificed for at the temple.

"Therefore, I will divide him a portion with many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong." That's what someone does when they win. This sounds like he died, but he's a winner. How does that work? "Because he poured out his soul to death," again, death, "and he was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sins of many, and he makes," present tense, "intercession for the transgressors."

You couldn't find much more New Testament theology in that paragraph right there, but it assumes, as you see bouncing back from death—pouring out his death, being crushed, having a grave—and then prolonging his days, prospering, splitting the spoils with the victors. Here you see a picture of resurrection.

Now, if we're before Christ and you look at that and you ponder that, you've got to say it sounds like the Christ has to die and be resurrected, which is exactly what Luke 24 says. Jesus was telling them on the road to Emmaus he must do, he must die and rise again, and that the Old Testament spoke to that. Here's clearly one passage where it happens.

So the Christ has to die and has to rise again.

Now, Romans chapter 1—that's precisely what Paul says about Christ. He fulfills the promise of the resurrection. And you could have your doubts about Christ, I suppose, because other people like Moses had done miracles and Elijah had done miracles, but this sets him apart because the Christ was predicted to die and rise.



Romans chapter 1, verse 1: “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, the Messiah, Yeshua, Joshua. He should be called and called to be an apostle,” that is Paul, “set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand”—we just read the gospel, did you not read the gospel? Intercession for the transgressors. He bears the iniquities of the people that are sinful. He counts righteous those who aren’t righteous because the servant suffers in their place. That’s the good news—“that he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures,” places like Isaiah 53, “concerning his son who was descended from David according to the flesh,” 2 Samuel 7, a lot of other places, “and he was declared to be the Son of God,” which was commensurate with the messianic title, who he was, “in power according to the Spirit of holiness by”—finally we get the mechanism here, the agency—“his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

That right there is a great statement regarding the fact that his resurrection attests to his fulfillment of the messianic promise. He is Messiah because he rose from the dead. It was the promise of the prophets. It was fulfilled in the new covenant. And every good Jew who was honest with the text would look at Christ and say, because he rose, he was dead and then alive, he’s the Christ. He’s the one we put our hope in. He’s the one that if we trust him, makes us righteous. We get counted right. We get our sins forgiven because he died and rose again.

Significance of the resurrection: if it didn’t happen, Christ is dead, we should all do something else. If he didn’t, then Christ is a liar, the apostles are liars, we’re still in our sins, we’re not forgiven, and Jesus is not the Christ.

You take the resurrection of Christ out of the equation seriously—and I mean this—and I was once in an apologetics class at some level in my education, I don’t remember which one, and I had a professor, and I don’t know if he’s an adjunct or what, but he said something about, you know, “I don’t like these Christians who say, if you can prove it wrong, I wouldn’t be a Christian.” And I was like, what are you talking about?

If you can prove that it’s wrong, I’m the first one to bail out of this thing. Of course I don’t want to be a part of this. I have no interest in being a Christian at all if Christ didn’t rise from the dead because the whole thing falls apart. And so I think, you know, whatever you want to call that—and I remember that lecture he gave, it irritated me—because I think to myself, you can’t possibly mean in any way in Scripture that faith is something that survives the lack of biblical evidence. Historical evidence.

If Christ did not rise—and I mean it with all of my heart—well, Paul said it, 1 Corinthians 15, let’s eat, drink, be merry, tomorrow we die. There is nothing for us to do here. There is no reason for you to know this book. Find a code to live by, but don’t get it from a book filled with people that are lying to you. That’s not a book I want to teach my kids to be good people by—one that’s full of lies where the main character lies and the apostles lie and the whole thing is built on a lie. Not interested.

So it is the linchpin of all Christianity, and it’s important for us to see that. The resurrection means everything to Christians. It’s do or die.



Let's talk about this, and I just want to talk—you know, just make observations. We can prove the case later perhaps, and we will do a little bit of that at the Bren Center, and I preached on that many times and you can look all that up, but let's just at least see this.

Every gospel is going to deal with this at great length. The passion—we call it the passion—the suffering of the Christ, the resurrection of the Christ, takes up half the material in all of the gospels. So for all that we learn about Christ, we get very little on his childhood. We get, you know, a decent amount on his—I mean, uh—earthly ministry, Judean and Galilean ministry, and then we get half of what they say in his biographies is about his death and resurrection—that he was really dead and that he really rose.

That's a big deal. I mean, if you're going to name the gospels and you're not going to use any theological overtones like gospel, good news, you're going to say it's a story of a guy who dies and comes back to life. That is the message in the theme of the Gospels.

Secondly, and I invite you to do this at some point, it was liberating and life-changing for me to go through the book of Acts and look at every message in the book of Acts and see what they talked about. You know, Peter's preaching, Paul's preaching, Stephen's preaching. Look at what they say. There's not preaching that takes place that doesn't give large amounts of time to the resurrection.

As a matter of fact, it shocked me. I was once—and I've told this story several times, forgive me if you've heard it—but I was once assigned by Dr. Baker, one of my theology profs, go through without using any books, any commentaries, anything else, just use the Scripture and look at—this is one section of the assignment—at every time that the message is preached about Christ in the book of Acts. That was one section. We had to do it in the whole New Testament, but in the book of Acts, I started building a chart as I was doing this assignment to see what do they talk about.

