

Reactions to a Resurrection

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[0:00] All right, let's get into the Bible now. Let's open up to the book of Matthew and chapter number 28. This was originally began putting this together as a Sunday school lesson.

! And as it developed and built, I decided to switch out and to save this for the preaching time. So I'm giving you a warning. There is going to be a good bit of turning in your Bibles.

And a good bit of it is going to be in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But let's see if we can't learn something this morning.

Matthew chapter 28. Last Sunday we took a look at the prophet Jonah and the four chapters of the book of Jonah.

And we learned not how man responds to God, but how God responds to man. Seeing how God responded to Jonah's rebellion and to Jonah's request. And then to Nineveh's repentance and then to Jonah's, what was that last one?

[1:01] His resentment of what the Lord did, how he handled it. And so we saw God responding to man and God always has an answer to man. But I want to show you now this morning and using this resurrection of Jesus Christ kind of as the backdrop and what transpires after that, how men respond to God or to truth.

You'll see as we go what I'm referring to. So let's get into the first six verses here to start. Matthew 28. 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 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. His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow.

And for fear of him, the keepers did shake and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified.

He is not here, for he is risen as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. The angel gives an explanation to the women for the reason that Jesus which was crucified is not here.

[2:12] And he says simply, he is risen as he said. And I think those last three words, they don't have to be in there. You could just say he's not here, he's risen.

But he says, as he said. And the only way that really lands with the women is if they had already heard Jesus say that he was going to rise again the third day.

He's implying to the ladies, as he said to you. Now, if you're not sure about that, flip over to Luke chapter 24. Luke 24. He is risen as he said.

He's already said this was going to take place. And now that it's happened, he asked them the question, Why seek ye the living among the dead? What are you even doing here?

He is not here. And you should have known this. It's kind of the implication. Luke 24. And let's read the first eight verses now together. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

[3:17] They found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. They entered in, found not the body of the Lord Jesus. Came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.

And as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when

he was yet in Galilee, saying the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of the sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

Now verse 8 says, And they remembered his words. So he had said that to them. And now they remembered. He had told them that the third day he would rise again.

So why are you seeking the living among the dead? He's not there. There's no way he's there. But they weren't seeking the living. They actually, in unbelief of his resurrection, were seeking a dead corpse.

They were seeking a body to anoint with spices. They were not seeking a living Savior. And the angel says, He is risen, as he said. He's already told you that he was going to arise the third day.

[4:28] And then, after the fact, they remember his words. Now a little bit later in Luke, in verses 9 through 11, the disciples, they did not believe the witness that these women brought them.

Verse 9 through 11, Returned from the sepulcher, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. And it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Were they lying? Were these women, their close friends, and that have traveled with them, they were in Galilee with Jesus, and the others, and now they're here at Jerusalem.

Were they just fabricating some nonsense story to deliver to the apostles? I mean, are they accusing these women of just being deluded and liars? They believed them not.

Peter then, in verse number 12, in verse 12, he arose, Peter arose, he ran into the sepulcher, stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

[5:36] Even Peter, with first-hand verification of the story of the women, and that the body is not here, but he's still unconvinced that Jesus had risen from the dead. He's wondering in himself.

He's not believing the words of Jesus Christ. He's slow to believe what Jesus had already said to him, even after it took place. Later in Luke 24, Jesus finds himself walking alongside of two of those other disciples that were with the eleven, and they're on their way to Emmaus.

And he comes up to them, and he sees that they don't recognize him. Their eyes were holding that they would not know him, in verse 16. And he speaks to them. He sees their countenance, that they're sorrowing, and they're describing to him why they're sad, because Jesus, that they thought would deliver them, was killed.

And now they're hearing some things that he's not at the tomb, and they don't believe. They don't know what's going on. And in verse 25, the Lord rebukes them. Verse 25 and 26, then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe, to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? You just expect him to enter into his glory, without suffering all these things? And he has to give them a Bible lesson, that the scripture doesn't record what he told them, and what he instructed them, and where passages he referred to.

[7:02] We can presume certain, but it'd be interesting to know. I'd love to sit in that one, and hear the Lord open to them the scriptures. Now they were ignorant of the need for Christ to suffer, and to be sacrificed for their sins, so they didn't believe what had happened, because they didn't understand it.

