

# Juice and Judgment, Your Life in a Cup

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[ 0 : 00 ]     Alright, if you have your Bibles, let's get into the Word of God. Find Matthew chapter 27. The Gospel of Matthew chapter 27. Near the end of the chapter is where we'll begin.

You'll get a little bit of an Easter message this morning. Not so much, but if you only come to church on Christmas and Easter, all you hear is Christmas and Easter. So, you know, come back throughout the year, you'll hear the whole counsel of God.

But we'll be in this passage of the resurrection of Christ. And first, let's read through the entombment of the Lord Jesus. Starting in verse number 57. Matthew 27, 57.

When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple. He went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher and departed.

[ 1 : 11 ]     And there was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulcher. Now, the next day that followed, the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that this deceiver said while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

Command, therefore, that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day. Let his disciples, or lest his disciples come by night and steal him away and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead, so the last heir shall be worse than the first.

First, what's the heir of the first, I wonder? What are they admitting to? Verse 65, Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch. Go your way, make it as sure as you can.

So they went and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch. Next verse reads, In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher.

And we'll stop right there. Father, Lord, please move in our midst now, I ask. Help me to have my thoughts clear and to be able to deliver this message and to preach the word of God in truth.

[ 2 : 21 ]     And Lord, I pray that you'll give conviction and that your spirit might be manifest in our hearts and draw us to this time and let us make application and see what exactly is going on here and may we not be guilty of what others were.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. I want to preach a message. I'm going to call this, What Keeps You from Christ? Not really a question, but a statement of some things we'll see in the passage that keep you from Jesus Christ.

Consider there were three days and three nights where his followers, more than just 12 or even 11 at this time, disciples, much more than that.

His followers were separated, completely separated from their Messiah, from their Christ, their deliverer, their leader. They went home confused. They went home sorrowing, mourning, definitely upset and scared even.

And you got to remember, I mean, these guys, they gave up their livelihoods, left their homes, traveled the land to follow this man.

[ 3 : 31 ] They believed him. They believed in him. They watched him with their own eyes produce things that, miraculous. Nobody could do such a thing.

He has to be the Christ. They've seen it with their eyes. They've handled him with their hands. They've heard him speak and heard words that came from above. Never man spoke like this man.

They believed in him. And so this is a very, very dramatic situation for not just as the disciples to be out there in the garden and have these soldiers come with their torches and their swords.

I mean, physically, arrest him, bind him and they took off fleeing for their lives. They followed afar off. They watched as he was taken from prison and judgment back and forth.

Six different illegal trials took place that late night, early morning. And they watched as even understood that he was tortured and a crown of thorns placed on his head and whipped and beaten and bruised for our transgressions and then ultimately and finally crucified.

[ 4 : 37 ] Hung him up on a tree in the early morning of Wednesday. Hung him with spikes to a wooden rugged cross to watch him slowly throughout the day expire.

It's a very traumatic and dramatic situation that these disciples and followers went through. Not as much as Christ, you know, but they're pretty messed up.

Where do we go from here? There's a lot to ponder. There's a lot to take in. A lot of thoughts to absorb and to meditate on. But one thing that they don't have in this time is their leader.

They're apart from Christ. They're separated from the one that always knew the right answer. The right thing to do. The right way to proceed and the wrong way to proceed. And now they don't have him.

And they've been following him for years. They've been learning from him for years. And if they could only get to Jesus. But they couldn't. Or they didn't. And then finally, in chapter 28, verse 1, at the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn to the first day of the week, they decided, some of these ladies decided, we're going to go get to him.

[ 5 : 52 ] And they headed to the tomb. Now I want to display from the passage here, there's several things that were keeping them from Jesus. And I realize it was only the body of Christ in that tomb.

I realize that. But if you would be so kind as to grant your preacher some liberty this morning, I would like to show from this passage and point out that there are absolutely things that will and do keep you from getting to Jesus Christ.

