

# The Christ Must Die

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 10 April 2022

Preacher: Rev David Andrew

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Great, good morning all. I want to apologize first of all because the last time I took a service here, I completely forgot myself and ran out of time, your time. So, if I'm running off today, just get up and walk out, okay? Right. We're thinking this morning about this remarkable Bible study that took place on the Emmaus Road.

Now, a good question for all of us to consider from beginning to end this morning would be this. Which end of the Emmaus Road are we on right now? Personally, individually, which end of the Emmaus Road are we on? You all know the story of Jesus coming and getting alongside the two downcast souls who had not realized that Jesus had risen from the dead. They were just totally miserable. Their misery rating would have been completely off the scale. Their faith, their hope, everything was through the floor. It was like the ground could open up and swallow them, and they would feel like they had lost nothing because they'd already lost everything. So, you couldn't exaggerate the misery of these two souls on the Emmaus Road. And then Jesus comes along and meets them and takes them on a tour of the Scriptures. And, oh, I would love to have been there for that Bible study. So, let's read that. We're going to turn to Luke chapter 24, verse 13. Luke chapter 24, verse 13. Now, just before we start to read,

Solomon, King Solomon, who wrote the Proverbs, he has a word to give us about this reading today, because in some ways what he was doing was he was describing the life of the believer, the person who really trusts God. He says, the path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. So, he's actually saying, if you're trusting God, you start off in darkness, and it gets a bit brighter and a bit brighter and a bit brighter until the full light of day just dawns on you, because God will take you from darkness to light.

That's what God does. There is no darkness in God. So, if you trust God, you're just going to move from darkness to light all the way through your life. But there's a lovely sense in which that text from Proverbs 4, 18 actually describes, it's almost like a little mini commentary on the story we're about to read, because for these believers on the Emmaus Road, they started out in total darkness, and the light of God came upon them, and it shone brighter and brighter and brighter until they had the full light of the gospel to show them the rest of their lives and what way they were going to go.

So, let's start at verse 13 here in Luke chapter 24. That very day, that's the day, this is the Sunday morning, Jesus has risen from the dead, but these two folk don't know. That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him, and he said to them, what is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk? And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them named Cleopas answered him, are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days? And he said to them, what things?

[ 4 : 34 ] And they said to him, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty indeed, and word before God, and all the people, and how our chief priests and elders delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.

Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they'd even seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But him they did not see. And he said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going further, but they urged him strongly, saying, Stay with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent.

[ 6 : 25 ] So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed it, and he broke it, and he gave it to them, and their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven, and those who were with them gathered together, saying, The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon. Then they told him what happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

It's okay to shout, Wow, or Hallelujah, or something at this point. What a God we serve. What a Savior.

Our theme for today is, The Christ Must Die. The Christ Must Die. That divine must. Do you know that, Luke uses that must, that word must? He uses it about four times more than any of the other gospel writers.

He uses it more than anyone else in the New Testament. Must, must, must. Every so often, this divine must is in Luke's writing when he's trying to explain the life of Jesus. This must happen.

The Christ must suffer. Why must he suffer? Why must he die? Because he's going to conquer death, that's why. How do you conquer death by avoiding it?

[ 8 : 30 ] You don't, do you? You look it straight in the eye and say, Meet your nemesis. Jesus. And that's exactly what Jesus did. Jesus went to the cross deliberately. And another reason he had to die is because he was the sacrifice for our sins. He was the sin bearer. He was the scapegoat that was taking the sin of the world upon his shoulders. The sin of the world. What do we mean by that?

We mean the sin of all people in all times, in all stages of history, and right on into the future until he returns again. You couldn't have more comprehensive sin bearing than that.

But do you realize that he wouldn't have borne anybody's sin if he hadn't died? If he hadn't died, there would have been no sacrifice for sin.

You and me would still be without hope. The Christ must die. He had to die in order to throw it off.

And how could he throw it off? Because the sting of death is sin, and he had none. Oh, he was bearing, he was bearing truckloads of sin.

[ 10 : 08 ] But none of it was his. And so when death got a hold of him, and it did. It really did get a hold of him. In those days, people knew when somebody was dead.

They couldn't be taken in by some fakery. They knew when somebody was dead. They had to butcher in order to eat. You want your dinner at night? Go and kill something.

They knew when something was dead. They routinely saw the Romans kill people. They knew when something was dead. Jesus really, really died.

And he really, really bore your sin and mine. But he had none of his own. And so death could not keep a grip of him.

It lost its grip. There was nothing to hold on to. You remember that just before he was arrested, Jesus said to his disciples, the prince of this world that's coming, he has nothing in me.

[ 11 : 15 ] He has nothing in me. There wasn't the slightest little part of Jesus' life that Satan could lay claim to and say, that little bit's mine.

There was nothing. And I'm forever saying this, and I'm going to say it again today. I don't apologize for repeating myself. 33 years of sinless perfection.

That is a bit of an achievement, don't you think? Huh? 33 years of sinless perfection. Perfect obedience to his parents.