They didn't see the necessity for the statements that he had already made, saying that I'll be put to death, and I'll come back to life in three days. And so having heard that, they dismissed it.

They had trouble believing what was spoken by Christ, and they had trouble believing what was written in the scriptures, and they had trouble believing the witnesses that came to them to tell them that these things are so.

Now flip to your right a little bit to John chapter 2. We like to say things like hindsight is 20-20. It's so much easier to see a thing and to understand a thing after it happens, after it's been exposed and all laid out, then you can see and understand it.

But in the moment, they were slow to believe. Fools and slow of heart. To believe what Jesus had said, what the scriptures had said, even the witnesses.

[8:12] John chapter 2, and look at verses 18-22. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

Now what he did was he ran them out of the temple and called at his father's house and said, take these things hence. And they're basically saying, if you think you can push us around and tell us what to do, who do you think you are, what sign, you've got to show us a sign to prove to us that you're somebody more important than we are, that we should listen to you and follow you, that you're some teacher or prophet from God.

And here's his answer. Verse 19, Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple and building and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

But he spake of the temple of his body. Verse 22, When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had said after the fact.

Until the fact, they were slow to believe but much quicker to believe after it occurred, after it was realized, after it was confirmed. It's so easy to see things in the past.

[9:37] Then they believed the scripture. Then they believed his word after they saw it, after it all took place. It's one of those, Oh, now I get it.

Now I see. Now I believe. Believing the scripture after it's been fulfilled doesn't sound like much of a feat, does it? It doesn't sound like some great thing that I believe the scripture after I just saw it take place and it's all laid out in front of me and there it all is.

It's just like perfect. But God expects us to exercise faith in what he said. They say in this world seeing is believing. But God doesn't want us to see.

He wants us to walk by faith. He wants us to believe his word because ultimately his word is a reflection of him. It's more than just a reflection. It is his character on script.

Holy scripture is a, it points us to the character of a holy God. If we can't believe his word, we can't believe him. And if we don't believe his word, we're not believing him.

[10:44] And we would be then unbelievers. We would then be thinking this Bible's idle tales. That it's, it's not true. Wondering in ourselves if these things were so.

If we don't believe. Now, man has always had trouble believing. Always. I can take you back through the Bible and show you point after point after point from the beginning. Man has trouble believing God and his word.

I'm going to show you and I'm going to use this, this moment, this scene, this resurrection as a backdrop to show you that man has basically three reactions to the truth.

and believing is a choice. A choice that every one of us must make or refuse to make. But it's always an individual choice how you're going to react to the truth.

Now come back to Matthew 28 where we were. Matthew 28. And reaction number one is for man to refuse to believe.

[11:59] To refuse to believe. Look at Matthew 28 and verse 11 through 15. Now when they were going, this is some of those that had met Jesus, he told them that he's going to meet them in Galilee.

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch, that's the soldiers, some of the watch came into the city and showed unto the chief priest all the things that were done.

And when they were assembled with the elders and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, say ye, his disciples came by night and stole them away while we slept. But they didn't do that.

And we know they didn't do that. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him and secure you. So they took the money and did as they were taught. And this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

What? Saying a lie. A straight up, 100% fabricated lie from men that knew better. That had testimony and eyewitness and beheld the angel and were knocked out to the ground.

[13:02] They knew that the disciples didn't come and roll the stone away. They were there. They were protecting that tomb. And these chief priests

and these men of Israel come up.

They will never believe that Jesus rose again from the dead. And the disciples and the soldiers would even go and fabricate a lie to refuse to believe that this is true or to spread something that's false to get others to not believe the truth.

After it was fulfilled, after the witnesses declared the events, men, certain men have hard hearts and they refuse to believe. Instead, will willingly and knowingly lie and conspire to keep the public ignorant about the truth.

Does that sound like anything that goes on in our world today? That men will conspire and lie to keep the public ignorant of what's really going on?

Nothing's really changed with men in power. These men right here are just par for the course. If it doesn't suit their needs, then we'll lie about it, find a way so that we can keep our position and keep our power and keep our wealth and prestige and all of this.

[14:15] Men will refuse to believe. The Bible says a matter can be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses. And if that's the case, then the matter of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was firmly established on the first day of the week.

