

Evidence for the Resurrection

by Anton Bosch

Anton Bosch presents compelling evidence for the resurrection of Jesus, emphasizing its foundational role in Christian faith and hope for believers.

Duration: 45:16

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 24:1-12, Acts 1:3

Topics: "Resurrection"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the events surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes the significance of the Roman soldiers who were responsible for guarding Jesus' tomb, highlighting their discipline and the severe consequences they faced for failing in their duty. The speaker questions the idea that a group of scared and disillusioned disciples could have overpowered these soldiers and stolen Jesus' body. He also emphasizes the importance of the physical evidence and witnesses that support the resurrection of Jesus, citing Luke's account in the book of Acts and the women who discovered the empty tomb.

Transcript

Please turn with me to the Gospel according to Luke chapter 24, Luke chapter 24. And we're going to speak about the resurrection, of course, and it's just interesting that the reading that we read this morning wasn't planned. We've been working our way through the book of Matthew, and it just happened to be that that is how far we got this morning.

And we read on the resurrection. I think we have one more reading in the book of Matthew next week, and then we're going to begin to read the Psalms. That'll keep us busy for quite a while as we read right through the book of Psalms, probably, I guess, three years or more.

I think the book of Matthew took us a good 18 months. And so we read from Matthew about the resurrection, and I'm going to come back to some of the references that we read this morning on the book of Matthew. But let's read from Luke's account, and I've been blessed by Luke lately.

Luke is very precise. I've always been impressed by his ability to give us the exact details of things. And Luke writes as a historian, and he is recognized as very scientific in the way that he writes.

And this is his account on the resurrection from Luke 24, verses 1 through 12. Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they and certain other women with them came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that, behold, two men stood by them in shiny garments. Then as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but he has risen.

Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words. Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.

It was Mary Magdalene, Johanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other woman with them who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb and stooped down.

He saw the linen clothes lying by themselves, and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened. There is increasing attack against the Word of God, and every important principle and every important doctrine that we believe in the Word of God is increasingly being attacked. And this is, of course, not new.

And you remember we read from the book of Matthew how the chief priests and the people said, Well, you know, this is a deceiver, and he's going to deceive us a second time by claiming to have raised from the dead when in fact he didn't. And so the attacks have always been there, but they seem to be increasing in intensity today. And there are many different ways in which this thing is attacked.

Some people say, Well, Jesus didn't die. Either he was in a swoon or he fainted, or he was in a coma and he woke up. Or the most recent attack is that he never even went to the cross.

And I think it's very important to mention the source of that attack, which is coming from Oprah Winfrey. On her radio talk show and also on her Internet, she is doing right now a course on miracles. It's called A Course on Miracles.

And in this Course on Miracles, she expressly says that the concept of a sacrifice is foreign to God. It is that Jesus never died on the cross, and therefore he never rose from the dead. Now, this is a very, very serious attack because it's not coming from someone who is unknown.

This is someone who is known throughout the world and is probably the richest woman in America today, and probably the most influential woman in America today. And she is teaching people actively that the Bible really is just a lot of lies, that Jesus never died, that Jesus never rose from the dead. And then there is the attack that comes to say that, well, he was never raised.

And remember, this is the line that the Jews wanted to take. They stole his body. Yeah, he died, but he's dead just like anybody else.

And we don't know what happened to his body, but he was never raised from the dead. And of course, what I'm going to do this morning is I hope to be able to give you some evidence, some proof for the resurrection, because we are able to prove it. The resurrection is not a myth.

The resurrection is not a doctrine. It is not a theology. It is a historical fact.

It is a historical fact. And unfortunately, some people, in fact, this morning we heard reference to a leap of faith. I don't believe you need to take a leap of faith to believe in the resurrection.

I believe that if you are a diligent scholar who is willing to examine the evidence, you can come to no other conclusion but that Jesus actually and really rose from the dead. And I trust that I will be able to give you some of that evidence this morning. And then the last attack, which is also coming from religious sources today, and there is in the world a thing called the New Reformation.

