

Stirring up the Hearts

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Heavenly Father, we thank you this morning. Father, today is a special day. We remember your son. We think about him. We remember the resurrection.

Lord. Father, I pray that you help me, O God, to bring a good report, to speak about things that are good, to speak about things that are lovely and admirable, to speak about your son. Father, I believe you. Help me to speak. I am poor, small, I'm needy.

God, have mercy on me. Have mercy on me. Thank you for this opportunity, Father. Thank you for the charge. Father, with that would you help me to preach your word, to speak aloud your gospel, and to do so accurately and boldly as you have charged me.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen. Amen. Well, it is an honor and a blessing and a privilege and a joy for me to have this opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with you all this morning and to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior. The most important event in human history.

Jesus Christ has conquered the grave. He has conquered death. That ancient boogeyman that has stalked and haunted every human being that's ever walked the face of the earth. And so it is a blessing, glorious day for us to celebrate today. And really, the purpose and the intention behind our celebration of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is that so we can be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

To remember, to recalibrate, to think upon, to meditate upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And in doing this, and considering the steadfast love of the Lord, we grow in wisdom.

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There's no greater wisdom than that of knowing God. As a matter of fact, that's the pinnacle of man's wisdom. You cannot get more wiser than that of trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And one of the ways that we learn to know God and learn from God and trust in Christ is by remembering him. It's by considering the steadfast love of the Lord. The writer of Proverbs, chapter 9, verse 10, puts it this way. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

And then we flip over to the Psalms and Psalm 107, verse 43 puts it this way. Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things. Let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord. And so that is my hope this morning, is to stir your minds and your hearts up in considering the steadfast love of the Lord as we reflect and as we remember and as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. So with that, let us turn to the Word of God.

I'll be reading from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 28. We'll start in verses. We'll start. We'll read from verse 1 to 11. And then we'll skip down and read verses 16 and 17.

Matthew, chapter 28, starting in verse 1. This is how it reads.

Now, after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back this stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him, the guards trembled and became like dead men.

But the angel said to the women, do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead. And behold, he is going before you to Galilee.

There you will see him. See, I have told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and

said, greetings. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.

Then Jesus said to them, do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me. Now skip down to verses 16 and 17. Starting in verse 16. Now the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

And when they saw him, they worshiped him. But some doubted. Brothers and sisters, I'm not going to sit here and try to present to you a bunch of physical evidence and scientific data and proving to you the resurrection of Jesus Christ. You know, Martin Luther had a very interesting quote. He said, the power of the resurrection is written not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.

Brothers and sisters, we are surrounded by the miraculous resurrection power of God. It speaks to us through creation around us. Even from the caterpillar that crawls on its belly to the supernova that gives birth in the heavens above us, to that tiny little seed, that tiny little husk that's buried in the ground and grows into a cedar tree. The miraculous resurrection power of God is all around us. And the apostle Paul puts it this way.

In Romans, chapter one, verse 20, he says this. Since the beginning of the world, God's invisible qualities, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen being understood from what has been made so that people are without excuse. And when you go to the next chapter in that book, the book of Romans, chapter 2. The apostle Paul says that the laws of God are written on the hearts of men and our conscience bears witness to it.

So there is an internal inexcusability and there is an external inexcusability. We are without excuse. It's all around us. And so again, it's not a matter of physical evidence, it's not a matter of scientific data. It's a matter of faith.

What I mean by that is you can take a cast iron heart, an unbelieving naysaying heart, and you can do miracles in front of that naysayer, in front of an unbeliever heart. A Christ could come from the floorboards this morning and show you his wounds. And an unbelieving heart, a cast iron naysaying heart, could touch those wounds and turn

away and scoff and shake his head and not believe. Gabriel could come out of the heavens right now and descend and, and perform miracles and preach the gospel to us. And cast iron naysaying hearts will turn around and not believe.

Because again, it's not a matter of physical evidence and scientific data. It is a matter of faith. When we think about sin, another word for sin is evil desires. The same thing. In the Greek it means hamartia, it means to miss the mark.