The first thing we see that kept them from Christ is the stone. Look in chapter 27 in verse number 60. They laid him in his own new tomb which he had hewn out on a rock and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher and departed.

The stone, the stone, these followers of Christ were separated by the unbudgable. Something they couldn't budge, they couldn't move. This early morning trip Matthew gives two Marys, other accounts give three ladies by name and even in the gospel of Luke he says there was these ladies and certain others with them, others being plural, there's at least five at least, maybe more.

This group of ladies making their way to the tomb and in Mark chapter 16 verse 3 it dawns on them on their way to the tomb they said among themselves who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?

[ 7 : 20 ] We hadn't thought of that. We've prepared spices, anointment and we're on our way already but oh, you know what? They told us, it shows us that some of those ladies there back in chapter 27, 61 they saw where they put them and they rolled a great stone and they hadn't really planned on what they're going to do with that problem.

It's unmovable. It's a great stone. That's a major obstacle and that stone for those ladies won't budge. It's unbudgeable. It's going to keep them from Christ.

As I read through this Bible there's others that faced obstacles as well. You can consider the nation of Israel fearing to enter into the land of Canaan because the inhabitants of the land were great and large and were but grasshoppers in their sights.

There's giants in the land and they're unmovable. We can't go in and push them out of the way where they're unbudgeable to us.

We can think of some soldiers that perhaps felt the same way when a Goliath of a man stood up against them and defied their armies and defied the God of Israel and they looked at him and said we can't touch him.

[ 8 : 37 ] We can't get away from him. They also faced cities with impenetrable walls. They encountered armies that severely outnumbered them. And whether it's a wall or a giant or an army or even supplying the substance of food and of drink in the wilderness to a few million people it turns out what's unbudgeable to man was never really a problem to God ever.

Look at chapter 28 and verse 2 behold there was a great earthquake for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it.

The stone though as far as the ladies were concerned was unbudgeable and they were separated from Christ because of the stone. And I want you to think on this Christian you too will face obstacles in life that you're powerless against.

You can't move them. You can't budge them. You can't plow through them. You can't just gird up your loins like a man and decide I'm getting through this hell or high water.

There's things in your life that you can't alter. You can't move out of your path. You want an easier path? Well good luck. You're going to have to deal with this one. You might as they say hit a wall like the Jews or face some giants or face an enemy or some real problem.

[ 10 : 10 ] And in your life and as you deal with people and loved ones and family and friends you can't control decisions that other people make. And you can't keep your loved ones healthy.

You can't keep them. You can't keep them happy. You can't keep your children. You can't keep your church family serving God and staying in love with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some things in your life are just going to be out of your control. And you can't alter that. And when they go and when they fall or when they walk away or when they're taken away to glory perhaps what are you going to do?

Are you going to let that keep you from Christ? I'll give you an example of what I'm talking about. I went to Bible school with a man who was much older than I was. He and his wife have been married for years and he lived a rough life.

And he was in biker gangs and into a lot of trouble. Treated his wife pretty bad and he got either got saved or got right with God or whatever the case was and they got that marriage restored and they decided we're not wasting any more of our lives.

[ 11 : 17 ] We're going to do something for God. I've done enough for the devil and myself. It's time to serve God with what life I have left. And so that man and his wife moved to Bible school and they went to school and my wife and I befriended them and just enjoyed fellowship with them.

They're an older couple. We were a younger couple and we just kind of just blended in together. It was fine. It was good for both of us. And they had this idea they didn't know for sure but they had their heart set on some mission in Mexico that they felt like there's these kids, these orphans that they could really use some love and some just some care and they would love to be able to minister the word of God in Mexico and preach the gospel there.

And they had it in their heart. This is what we're going to do. And so he went through Bible school with me. We graduated together and my wife and I we left town, moved back to Pennsylvania and just heard just shortly after that the woman fell sick and she had Lou Gehrig's disease and went downhill fast.

