



He Has Risen, As He Said

Series: Matthew: The King and His Kingdom

Matthew 27:57-28:15

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This morning we come to the climax of Christ's passion, of His saving work of atonement – the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is the resurrection that makes Christ's cry from the cross, "It is finished" a cry of victory, of triumph, of redemptive power and a hell-shattering certainty and not just some empty boast. It is because of the resurrection that we are here, worshipping on the first day of the week, that we come to praise and honor the One who redeemed us from sin and hell and death, who delivered from the wrath of God. We worship Him because the grave could not hold Jesus Christ, because the Lamb of God did not see corruption in the grave but was raised by the power of God and ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven from whence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. Without apology, we gather to declare that because Jesus Christ is risen from the dead -- there is no God but our God and there is no other Lord and Savior but Jesus Christ. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the capstone of the glorious gospel that Matthew has written for us by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Just think of what we have seen. Matthew has given to us this amazing picture -- the incarnation of Jesus Christ in a virgin's womb by the work of the Holy Spirit, His perfectly sinless and law-fulfilling life, His miraculous works, His transcendent teaching, His impeccable character, His substitutionary, wrath-bearing, , sin-atonement and willing sacrificial death on the cross, culminating in His glorious resurrection from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is the climax of Christ's passion, what proves the power and the worth of the cross Christ suffered for you and me. And we are going to look at the circumstances surrounding the resurrection of our Lord and its implications, but first we have to begin with His burial, so let's look at it together.

The Burial of Jesus Christ (v. 57-66) After doing everything necessary to save sinners to the uttermost, having made propitiation for the sins of His people, Jesus yielded up His spirit and

died. Matthew tells us what happened next: “When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.” (Matthew 27:57–61, ESV)

Jesus died at 3 pm, the time of the evening sacrifice, and it was very shortly after that that Joseph of Arimathea came to request His body from Pilate. This is the first mention of this disciple, this rich man, Matthew tells us, named Joseph. From Luke, we learn a little more about him than Matthew gives to us. Luke says of him: “He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man (that is, he was a faithful and an upright man, who though he was a member of the Sanhedrin was not like the hypocrites who had the appearance of godliness but lacked the reality), who had not consented to their decision and action (he was not a party to the false charges and the sentence that the Sanhedrin had brought against Christ because of their envy and hatred of Him); and he was looking for the kingdom of God. (in other words, he believed Christ’s teaching, believing Him to be the Messiah sent from God)” (Luke 23:50–51, ESV)

John adds in his account that until this point, he was a “secret disciple” of Jesus. There is no way for us to know exactly how Joseph had come to believe Jesus. We have no record of how it happened. No doubt, as one of the teachers and leaders of the nation, he had been among the Sanhedrin who had gone out to listen and to observe Jesus and was captivated by His person and His teaching. Still, he had kept his faith and his discipleship a secret from the other men in the Sanhedrin out of fear that he would lose his place in the Sanhedrin and would have placed his social and economic standing and his family’s welfare in danger. One can only imagine what it must have been like for him to remain a secret disciple among men who were filled with hatred and animosity toward Christ, plotting incessantly to put him to death.

Whatever the reason for his previous silence, here, when he had nothing to gain, when the apostles had fled, when it was most dangerous to confess Christ, when it would cost him everything, when there was no earthly advantage to professing allegiance to Jesus, Joseph boldly stepped forward to ask for the body of Jesus from Pilate in order to save it from any further desecration, regardless of the consequences. His cover was forever blown, the secrecy

over. It is ironic, isn't it, that the crucifixion which sent Jesus' disciples into hiding had the exact opposite effect on Joseph and brought him into the open.

And you need to see beloved, that what he did is so important to the testimony of the resurrection. The Romans had no compunction, no hesitation, about leaving the victims of crucifixion out in the open to decay and rot, but in deference to the Jews who demanded that even a criminal be buried so as not to defile the land, they would bury the bodies of the crucified in a common grave used for criminals. If that had happened, Jesus' resurrection would have been obscured. So Joseph, a rich man, as Matthew told us, instead, to save the body of Christ, together with Nicodemus, took Jesus' body and wrapped it in clean, unused linen as His grave clothes and laid it in His own new tomb which He had cut into the rock. He would himself, never be able to use that tomb again. And in doing so, Joseph fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah 53.