And the New Reformation is denying many of the fundamentals of the faith. And one of the ways that they deal with this issue of the resurrection is Jesus didn't physically rise from the dead. He rose spiritually.

We sang that hymn this morning. He lives within my heart. And so Jesus died and he didn't rise again, but he lives in our hearts.

He lives in our thoughts and in our minds. And so that's the way that he was raised. No, Jesus rose physically, bodily from the grave.

And this is the essence of our faith. Paul is adamant and he says that if Jesus didn't rise from the dead, then our faith is futile and we are still in our sins. In other words, our whole faith hangs on this truth.

Our whole faith hangs on this truth that Jesus was raised from the dead. Yes, the atonement was paid for. The cost of our redemption was paid for at the cross.

But without the resurrection, we have nothing. And this is what sets us apart from every other religion in the world. Every other religion, you can go and see the tombs of the gurus and of the leaders and of the great men who they worship.

But we have an empty tomb. Many Christians go to Palestine and many have gone over this last weekend and have walked the stations of the cross. But at the end of the line, there is an empty tomb.

There is no body. Jesus has risen from the dead. And this is obviously the most powerful work and miracle that Jesus ever did.

It was the last miracle that he did on earth, and yet it is the most powerful miracle of them all, that he raised himself by the eternal spirit from the dead. This is important because it assures us that our sins have been forgiven, that the work of the cross and the sacrifice that Jesus made was accepted by the Father. But it also assures us that because Jesus lives, we will live also.

Because of his resurrection, we have hope for tomorrow. Every other faith, every other religion is hoping that maybe, maybe something good will happen in the afterlife. Maybe I can evolve or I can be reincarnated at a higher level.

Maybe I'll have 27 virgins. Maybe this will happen, maybe that will happen. But nobody has a guarantee.

But we have a guarantee. Because the one who gives us the promises is the same one who himself rose from the dead. And because Jesus has risen, he is able to guarantee and to assure us that that which we are hoping in, that which we are putting our trust in, is sure and is steadfast.

And so I've divided my points this morning into two main groups, the physical evidence and the witnesses. And, again, it was Luke. We read from Luke's gospel, and if you have your Bible with you, we turn to Acts chapter 1, as Luke gives us the introduction to the book of Acts.

And verse 3, And speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. So Luke, this historian who writes so very precisely and so very accurately and so very carefully, who has very carefully researched his sources, and has put it together in the most factual way possible, says that Jesus, by many, not just a few, but many, infallible proofs. Now remember, under the law in the Old Testament, we made reference to this in the Bible class this morning, that we need two or three witnesses.

But Luke is saying, we don't have two or three witnesses. We have many proofs. Many proofs.

And these proofs, these evidences, are infallible. They are not weak. They are not guesstimates.

They are not maybes or ifs or nebulous suggestions. They are infallible proofs. And so if they are infallible proofs, and if he says they are infallible proofs, then we need to go to the scripture and say, what are these proofs? What is the evidence that Jesus was raised from the dead? And while I understand that there is an element of faith to our relationship with God and to our relationship with the Word of God, at the same time, as I said earlier, we need to know what we believe.

And we need to have proof for what we believe. And I believe we have proof for what we believe. And I think it's important that we know what that proof and that evidence is in the light of the many attacks that come against the Word of God today.

The first evidence is the empty tomb. The empty tomb. Somehow you have to explain what happened to the body.

What happened to the body? And you know, the fact that the tomb was empty, not the resurrection, be careful on this, not the resurrection, but the empty tomb is confirmed by Roman historians as well as Jewish historians outside of the Bible. Jewish and Roman historians confirm that the tomb was empty. Now obviously the way they explain it is they say they stole the body.

Now let's examine that question. Who stole the body? Well, the Jews wouldn't have stolen the body because they wanted to make sure that Jesus was dead and he was going to stay dead. Because if he rose from the dead, he was proved to be true and they were proven to be liars.