Sin has a noetic effect on man's intellectual. And what happens with sin and evil desires is it corrupts one's ability to discern and to receive and to perceive divine truth. That's an amazing thing. And so I can present physical evidence, I can present to you creation around you. We can go through and we can look at all of this scientific data and I can give you all these analogies.

But when it comes to a cast iron heart that doesn't believe, those things won't. Do you know Jesus Christ in this same gospel, the Gospel of Matthew, in chapter 11, he says it this way. He goes through a town known as Capernaum. And in that town he. He performed a whole bunch of miracles.

You know what he says to this town? He says, woe to you, Capernaum. Do you think you're going to be raised up to the heavens? He said, no, you're not. He said, if the miracles that were done in you were done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

And so again, it comes back to the deceitfulness of sin, the hardening of our hearts. So when you think about verse 15 and 16, how the disciples met Jesus Christ on that mountain in Galilee, you hear the Report that they worshiped him. But some doubted. Some doubt. Anybody have doubts?

Any. I got my hand up, I doubt. Anybody have fear? I got both hands up. I doubt and I fear.

Well, you know what? We have a beautiful example. We have some. These ancient eyewitnesses, the very first two ancient eyewitnesses in the Gospel of Matthew,

chapter 28, Mary the Mother of James and Joseph and Mary Magdalene, who Jesus Christ cast out seven demons. And there's a couple of things that we do well to pay attention to these models of faith when we look at their virtues and their nobility.

One is, if you notice in verse one, you think about Jesus Christ with all of his followers and all of his disciples. These were the only two that that went to his grave, to sit by the grave site of a dead man, just to be next to the tomb of their dead rabbi. You see this affection, this love that they had for Christ. But the outstanding quality, that characteristic of nobility that we see is in verse eight, when you read verse eight, they're given a command by that angel, basically a command by God to obey, to go tell the disciples. And when you read that narrative, when you read verse eight, it says they went quickly.

They didn't hesitate, they didn't ponder, they didn't question, they didn't ask questions. They moved, they obeyed. When you think about doubt and fear, which every single one of us in this room struggle with, there is an antidote. It's called over obedience. Obedience obliterates doubt.

Obedience obliterates doubt and fear. When we think about Mary and Mary, and they departed quickly in obedience. What happened to them on the way they met Jesus? Obedience is always rewarded. Always.

Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 6 says this. And without faith, it is impossible to please God. Because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek Him. Obedience is always rewarded. You look at John, chapter 14, verse 21.

Jesus Christ is addressing his disciples and he says this. Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is that loves me. You know what he's saying? If you obey me, you'll keep my commandments. That's what he's saying.

If you keep my commandments, you'll obey me. If you obey me, you'll keep my commandments. Then he goes further. He says, whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and manifest myself to him. John, chapter 14, verse 21.

Obedience is always rewarded. So when we think about fear, when we think about doubt, when we think about the resurrection, we think we do well to think about obedience. And so this morning my goal really is to preach the word of God, knowing that the physical evidence and scientific data and all of these other things aren't enough to convince anyone of the resurrection. But I want to hold out hope to you this morning in the Word of God and that there is something more weightier than physical evidence, something that has more authority and packs more of a punch in the way of conviction, in the way of persuasion, in the way of conversion, and that is the holy word of God. Hebrews chapter 4, verse 12 says this.

The word of God is living and powerful and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and marrow and joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts, intents of the heart. Romans chapter 1, verse 16 says the gospel is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. And so this morning I want to preach the word of God, I want to share the word of God and I want to do so according to the biblical format that we have outlined for us in the Scripture. Because the Bible amazingly enough, actually teaches us and shows us how to preach the Word of God and why to preach the word of God. It's an amazing thing.

And we find out the how and the why in second Timothy chapter four, verses two and three. And you're welcome to turn with me there if you'd like. Second Timothy chapter four, verses two and three. We find the how and the why and a little bit of context. We have the Apostle Paul who is charging his young protege, a young man by the name of Timothy, who was a pastor of a 1st century church in Ephesus.

He's giving instructions to Timothy on how to oversee the people of God, the church. And in these instructions, he tells young Timothy how to Preach and why.