After describing the crucifixion -- "But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?" (Isaiah 53:5–8, ESV) – then Isaiah said: "And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth." (Isaiah 53:9, ESV)

Imagine this. Joseph did what he did out of faith, out of kindness and generosity, out of love and loyalty to Christ, and his action turned out to be critical to the fulfillment of Scripture and the decree and will of God. And then he fades from the biblical scene – nothing more is said of him in Scripture.

All the while that he was burying Jesus, the Mary Magdalene and the other Mary who Matthew mentions as faithfully staying at the cross as Jesus died -- "There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among

whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.” (Matthew 27:55–56, ESV) – watched as the Lord was placed in the tomb. They will figure prominently in just a little bit. From Joseph’s act of faithfulness, we turn to the Sanhedrin’s and Pharisees’ act of fear.

“The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.”” (Matthew 27:62–64, ESV) On the Jewish Sabbath, although Matthew cannot bring himself to say it – perhaps because with the soon resurrection of Christ, that Sabbath would be fulfilled and superseded in Christ, the Sanhedrin – the chief priests – and their new best friends come to Pilate’s house to pay a visit. They are bothered and it is interesting that they would be. You would think they would have no further business with Pilate having already gotten what they were after, namely the death of Christ. They should have been well pleased. What could they have to fear from the One they called an impostor, deceiver and son of Belial? And yet, there is a persistent uneasiness about them. Why? Certainly the miracles that surrounded Jesus’ death must have unnerved them some. His was no ordinary death, right? But, they also knew that Christ had staked the authenticity of His ministry on His promise to rise from the dead. The Pharisees, after all that took place, had to have come to the Sanhedrin and told them about the encounter they had had with Jesus back in chapter 12. “Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, “Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.” But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matthew 12:38–40, ESV)

In fact, they give themselves away, saying: “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ How interesting. When they found him guilty of blasphemy, they used Christ’s claim to rise in three days as a accusation that He was going to tear down the temple. But now, after His death, they change their tune. They admit that they knew he was not talking about tearing down the temple at all but about dying and being raised again three days later. And strange things were happening. They are running scared, fearful of what may happen. They try to disguise it. They tell Pilate:

“Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.” They say, “His disciples (who by the way are nowhere to be found) may come and steal his body and thereby deceive the people into thinking that He rose again. It’s in the public interest.” It is preposterous. Why would these men who feared for their lives do something like that? So they could be hunted down and put to death? It is completely irrational, but this is what unbelief in the face of such mounting evidence is – the height of irrationality. They were convinced and committed unbelievers and nothing was going to stand in the way of their unbelief. At this point, probably just to be rid of them, Pilate grants their request.

“Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.” (Matthew 27:65–66, ESV) Having received from Pilate a squad of Roman soldiers, they went to the tomb, set an official seal on the tomb – some sort of cord or placard indicating that it was off limits and set a guard to repel any possible thieves. Catch the irony of this beloved. In all of their attempts to make Christ’s tomb secure, they were unwittingly providing incontrovertible, unquestionable evidence of the truth of Christ’s coming resurrection. Like JC Ryle said: They were actually making it impossible to prove that there was any deception or imposition. Their seal, their guard, their precautions, were all to become witnesses, in a few hours, that Christ had risen. They might as well have tried to stop the tides of the sea, or to prevent the sun rising, as to prevent Jesus coming forth from the tomb. They were taken in their own craftiness. (1 Cor. 3:19.) Their own devices became instruments to show forth God's glory. They were not going to prevent anything. They could not prevent:

The Irrepressible Resurrection of Christ and the Response of Faith (20:1-10) Look, starting in verse 1: “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 the 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.”” (Matthew 28:1–7, ESV)

There is so much to see in this text. Let's take the angel first...Can you imagine being the angel that was chosen of God to deliver this message? This has got to be the best assignment of them all. Shining forth in his purity and righteousness, powerful and terrifying, this ministering spirit, this flame of fire, descends from heaven and has the honor of being the first to proclaim the resurrection of the Son of the Living God from the dead. His arrival triggers an earthquake. As he rolls back the stone from the mouth of the Lord's tomb, the earth begins to roll under the soldiers' feet and they are terrified. These are tough, battle hardened men and they have never seen anything like this before. In a play-on-words, Matthew uses the same root word for earthquake to describe what happens to the guards. Overwhelmed with fear, they crumple to the ground and do not move. Having rolled back the stone, this angel sits on top of it and waits for the women to show up.