So they were going to make sure he was in that tomb and he stayed there. The Romans had no interest in raising him from the dead because he was a troublemaker and they were happy to get him out of the way. And if he came back to life, they would have their hands full.

So the Romans and the Jews had no interest in seeing Jesus alive again. The only ones who had any interest in seeing Jesus alive or seeing his body stolen and seeing the myth of his resurrection perpetuated would be the disciples. So the disciples stole the body of Jesus.

That's what they're saying. But who are we talking about? We're talking about 11 men. Remember, Judas had defected.

We're talking about 11 men of which only one stood at the cross. The rest of them were too ashamed to be identified with Jesus. They were confused.

They were disappointed. They were disillusioned. They were scared.

And you're telling me that these scared men who could not even stand next to the cross with Jesus, who could not even stand there and look up at him as he hung upon that cross, that these men came and attacked a Roman god of at least four men, rolled away the stone and took the body. If that was true, then why did the gods not speak up? Now, one of the things you have to remember is that these gods were going to die for the stolen body. So the gods would do everything they could to make sure that they could exonerate themselves, that they could explain what had happened if that was at all possible.

And so if these 11 scared fishermen came and attacked them, they would have appeared before the governor and said, here's the marks. See how they beat us up. But that never happened.

So clearly nobody attacked them. The disciples never came near that tomb to steal the body. So what happened to the body? The only explanation is that it was raised from the dead.

It was not stolen. And we've tried to prove that it could not be stolen. So we have the empty tomb.

The stone was moved. And there is a book, I forgot who wrote it, I read it many years ago, entitled Who Rolled Away the Stone? Who Rolled Away the Stone? That's one of the questions we have to ask. Who rolled away that stone? The scripture is clear that it was a very heavy stone.

That it weighed, and the estimate is that it weighed between one and one and a half tons. Not only was it very heavy and it was brought against the mouth of the tomb or of the cave, but it was secured. We read in the book of Matthew this morning that what Jesus says to them is, you make it secure as best you can.

You make it secure as best you can. So I don't know what they did, I don't know how they made that thing secure, but they made it as secure as they can. So it wasn't just like you could walk in and just do whatever you wanted to do.

Because remember again, I said that the Romans and the Jews both had a vested interest to make sure that that body was never disappeared out of that grave. And so they sealed it physically. And yet somehow that stone was rolled away, even when a Roman God was set there.

Who rolled away that stone? Again, the disciples would have to overcome the Roman God if they were going to try and do that. They hadn't done that. The Roman soldiers wouldn't have done it.

The Jews would not have done it. So it could only, only these one, one possible person who could have rolled away that stone, and that is God himself. That's the only one who could have rolled away the stone.

The next question we have to ask is, what happened to the body? So it's not in the grave. It's disappeared. So what happened to it? Nobody's ever found it.

And remember that we're not talking about a country the size of the United States. We're talking about a very small country, 27 miles across. We're talking about a very small city.

We know that even in this big country, the bodies eventually surface. Eventually somebody finds the evidence. They never found the body.

And you know, I have no doubt that the Romans and the Jews alike would have done what they could to try and find that body, to try and discover what they had done with the body of Jesus. And remember that if

the body existed and if the disciples knew where it was, there would be a trail to the tomb, or to the grave, or to the place where they had put that body. Because these people were devoted to him, they would be going there in droves to mourn wherever their corpse was.

But they never found that corpse, because there was not one. There was no dead body. What about the Roman gods? We're not talking about some second-grade security guys.

We're talking about Roman soldiers, the most disciplined military force on the face of the earth at that time. These men were going to die for the fact that they lost that body, and they knew it. It is recorded in history, and it is recorded by Roman historians, that the punishment for dereliction of duty and for losing this body, the man whose fault it was would die, and he would die a terrible death, and I won't give you the details of that.

That was standard. There was no question about it. They knew that was what was going to happen.