Second Timothy chapter 4, verse 2 says this. Preach the Word, be ready in season and out of season, every season, under the sun, fall, winter, spring, summer, but also when it's not convenient, when you're not feeling up to it, when you're not in a good mood, when it's not convenient, when it's awkward, and when you're in a post Christian culture like we're in now, when it's not the most popular thing to be talking about Jesus

Christ and him crucified. Preach the word when it's awkward, when it's inconvenient. And then he goes further and he describes how we are to preach the Word, the modus operandi behind preaching the Word. He says it this way, reprove, rebuke, and exhort.

With complete patience and teaching. I will say this. That's not a popular way to preach the word of God. Because what we know about human beings is human beings have pride and they have ego. And Christ crucified is an offense to man.

It comes against man's pride, and it comes against man's ego, and it wounds men's hearts. You may have heard it said that if you want to be popular, preach about happiness, preach about cupcakes and rainbows. If you want to be unpopular, preach about holiness. And so with that, I'm not here to win a popularity contest, and I'm not here to share my opinion. Pastor Jim asked me to come here to share the word of God, not my opinion.

And so with that, I'm going to make due diligence in doing so. With that, here's a disclaimer. It could be that you are offended this morning. It could be that you're convicted this morning. It could be that your hearts may be wounded a little bit this morning.

The word of God has a way of doing that with us, but it's not something that we need to shy away from. It's something that we can embrace. You know, it's good for our hearts to be wounded, especially today as we think about the resurrection of our Lord and our Savior, that great King, the shepherd of our souls, Jesus Christ Almighty. The Bible says to weep, mourn and wail, turn your joy into gloom, your laughter into mourning, humble yourself before the Lord, and he will exalt you. So it is actually a healthy thing, a nourishing thing, as we consider the steadfast love of the Lord.

And we think along these terms in regards to preaching the Word. Now, verse three goes further. It says, the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions. Brothers and sisters, we are in a realm and in a time where people want to hear an aberrated gospel that teaches them that they are justified in their sin. People

want to hear an aberrated gospel that teaches them that what is wrong is right and what is right is wrong.

And I'm not going to preach that gospel to you by the grace of God. Woe to me. Woe to me if I come to you with that report. So my hope and my goal again is to preach the word of God according to the biblical format that we have laid out for the Bible. I'm not here to please people.

I'm here I want to please God. I want to be wise. I want to grow in wisdom. And I want to please him. And I want to love you and speak the truth to you.

So with that, I want to take a little jaunt down memory lane. What we know as Passion Week or Holy Week. And it may be that you've been hearing about Holy Week for the last five weeks. I'm not sure. But I've been hearing about Holy Week a lot.

And I know this. It's not going to hurt us to hear it again. We can walk through it briefly, and we'll start with what is known as Palm Sunday. But know this. You and I cannot have the resurrection of Jesus Christ without the crucifixion.

And you and I cannot have that crown that God promises to those who love him without the cross. And you and I cannot have the palm without the pain. So let's start with Holy Sunday. Let's start with Palm Sunday. Jesus Christ comes in from the east.

He makes a triumphal entry into the city of the great king, Jerusalem. He comes down the slopes of the Mount of Olives. He comes right in through. And this is the first time we find in the canonical Gospels where Jesus Christ goes open and public about who he is. He is the Messiah, the King of the Jews.

This is the first time. Before that time, we have what is known as the Messianic secret. But at this time, he comes in and he. He makes his triumphal entry right into Jerusalem. You hear shouts of praise, Hosanna.

Hosanna. Those cries are coming from unconverted, unregenerated hearts. Because we will find about five days later, those same people will be saying, crucify. Crucify

him. So let's head right into Holy Monday.

The triumphal entry forges on right into Holy Monday. And Holy Monday, we find that Jesus Christ burrows in deeper into the belly of Jerusalem. And he goes right into the temple. And he starts to rearrange furniture. He starts to flip over some tables and do some things.

And he goes head to head with the money lenders. And he goes head to head with the religious leaders. And he says, look, you've taken the house of prayer and turned it into a den of robbers. God's temple. God's place.

God's house. This place. This house is not a cinema. It's not a theater. It's not a way to get rich quick.

That's not a den of robbers. This is a place where we've come among the elect of God. This is a place where we come to Worship a righteous and holy God. This is a place where we come to hear the word of the Lord. And so you and I are to share that same zeal as our Messiah.