When the women get there, this messenger from heaven has a direct and certain message, filled with wondrous news and eternal hope. The angel speaks a word of encouragement to their souls – Do not be afraid – do not be like these Romans who are on the ground in front of you. They have a reason to be afraid, but not you. He speaks a word of testimony to them – I know that you are seeking Jesus who was crucified – I know you are here to see Jesus who was crucified for you and for others for the forgiveness of sins. He speaks a word of certain and complete triumph – He is not here for He has risen, as He said – What He, who cannot lie, has promised has come to pass. He speaks a word of proof – Come see the place where He lay – Past tense, He is no longer here. The stone is rolled back, come see the empty tomb. And then He speaks a word of commission and calling – 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 – do not simply stand here but be about the business of announcing His triumph over death to the disciples. And last a word of finality -- See, I have told you – there is nothing more to say. They are words meant to comfort their souls, to embolden their hearts, and to stir them up to action and joy. Notice what happens.

“So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.” (Matthew 28:8, ESV) First, with the announcement by the angel, they are fearful, scared, shaken. And why? Because they had not come expecting this – an empty tomb or an angel. Matthew emphasizes that fact by saying that they came to see Jesus' tomb. True, they had brought some spices with which to anoint His body but they had no way to possibly roll back the stone and get to Him. They were coming to mourn, coming to be near to Jesus in his death,

perhaps, but this was far beyond their wildest imaginations. And they were speechless. They said nothing to the angel but instead they left in fear, astonishment, trembling, and amazement. They departed in fear to tell the disciples but as the truth began to dawn upon their souls, as their faith in Christ was reawakened, their fear began to be mingled with a new emotion – joy, great joy. Don't miss this.

Initially fearful, they became overjoyed and thrilled. They believed. Joy is the fruit of faith, of active and real faith. And that is so important to see here because they initially came to the tomb with a dormant and dashed faith, not believing that the tomb would be empty. They had come in grief and out of loving duty to further prepare Jesus body for burial – but a resurrection – that seemed too good to be true. These women came not expecting a resurrection, and left convinced that one occurred. They ran to go and tell the disciples. And here's the thing. That would have been enough for them, but not enough for Jesus. This is so like our lavishly loving Lord.

Matthew writes: "And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him." (Matthew 28:9, ESV) An amazing thing happens as they're running to the disciples. Jesus met them. And he met them in resurrection glory. And He permitted them to recognize Him. And they knew He was their Lord, alive from the dead. They knew. They knew. And He gave them the common greeting which means, "Hello, hi, good morning," just a very common, normal everyday greeting, the ordinary salutation of the marketplace, the highway, and the home. There He was, the King of Kings, the Glorious Lord, out of the grave and He speaks to them as their friend. And their joy is taken to another level, magnified beyond description as they approached Him, the resurrected Lord, they came to Him and did not shrink back in fear and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. This is no spirit. This is not apparition. This is no phantom. This is no figment of their imagination. This is a living, bodily-resurrected Christ. And they grasped His feet. And Matthew wants you to know that.

"They seized His feet with adoring love," like a person who recognized a sovereign king would come up and bow before his feet, and perhaps even kiss his feet in ancient times. They fell at His feet in reverence, overwhelmed with thanks, overwhelmed with wonder. They fell at His feet and worshiped Him. Then they went on their way to proclaim the good news of His resurrection. And notice the words that Jesus uses to send them on their way:

“Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”” (Matthew 28:10, ESV) Notice that word “brothers” because it speaks volumes. The disciples who had failed Him, who had fled and were still in hiding, whose promises of faithfulness unto death had proven to be false – these disciples, these faltering and fearful men, Jesus calls His “brothers.” Failures though they were, and glorious though He is, conqueror over hell, death, and the grave, the Son of God, He still calls them His brothers.

What an expression of love and grace from our Lord to His disciples, who had failed Him and whom He had forgiven and still loved with a special and unfailing love, and what an encouragement to us who fail Him yet all too often but whom He loves with an everlasting love. The women go on their way filled with great joy, their faith revived and their response is in sharp contrast to

The Rejecting Response of the Wicked (v. 11-15) Look, starting in verse 11: “While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place.” (Matthew 28:11, ESV) While the women went on their way, some of the guard, having finally come back to their senses, went to find the chief priests and the religious leaders were told the entire story. They heard the whole story -- the sealed tomb, the uneventful night broken by a sudden earthquake and appearance of an angelic being as he rolled away the heavy stone and sat on top, the empty tomb, their fear and the women to whom the angel spoke.