Oh, they talk about sin—"I say you nailed him to the cross." It talked about, you know, the fact that he went about doing good or that he was, uh, you know, he healed people. And I started mapping it all out—how many verses and how much material was given to everything they said. Oh, we need to repent. We should put our trust in him. And all that. I mean, it had to be—and I don't, I should have pulled the old paper out that I wrote on this—it had to be half, I'm just estimating now, of the verses that were discussing anything about Christ were given to his resurrection.

And then in the second half of the semester we were supposed to take gospel tracts and presentations of the gospel and compare them to what we found in the book of Acts, and it was an amazing thing because there was very little mention—even in the best tracts that try to get people saved—there was very little information about the resurrection, and many of them didn't mention it at all.

It's important for us to realize the book of Acts is the preaching of the apostles that is, by and large, a lot like the Gospels, about half or 40% of their preaching is about Christ rising from the dead. It's much more important and central than we give it credit for in modern Christianity.

It is the basis of the New Testament epistles. Let me give you some examples of that. It is the basis for all the New Testament epistles, the resurrection of Christ.



And by the way, some of you are saying, are we already to the resurrection of Christ? Well, we are in December, you know. It didn't seem like we dealt a lot with His death, and we didn't. Remember I said at the very first week of Christology that several divisions of theology intersect with Christology? One of them is soteriology, which really takes a big chunk of the life of Christ and kind of slides it over to that study.

In other words, if we're going to learn about what happened on the cross, the theories of the atonement, how did the substitutionary issue work on the cross, what about his suffering, all of those things, we're going to deal with that in soteriology, not in Christology. So I feel bad a little bit rushing through what we've done and talking about the resurrection tonight, but just know it's not that we're skipping it or avoiding it. When we get to soteriology we'll spend time back looking at the gospels—how he died, what was said about his death, and what his death accomplished—but there's no other place for us really to deal with the resurrection the way most of us at least traditionally do in theology but in Christology.

So let's keep going, 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 1.

The epistles, as you know, are there to unpack the historical information about Christ. They're to give it some interpretive meaning. What is this all about? We get the messages of Christ, we get the life of Christ, we get the death of Christ, we get the resurrection of Christ in the Gospels, and now the epistles, according to the promises of Jesus in the Gospels, was God's Spirit's work in the apostles to give instruction to the church through the ages as to what it all means.

And though there's lots of hints in the Gospels themselves, we get it all unpacked, unraveled, and put on a table in the epistles. And the themes are being born again, seeing Christ when we die, living on a new earth one day, all of those kinds of things that we don't get too much of in just the raw material and data in the gospels.

But take a look at how it's worded here in 1 Peter 1:3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, an example of him affirming God, ascribing to God honor and majesty and all of that. According to his great mercy, which like the book of Romans was all about, how the life of Christ gave us that mercy and grace, He caused us to be born again, so much of Pauline epistles dealing with that, to a living hope, which is certainly what we get in the book of Revelation, where this is all ending and a lot of hope in James and in 2 Peter and all of that.

Here's the deal. All of that comes—here's the qualifier—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, okay?

So I'm praising God. I've received mercy or grace. I have a new life. I'm looking forward to a hope that's real and sure. And all of that is predicated on all the teaching—and it's just a sample of epistolary themes—all predicated on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We don't have any of that without the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



That's why, by the way, um, the battle was fought in the early 20th century in this thing called fundamentalism and liberalism. You're familiar with that—fundamentalism, I know it's a bad word now. Fundamentalists are guys with, you know, ties and wingtip shoes and choirs behind them or whatever they're called fundamentals. That's not what fundamentalism is. That may be a one segment of what fundamentalism looks like, but fundamentalism was this: when liberalism had so invaded American Christianity in the early 20th century after all of the stuff that came out of Europe and Germany in particular that had so stripped the Bible of its basic and clear teachings—guys like Schweitzer who looked at the Bible and said, if anything in it is supernatural, we have to toss that out—we started to demythologize the Bible as we read in history and in late church history.

And when they did that, one thing they had to throw out was the resurrection. Because that's supernatural. And of course, people who are dead stay dead. So Christ didn't rise from the dead. If he did rise, it was an idea that rose, or it was a continuation of a good theme after death, but it's not a bodily resurrection. Even those words—you don't find those in Scripture. Those are words we've inherited in the 21st century from the battle of the early 20th century where people said, did he or did he not bodily rise from the dead?

And they added to that things like the virgin birth. Was he an illegitimate child of Joseph and Mary, or was he really born of the Holy Spirit of Mary? Those were the things that they set up, and they said, these are the fundamentals of real Christianity.

And people that said, we believe in the fundamentals of real Christianity, were called the fundamentalists. And you may not like this, but if you believe, you know, in the basics of the Christian message, then, newsflash, you're a fundamentalist.