We're to share that same zeal. Sadly enough, we have so called evangelicals and church leaders all over the place, turning church into a den of robbers, pickpocketing the poor and doing these things. And we're good to call those things out and to address them and share that zeal. And so we have Holy Tuesday. The next day Jesus Christ makes his triumphal entry and he burrows even deeper into Jerusalem.

And this time he goes head to head with the religious leaders who have this man made religion. A works based religion where Jesus Christ debunks and dismantles that theology by reminding them that salvation is obtained through the person and works of Jesus Christ alone. And after Holy Tuesday, we're cooking along and you can follow along in the narrative in Matthew chapter starts in Matthew chapter 21, all the way up today's, today's chapter, chapter 28. And we get to what is called Spy Wednesday. Spy Wednesday is where Jesus Christ's own disciple conspired against him with the religious leaders.

They got together and they devised and schemed a way to destroy the most righteous, loving men that's ever walked the face of the earth. And you think about the pinnacle of men's sinfulness. I don't know if you can get more sinful than that. But you could imagine coming together with other conspirators, other sinful men, wicked men, and trying to figure out a way to destroy the Son of God. That's the pinnacle of men's sinfulness.

And then after Spy Wednesday, we head right into what is called Maundy Thursday. Maundy is a Latin term for mandate. It's the English word that we get for commandment. Maundy Thursday is where Jesus Christ took his disciples up to an upper room. And there he fulfilled the Passover feast by instituting the Last Supper, also known as the Eucharist.

It means thanksgiving. And that last supper, that communion meal, was a ceremonial meal symbolizing and representing the new covenant made in the blood of Jesus Christ. And after that he leaves the upper room. They sing a hymn, the Egyptian Hallel. Hosanna.

Hosanna, Psalm 118. And then it's shortly after that that he's arrested by temple officers. His very own people betray him. They arrest him. He's betrayed with a kiss.

And he's carted off to the Sanhedrin. Sanhedrin is The Jewish ruling council comprised of anywhere from 70 to 71 men. These are chief priests, scribes and rulers. Pharisees, knuckleheads, wicked men that come around and surround Jesus Christ. 70 of them.

I mean, you think about two men surrounding you. Think about 70 of these knuckleheads surrounding you, right? They surround him and they blaspheme his good name. They convict him and they charge him with crimes that he never committed. Then they blindfold him and they beat his face with sinful fists.

They beat him in the back of his head. They beat him in the side of the head. They beat him in his face. And rather than saying, this is the prophet from Nazareth, they're saying, prophesy to us, who hit you? Who is it that hit you?

And they beat him after they beat him to a bloody pulp. We enter into what is known as Good Friday. Good Friday is where these people, the Sanhedrin, cart Jesus Christ off and they take him up to what is known as the Praetorium, the palace of one Roman governor of Judea, Pontius Pilate. They take Jesus Christ before Pontius Pilate. Pontius Pilate washes his hands in innocence.

Because I don't find any way to charge this man with any crime. But because of your shouts of crucify him and your shouts prevail, I'm going to hand him over to be scourged. And so they hand him over to be scourged. And when you think about. And when you study the art of crucifixion and you think about scourging and you think about the cross and the lifespan and longevity of how long man lives on a cross, it's roughly, on average, 36 hours.

That's the survival time. You will last, on average, about 36 hours. The gospel says that Jesus Christ lasted from the third hour to the ninth hour. That's six hours. That means he was beaten within a centimeter of his life before he ever put was on that cross.

Beaten within a centimeter of his life. Okay, when you think about scourging and listen, let me pause right here, because it's probably going to get. It's probably going to heat up a little bit when you start to hear about this. And it's okay, listen, it's good for us to grieve. It's good for tears, it's good for your heart to tremble inside your chest when you hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Because contrary to popular opinion, the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ is not a cute story, okay? It's not polite. It's impolite. It's graphic.

Okay, so just so you know what's coming down the pipe. So when you study the art of crucifixion and you think about what happened to Jesus Christ, they would have people that would scourge. They were professional scourgers, if you will. They would tie a man to a post and they would take a multi lash and there would be bones and metal on the end of that lash. And they would whip a man and they would tear out his nerve endings in his spine, and they would whip him and they would turn his body into

hamburger meat.