And it was really it was just a matter of time, not long at all that the Lord took her home. And the church, the pastors, the church rallied around him, loved him, cared for him, got him through all of this big funeral, a big deal.

And as soon as all that was over, that man that had just graduated Bible school devoted his life, the rest of his life to serving God, he was gone like the wind. He took off in a rage of pain and confusion and couldn't make sense of what has happened to his life, losing his wife, the best thing that ever happened to him, the most spiritual woman he ever knew, a rock in his life and he was gone.

[ 12 : 56 ] And for years he was gone and returned right back to the only life he knew, like a dog returning to his vomit, right back to the biker gangs, right back to just drinking and drugs and a mess.

And he ran from God for years, for many years, that unmovable, that thing that he was powerless to prevent, powerless to stop from happening in his own life, that thing rolled in his life like a great stone.

And it kept him from Jesus Christ. He was powerless against it. It's like a great stone getting separated by the unbudgable.

I wonder what keeps you from Christ. Because you're going to face obstacles and you're going to face disappointments and things are going to come and when they come, are they going to be that great stone that you can't budge and it's going to keep you from Christ?

You have to resolve now that nothing's going to keep me from Christ. And you can't even predict it though when the pain comes. You're going to have to learn how to go to the word of God and draw strength from the book alone.

[ 14 : 06 ] You're going to have to learn to trust God that he saw this coming. He knows this obstacle. He's not surprised by any of this. I am. He's not. I can still trust him. I could walk with him when things were good.

I can still trust him when things are hard. You're going to have to learn that or it's going to keep you from Christ. There's something else we see in this passage that kept them from Christ.

Look at verse 66. It says, so they went and made the sepulcher shore. Notice the next phrase, sealing the stone. Sealing the stone.

The second thing that kept them from Christ was a seal. There's first the stone and now it's the seal. They're separated by the unbreakable. The unbreakable. This purpose of a seal is to make it impossible to move that stone and to get into the tomb.

They were not weatherproofing the tomb to preserve his remains. They were trying to keep everyone and anyone out. To fix this stone in a permanent place.

[ 15 : 07 ] Pilate said in verse 65, Ye have your watch, go your way, make it as sure as you can. And they sealed the stone, making it as sure as they could.

I don't know what they used. Perhaps some plaster, some probably mortar type material like they would in building foundations. Whatever they used, they sealed it.

And they made it sure. And so in order to move the stone, you're first going to have to break the seal. Now the seal represents more than just some fixing of the stone, but it's thought that the sealing of a stone was a form of a government seal, a stamp within that wet plaster or mortar.

A stamp that bore the name of the Roman government, showing that this is under the authority and power of the Romans. You don't mess with this steel, this seal.

It's a stamp or a sign of their authority. It's warning everybody, don't touch this tomb. If you break the seal, you're violating the government. You're in trouble. And so it's rather easy.

[ 16 : 18 ] Don't break the seal. No trouble. You don't want any problems, everything to be well with you. You're safe. You'll be left alone. Just don't touch the seal.

And we'll leave you alone. But if you want to get to Christ, there's a seal in the way. And it has the name stamped of some kingdom of this world.

And one day, you're going to see it, I wouldn't doubt it in this generation or very close to it, you're going to see it say the United States of America stamped right on that stone, right on that seal.

And Americans really, they don't have any experience with this yet. Not on a large scale, but little by little by little, the platform is already being built with all this hate crime and you can't offend anybody.

And that's being built and it's being built in our courts to where it's going to be there. And you're going to find out that there's going to be a seal that says, in God we trust. United States of America, don't touch that seal.

[ 17 : 24 ] You can't get to Jesus Christ. And I want to read you something to show you and remind you this is not big in your face here, but it's all over the world.

Here's some research I was doing reading on this thought of what's going on in the world around us as far as the legally goes. whether or not Christianity is legal or illegal in a given country can be difficult to determine because they're vague oftentimes in their wording of their laws.