Paul even declared that beyond these that he showed himself to, that above 500 witnesses saw Jesus Christ alive after his passion or after his death.

It was confirmed. The men that followed him were so certain that he was alive that for the next several years they went into hostile ground and preached that Jesus was alive.

They were witnesses of his resurrection. Acts chapter 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, every single chapter showing that they're witnessing that God raised him from the dead, that Jesus is alive.

And these people, these same men, were so convinced that he was alive that they preached until they were dead, until it cost them their lives. The evidence was available, the witnesses existed, the truth has been established, and yet men still refuse to believe.

[15:21] I don't want to take you on too much of a sidetrack, but Romans chapter 1 describes the creation and the creator, and it describes how that it's clearly seen by the things that are made, the eternal power and the Godhead.

The existence of God is clearly seen by the things that are made. And yet foolish man would refuse that, and men love darkness rather than light, and because of that God has turned them over, and God gave them up, and God allows them to have a reprobate mind, and men, he's allowed their understanding to be darkened, Ephesians chapter 4.

And all of this man teaches some other theory or another theory or another theory of how it all got to be. How is that? Because they refuse to believe. The evidence is clearly seen, and yet they'll conspire a lie that they know doesn't work and can't be proven and has never one time made sense on any level and yet insist this must be the way it is.

We have to have evolved from something. The universe has got to have come from some mystic crazy bang, and we can look back into the past with powerful telescopes. They're full of baloney. Why are they so stupid and ignorant? Why are they so nuts? Because they refuse to believe. They refuse, refuse, their hard hearts refuse to exercise faith.

[16:45] Some people just simply refuse to believe. It could be because of their pride. It could be because of their hardened heart. It could be because some event happened in their life that has clouded their mind and clouded their judgment and hardened them.

It could be just because they want their sin, and they don't want to let go of their sin. And to humble themselves before the existence of a holy God that demands justice and righteousness, I don't want to do that, so I'll just keep living in my fairy tale for a little bit longer.

Some refuse to believe. Some refuse to believe what the Bible says, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture, that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scripture.

Some refuse to believe when witnesses come and testify to them of the authenticity that Jesus Christ can save you from your sins and can deliver your soul from hell, and they refuse to believe.

They just push back on the witnesses. That sounds like idle tales to me. I'm not going to believe that. Well, that's a reaction. That's a choice that every man has the ability to make.

[17:54] You can refuse to believe. God has not hardened or forced anybody to reject truth until He first rejects truth and refuses to believe.

Then God will allow you to be blinded. There's another one. Come to John chapter 20. The end of John's Gospel, chapter 20. There's another reaction that men have to the truth and we see it here in this reaction to the resurrected Christ.

Some absolutely refuse to believe. John chapter 20. Here's one of His disciples, Thomas, and he's going to show us reaction number two.

Reaction number two is to demand an experience. To demand an experience. In verse 24, But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

Earlier Jesus had revealed Himself to these other eleven or ten rather. The other disciples, therefore, said unto Him, We have seen the Lord. But He said unto them, Except I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger in the print of the nails and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.

[19:08] So Thomas, are you just like the other guys before with the women? You think your brothers, your other apostles, you think these guys are lying through their teeth to your face?

Think this is a joke? But no, He says, I will not believe unless I see it, unless I handle and touch, unless I have that experience that you had, I will not believe.

Verse 26, After eight days, again, His disciples were within and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it in my side, and be not faithless, but believing.

Thomas answered and said unto Him, My Lord and my God. Jesus said unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Reaction number two is to demand an experience. Thomas insisted upon seeing it for himself, refusing the testimony of these faithful men that he had grown so close with and said, I'm not going to believe anything you have to say.

[20:17] I have to see it. I have to touch it. I have to rely upon my senses. And if they verify this to be true, I will believe.

But until then, I'm going to demand an experience. I will not believe. Hearing is another vehicle of leading you to a belief, not just seeing or touching, but hearing another one of your senses.

And if you want to, well, you're in John, just come back to chapter four. We'll just quickly look at this. John chapter four, there was a woman that was, that met Jesus by a well in Samaria. And he told her things that nobody could have known about her.

And it was evidence to her that he was the Christ. And she went back to town. And she went back to tell other people who she met. In verse 28, the woman left her water pot and went her way into the city and saith to the men, come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did.