"I don't want to be a fundamentalist." You are one. If you believe in the basics of, Christ was born of a virgin. He's truly God and man. He died on a cross for our sins. He was bodily resurrected into heaven. He's coming back one day to receive us again. The basic—and usually it was down into a simple hand of five basic things—they said then we're fundamentalists. Obviously, there was more than that.

Torrey was one. You know Torrey, who founded Biola—he was the president at Moody Bible Institute for a while—wrote a long string of articles on the fundamentals of the faith. But the concept is, do you believe this was real?

My point, though, is if you look in the Bible and you think logically about the topic of the resurrection, which is one of the fundamentals of the faith, you got no Bible without it. I mean, you really don't. If there wasn't a supernatural event that took place where Christ bodily rose from the dead, the Bible is quick to say none of it makes any sense.

It is the major detail of the Gospels. It is the theme of Acts preaching. It is the basis of the New Testament epistles and all the themes that are unpacked there. And of course, the problem we'll all face, some sooner than others, death. It's the only hope in death. I mean, that's how it's presented in the Bible.



Don't close 1 Peter, because once you write that down, I want you to look at the next verse in 1 Peter. Let's look at 1 Peter chapter 1, verse 4, just to get the whole sentence. Start in verse 3 again:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance," that's what it accomplished, "that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you."

There's life after death. There's something good coming. The words are inheritance, imperishable, undefiled, unfading, and it's there guaranteed for you through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The hope that you have in death—and another one I'd like you to look at is Hebrews chapter 2—is only based on the bodily, physical resurrection of Christ. Without that, we don't have hope. I mean, at least biblically, if to speak or think biblically, there is no hope when you face your death if we don't believe in the—if we don't have confidence in the historical bodily resurrection of Christ.

Hebrews chapter 2. Look at verse 14 to start us, which by the way, it's not said explicitly here. It is inferred, but so much of the case for Christ being the second Melchizedek, or a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, is that He lives always to make intercession for us. So the resurrection is implied through so much of Hebrews, starting in chapter 1.

But let's jump into this because it deals with the issue of our hope and death.

Verse 14: "Since therefore the children," that's us, "share in flesh and blood, He Himself," Christ, "likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all of those who through fear of death deliver all of those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. That's a great verse. Read it again, verse 15: "To deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."

I find a lot of people talking very boldly about their death. I catch that all the time, usually when they're healthy in the middle of their lives. I spend a lot of time—and earlier in my ministry, when I was in a smaller staff and at times a solo staff member at a church—I saw a lot of people die and had to be at their bedside there. It's a different story there.

A lot of people say, "Ah, death, I don't care, you know, put me out of the trash can, doesn't matter, burn me up, cast my ashes." When you get to death itself, there's a real difference between those who have freedom from the slavery of fear of death and those that don't.

When you reach that place, you recognize this: I'm about to step through a threshold I'm not coming back from, and I'm going to face some things there that just intuitively, as human beings, as Solomon said, eternity is set in my heart. I recognize the big issues of life are coming to bear right now at my death.

And if you spend any time with people that are dying—and everyone—I mean, if you have the experience with enough people dying that are Christians and non-Christians, you see the night and day



distinction between how they die. As a matter of fact, there's an old book, I didn't recommend it here, which you can get for a dollar less than you could get it for on Amazon in our bookstore, called *The Last Words of Saints and Sinners*. That's an old classic, but that's not a bad book to thumb through.

And if you've been in situations like me, maybe you're a nurse or hospice or whatever, you've experienced that yourself. But there's two different ways to die. And, uh, those of you that are very deluded or those that are confident or those that are fearful and afraid—the point is that the whole issue of Christ was to destroy the power that comes over people that are sinful and know they're going to meet their maker, to deliver them who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery, to be done with that.

God brings help through Christ.

Verse 16: "Surely it's not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God," that's an ongoing service, "to make propitiation for the sins of the people." See, that's the problem with death. I'm concerned about what may happen to me, hoping that maybe I'm not going to incur penalty for my sin.

"For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." He is present tense helping those—helping us—is for us not only a present help in time of temptation, but a profound cataclysmic kind of whole, you know, huge help in terms of do I fear death or do I not? Am I ready to meet my maker without reference to my sin or am I not?

And since that's something we all face, as I often say George Bernard Shaw said it well, "The statistics on death are quite impressive. One out of one people die." We all are going to face that.

And the question is, Christ predicates all of New Testament theology—I mean, the ultimate help and need that we have—Christ provides the help in our ultimate need, because he rose from the dead. That's the point.

So the text—just looking at the evidence—and by evidence I mean the evidence of the significance of the resurrection: Gospels spend a ton of time on it. Acts preaching is all about it. New Testament epistles—all the themes really are rooted in the resurrection. And when you face death, you'd better hope Jesus rose from the dead.

Number three, the question though is, did it happen? The historical evaluation, which I hope to spend about 75% of the time at the Bren Center preaching on. You know, can we look at this objectively, you know, like, I don't know, like the Milvian Bridge battle for Constantine or George Washington, you know, becoming our first president or Lincoln being shot at Ford's Theater. Can we be confident that it actually happened?