This is a remarkable story, a reason for the wicked priests to be terrified if they had a shred of integrity or wisdom. Their greatest nightmare had come to pass. Jesus, according to the reports of the soldiers, had in fact accomplished the sign of Jonah and risen from the dead. Instead of investigating and understanding what had happened, instead of seeing if what the soldiers said was true, being determined to remain in their unrelenting and willfully ignorant unbelief, they schemed to concoct a false story to cover their unbelief. “And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.”” (Matthew 28:12–14, ESV) It is amazing that with all of self-professed genius in that group that best story they can concoct is something akin to the “life came from outer space” foolishness that we hear

from the dimwit atheists of our day. This story is thoroughly unbelievable. How would they know the disciples stole His body if they were asleep? How could they stay asleep if someone were rolling back the stone? If they awoke and saw the disciples, then why did these battle hardened soldiers not kill or apprehend the unarmed and militarily challenged disciples when they saw them hauling off a body? Why didn't the Jewish leaders go and arrest the disciples? So bent on stubbornly remaining in their sin and rebellious ways, they stood by a ridiculous story that they had created and paid a sufficiently large sum of money to the soldiers to comfort the soldiers' fears and purchase their honor so they could continue to reject the plain truth. Beloved, the barrier to believing the resurrection, to believing the gospel is not an intellectual one, it is not an issue of truth; it is a moral barrier, an issue of unbelief and of love for sin.

Rightly did Jesus speak of these men, saying: "Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me?" (John 8:43–46, ESV) In the face of the truth, they prove themselves to be the children of Satan. As children of Satan it is clear why they would suppress this truth, isn't it? These men and Satan through them would have every reason to suppress the truth, wouldn't they? The implications of the resurrection are staggering.

The Implications of the Resurrection of the Son of God Do you see why the Devil and his children hate this truth?

The resurrection vindicates the false charges of blasphemy that the Jews made concerning Jesus, treating Him as if He was a criminal. The Jews who instigated the arrest and crucifixion of our Lord accused Jesus of blasphemy and declared Him deserving of the shameful death of crucifixion. The resurrection proved that Jesus is exactly who He declared Himself to be, the Son of God with power, not a criminal deserving death and by that declaration condemned these men as guilty before God. The resurrection was God's way of publicly overruling the verdict of the Sanhedrin and testifying that Jesus is, indeed, the Son of God, even as He claimed. When He rose from the dead, the teaching and ministry, the gospel proclamation of

our Lord were undeniably validated as true. It forced the enemies of Christ to face their responsibility for rejecting God's Messiah.

Christ's resurrection gave evidence that His atoning sacrifice, the just for the unjust, satisfied for man's guilt and condemnation before God. The resurrection was the ringing declaration that all the Father sent Christ to do in the cross was accomplished; that atonement was made and propitiation completed, and that the Father was satisfied with all that He had done. He has satisfied divine justice and proves forever that we are justified. We know that Jesus "paid it all" by the fact that death could not hold Him.

The resurrection demonstrates that Jesus, as the Captain of our salvation, has conquered the enemies of sin, death, and Satan. There is no more fear of death because its sting has been taken away and its power has been conquered through the work of Christ. "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:55–57, ESV)

The resurrection guarantees that Christ reigns as our Sanctifier, Advocate, and King and gives us power to walk in the newness of life. By His Spirit, the Living Christ is active today, sanctifying and shaping us more and more into His image, making us holy in practice and faithful in our pursuit of Him. When we sin, because He lives we have an advocate with the Father in heaven and He reigns over us as King even now until we see the consummation of His kingdom. And this fact, His resurrection, confronts every Christian with the necessity and blessed ability to live in a godly manner. We cannot claim to have died to sin in Jesus Christ without striving by the power within us to cease living in sin. We cannot profess to have been raised to new life in Christ without some evidence of a newness of life in our daily walk. "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you." (Romans 8:11, ESV) God supplies the ability to do whatever He commands. The resurrection is the measure of the power that is at work in us. Paul wants us to know what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places. (Eph 1:19-20, ESV) The very same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead, that brought death from life, that broke the jaws of sin and death, that same power is available to you and to me if you are a follower of Jesus Christ. In Christ we are a new creation; his Spirit lives within us. We