Is not this the Christ? And so these people come. They follow her out to that well to meet with this man, Jesus. In verse 39, many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman which testified, he told me all that ever I did.

[21:31] They believed her word. But look at verse 40. So when the Samaritans were coming to him, they besought him that he would tarry with them. He bowed there two days and many more believed because of his own word and said unto the woman, now we believe not because of thy saying for we have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.

In verse 45, he went to come into Galilee. The Galileans received him having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast for they went on the feast. So the Galileans, they saw things that they received.

They believed he was the Messiah, the Christ. These people of Samaria, after they hear it for themselves, now they believe it. And I'm not completely knocking these people saying that I have to see it to believe it.

I have to hear it with my own ears. I have to experience it myself. I'm not completely knocking them because after all, the Jews require a sign. According to the Apostle Paul, God has dealt with that people for generations along those very lines.

I'm not going to turn you here, but I'm going to read something in Matthew chapter 13 when the Lord Jesus was giving them some parables. The disciples asked him, why are you speaking in parables? And he begins to reveal some things.

[22:47] He says in verse, Matthew 13, 16 and 17, but blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear. For verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them.

The point is, these people of Israel were extremely blessed to have the Son of God come to them and to work works among them and to heal their children and their blind and to raise their dead and to prove to them that He is the Son of God and therefore believe on Him.

They were blessed to have that happen. Look at John chapter 9 if you're close by there still. John chapter 9. They were blessed to have seen His works.

They were blessed to have heard His word and say, never man spake like this man. Is not this the prophet that should come? Yes, He is. And they were blessed to have had that experience but many, many, many, many generations did not get that experience to see and to hear, to have the experience.

So for some to believe it requires an experience and that's how God has operated with His people. He brought them to a belief using an experience. Here's an example again in John chapter 9 in verse 1.

[24:10] Jesus passed by, saw a man which was blind from his birth. And the disciples start a theological question going about why he was born blind. But skip all of that. Jesus heals the man.

He now can see. He doesn't know who it was that healed him. He was sent away when he got his sight and we never saw him with his eyes. He comes back around after getting kicked out of the synagogue of the Jews.

They booed Him. Let me back up a little bit. I'll start in verse 32 what I want to read. From 32 down to verse 38. He's speaking to these men of the Pharisees.

He says in verse 32, Since the world began, was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind? If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

They answered and said unto him, That was altogether born in sins and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. Jesus heard they cast him out. And when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

[25:09] He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe.

And he worshipped him. He believed on Christ because he had an experience with him. His eyes were opened. He knows that this man's of God. Now he believes that he's the Son of God and that he is the Christ.

And so demanding an experience is a reaction that men have. Now you and I operate like this all the time.

In our daily lives, we operate like this in so many things. Almost everything we know to be certain, we've received by experience. In some cases, it's by sources, other sources.

We haven't seen or experienced it. I've never been bitten by a rattlesnake, but I'm pretty sure that I don't want to be. And I have the understanding, but I've never experienced that.

[26:10] I don't believe it from experience, but from witness of others. But for instance, many of you would agree to this, that you don't like to take caffeine after a certain hour at night or in the afternoon because you know it's going to keep you up at night.

And you know that not because somebody told you it happened to them, but you've experienced it. And because you've experienced it for yourself, like if I told my son, hey, don't drink that energy drink.

It's two o'clock. What are you doing? He's just like, whatever, chug it because it's not going to affect him. But if I do, it might affect me. I have had the experience of midnight, one o'clock in the morning, just wide awake, laying in bed, can't roll over and fall asleep.

Now, I've learned that from my own experience. And we operate like that. It's common to develop a belief from experience. It's a very, very familiar concept to us.

But now, when it comes to the work of God, when it comes to a God that is spirit, a God that moves and works and operates in a spiritual realm, how are we to approach him?

[27:21] How are we to discern his working? How is it that we are to believe his work and his word and what's right and what's wrong? When it comes to the work of God, many today demand an experience.

They demand because some have just been taught false doctrine. They demand that, well, the Bible had miracles and they worked miracles and there was apostles and so we need to see that in our churches today, apostolic church of the such and such and apostle so and so is going to get up and have supposed powers.

And we need to see it and we need to experience it or we're not going to believe it's from God.