And we'll get into more detail on this later, and many of you heard me preach on this, but one of the things that's very important and different about Christianity than most other historical claims that are of a religious or supernatural nature is that the claims of the Scripture always present this to us as the



public death and public appearances—that lots of people saw him die and lots of people saw him raised chronologically after he was dead. The public nature of that is huge.

Now there's so many, you know, related issues and points that I can make. Like the background screen on my phone—I don't know what yours is, your kids or your dog or whatever. I've had for over a year now P52, Papyrus 52, from the John Ryland's Papyrus collection. And I have that there for a very important reason. Though there are others that are claimed to be older, scholars all agree that that's the oldest copy that they can agree on. Some make good cases for older pieces. But an early second century fragment from the Gospel of John.

That means so much to me, not only because I like the Gospel of John in the ninth chapter, which it's from, but it reminds me that the evidence for Christianity dates back to the time that it happened. This is not disjointed or disconnected from the events. The claims of Christ, see, they were made in a place that is connected to what Christ did in a time frame that's to what Christ did, the extant copies of what we have. And all of this is a discussion about a public death and a public resurrection.

I love this verse. You don't need to turn there. I quote it often. But in Acts 26:20, Paul is speaking to King Agrippa about the rationality of the resurrection. And if you're not tired of turning, I guess you could turn there if you had any energy left from the guacamole.

But look at this one. This is great. He's preaching about the resurrection of Christ. And when he brings this all up in verse number 24, Festus, kind of the underling here to the king, responds to Paul. Verse 24, and as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice—this is Acts 26:24, just to set up verse 26—"Paul, you are out of your mind. This doesn't make any sense. Your great learning"—he's admitting he's a PhD and he's a smart guy and all that—"but your great learning is driving you out of your mind. You're crazy because this just doesn't happen. People don't die and come back to life."

But Paul—now here's his defense to the resurrection here. There's a few things here, but the first one's important. Paul said, "I'm not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice."

Underline now: "For this has not been done in a corner."

I love that it's an idiom. Because it's kind of a slamming idiom. This is not done in a corner somewhere. But really, obviously, what that means is this was done publicly. These things happen publicly. To prove the resurrection, he says, it's a public event.

And to know that it happened, you've got to have lots of people see him die, and lots of people see him alive after he died, which is exactly what we have. Like in Matthew 27:35, where they crucify him publicly. They not only crucify him publicly, they crucify him by a road, Matthew 27 says, where passers-by came by. It's like perfect. It's like a billboard, not in the middle of the desert, but right off the five freeway. Everybody's going by. Everybody's watching. They're all there for the Passover. It's crowded in Jerusalem. They're all watching.



If you said, “How many people saw that guy dying out there, and they made a big fuss about him, they had a kangaroo court overnight, and they put the sign over him, King of the Jews, which was weird, because usually you had insurrectionist or criminal or rapist or robber over your head. That one said king of the Jews, and he was in the middle of three people being crucified.” You’d have thousands of people say, “I saw him being crucified.”

This was as public as you could make it. It’s in the capital city of the nation, and it is done by a public thoroughfare, and the Bible says people were passing by the road casting insults at him. Public, public, public death.

This is kind of what I was getting ahead of saying a minute ago. There are contemporaneous assertions. Contemporaneous assertions. In other words, this is being claimed when it happens. There’s a close proximity in time and geography.

You know, it’s funny, I don’t know why, I had a little stage in my college days when you’d go get your milk or your, you know, cornflakes, and you’d stop at the rack there—at least the place where I’d shop—and there were those world magazines, you know, and they were all the crazy stories, like a lady gives birth to a 50-pound baby, and, you know, kid, you know, grows a fifth arm out of his back, or whatever, just bizarre, bizarre, bizarre stories. You know, a child can rotate his head 360 degrees, horn growing out of the forehead, just bizarre things.

Well, I’d stand there and I would flip through the magazine and everything either happened a long time ago or it happens in some bizarre little town in Argentina I’ve never heard of. It didn’t happen in Chicago where I was reading the magazine, you know, at the corner of LaSalle and 8th. Oh, I’m going to go check it out and talk to those people. You can’t because it’s never near you and it’s never now. And if it is now, it’s not near you now. That’s the way those bizarre claims were made.

Well, it is near you and it is now. In other words, you’ve got just days after this happened. They had to wait so many days until the Spirit came upon them, but in the first sermon in Acts chapter 2, it’s all about the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection is prominent in the preaching of Peter.

And this is just, you know, weeks before. So these weren’t claims that grew out of a, you know, sitting on a shelf life, thinking about the rabbi that used to live. These are contemporaneous assertions.

Acts 2:32 is a good example. The other one that you should look at is 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. This is good because this is not just, it’s a contemporaneous assertion that’s being made because he went around and privately showed up at everybody’s upper room where two or three people were gathered.

I love what Paul says here about the resurrection and kind of taking a cross-section of proof and saying it wasn’t just that He appeared to a lot of people. He appeared to a lot of people at one time. That’s a big deal.



Verses 3 through 8. Let's start in 3: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, and on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures, that He rose again. He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures. And that He appeared to Cephas," that's Peter, "and then to the twelve, and then he appeared to more than 500 brothers"—three words—"at one time." "Most of whom are still alive, if you want to check it out, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James and the other apostles, and lastly, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me."