There are two main reasons for this confusion. First, the laws themselves can be convoluted and often appear to contradict themselves. And so therefore, they're vague. And what they can do is, depending on the situation, we can implement this or we can go this way.

They could set you free or persecute you. Their laws, it's set up and written either way. And it says here the regimes that are most likely to restrict religion of freedom or freedom of religion are the same regimes that are more likely to be secretive or deceptive about the differentiating between the letter of the law and its real world implementation.

Here's an example. The Constitution of North Korea. It establishes specifically for its people freedom of religion. However, it adds this phrase, quote, religion must not be used as a pretext for drawing in foreign forces or for harming the state or social order, end quote.

[ 18 : 55 ] It's a very vague wording, but it's used by the government to enforce one of the most religiously oppressive government regimes in the world with just some vague words written in their laws.

What about Afghanistan? Their constitution names Islam as the state religion, but isn't this great? It promises practitioners of other religions they're free to worship, quote, within the limits of the law.

Well, what would that mean? Well, the limits of the law say you are forbidden to share one's Christian faith. You are forbidden to negatively speak against Islam.

You are forbidden to publish materials that contradict Islamic principles and doctrines. And converting from Islam to Christianity or any other religion is illegal.

It's punishable by imprisonment, by confiscation of property, or even the death sentence. And all the while they say on their laws, you have freedom to worship. You just can't do it that way.

[ 20 : 02 ] There's a seal that's been placed against the Lord Jesus Christ. Now turn to Acts chapter 4. You can keep your place, but look over at the book of Acts chapter number 4.

And realize that at the time we're going to step into with the apostles early in the book of Acts, after Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, in this time frame that we call the early church perhaps, there's a real fear, a real danger in living for and mentioning and preaching the name of Jesus Christ.

Just a few chapters later, you were introduced to Saul. And Saul is going on, and he's imprisoning, and he's beating, and he's causing them to blaspheme, and he's even giving his voice against them, being compelled, or compelling them to blaspheme, and even causing them to be put to death.

Christians murdered by the government for proclaiming and believing Jesus Christ. Look at Acts chapter 4 and verse 18.

So Peter and John, and these are called in before the council, and it says in verse 18, they called them and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.

[ 21 : 25 ] But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

Look over at chapter 5. They let him go, and they go back to preaching Jesus Christ, and they go out and round him up again. In chapter number 5 and verse 27, and when they had brought them, they set them before the council, and the high priest asked them, saying, did not we straightly command you that you should not teach in this name?

Behold, ye filled Jerusalem with your doctrine and intend to bring this man's blood upon us. And Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men.

And he carries on with preaching a message right to their face about being guilty. They were cut to the heart in verse 33 and took counsel to slay them. And so in the end, they get beaten later on in verse 40.

And I want you to realize the answers that Peter gives are a tremendous help, and they're priceless for us as believers to understand how to handle when the government tries to step and keep us from Jesus Christ.

[ 22 : 44 ] There's a rule. It's obey God rather than men. And if men say, no, you can't, then you're going to have to obey the command of God to do. Now, if you don't want to get to Christ and this government puts a seal on the stone and says, you can't come past this, we say so, then you're going to have to figure out what to do.

You're going to decide if you can break the seal and disobey the government and obey God. Let me give you just an illustration, a thought here. It's not so far-fetched. Let's pretend you get a gospel track.

You take one with you, and you're out there in the streets, and you go and hand a gospel track to some individual, man, woman. And they take it, and they start looking through it, and they see that it says that they're a sinner, and they're not a good person, and that they're on their way to hell, and God's going to judge their sins.

And they say, hey, you can't say this about me. You can't give me this and tell me you don't know me. You think you're better than me. And they get all offended and riled up and mad, and they remember what they've been hearing in the news and hearing popping up here and there and how people are protesting against this, and it's hate crimes.

And they realize, you know what? I'm not going to let you do this. And they get a picture of your license plate, and one day a man, a police officer, comes and says, did you, are you such a, did you hand this to that person?