From the bottom of his feet to the top of his head, from the back of his legs, his heels, his back, his shoulders, his face, his neck. And as a matter of fact, it took two of them because one of them, their arm would get tired. And so they have to trade back and forth. This is sickening, right? This is scourging a man.

And so Jesus Christ suffered severe blood loss before he ever bore that beam on his back. He suffered severe blood loss, but we're not done yet. After the scourging, they give him over to a Roman battalion consisting of anywhere from 200 to 600 men. This Roman battalion went around Jesus Christ. They took a crown of thorns.

The thorns are three inches long, and they pounded it into his head with a reed. And then they beat him some more. And they worshiped him. Isaiah, chapter 52, verse 14. The prophet Isaiah gives us a startling graphic description of what happened on that Friday afternoon.

He gives us a description of what happened to our king, our Savior. You know what he says? Chapter 52, verse 14, part B. You know what it says? It says this.

His appearance was so marred beyond human semblance. You know what that means? He didn't look recognizable by the time they were done with him. He not only didn't look like Jesus, he didn't look like a human being. But they mangled his body, they mutilated him, they dehumanized him.

We go back to Maundy Thursday, before all of this. He went into a garden known as the Garden of Gethsemane. Gethsemane means pressed olives. You get the sense of pressing something bitter and out comes something sweet. And when he went into that garden, Jesus Christ suffered a great deal.

The canonical gospels report him suffering, his soul suffering even to the point of death. Other gospels report him sweating blood. And still other gospels yet report him falling on his face several times. This is God in human form falling on his face several times, asking God, take this cup from me. Take this cup of suffering from me.

Nonetheless, let your will be done and not my own. And. And what we have to consider, brothers and sisters, this morning is not just the physical agony of the cross, but the spiritual implications as well. A lot of times we gloss over that reality because, you see, Jesus Christ was about to take on and dawn that nasty, filthy jacket of sin. This chaste, innocent, righteous, loving man, sinless man, was about to take on the sins of the entire world upon himself.

See, that, that scope, that profundity, is beyond our pay grade. I can give you. Maybe I'll attempt to give you a tiny little analogy of what that would mean. It's a feeble attempt. But I'll say this.

I'm 52 years old in September, and you know what? I've done a lot of sin. I've done a lot of evil. Blood on my hands. I've had a lot of evil thoughts, done a lot of wicked things.

And I can tell you this. If I were to take my 52 years of sin, it's a lot of sin. And if I were just to place it on one of you who was another sinner like me, you would buckle under the weight. You wouldn't even be able to bear it up. You would stagger under that load.

So imagine that. Imagine that for a moment. That's just my sin. The sins of the world see, placed upon him. Second Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 21 says, for our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin.

That doesn't mean he was a sinner. He was regarded as sin.

In other words, he was about to be regarded as a serial killer, a murderer, a perjurer, an idolater, a drunkard, a thief, a rapist, an idolater. All of those things and more. Jesus Christ was about to take all of that on. Why? To save you.

To save you and to save me. You see this? Now, let's go back to the. To the battalion, Roman battalion. After that, Roman battalion got their hands on him and beat him some more.

They put a beam, 40 pounds of wood on his back and they marched him from the praetorium to the hill of Calvary. It's called the Via Dolorosa. Latin, it means the way of suffering. Three quarters of a mile from that praetorium to Golgotha, the hill of Calvary, they marched him up to that hill. They took him up to the top of that hill.

But you know what? He couldn't bear 40 pounds of weight on him. He buckled down underneath that Weight. They had to summon one from Cyrene, one by the name of Simon, to help him carry that load. And he went up to that cross.

He went up to that site, the hill of Calvary. And you know what they did there? They took all of his clothes off of him. Publicly, nude, naked, dehumanized. A public spectacle before man.

Disfigured and marred and bloodied. And naked before man. A public spectacle. I want to remind you of a beautiful verse that I hide in my heart, that I love. And I think about this time of year.