That is a great statement. He is now claiming the resurrection of Christ in the same era, in the same time period, within months of it happening. We have the first preaching of it. We have discussions and appearances three days after He died. On the day of His resurrection, He's appearing to people, and He's appearing to people, hundreds of them at one time. Contemporaneous assertions and claims.

Thirdly, letter C, the circumstances don't leave as many plausible options.

Lots of theories have been proposed to say what really happened, because if you're not going to deny, like the billboard says, that it's all a myth, including his birth, which is crazy—I mean, just an idiot would claim there was no person named Christ historically. Circumstances don't leave plausible options.

Option A is here's one quote-unquote suggested plausible option: the swoon theory. Swoon. I don't use that word much, but that was the word that was given to this theory that he didn't really die. I like to say, quoting *The Princess Bride*, that he wasn't dead, but he was mostly dead. That's the swoon theory. Because, you know, if you're only mostly dead then you can get, you know, put in a grave and as the swoon theory goes the coolness of the of the grave there, the tomb kind of revives you, got a little time to rest up there, and uh, and then you pop out and it's like you rose from the dead but you didn't, okay?

Some problems with that. Number one, I like to put it this way: the Romans were good at killing. I can see if you go out hunting for the first time, trying to kill Bambi, and you don't do it, and Bambi swoons. I don't know how that would work. But if you're a lifelong hunter, and you go out to shoot an animal or kill an animal, I doubt that you're going to think it's dead when it's not. The Romans knew how to kill people. They'd experienced this a lot.

This was a public, high-profile death. The chief priests and the scribes were watching. I mean, we had Pilate involved in this. I mean, you're not going to put amateur killers out there. You're going to put the best executioners you've got to make sure he's nailed to the cross and make sure that he's dead.

But let's just say he was only mostly dead. You got a few other problems. There's a big stone in front of this grave that I'm thinking you've spent—you're on your third day in this tomb—it's just tough for me to think you're going to, you know, without any food, roll the big stone away. And there's not only a big stone there, there are big guards standing outside. Remember that was a big part of the story. The Roman guards were dispatched. It was such a high-profile death that they had high-profile guards there to make sure that no one stole the body. That would be bad. They could start a conspiracy with that theory.



So God and his providence made sure there were big guards to guard. So you'd have to roll the stone away, mostly dead person for the weekend, and now you've got to fight off the guards who were there dressed in their garb with their weapons of war.

And I'm thinking if that really happened, there's a real easy way to stop the myth of the resurrection: kill him again. That was your assignment to kill him. Hey, Romans, just kill him and then present the body to the world and say, "Hey, he didn't rise from the dead," because the resurrection was being preached from the weekend of his crucifixion on. People were saying he rose from the dead. You want to stop that. They hated Christians. Stop it. How? Kill him and show the body.

We'd have the second death of Christ, but we don't. Easy one to fix if he did swoon.

Fifthly, I'm thinking a victorious post-coma victim. It's hard to imagine Christ getting people to be willing to die for the story of the resurrection if in reality he came out as a pretty beaten up, almost crucified hospital victim. Swoon theory is stupid. I mean, it is. You know it. But this was tossed around seminaries trying to convince the church to be liberals. You know, "I know it may look like he rose from the dead, but he just swooned."

The second theory, option B, is called the theft theory. The theft theory. It was the reason they posted guards there. They didn't want anybody to steal the body and claim that these eight predictions at least recorded in our Gospels—and all the synoptics that go with that, so several references and promises to his resurrection—we don't want that taking place, so we'll post guards there and make sure no one steals the body.

Here's the first problem. To post guards there, who are you posting guards there to keep from getting in the tomb? You need to remember this: most people wanted him dead. The Jews weren't big on him. The Jewish leaders hated him. A lot of people wanted to see him dead. People that heard him talk about God being his father, the rank and file Jews, hated him. The Sadducees even got offended. The Romans weren't big on this whole thing either, the Christ ministry.

So there was only a small group of people. If you're a detective, you're looking for suspects. The only people that had a motive were the disciples.

And the disciples were displaying fear, not savvy, not shrewdness to go, you know, nab the recently crucified body of Christ. The disciples, they displayed fear. What happened when he got arrested? Where did they go? Everywhere.

Peter, the head of the bunch who said, "I'm willing to die with you," was willing to stay at a distance, and he was probably the closest one, warming himself by the fire in Caiaphas' court, watching Jesus from a distance, denying him with cursing. That's what he was doing, because he was afraid.

I don't know. When he's really fully dead, I don't know that the disciples have displayed any characteristics of stealing the body of Christ. The tomb was guarded. Don't forget that. I don't know. They did have a sword, but Peter proved he wasn't very good using it, if you remember. I don't think he's much of a threat to Roman soldiers guarding the tomb. But if the swooned Christ would have to



get past the soldiers, then you know if he's being stolen—the corpse—you've got to still fight those Roman guards. I don't think Peter and Thomas and Philip and Nathaniel are a big scary posse for the Roman soldiers.