[ 24 : 14 ] And you say, yeah. You need to come with us. You think, I didn't do anything wrong. I could do that if I want to. I have freedom. Just come with us. Okay. And then they take you to the station, and they say, did you do that?

We're considering this a crime of hate. And you say, I don't hate them. I'm trying to help them. No, no, no. That's not the way we see it. And so when you get charged with something, and you have to appear in court, and you stand before the judge, and the judge looks at you, and looks at the case, and looks at the material that you handed to that person, and they received of you, and you say, they say, no, it says here that obviously you think you're better than them.

You got some liberal judge who doesn't know the Lord. They don't care for Christ. They don't care about heaven and hell. They say, you're calling this person a bad, you know that this person is a nurse?

Do you know that they've worked tireless hours through the COVID pandemic? They've risked their life for others, and you're calling them a bad person? Who do you think you are?

And then the judge just takes their position and just reams you out for thinking somebody's below you, and you Christians think you're better than them, and just takes it and says, now look, you don't have a criminal record, so here's what I'm going to do.

[ 25 : 29 ] I'm just going to give you a warning, but don't you ever hand that stuff out again. Now, that's putting Peter's situation right to where you are today, in kind of a hypothetical, kind of an imagined thought, but I don't think it's so absurd.

And let's just imagine you stand there and you say, yes, your honor, thank you. Now, I'm not advising you in that position to mouth off to the judge. Peter said, hey, I mean, he's dealing with somebody who's supposed to be God-fearing, so it's a little different with the high priest.

But Peter wasn't going to back down, and Peter wasn't going to walk away and say, oh, I got away with that one, so I'm just going to lay low now. They went right back to preaching, right back to witnessing, right back to telling what they were supposed to do, obeying God rather than men.

I wonder if you'd reply like Peter did. You know, he got bound, he got imprisoned, he got beaten, the whole works. I think you and me and most Christians in America would avoid that at all costs.

The threat of government punishment has kept people all over the world from Christ. Will it keep you? The Bible says the fear of man bringeth a snare.

[ 26 : 44 ] The Bible says, I will not fear what man can do unto me. That's what the scripture will tell you. There's a song we sing in our hymnal. I'll just tell you the first line and ask the question, must Jesus bear the cross alone and all the world go free?

Is that right? That Christ endures all the suffering and reproach and we just get to go free, untouched, unscathed from it all? The persecution? Is that right?

The song says, no, there's a cross for everyone and there's a cross for me. There's another hymn. I'm going to read it to you.

This one I love. It's convicting. 414. It says, am I a soldier of the cross? Another question. Am I a soldier of the cross, a follower of the lamb?

And shall I fear to own his cause or blush to speak his name? Must I be carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease while others fought to win the prize and sailed through bloody seas?

[ 27 : 48 ] That's our Christian forefathers and mothers that have died, persecuted and died. And we're just going to coast on through. Are there no foes for me to face?

Must I not stem the flood? Is this vile world a friend to grace to help me unto God? And the answer is sure, I must fight if I would reign. Increase my courage, Lord.

I'll bear the toil, endure the pain, supported by thy word. What a foreign concept it is, though, to American Christianity. They just want wealth.

They want health. They want parties. They just want to worship and feel good. They have no concept of what it is. And when the government does squeeze and when that platform that's being built actually gets established, and I'll prophesy it's coming.

And when it comes, you're going to see them cave and you're going to see them fall away. And will it keep you from Christ? There's a seal.

[ 28 : 52 ] That seal that kept them from Christ. Thirdly, let's look at this in chapter 27 near the end. There's something else that kept them from Christ.

So far, it's the stone that was unbudgable and the seal that was unbreakable. And now, thirdly, we see the soldiers. And these are separated by the unbeatable.

The unbeatable. In verse number 65, Pilate said unto them, You have a watch. Go your way. Make it as sure as you can. So they went and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.

These watch are soldiers in the next chapter. They're called keepers in verse 4. And later in verse number 12, they're called soldiers.