It's from Colossians, chapter 2, verse 15, and it says this. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. See what. What Satan and sinful man intended for evil, God intended for good. This great reversal that's profound, brothers and sisters, to me, as it ought to be to you.

And so after they stripped him and dehumanized him, they took spikes and pounded it mercilessly through his wrists and threw his feet on wood. They plastered him on beams of wood, and they raised up the beams of wood so everybody could see him. And rather than saying, hosanna, save us, save us, now you have these religious leaders talking about, save yourself, you're the king of the Jews. Look at you. You're the Son of God.

I thought you could save yourself. Come down off that cross. Come down off that cross if you're the Lord.

Jesus Christ was bloodied, marred, disfigured beyond recognition. And he took his bloodied face with his marred, disfigured frame. And he cried out to God and he said, eli, eli, lama sabachthani. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Brothers and sisters, that's a horrifying ordeal, to be forsaken by God.

He took that for you and me. Do you know that? This morning, for you and for me. Listen. He took the wrath of God upon himself.

And I will say this, you and I wouldn't last one red hot second under the fiery blast, that furnace blast of the wrath of God. You would not last. And Christ took that upon himself to save knuckleheads like me.

This morning, Pastor Jim said something very profound that we do well to consider as we consider the steadfast love of the Lord. He quoted from Hebrews, chapter 12, verse 2. And I'll remind you of it again because it's important you know what it says. It says, for the joy set before him, he endured the cross. Now this, this may make your heart Tremble.

This may make tears. It ought to make tears start welling up in your eyes. But I want you to think about this for a moment. For the joy that was joy. That's joy.

Being made sin, being taken. The wrath of God is joy. Being crucified and beaten by sinful, wicked men, that's joy. Being dehumanized and being made a public spectacle, that's joy. You know what?

That's joy. I was in the mind of God when he died like that. I was in the mind of God. He couldn't have me separated from him. He couldn't.

And he counted it. Joy. To save me. He counted that joy. Brothers and sisters, if this gospel that I just told you, which is graphic, it is graphic.

If this gospel, these words that I just told you, if they're not making your heart seize up and tremble in your chest and tears well up in your eyes. If you think that this is a made up fairy tale, if you think that this is some ancient Near Eastern fable, I will say

this. Be afraid. Be afraid. If you think this is silliness, be afraid.

You know what that means? That means it could be that you're alienated from the life of God. That your understanding is darkened because an unbeliever. And listen, I know how to. I know what it's like to be an unbeliever.

I've been an unbeliever most of my life. And as a matter of fact, I'll never forget when Jesus Christ found me. He found me on the side of the road to Jericho, half dead, wallowing in my blood. When he found me, my shepherd was tracking me. For years he'd been tracking me.

My shepherd was tracking me. My sin had found me out. I was a walking rib cage. A wicked, evil, satanic man when he found me. And you know what?

When he found me, I was hallucinating, spitting out my teeth. And he found me on the ground, on the pavement. And I'll never forget it when he found me. Because you know what he did when he found me? He scooped me up off the ground and he took me to his bosom and he said three words to me.

You know what he said? I love you. Do you know how long I've waited to hear those words from my Lord? Those words changed my life. He took my calcified, cast iron heart out of my chest and he whispered the gospel, what you're hearing right now.

And I became alive. Do you see that? Christ, who was raised by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in Newness of life. I'm not on the side of the road to Jericho anymore, brothers and sisters. I'm alive now.

Praise the Lord. The risen Lord. He's risen. You know, there's two resurrections for the believer. There's a spiritual one, that one comes first before the physical one.

And it will come. It's just a matter of time. But that spiritual one is a beautiful one. It's a down payment sealed by the Spirit. My life has changed.

I have different affections. I'm now made privy to divine truth and revelation because of the gospel. The power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes. So,

brothers and sisters, I want to hold this word out to you. And saying this.

And look, I'm not the Lord. And I don't know who's saved in here, but God does. He knows who's saved. And you know what I know about people to go to church? Not everybody that says Lord.

Lord is saved in the Bible. Now, that's his business, and that's your business. But I will say this. I know this kind of seems like a Debbie Downer this morning, but I want to give you a little bit of hope and light as we finish up. John, chapter 6, verse 37 says this.