And if there was a team, and in this case there was a group, at least four men, and if it couldn't be defined who of them it would be, who was the guilty one, then they would cast lots, and the guilty one would die for the rest of them. Now, of course, you know what happens when you do that. I was in the military, and they used to do the same thing.

Who did this thing? If you own up, then the one will be punished. You don't own up, then everybody's going to get punished. And when everybody's got to get punished, somebody's going to rat, somebody's going to tell tales.

And yet nobody... So these men, do you think they were going to allow this body to be stolen for the sake of dying, or they were going to die for the sake of somebody else just stealing the body? I don't see it. And remember that this was not something that happened by surprise. When you read through these accounts, and we read the account this morning, they knew what was going to happen.

It wasn't like Jesus died, and then suddenly, out of the blue, without anyone expecting it, He rose from the dead. He had told them He was going to rise from the dead. And so the Jews go to Pilate, and they say, He said He's going to rise from the dead.

Now, we better make sure that His body is not stolen. We don't believe He can rise from the dead, but the worst that can happen is they can steal the body and say that He did rise. And so they knew what was coming.

And so it wasn't like they were caught by surprise. They defended, and they would have fought off any attempt to steal the body of Jesus. The fact that the body disappeared from that tomb in the face of a Roman guard, and we're not talking about one man, but at least four men, is proof of the resurrection.

The body could not have been stolen, not past those men. And then we have the broken seal. Remember that it is sealed, and one of the ways they would do it is they would string a line across the stone from one wall to the other wall, and they would seal both sides with clay and with a signet of Caesar or of the centurion, of the guard.

That seal would have to be broken in order for the stone to be rolled away. And that was the thing that the soldiers would guard. Who broke that seal? The Roman soldiers would not break it.

The Jews would not break it. The disciples could not break it. And so God alone broke the seal and rolled away the stone and raised Jesus from the dead.

In the passage that we read, and maybe if you turn there again, you find the same in the book of John, but in Luke chapter 24, the last verse that we read, you find a very, very interesting statement. Peter arose, verse 12 of Luke 24, Peter arose and ran to the tomb, and stooping down, he saw the linen clothes lying by themselves, and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened. You find the same message in John's account.

So John and Peter together, but Peter particularly, they arrived there and they look in and they see the grave clothes. Now, these grave clothes would have been wound around the body. They're not clothes in the sense that they have a zipper or they have buttons.

I mean, it's wrappings that are wrapped and they are covered with spices and with aloe juice, which forms a cake around the body, seals the body. And so the body would have been wrapped in these things. You remember Lazarus had the same thing.

Lazarus was raised and Jesus says, loose him because he was bound by all these things. And so they had to undo the wrappings and set him free. And so Peter goes in and he looks in there and he sees the wrappings and he is convinced.

He is convinced. There was something about the way that those wrappings were lying there that proved to Peter that Jesus was raised from the dead. And I would suggest to you, although it's not in the text, but there was clearly something that he saw.

What did he see? Well, if they were unraveled by some person and they were just lying on a heap, he would say, well, somebody, you know, undid the wrappings and stole the body. But clearly the way the wrappings lay there proved to Peter that Jesus was risen. And I can only assume, and it is generally accepted that what had happened was that God miraculously extracted the body of Jesus from out of the wrappings like out of a cocoon.

And the shape was there, but it was empty. The body was out. Because the moment Peter saw that, he knew that Jesus was raised from the dead.

Again, evidence of the resurrection. And what about the witnesses? How many witnesses do we have? And who are these witnesses? You see, one of the accusations that is brought against Christianity is that this is a myth that is perpetuated by the 12 apostles. That they had this thing, and in order to keep the faith going and to secure their position and all of these things, what they did is they just told people that Jesus was raised from the dead, but nobody ever had any witness.

So we need to examine the witnesses. And the book of Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, Paul says that he was seen of 500 witnesses at once. Very, very important.

Not just that he was seen by 500 witnesses. And so there's this mass hysteria, and this guy comes, he says, I saw Jesus. And somebody else says, I also saw him.