Some insist that the Holy Ghost has to fall from heaven and rattle their bodies and he has to, they need to see some evidence that God is present.

They need some power, they need some gift, they need some movement within their church and then they'll say, oh, the Lord is here. The Holy Ghost is here. Yeah, because this is happening and that's happening.

They need to experience it. I'm sure I told you this before at some point, but I worked with a young man in Pensacola, Florida and he went to a Pentecostal meeting at the Civic Center.

[28:41] It was a huge, this blonde haired woman, Paula White might have been, one of these big name preaching women and she gets on stage in her high heels and preaches and dances and whatever she does and calls on the Holy Ghost to fill everybody and all that jazz.

And so this guy went to this meeting and he was there and came to work the next day and I said, how was the meeting? And he's like, oh, bro. Oh, wow.

And I was like, what? What? Tell me about it. What happened? And I'm kind of, you know, I'm, everything that comes out of his mouth, I am ready to filter through the word of God whether, whether what he says, what he experienced is true or accurate or godly or of the spirit of God.

And so I'm just, and I'm not challenging him and cutting him down. I just want to know, what's your take? What was this meeting like? And so he went on to tell me. It was this, it was that, it was, and all this praising, it was so much praising.

And anyway, it gets to the end and to the climax of what he, his takeaway was. And I said this, I said, did, did at any time she preach the gospel?

[29:51] And he's like, ah, he didn't have an answer. He didn't, he couldn't say yes, he couldn't say no. I was like, I mean, did she ever tell everybody that the Lord Jesus Christ is God's son and that he died on a cross to pay for their sins and that believing and exercising faith in his work on the cross, we can have forgiveness of sins and salvation.

Did she ever cover that material about Jesus being the Savior and really point folks to the cross?

And he's like, and the answer was no. She talked about the Holy Ghost.

And when I got to the end, I said, and he talked about the ending and the music, the dull music that played and the mood and the dim lights and the people started speaking and tongues going around and popping up and popping up and popping up.

And I said, so what was your takeaway? And he said something about saved, like I got saved is the word he used. That's why I asked him about the gospel.

And he said, I felt it. And I was like, what did you feel? He's just like, I felt it. I'm telling you, I felt it. I was just sitting there and I felt it.

[30:58] I'm like, what did you feel? Tell me what you experienced. And he couldn't say it. He just felt it in his body. I felt it. So because he felt it, because of what's going on in the room, these people, these simple people that don't know the words of God at all are being deceived that if you'll just open yourself up and receive this, the same garbage that goes on in the yoga community of just out with this and in with this and receive the universe into your heart and into your spirit and breathe and just, it's spiritual stuff that's going on.

And I didn't want to get too sidetracked with that except to say that that it's been common among religions and among men to demand an experience.

And if I don't have an experience and if I don't feel it and if I don't get to see it with mine eyes and my senses, then I'm not going to believe it. I'm not going to believe it's true and I'm not going to believe it's of God.

But then there's a third reaction. The first one, men will refuse to believe no matter what witnesses, no matter what evidence, none of it. Another one, they will demand an experience and then they'll believe that experience.

But then the third reaction is simply to exercise faith. Come back to where we were in John 20. I stopped you in the middle of the verse. John chapter 20 in verse 29.

[32:27] After Jesus comes to meet Thomas and reveal himself to him, in verse 29 again, Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed.

But notice the blessing here, blessed are they that have not seen and yet believed. Jesus Christ is talking about exercising faith.

You know, why, where was that verse we just read that? Yeah, verse 27. And be not faithless, but believing.

He was faithless. He had to see it, have the experience. He needed sight in order to believe. But Christ says exercising faith is where the blessing is.

Now what he's talking to, the company, that's nobody in the room. That's not the apostles. They've seen him. That's not the others with them. That's not the women. They've seen him.

[33:24] He's not putting the blessing on anybody in the room. They all demand an experience in order to believe. But somebody will believe the word of God without verifying it beyond all doubt.

Without verifying it beyond all reason and arguments. evidence. Now just as we've seen here with Thomas and the others that sight can experience and can produce a faith, a belief rather, sight can produce a belief, so can faith.