All that the Father gives to me will come to me. And whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. And Romans, chapter 10, verse 13 says this. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Jesus Christ is not a liar like men.

Men lie. I know that. Shoot, I'm a liar. Jesus Christ doesn't lie when he says those words. You can take it to the bank.

When he says, everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. He's not mincing his words. That's truth. You know how I know that? Two ways.

The Bible says it, and I've done it. I've done it. He saved. I know that that's true. He saved my life.

Called upon the name of the Lord. So if your heart is hardened today, if you're thinking, man, I don't understand the gospel. This doesn't make sense, you know, to an unbeliever. And I've been like. Like I said, I've been one.

This sounds odd. I don't get it. Some man that died thousands of years ago. What does that have to do with myself? But what is that sin?

What is that? This stuff doesn't make sense. I want to tell you something. There's good news. If that's you.

I don't know if it is you. If that's you, here's good news today. Today, go into your private chamber, shut the door, get on your knees and cry out to Christ. You know what you do? You say, Jesus Christ.

I don't understand. This doesn't make sense to me. This doesn't make sense to me. But I just heard some words from some bug eyed, bald headed preacher talking about the gospel and the risen savior. But Lord, I want to know.

Jesus Christ, reveal yourself to me. Jesus Christ, reveal the gospel to me. Jesus Christ revealed. This, this, this thing of sin, reveal. I don't understand.

And you know what? He will. He's faithful. He's faithful. I've done it.

I've done it. Praise God. So with that being said, oh, obedience obliterates doubt and fear. Isn't that amazing? You know, I want to be an obedient man and I want to promote obedience in the people of God.

And so we'll finish up with this. You know, I was reading about the resurrection the other day, about how Jesus Christ said some words to Martha. I don't know if you guys ever heard about Martha. She had a brother named Lazarus who died. Jesus Christ raised him from the dead is an amazing thing.

But before, before he raises Lazarus from the dead, he tells Martha, I love this line from Christ, this one I keep in my heart. He says, this martyr, he says, Martha, he says, Martha, he says, everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Wow. I'll say it again. Everyone who lives now, I think, I'm pretty sure everyone, I'm looking out, everyone here is alive.

Pretty sure. No one's dead, no one's falling asleep. Okay, so everyone's. So that pertains to you. So everyone who lives and believes in me, here's the promise.

Shall never die. Now watch. Then he follows up with this. Martha, he says this, this is pivotal. Do you believe this?

That's what he says. Do you believe this? I will say this, and I will confess Christ before men, gladly, unashamedly. Yes, I believe it. But here's the question I want to leave with you.

Do you believe it? Do you believe that? Go to him. Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near.

Isaiah, chapter 55, verse 6, says, Today is the day of salvation. So brothers and sisters, as we depart, as we partake in the communion, the Last Supper, my hope is these words aren't cast behind you. That as we continue on and we think about that triumphal entry that made it right through the center of Jerusalem, right through the tombstone, right through the grave and burst out, O glorious day, that we continue to remember the resurrection. Think about the resurrection, Read about the resurrection, pray about the resurrection. Remember the resurrection and by considering the steadfast love of the Lord, that you and I may grow in wisdom.

Let us pray. Father in heaven. Oh God, we praise you this morning, Father. We do not take your gospel, we do not take your son. We do not take the crucifixion of your son.

We do not take our sins, we do not take our inheritance, we do not take eternal life, we do not take heaven, we do not take hell. We do not take the resurrection of our Savior lightly. We take these things very serious, Lord. These are weighty things that we've talked about and thought about this morning. Father, our lives are yours.

O God. Father, have mercy on us. Let us not be forgetful hearers of the Word, but empower us to be doers of the Word. O God, help us to model ourselves after our sisters Mary and Mary. God, let us be quick to obey.

Let us be quick to run to you, Father, help us. Thank you, Father, for this celebration. Thank you for the promise of the resurrection. Thank you for that glorious day that is on the horizon, Father. Thank you that it's just a matter of time until we are raised from the dust to be housed in a permanent, indestructible frame that will outlast time and eternity.

Oh, Father, thank you. O God, we think of you, we praise you, we tell you that we love you. And it is in the name of your son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, that we pray. Amen.