have been renewed, we have a new self -- and the purpose of that new self is to be conformed to the image of Christ, to become like him: truly righteous, truly holy -- to become what God has declared us to be by Christ's work on the cross. We have power to walk in a way that is pleasing to God -- resurrection power! But we need to live in it, by faith trust God to manifest that power in our lives, as we trust in Him and call upon Him to strengthen us, to deliver us from temptation, to make us persevere in faithfulness and loving obedience, to abide in Him and in His love, to reflect His image and to sanctify us by His grace. A dead Savior cannot sanctify, mediate, or reign!

The resurrection of Christ is the firstfruits and proof of our own resurrection. Because Christ has been raised from the dead, so also shall we be who trust in Him. "But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself." (Philippians 3:20–21, ESV)

The resurrection reawakened and restored the failing faith of the disciples and became the capstone of the message which they began to fearlessly preach. It transformed discouraged and unsure disciples into fearless preachers of the gospel. Once fearful, they were now gladly willing to suffer and die for the cause of Christ. And that attribute marks the character of every true preacher of the gospel and every true church.

For all those reasons, the resurrection is, as Calvin says, "the chief article of our faith, and without it the hope of eternal life fails." When we look down into the empty tomb and upon the risen Christ, we know that the Word of God is all true. Our Lord arose from the dead exactly as he said he would and our Savior is "the mighty God."

Oh, beloved, we need not wonder why the resurrection of our Lord was opposed and hated from the beginning by the children of Satan. It is the seal and headstone of the great work of redemption, which He came to do. It is the crowning proof that He has paid the debt which He undertook to pay on our behalf, won the battle which He fought to deliver us from hell, and is accepted as our Surety and our Substitute by our Father in heaven and that He has overcome death, and him that had the power of death, that is the devil. Thanks be to God, by the resurrection of our Lord, we are not left in doubt. Our response must be that of the women

who first saw our resurrected Lord – worship and obedience and living in the newness of resurrection life and truth. We must live in the light of the resurrection, but when I say that, what do I mean?

Let me just give a few practical ways the resurrection should impact our lives. First, there are far too many believers who can articulate and defend the gospel, who love theology, who read all the right books, follow all the latest fads and trends, but who spend precious little time actually communing with and abiding in Christ. Christ was raised from the dead, never to die, to be known by His people. If we fail to abide in Him and commune with Him, we practically deny the resurrection.

Second, we need to live in reality of the power of the resurrection. The power that raised Christ from the dead is at work in us. Yet some of us spend more time talking about how strong a sin is rather than how strong Christ's resurrection power is to kill that sin. We have all sorts of excuses for the proliferation and power of sin in our lives, all sorts of complicated psychological and social reasons. But at the risk of sounding "gospelly simplistic" –if you are not gaining in holiness, continually floundering in repeated sin, the issue is not a series of other factors – it is your lack of faith, lack of appropriating the resurrection life. It is not a deficiency in Christ, it is in you. If you are a new creature in Christ, walk like it.

Next, we need to walk in the resurrection truth that we have an advocate before the throne of God. No more walking in the twilight between true forgiveness and real guilt. If the resurrection is real, live like you are forgiven. Last, if the resurrection is real, then we have a King who demands our allegiance and expects our obedience. So let's give it to Him gladly.

And for those of you who are here and who do not know Christ as Savior and Lord, to whom the words that I have spoken this morning seem unreal -- I want you to know today that Jesus Christ is very real. He is unavoidably real. He is inescapably real. He really did come to this earth, really did live a perfect life of obedience to Father God, really did die to pay the penalty of sin for His people, really did rise the third day, really has been given all authority in heaven and in earth, really is seated at the right hand of God the Father in heaven, and He really is coming to judge the earth, to receive His people and cast those who have rejected Him into hell. This is a very real moment to examine yourself before God. If you refuse to bow before Him and worship Him as Savior, Lord, and God, in light of all of the evidence that proves His resurrection, your only hope is the foolish and damning hope of the Sanhedrin and the Pharisees – that this is all not true – and based on the evidence that is a foolish hope indeed.

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