I mean, we know the stories about the UFOs and about ghosts and things, you know. But when 500 people at the same time witness something, see the risen Christ, it wasn't like, well, you know, nobody can say, well, you know, you're lying, because, I mean, I saw what I saw. But when there are 500 of us

together in one place and we all see the same thing, it's not an illusion.

It's not a deception. It's not me trying to say, well, I saw something that I can't prove. All 500 saw him at one time, at one, the same moment.

Now, if these 500, can you imagine you have a court case today, and the case is whether Jesus was alive after his death or not. Can you imagine the attorneys for the defense bringing 500 witnesses? 500 witnesses. If each one of those testified for six minutes, it would take 50 hours to run the witnesses.

Now, I think that 500 witnesses has to be an overwhelming testimony. And I don't think that any court anywhere in the world that has any sense of justice can deny the fact that 500 people testify to the same fact. Remember we said in the Old Testament, by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word is to be confirmed.

By the mouth of two or three witnesses, a man could be condemned to death. Jesus was crucified by the mouth of two false witnesses. It's one thing to find two witnesses, it's another thing to find 500 witnesses.

These witnesses testified at that time. In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul says, many of these witnesses are alive even today. Some he says have died, but most of them are still alive right now.

What is he saying? He's not saying, well, there are these people, you can't cross-examine them, you can't really go and ask them, but there are 500 people who say that Jesus rose from the dead. No, Paul is saying they're alive, you can go and ask them if you like. In other words, these are men who are open to cross-examination.

These are people who you can go and speak to. These are not obscure witnesses. I mean, we know these kinds of things happen oftentimes in courts.

People say, well, you know, I have witnesses that saw the man do this thing. Who are those witnesses? Well, I can't tell you. They're confidential.

Now, these are not confidential witnesses. These are not make-believers. These are people who were alive at that time and who could be called to testify to the fact that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

Many of these people died for the faith. Not just the 500, but some of the others, especially the 12, except John, as well as Paul. And the thing that they died for was the resurrection.

It wasn't because they believed that Jesus died. That wasn't why they were killed. They were killed because they preached the resurrection.

Remember, if you read the book of Acts, the message they preached was his death and his resurrection, but particularly his resurrection. And they died for that. Now, it's one thing to say, well, you know, I'm happy to perpetuate a myth.

For 500 people to agree together, to conspire, to say, we're going to all confirm that Jesus rose from the dead. But, you know, when they begin to kill those 500 people, one by one by one, somewhere along the line, somebody's going to own up and say, he didn't really die, we lied. But not one of them said that they lied.

Every one of them died standing by the truth that Jesus rose from the dead. Folks, if that is not evidence that Jesus did rise from the dead, that they really saw him, then I don't know what is. Because not one of them denied the faith.

Not one of them denied the resurrection. Everyone died for their testimony that Jesus was raised and had risen from the grave. One of the other accusations is that, really, the witnesses were friends of Jesus.

They had a vested interest to make sure that the myth was perpetuated. But is that really true? Remember, one of the men that Jesus appeared to was called Thomas. Yeah, he was one of the disciples, but remember, he was not a particularly, he didn't have a lot of faith.

He didn't believe, he was, and we call him Doubting Thomas. He did not believe that Jesus rose from the dead. So he was not a sympathetic witness, he was a disbelieving witness.

And yet when he saw Jesus raised from the dead, he believed. But then what about Paul? Paul was not just a doubting witness, he was a hostile witness. Remember what Paul was doing at the very time that Jesus appeared to him.

He was persecuting Christians because of the faith. And he was doing everything he could to destroy this myth that Jesus was raised from the dead. And yet when Jesus appeared to him, it was so real that he could not deny it.

His life was changed, and he began to preach the resurrection. And so Jesus did not only appear to friendly witnesses, he appeared also to a hostile witness in the case of Paul. But then there is, the most hostile witnesses, of course, came from the Jewish leaders of which Paul was one.