So we know these are soldiers, full-on, legit, trained, highly professional soldiers that were given by permission of the government to set a watch and protect and keep everybody away from the stone.

[ 29 : 53 ] If in those days you were to make your way to where Christ was, you'd have been met by a company of soldiers. Highly trained professionals. Some say that these were in bands of 16.

And I don't know the truth of any of that. It doesn't say it in the Bible. But there's a number of them for sure. And many say they're 16. And many say that they give a description of the rules of engagement or of their duty of not being able to rest or sleep or even lean on anything but to stand at attention and be in charge or have responsibility for a particular area around them individually and collectively.

And they were all held accountable for one man's mistakes and things like that. At any rate, they're given orders to guard this tomb and specifically keep away those disciples, those followers.

That's who we're worried about. They're going to try to get here. And you're going to protect this tomb and guard it from them. It's no secret where he was laid. They're not hiding the tomb or the place of it at all.

You're free to walk on by. But don't think about approaching it because they bear not the sword in vain. They've been given permission. They're sword-toting soldiers and they're not afraid of using them.



[ 31 : 07 ] And they will slay you if you try to resist them or get through to that tomb. The women, it's interesting, the women had no idea they were even there. You notice that in verse 62 that the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate.

And that's when they say, hey, so he's already in the tomb. That's Wednesday night, 6 o'clock. They got him in the tomb. They went their way. The next day that followed, they show up to Pilate.

So all night that tomb was unguarded and unsealed. And so they show up and they say, hey, we need to protect this a little better than it is. They must have been sitting there thinking, huh, they didn't plan all of this out.

The tomb thing, they didn't even know where he'd go. Oh, that was Joseph's doing, going to Pilate and saying, can I put him here? I got a new tomb. And it was close by. And he said, sure, go for it. So they had no plan of what they're doing with the body.

The Pharisees were finding this out. Oh, he's over there. Then they realized we got to set a watch. And so the ladies were already gone and getting back home. They were unaware of this thing.

[ 32 : 18 ] And they make their way that morning to go to the tomb. They went to anoint the body of Jesus. And in reality, had the Lord not done the miraculous that we read in chapter 28, these ladies were in for a surprise.

And the stone that they were fearing not being able to roll away, they weren't even going to be able to touch. They didn't know this. They're on their way thinking, oh, how are we going to get that stone?

They didn't know there was an entire band of Roman soldiers guarding this tomb. They're going to say, not one step closer. Those ladies, had it all gone to where they expected, were going to go to the tomb, see the soldiers, get confronted, and be disappointed and go back home.

And never make it to their intention of getting to Christ. There was the soldiers. They were separated by the unbeatable. You know what the unbeatable reminds me of? It reminds me of your sins.

Sixteen of them, maybe. It reminds me of your sins. Strong and unbeatable. Because this is the same group that mocked and ridiculed Jesus Christ, that blindfolded and whipped him, and they stand in your way, too.

[ 33 : 30 ] And it's just as your sins were what put him on the cross. And these soldiers, the sins of lust, the sins of anger and greed and laziness, and they're all there, are going to keep you from Jesus Christ.

They're going to stand up and say, don't take another step. Maybe just like those women, you don't even realize they're an issue until you attempt to go toward Christ, and then those sins become very visible and stand up and get in the way.

They're unbeatable. And you're no match. They stand between Jesus Christ and you, and they say, you take another step, and we'll slay you right here and now.

You know, the Apostle Paul said that sin in Romans 7, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me and by it slew me. Sin's a killer.

Describes in Ephesians 2, you're dead in trespasses and sins. There's many a believer, even today, that have been made alive by Jesus Christ, but been separated from Him because of their sins, because they refuse to repent of their sins.

[ 34 : 43 ] They refuse to confront their sins. They refuse to seek God's face and acknowledge their sin, but rather justify it and say, it's okay, it's not that big a deal. Other people are doing it.