Oh, and by the way, that stealing and lying thing—that's not what the apostles were teaching. Is that right? The rest of the New Testament—the things that they did—were all about being truthful and sincere and honest and not cursing and not even looking at women lustfully. These are the guys that are now going to pull off a heist of a body and then propagate a lie about Christ who rose from the dead when he didn't.

Not to mention—and I didn't even list this as a separate one—they all died for this. Even John, who died, we assume, of old age on the island of Patmos, died as a prisoner. The rest of them had their heads lopped off.

As Chuck Colson says about becoming a Christian, "I realized," Chuck said, "if we at the presidency could not keep a lie under wraps under threat of imprisonment, then how could the disciples under threat of death keep a lie going." And every one of them hold it all the way to the end.

About the time you're going to chop my head off, if I've been preaching the resurrection of Christ and I knew for real I stole his body and tucked it away under a rock pile somewhere, I'm going to say, "Hey guys, I'm going to turn state's evidence," and, you know, say, "Hey, we were just kidding."

At threat of death, they stayed behind.

An interesting historical note in the Gospels: they left grave clothes that they had as tactile evidence in the grave. Here's one thing I'm thinking you're not going to do if you're stealing a body: unwrap it, put all the grave clothes back right where they were, then hurry, let's get out of here after we beat up the guards. I don't think so. So it is interesting historically that the grave clothes were left behind.

Option C, hallucination theory. Hallucination theory. We just thought we saw him. "Didn't you?" "Yeah, I did." "Well, here's the great thing." Not just one testimony. Unlike most of these bizarre claims, we're not relying this on one guy's testimony. We're not even relying on 12 guys' testimony. We're relying on hundreds.

And if you're telling me it was a hallucination and it was a—like—and didn't—wasn't that—you know—that was Madonna—you know—no, yeah, I think it was—you know, at the airport you always think you see somebody famous. All I'm saying is it would require the entire terminal thinking they saw somebody, you know. This is mass delusions.

Because Paul in 1 Corinthians 15 is telling you to look up the people that saw him and go talk to them. Most of them are still alive. A couple have died. But go talk to the 500 people that saw him at one time, not to mention all the other people that saw him individually and in small groups.



If it is a hallucination theory—and knowing it was causing so much trouble in the first century—again, the critics would only need to produce the body. Produce the body. That is a death blow, pardon the pun, to a resurrection theory. Show me the dead body and we’re done with this.

That’s all I had on that.

Option D. Oops, we misplaced the body. The misplaced body theory.

Obviously, there are problems with this. I lose my keys every now and then. And I’ve been to a lot of funerals. And I was even late for a funeral once with the body in the hearse. That’s a story. Ask me later. Oh, that was a great story.

Right off of Sand Canyon, our hearse broke down. I’m going to tell you this story now that I’ve started it. And I’m with my buddy Gary, who runs the mortuary, and we’re going down the road, and the hearse—which is always fun to go through the drive-thru, we love to do that. You like to eat like I do, but we would do that.

But we’re driving down, and the car starts sputtering just north of the El Toro Y, and it comes to, you know, we start rolling. So we pull off there at Sand Canyon, where there’s not a lot there. And he goes, “Oh, man.” We’re trying to get to Riverside for a funeral. And so there’s just the two of us. Well, Jim’s in the back, but he’s no help.

So we’re there trying to figure out what we’re going to do. So he calls the mortuary and he says, “You know, we have another hearse. Send Jimmy with the hearse.” So he comes in his jeans and t-shirt and sure enough drives there to this off-ramp where we were stalled with another hearse.

Now we’re thinking, we’ve got to get to Riverside and we need the body. So here we were with traffic driving by. Two guys in black suits and a guy with a pair of jeans and t-shirt pulling out Jim, who was no lightweight, out of the hearse. This had to be a scene. There are people telling the story who just drove by us that day. Transferring it from one hearse into the next hearse.

And we were kind of late for the funeral. I don’t know what Jim’s life was like, but, you know, they say he’s so tardy all the time, he might be late for his own funeral. Jim was late, but they didn’t start without us. They couldn’t.

Alright. Misplacing your body had very little to do with this story, but once I started it, you’re glad I told it now, aren’t you?

I’m just thinking, I don’t think so. You had less than 72 hours to forget. And since this was a really public death and burial, it would require mass forgetfulness. Hundreds of people would have to forget where we put the body. “Did you have that?” “I thought it was over here.” “No, it was over here.” “Was it over here?”

Here’s the other thing about that theory—and it’s passed off in liberal books. They pass these theories off as possibilities. I’m thinking to myself, there’s a guy named Joseph who knows where it is. And



he's still alive. This is his family tomb. So I'm thinking Joseph of Arimathea knows where it is. Someone should ask him. I don't think the resurrection myth grew up and no one thought to ask Joseph, "Where was your tomb again?"

Not to mention that there was dispatched Roman guards. And the Jews were concerned about this resurrection. Surely they weren't guarding the wrong tomb. And even if they were guarding the wrong tomb, what happened to the guy in the tomb?

Alright. You know, that's not exhaustive, and I understand it's not, you know, every argument we could possibly have. But I think the preponderance of evidence—we've got an empty tomb of a very high-profile guy after a high-profile death. This is hard to explain.