But remember that Paul had been trained, and Paul's professor was a man called Gamaliel. And he is one of the great gurus of the Jewish faith, one of the great rabbis. And even today in the Talmud, which is the teachings of the rabbis, many of Gamaliel's teachings are encapsulated in the Talmud, and so even today they study the teachings of Gamaliel.

And remember a few years later the disciples were brought before the Jewish leaders because of the message they were preaching. And when you look carefully at what Gamaliel said, you remember Gamaliel said there have been false prophets, and they were all proven to be false. But if this is of God, we need to be careful, lest we be found fighting against God.

Now you read that passage, and I read it again this morning very carefully, and you see that Gamaliel is saying this could be of God. This could be of God. He's not saying definitely this is of God.

This could be of God. Now on what basis did he believe that? It could only be because of the resurrection. He was in Jerusalem when it all happened, and something convinced him to such a degree that even though the Christians were being persecuted, and even though he agreed to the beating of the apostles, there was sufficient doubt in his mind because of what he had witnessed, that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead.

He never came to a point where he said Jesus did rise from the dead, but he's very, very close to intimating that, and he is definitely a hostile witness. The resurrection is the message of the apostles. If the resurrection was suspect, if it was a myth, if it was real, then surely they would have preached something else.

They had many other things they could preach. They could preach about Jesus' kingdom. They could preach about his violent death.

They could preach about his teachings. They could preach about many other things that Jesus preached about, but why did they especially choose to preach the one thing that was so questionable? And if you're going to start a religion, if you're going to start a faith, you're going to preach something that people will find believable, that people will find acceptable. You're not going to look for some far-out thing that is so unbelievable that people are going to find hard to believe it.

And yet they perpetuated and they continued to preach the resurrection, the most difficult part of everything that Jesus did to believe. They could only have done so if Jesus truly was raised from the dead. We have more than 25 references in the book of Acts to the resurrection.

We have more than 30 references in the epistles to the resurrection. And so we have to ask the question, what about the testimony of the Bible? Is the Bible a reliable witness? I believe the 500 witnesses were reliable. I believe that those who were martyred for the faith can be proven to be reliable.

But now we have the word of God. Can we prove that that is reliable and a reliable witness? Because as I've said, over 25 references in the book of Acts, over 30 references in the epistles, and some major sections, 1 Corinthians chapter 15, an entire chapter devoted to the subject. Can we believe the testimony of the Bible? And I suggest to you that we can.

Now, we've tried to prove the resurrection this morning. We can also prove the veracity of the word of God. We can also prove how Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament, how that many other prophecies, not only concerning Jesus, but concerning world empires, the Greek and the Roman Empire, and the Babylonian and Persian Empire, how that all of these things have been fulfilled in the minutest detail.

How that Jesus rode into the streets of Jerusalem on the exact day that had been predicted hundreds of years before. We can prove that the Bible is a reliable witness. And so when the Bible says that Jesus raised from the dead, it is not the Bible perpetuating its own myth.

The Bible stands on its own feet, and the Bible can be proven to be reliable and to be the word of God. And when the Bible says Jesus raised from the dead, then that is a fact. And that alone should be sufficient witness.

That alone should be sufficient testimony. And I've given you many, many other proofs and evidences this morning. Not only is the resurrection something that is spoken of in the New Testament, but it is something that is promised and prophesied in the Old Testament.

Jesus prophesied that he would be raised. And you know, what struck me today is, again, as we just read that passage in the book of Matthew, that the Jews remembered that Jesus said he was going to be raised on the third day. And that's why they wanted the tomb sealed and they wanted a God.

But you know that the disciples could not remember that. Isn't that amazing? The Jews who were the enemies of Christ, they remembered. And they said, he said he was going to be raised on the third day.

Now we better make sure he doesn't. And yet his very disciples who walked with him for three and a half years, when he died, they said, this is the end. And when the women come back to the disciples, they say,

he's not there, he's risen.