Why are you throwing my face about it? Because they want to keep their sins. And their sins are unbeatable, and they're going to keep them from Jesus Christ.

And sin, though, consider this. Christian, if you're born again, have the Spirit of God in you. He came inside and made a new creature. Old things are passed away, and inside of you is a new man that's created in righteousness and true holiness, wherein dwells the Spirit of God and eternal life.

Sin cannot touch the new man. You do know that, right? In 1 John chapter 3, he that committeth sins of the devil, that's the old man. But the new man does not commit sin.

The new man doesn't commit sin. He can walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh. These Roman soldiers, they're agents of a worldly and Gentile kingdom.

[ 35 : 52 ] Strong, powerful, intimidating. But if you could come before them as an agent of a higher kingdom that possessed more power, you could almost just walk right through, untouchable, invisible, say, like an invisible spiritual kingdom called the kingdom of God, where the new man has been made a member.

A carnal Christian that walks in the flesh, that spends all their time in the flesh and feeding their flesh, no time for the words of God, no time to walk with God in prayer, they'll never get by those soldiers of sin.

They're unbeatable. But the new man can walk right past. But what keeps you from Christ? Your sins. Your sins.

You're separated by the unbeatable. And there's one more thing, and we'll be done. In the next chapter, chapter 28, we read verse 1, in the end of the Sabbath, it began to dawn. I want you to consider there's one more thing that separated them from Jesus Christ, the Sabbath.

The Sabbath. And here they're separated by the unbearable. What kept them from going to anoint him? Well, we have to obey the law.

[ 37 : 14 ] We have to keep the Sabbath. Do you? You know, this controlled much of the scene in the Gospels of the death. They had to hurry up.

The Sabbath was drawing on. They had to go and break the legs of the soldiers to get them to be dead sooner so they could get them off the cross. They came to Christ. Oh, he's already dead because he's the Passover.

He's our Passover. Killed on that very day. And they go on, and they break these legs. We've got to get them off the cross. We've got to hurry up because the holy convocation is coming.

And John, we're told, that that day was a high day. It was a holy day. It wasn't the seventh day of the week. It was one of the days associated with that Passover. And so they needed to get him off the cross.

And get him into the tomb and have all of that done and get on their way before this six o'clock start to this holy convocation. They had to hustle.

[ 38 : 13 ] Joseph's tomb, the Bible describes all of this. It says his tomb was nearby. And all of this is being done to hurry so they could observe the high day. You certainly couldn't be in contact with a dead body.

You'd be unclean. You wouldn't be permitted to observe these holy ordinances, these holy days. In Colossians chapter 2, Paul writes about what Christ did.

He said, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

Now some will say, well, they didn't know that. I mean, they were ignorant of the work of Christ. What do you call it? The finished work of Christ. Yeah, okay. They didn't know that, maybe.

But do you still think the Sabbath should have kept them from Jesus Christ? In Mark chapter 2, the Pharisees accused the disciples of doing something unlawful. You know what they did?

[ 39 : 12 ] They plucked ears of corn and ate them on the Sabbath day. And they confronted Christ about it. And he said, the Sabbath wasn't made for, or, yeah, the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath day. I'm above all of this stuff. And they couldn't say anything against him. In Luke chapter 13, he healed a woman with a spirit of infirmity.

And the ruler of the synagogue got up and I'm sure very piously said, there are six days in which men ought to work. Come therefore on one of them and be healed.

And looking out of the corner of his eye, but not on the Sabbath day. Remember Moses. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. We must be holy.

You know what Jesus Christ did? He rebuked him. He said, thou hypocrite. The people in that passage, it says the people rejoiced when they heard him talk. calling that ruler a hypocrite.

[ 40 : 17 ] He said, you can lead your animals to water on the Sabbath day. You can pull them out of a ditch on the Sabbath day. That's all okay. But these disciples and followers couldn't anoint Jesus' body.