Unless, of course, those promises from the Old Testament are actually true. And since all the other promises came true, maybe this resurrection one came true also.

Christ is our prototype. Don't turn there because we're out of time, but 1 Corinthians 15:20 and 49 say that Christ is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep—euphemism for death. Verse 49: "Just as we bore the image of the man of dust," in context, that's Adam, "so also shall we bear the image of the man from heaven," that's the resurrected Christ.

So Christ is our prototype. That's what the Bible teaches. So we want to learn a few things about Christ and his resurrection so we can learn a few things about us.

Let me just read this one for you, unless you're real quick on this. Luke chapter 24, Luke chapter 24 verses 36 through 40. What do we learn about the resurrected body?

This is now—I want you to think with one side of your brain about Christ historically, and now I want you to start to think about what Christ promises about you.

Luke 24:36: "They were talking about these things. Jesus stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace to you,' shalom. And they were startled and frightened, and they thought they saw a spirit, because they're thinking, here's a guy, he's dead. And he said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, it is I. Touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see, and if you touch me, you'll feel, that I have.' And when he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. He offered them his hands and his feet. Look, touch it."

Okay. Learn this about the resurrected Christ. He is a physical being who has flesh and bones. Now, granted, it must be different because it's going to endure forever, but it's physical. That's what should dispel all the myths about you floating on a cloud with a see-through body like Casper the Friendly Ghost. It's not going to happen. You're going to have a physical body.

Luke 24:41–44. They didn't believe him. Some still disbelieved because they were marveling. They were all joyful at all this. He said to them, as though to prove it—which he's about to do—"Have you anything to eat here?" And they gave him a piece of broiled fish. And he took it and he ate it before them.



And he said, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was with you: everything about me that was written in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled,” which are allusions and references to a resurrected person—Christ after Christ had been crucified, poured out as a guilt offering, assigned a grave, and all of that.

So he’s eating fish saying, “See, I’m resurrected physically.” And if you can put a piece of fish and masticate your teeth down on those and swallow it down a pipe called an esophagus, it’s going to go into a little sack called a stomach. And then there’s all those miles of intestines.

And he is—let’s put it this way—biological. He is not just a phantom. He just doesn’t have a tactile appearance or shell of a human. He’s not only got bones that hold together his flesh, he has a digestive tract. He’s got a GI tract. He is a biological being with living cells.

And if he’s the first fruits or the prototype or we’re going to bear his image, you’re going to be physical and you will be biological and you’ll be eating, as Matthew 8:11 says: “Many will come from the east and the west and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” Think about that. They’re not just reclining at the table to play cards. That was what they did to eat. There’s going to be food in the new Jerusalem. That’s good, isn’t it?

And throughout Luke 24, it keeps talking about him—he, his, him, he, his—and they all recognize him. And he’s not androgynous. He’s still a guy. And if you’re a girl, you’re going to get resurrected and be a girl. Much to the chagrin of Cher’s son, daughter. Sorry. Whatever. I just saw that on a commercial for 20/20.

But whatever you’re designed to be, you are going to be that in your resurrected state. They didn’t say, “Oh, Jesus, you look kind of more feminine than before.” You know, “Now you’re a he-she kind of middle ground being.” No—he. That’s important. Be guys.

And I know some say, “Well, what about that passage about, you know, this is Acts 24, or Luke 24, Luke 20 says, not going to be given in marriage.” I didn’t say anything about marriage. I talked about gender. So Jesus was clear. We won’t have, you know, won’t be married to one another, but that’s all that statement means. I don’t—I mean, you can guess around that, but you’re going to—they’re going to be guys and girls, men and women, male and female.

Psalm 16:11—not to put this close to letter C for any particular reason—but we are going to be sentient beings. Sentient beings. We’re going to have feelings. We’re going to be able to experience pleasure and pain. And though pain will be extracted from the economy of the new Jerusalem, we’re going to have the ability to experience feelings.

When you eat at feast, you know, in the afternoon in the New Jerusalem, you’ll feel full. And I jotted down Psalm 16 because it speaks about “in your presence there is fullness of joy. At your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.” I mean, I’m not sure what all those are, but I do know we’re going to experience pleasure in God’s presence.



Physical, biological, gendered, sentient.

1 Corinthians 15. You've heard me preach on this before. Maybe you haven't. I don't know why I said that. Maybe because I preached on it so many times, but 1 Corinthians 15. This is good. They're all real close together. The last four, maybe it'd be worth turning to real quick. We'll do these quickly because you've heard them. Some—for some of you haven't heard it.

1 Corinthians 15:42: "So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown perishable is raised imperishable." Imperishable. You've heard my illustration of the rotting banana on your counter. Though it's perishable food—Spaghettios are not perishable foods—bananas are, avocados and all that—they perish, okay? If you don't perish, if it's imperishable, then it is ageless. Ageless.

It is a body that is not declining. It doesn't cease to work as well as it used to. We all need to get used to that. Your body, your brain, your muscles, your joints, your physical, biological unit will not work as well the older you get. But whatever you get in the new Jerusalem, in your resurrected body, like Christ, it will be ageless. He lives forevermore to make intercession. He's ageless. We'll be ageless.