They said, you're just talking nonsense. It was as idle chatter, it says, it was as idle chatter to them. Just hysterical women just going off.

That blows my mind, you know. That the opposition believes when those who are his disciples don't. And I pray that this morning, we who are the faithful, that we will believe with all of our hearts.

And that we will trust the word of God and that we will trust the testimony of Jesus and the testimony of the apostles and the testimony of those who say that Jesus was raised from the dead. Because if the devil can undermine this truth in your heart and your mind, he can undermine the whole of the word of God. Because as I said, on this truth hangs everything that we believe.

But if we can prove it, we can strengthen our faith. Now let's not be like the Pharisees. Let's not be like who tried to disprove what they knew to be the truth.

Let's not be like the disciples who couldn't believe even though it was evidence and it was right in front of them. The resurrection of Jesus is not a theory. It is not a theology.

It is not the teaching of this church. The resurrection of Jesus is a historic fact. But because it is a historic fact which can be proven from history and can be proven in many, many ways, it demands our acceptance.

It demands that we believe and accept that. And folk, I just prayed this morning that that reality of that resurrection would grip hold of our hearts and change our lives because it did the disciples. One of the other proofs, and the final one I'm going to give you this morning, of the resurrection is the changed lives of the disciples.

Before the resurrection and after the resurrection. And yes, you can say, well, it was what happened on the day of Pentecost and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Yes, that had something to do with it.

That was part of what happened to them. But there was something more to it than that. That this band of scared, weak-kneed men who fled from Jesus, Peter denying Jesus, saying, I don't know the man, suddenly were prepared to stand up and say, this is the Lord and this is the Christ.

And if that truth changed their lives, I pray that that truth will change our lives. And that as Christians, we will not run scared of the critics. That we won't dig our heads in the sand and say, well, when the attacks come, when people say, well, Jesus didn't really rise from the dead.

He rose metaphysically. He rose spiritually. Whatever attack comes, we don't say, well, maybe.

But we're able to boldly say, I know in whom I have believed. I know in whom I have believed, as Paul says. But I am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed unto him, even against that day.

Because he has proven himself in the fact that he was raised from the dead. He will raise us also. What a glorious hope.

Father, we thank you for the truth of the resurrection of Jesus. But Lord, not just for the truth that he was raised. But Lord, for the glorious reality that you are able to give life to a dead body.

And because you raised Jesus from the dead and because he ever lives to intercede for us, we will live also. And Lord, maybe the words of that song of Gaither is maybe a little bit trite. But yet, Lord, it is so true.

Because he lives, I can face tomorrow. Thank you, Lord, that we can say together with Paul that if it wasn't for the resurrection, we would have nothing. But we thank you, Lord, that the resurrection is real.

And that because Jesus was raised and because Jesus is alive, our faith is real and our faith is alive. Because Jesus was raised, our sins have been washed away and been removed and we have an assurance and a guarantee of that. We also have a guarantee that he will come back again.

That he will raise us on that last day. At the trump of God, the dead in Christ will rise. The mortal will put on immortality and we will live forever in his presence.

Lord, we thank you that these are not things that we hope in. But these are realities upon which we build our lives. Help us, Lord, to live in such a way then that we reflect that truth in our lives.

As people who live with assurance, people who live deliberately. Because our hope and our faith and our lives are built on truth and on fact. So we bless you for these things, Lord.

Make them real to us. Lord, if there are those in the service this morning who really struggle with these things, we pray that you would help us to minister to them. That you would minister to them through your spirit.

And Lord, maybe if there is someone who has doubted up to now and not been sure, Lord, we pray that they would come to full understanding of that reality this morning. And as a consequence, give their lives to you. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Part us with your blessing. Go with us into the rest of this day. Keep us and protect us.

Bring us together again safely this evening. And Lord, we pray for those who are not here this morning. We pray especially for Robert and his family, wherever they may be.

That you would be with them and comfort them and keep them and protect them. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

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