The body of their Messiah that was murdered, they couldn't do that. They had to... You think God wanted them to observe a Sabbath day and not show their devotion and concern in anointing the body of Christ?

You think that's breaking God's law? You realize what's happening here? There's a yoke that the Pharisees have put tight around their necks and said, you can't pluck an ear of corn and eat it.

You can't heal somebody. You can't do that or go to that tomb side. You can't do any of these things. You've got to stay and obey us. And you know what kept them from Christ?

The unbearable, the Sabbath day. And I think Jesus Christ's teachings there just didn't even make a dent. Even his own followers. They're still programmed. We're almost done.

[ 41 : 19 ] Look at Acts chapter 15. Acts chapter 15. When the word of God is being preached and the gospel is going to the Gentile nations and they're receiving the word of God and the truth of Christ's sacrifice, some of the Jews are trying to bring them under submission to circumcision to the law of Moses.

And Peter gets up and makes a profound statement here I want you to notice in verse number 10. He asks the question, Now therefore, why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear?

The law is unbearable. Religion, rules are unbearable. No one has ever been able to live a perfect life observing and fulfilling all that God's holiness requires.

The fathers couldn't do it. We couldn't do it. Peter says, Why are you trying to get them to do it? Yet his disciples and those women that loved him went from Calvary right back to the bondage of religion.

Paul mocks them for this. Paul mocks everybody for this. In Colossians, he's like, Touch not. Taste not. Handle not. Don't do this. Don't do that. Submit yourself. It's all going to perish with the using.

[ 42 : 51 ] And you think you're obeying and pleasing God? When you follow that and submit to that, it's going to keep you from Christ. At Calvary, Christ makes a new creature.

At Calvary, Christ makes a man free. Free to live. Not free to sin. The new man doesn't even want to sin. You understand that? The new man doesn't want any of that.

The new man wants to live unto God. Wants to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The new man wants to walk in newness of life and he's given liberty to do that.

And to stand in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. You know what will keep you from Christ?

Putting that yoke back on. Going back to religion. It's unbearable. There's one more verse I want you to think on. Look at Matthew 11 and we're finished with this.

[ 43 : 52 ] Matthew chapter 11. Matthew 11. With religion putting a yoke on you that's unbearable and keeping you from Christ from eternal life and forgiveness of sin Jesus says these words in the last three verses.

Come unto me. Religion will keep you away. But come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I'm meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

You want rest for your souls? Come to Jesus Christ. Don't let the yoke of religion hold you back. All the demands all the do this don't do that.

Maybe God will be pleased maybe he'll accept you. You'll never get his acceptance by what you do. You'll get his acceptance by what was done. What Jesus Christ did.

[ 45 : 09 ] Now all of these things we've looked at and studied keep people from Christ. There's the unbudgable that stone it represents the great trials in life. The things that can knock you off your course you can't avoid them you can't move them you can't go through them it's going to take something of God to get you through them.

There's the unbreakable the seal representing the kingdoms of this world and they're ruled by the God of this world and God help us in time to come I don't see how we can get around it.

We've already told God get away from our children get out of our schools we don't want the name of Christ let's not pray in public in the name of Christ just the name of Christ Jesus Christ we've already told him we don't want him.

The unbeatable those soldiers representing those great sins in our flesh that stand between us and Christ and the unbearable the Sabbath and religion that demands our allegiance and obedience all of these can and all of these do keep people from Jesus Christ they separate us they intimidate us and they defeat us they defeat many and hold them back from realizing salvation and a new life and for the Christian some of these keep you back from walking in newness of life and being a pleasure to your creator and knowing him I wonder if this morning if there's something keeping you from Christ or something keeping you in this story there was four things but he arose and he's alive and it's easier than ever to get to him to walk with him to speak to him to commune and to love him and to grow with him and to have him lead you it's easier than ever so what's keeping you from Christ?

is it one of these? let's pray Father please move amongst us reveal to us what it is that's in us and around us that we've allowed to show the spread