And it just says it right there. "It is with the resurrection of the dead. If it's perishable and it's subject to death, now it's impervious to death. It's imperishable."

Next verse, verse 43a: "It is sown in dishonor. It is raised in glory." Glory is the word that is used throughout the New Testament in various settings, but when it comes to something that is a tangible thing, like the flowers of the field—he says, "Why do you worry about what you're going to wear? Look at the flowers of the field." The glory. Speaking of the glory they have. They don't have—you know—Solomon in all of his glory didn't look like one of those. The point is, it will be a beautiful body. Ageless, beautiful.

Can't say that you're going to retain that in this life for very long. But when you get your ageless body, it will be a beautiful, ageless body.

Next verse—or actually bottom of verse 43: "It is sown in weakness. It is raised in power." Power—*dunamis*. It has energy. It's energetic. It doesn't get tired. And that's a good thing because there's no night in the new Jerusalem, which always bothered me early on because it still occasionally tempts me to be discouraged about the new Jerusalem because I love nighttime because I get to sleep for a few hours, and that's a good thing.

But there will be no night there, but you're not going to be longing for, you know, dusk because you want to curl up in bed because you'll have a body that is not weak, it is not tired. It's *dunamis*. It's powerful. It's energetic.

Verse 44: "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." And I wish that somehow this hadn't caused so many problems throughout church history, but I put "ff" behind verse 44 because you really need to read the rest of this section.



If there's a natural body, there's also a spiritual body. Natural and nature and fleshly—those are the things that speak not just to is it tangible, because clearly we already established it's physical, biological, gendered, and sentient. So we know it's not see-through, it's not translucent. But we look at a passage like this and say if we're comparing something spiritual to something natural, we're kind of talking about that distinction that you make when you say, "Jim sure is a spiritual guy." You don't mean that when you touch him your hand goes through him. You mean he's a godly guy. And that contrast is frequent in the Bible.

And here's an example of it, because it says the first man, Adam, was a living being. The last man, life-giving spirit. What kind of life does he give us? He gives a spiritual life. We're alive to God.

Verse 47: "From the earth, man of the dust. Second man from heaven." Born the image of the man from the dust. Verse 49: "We shall also bear the image of the man from heaven."

We can put it this way: we're going to be righteous. And that's a good thing. By that, I mean if we're going to be like Christ, we're going to be like Christ in our appetites to do what is right. We're going to be spiritual. You may be kind of spiritual now. You're going to be really spiritual then.

And it doesn't mean something relating to your corporal being. It has to do with your aliveness to God. Righteous. Righteous person.

Alright. Book of the week. This is decent. And if you buy this in our bookstore, um, not only will you save money—it's a dollar less than Amazon—you will get a little CD in the back. All of them sold recently have the CD in the back.

And I've read this book, and I'm actually rereading it just casually and slowly as we lead up to Easter again. I've never even popped the CD in the computer so I don't even know what it does. Maybe it's cartoons. I'm not sure. But I'm sure there's a lot of good information on the CD.

But this is a good book. Habermas, Licona, *The Case for the Resurrection*. More of an apologetics approach. Got some good tips on evangelism in the book, but I recommend you get it.

All right. 8:15 on the dot. You see that? Amazing. Let's pray together. We didn't pray at the beginning. Let's pray now.

God, thank you very much for your word. And I know many people don't give it the thought it deserves. They don't research it like they should. They'll research their loan docs or, you know, some contract they sign at work more than they do the Scriptures. But I pray we get serious about it and recognize that all of Christianity really is contingent on this historical thing called the resurrection of Christ.

Thank you for our spiritual forefathers in the early to mid 1900s, the 20th century, who fought the battle for the fundamentals. And we're certainly their spiritual children, because we here today, at least I am, believing wholeheartedly in the virgin birth, the deity of Christ, the death and resurrection of



Christ, the ascension, the second coming of Christ. These are fundamentals to our faith, even though they don't keep in step with our experience in nature.

We believe you're a supernatural God who can suspend natural law at any time, and we believe you did this in Christ to solve the most basic and fundamental problem we have, that we're going to die. And as Solomon said, you've set eternity in our hearts, and we long to live beyond the grave. You've made us to live beyond the grave, and you've made us, because of Christ, to live without any reference to sin, and that'll be great.

So we look forward to that. Thanks for this reminder about the importance of the resurrection. Prepare us, God, as we think about Easter at the Bren to do what we can to be a part of the harvest, see people wanting to Christ. We're going to need a bigger building here if we're going to keep any of them in our church after we win them to Christ, your son. We need to see you open some doors there, provide resources, and just see if we can get this church established and go from renters to owners or whatever you have for us, God.

But keep us strong and healthy. Guide us along the way. We're working hard to try and be what we should be as a church, and I know that's really predicated on us being who we should be as Christians. So continue to work in our hearts as individuals. Make us godly. Keep us in step with your Spirit. And just keep us going back as frequently as the early church to the important doctrine of the resurrection of Christ.

Thanks for this reminder. In Jesus' name. Amen.