Faith can produce a belief that's just as strong. Faith, the Bible says, is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

And faith allows you to believe in something that you cannot see, something you cannot touch with your hands and hear with your ears. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5 and verse 7, for we walk by faith, not by sight.

The two are distinctly different vehicles that can lead you to a belief. When I say a belief, I'm referring to something that you hold as true and it is so, it is certain.

[34:41] It's a belief. Sight can lead you to a belief. If I told you it's going to rain this afternoon, you'd look out, see blue skies, you wouldn't believe me. Well, if raindrops started to fall, you'd say, I believe you now.

Because sight will lead you to a belief. And so can faith. So can faith. And today, many are unwise and deceived waiting for a sign from heaven.

Waiting for God to stir the waters. Waiting for God to heal or to speak in a voice and some formation in the clouds or some miracle, some miraculous thing to happen in their life, then they'll believe.

Many are fools to wait for this when God is looking for faith today. He's looking for faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please Him.

For he that cometh to God must believe that He is. keep your Bibles open one more time. Go to Luke 16. And I'm going to read a verse to you from 1 Peter chapter number 1.

[35:54] But you can slide back to Luke 16. You're going to find Luke 16.

And in 1 Peter chapter 1, listen to what Peter says. He's speaking of the appearing of Jesus Christ. And he says in verse 8, I fit that statement.

I haven't seen Him, but I believe. I exercise faith and my faith leads me to a belief from the words of God that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for my sins and that He's alive today.

He rose again and ascended to heaven. The Word of God says it. I believe it. I exercise faith in what God said and I'm not going to get to see it probably in my lifetime.

Who knows? I'm probably not going to see anything while I'm walking on this planet and living in this body of flesh. And instead of seeing it, I'll believe by faith.

[37:13] Now Luke 16, this is the last place I want you to come to today. In Luke 16, there's a rich man and there's a beggar. And they both die and the rich man is in hell in verse 23.

The beggar is in Abraham's bosom and in that age before Christ died, they were both compartments in the heart of the earth, one across from the other and they could see each other from the story.

This is not a parable. This is not false. This is doctrine and truth. It's history. And there's Abraham and the place of paradise is elsewhere called Abraham's bosom.

Actually, in verse 22, it's called Abraham's bosom. In verse, the beggar, I'm sorry, the rich man is not getting out.

He's tormented in the flames. But he wants somebody to go to his brethren. So look at verse 27. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, Father, speaking to Abraham, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house.

[38:17] Send Lazarus, he's asking him. Send him back. For I have five brethren that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them. And he said, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

He said unto them, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. And the point I want you to see here is twofold.

One, the reality of hell and the torment and the flames. And it's, I believe it because it's in the book. Because Jesus Christ warned about it.

It's in the book. I don't need the scientists to tell me about the magma and the temperature and the inner core of the earth and what they believe with their sensors. I don't need to tell them that.

[39:15] That doesn't mean anything to me. I understand that souls are thrown and cast into hell fire and they're tormented because they've deserved it.

Because they've sinned against the holy God and refused to repent and to acknowledge the gift of escape that God offers them. And so I believe in hell. But secondly, God refuses to send a sign. He refuses. Men refuse to believe and they go to hell. Men demand a sign. They demand an experience and today God is not going to give them that experience.

He's demanding they believe His word. He's demanding man exercise faith. He refuses to send a sign but instead he determined this. The scriptures are sufficient to persuade men.

The holy scriptures are sufficient. So let me ask then, have they persuaded you? Are you persuaded this morning that if you died, if you didn't make it out of this building, if your heart beat its last beat and your lungs breathe their last breath, now, are you persuaded beyond any doubt, are you persuaded that you would go to heaven, that you'd be taken to the presence of God?

[40:41] You say, well, I think so. Why? What do you base your thinking upon or your hope upon? I hope so. I want to.

What would you base it upon? If what comes out of your mouth is, well, I, you're going down the wrong path right away. If you begin to say, well, I've tried, I've been, I've done, I've, no, no, no, no, no, no, not accepted.

But if what comes out of your mouth is because Jesus and you start there, okay, that's where God accepts. Bible says that we're accepted in the beloved, in his son, Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, his beloved son.

Are you convinced? Are you persuaded that you, in other words, do you know for sure that when you die, you'll go to heaven? Are you exercising faith in the gospel?

Or have you had an experience and you're clinging to some experience, something you felt, something you've been in a service and moved and something took place, the wind blew through and you were there and now you're okay.

[41:56] I don't, I don't know that anybody in here has such a hard heart that they refuse to believe. I doubt you'd come to church Sunday morning if that's you. But that's one reaction men have. If you've come to this place and what you're staking your salvation, the eternity of your soul upon is that you felt something one day at a service or that they talked

about the gifts of the Holy Ghost and somebody, and I got up and I started speaking something I never did before.

You think that's wild? I know, I had a friend of mine in high school that his sister stood, just a normal family, and they were in this church and he said they did this stuff and he didn't really like it, but his sister, just a normal kid, one day got up and started doing his stuff and he's like, what in the world? And they, like the mom and dad were like, what is going on with this? But they've been exposing her to this stuff and she got up and they suppose she's speaking in tongues as the gift of the Holy Ghost. And I was like, is your sister saved?

I just asked them that question, is your sister saved? And I don't know. Anyway, I'm not going to go down that story, but that was like out of the blue, an experience and now the family's like, oh boy, God has moved in our family, has chosen our daughter, has gifted her with the gifts of the Spirit. No Bible, no understanding, just an experience. I hope you're not holding an experience in your hands hoping that that's good enough to carry you through the judgment and to have eternal life.

[43:34] What I'm pointing us all to this morning is to what God accepts and what God demands is that you exercise faith. Faith in the gospel.

Faith in believing what it said that Jesus is the Son of God, that He did die, that He is alive. That believing on Him that we can be justified from our sins, from all things, justified by faith, that we can be sanctified in Jesus Christ and receive the righteousness of God and have that attributed to our life when the truth is we are dirty and vile and unclean in God's sight and yet He would gift us with the righteousness of His Son.

How is all this possible? According to the Word of God, to receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's bow our heads this morning and we'll be taking off here in just a moment but before anybody leaves, I want to challenge you in your own mind and heart, what are you trusting in?

What are you holding to right now, today, not 20 years from now, not 20 years in the past, today, what are you clinging to? Do you know that you possess eternal life?

Have you believed on the Son of God? Not on a church, not on your good works, not on anything you've done. Have you believed on the Son of God? Is He your Savior?

[45:06] The Bible says, He that hath the Son hath life. So do you have Him? I didn't say, did the Holy Ghost move in your family or in your living room?

I didn't ask you if you had a vision one night in your bed. I'm asking you, have you exercised faith? Have you called upon the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Savior?

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Do you want that? You want to be saved? Don't count on experience. You'll have to cling to Jesus Christ.

I'm going to leave you with this and we'll be dismissed. If there's any one person or ten people in this place that are doubting in their heart whether they're saved or not, would you please, would you please see me before you leave today and just say, I'd like to talk about that.

And what I will do is take a King James Bible and open up to the passages that you need to be aware of that will direct your mind and heart to believing by faith Jesus Christ and knowing what it says and then calling on him and receiving the gift of eternal life one time forever so that you leave here today knowing that you're a child of God on your way to heaven.

[46:34] I'm not going to tell you to have an experience and to pray and fast until something happens. you can be saved today if you're not sure.

Let's make sure today. So I'm going to leave that in your hands. I'm going to pray. We're going to be dismissed. And if anybody needs to get this settled, let's get it settled today.

Father, thank you for Jesus Christ being willing to take our sin upon himself and endure that on the cross. But thank you more than that, that he of his own power took his life and he raised it again and came back.

And we're thankful that he's alive, that we can rejoice in that and sing of this and believe this with all of our hearts. We thank you, Lord, that not only have you died, buried, and rose again, but you're living and you're in our hearts and you're guiding us and your word is real to us and it's alive.

And God, we need to have that living word and we need to have your spirit guiding and speaking to our hearts and teaching us. And so, Father, today, if anybody here is unsure, please do not let them leave, do not give them rest, do not let them have peace, but God, the way you deal with them, deal with them until they'll be willing to get it right.

[47:49] Grant them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And Father, for us that are saved, may we live today and the rest of our lives in the light that our Savior is alive, and may we walk in newness of life because he's been raised from the dead.

thank you for salvation, thank you for eternal life, thank you for Bible Baptist Church and its members, and thank you again for saving our souls, and it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.