Perfect submission to the authorities. Perfect obedience to the Father in heaven. Never once putting a foot wrong. Provoked 24-7 by enemies coming out of the woodwork.

Trying to trip him up. Trying to get him to be on the wrong side of Caesar, or the wrong side of God, or the wrong side of the Jewish people. Trying every trick under the sun to get this man to just fail.

[ 12 : 18 ] Just once. Because if he had sinned only once, only once, he would not have been the spotless sacrifice that God demands, that righteous, a righteous God demands for the sin of the world.

You see, there had been thousands of priests over the years, and millions of blood sacrifices. The blood of bulls and goats. And as Hebrews tells us, the sin could, they could cover the sin.

It was a temporary atonement that God had provided. All the way from the Garden of Eden, when an animal had to die to make a leather covering for Adam and Eve because of their sin.

All the way from there, millions of blood sacrifices, and they could cover sin, but they couldn't take it away. Only one could take the sin away, and that was the one who took the sin upon himself.

He wore our flesh, and he wore our sin like a garment, like it was his skin. And when that curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, 60 feet high, and about five inches thick, it could not be torn by a human hand.

[ 13 : 45 ] And it was ripped as he was dying on the cross, as he was being ripped apart. The curtain was ripped apart. And God was declaring from that moment on the Holy of Holies is open to every sinner who trusts in the sacrifice we have just provided.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Hmm? So for this disconsolate pair here on the Emmaus Road, the path of the righteous is, it's in total darkness right now.

They're just living in fear. Hebrews 2.14 tells us why the Christ had to die.

Let me just read that for you. Since the children have flesh and blood, that's you and me, he too, that's Jesus, shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Brothers and sisters, just a few nights ago I was at a meeting online and I happened to mention that all I could see in our society today was the power of fear gripping people's hearts.

[ 15 : 48 ] people are afraid of death and they're afraid of the process of dying and they just don't know how to cope with that. Unknown to me, in the body of people I was speaking to online, there was a woman who was actually a doctor.

It turned out, I knew she was a doctor because I saw that in her title on the screen, but it turned out she was a clinical psychologist and she said, I want to endorse what David has just said.

She said, because as a clinical psychologist I've treated many, many, many patients over 25 years and I would say the root cause of all of the problems in all of their lives is their fear of death.

And I thought, wow. Jesus had to die to deliver us from the fear of death.

And this pair here on the Emmaus Road, they were gripped by the fear of death because it seemed as though death has had the last word against the very last person they would expect to be conquered by it.

[ 17 : 00 ] Because this is the man who had said, Lazarus, come forth, and Lazarus had walked out complete with grave clothes. No one would have expected, no one who knew Jesus would have expected that he would be conquered by death.

But Jesus had always been very clear in his own mind that he had to be conquered by death. Death had to overthrow him so that he could overthrow death. He had to become death's victim so he could become the victor over death.

you go from, in three days, from being the victim to the victor. Hallelujah. What a savior. fear. And so here they are, these people, in total darkness, and death seems to have had the last word, and they're gripped by that fear of death that Hebrews is talking about.

And it says here, they were talking with each other as they went about all the things that had happened. They were talking with each other. What a completely and utterly useless conversation.

They were talking with each other, and one was as much darkness and fear as the other. The blind trying to lead the blind. What a shame.

[ 18 : 23 ] What a sad thing. So here they were talking with each other. They didn't need to talk with each other. They needed to talk with the only one who is sane.

And this is our God. Our God is the God of sanity. He has not given us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power and of life and of a sound mind.

That's our God. And while they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and he went with them, but for some reason or other, their eyes were unable to recognize him.

And I think, to be honest, unless God actually opens a sinner's eyes, your eyes and mine right now, we can't see him. We need his help to do that.

We just can't see him until he opens our eyes. Now that's literally true right now because he said, where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in the midst.

[ 19 : 34 ] We're gathered right now in his name and he's in the midst. Can any of us see him? No, we can't. But he's here.

And if he chose to, he could actually open all of our eyes right now to see his presence with us. Right now, we don't need that because we live by faith, not by sight.

So that's fine. That's okay. We don't need to see you right now, Lord Jesus, because our faith is confident. Your word is true. God does not lie.

Our Savior is with us. That's all we need to know. And he says to them, what's this conversation you're having? When I read the next bit, every time I read that next bit, there's a belly laugh comes on.

You know, it's like, this is one of the funniest moments in Scripture. This is a man saying to Jesus, what planet have you been on the last few days?

[ 20 : 43 ] Have you no idea what's been going on in Jerusalem? And this is the man to whom it has been going on. And Jesus, he doesn't rebuke them.

He doesn't come on strong. He just gently gets alongside them, and he's walking at their pace with them. And when they stop, he stops. It's so, so gracious.

And he says, tell me more. What are these things? And then they begin to recite all their miseries to him. Here's this prophet from God. He was mighty in word and mighty in deed.

And we really thought he was the one who was going to give the Romans their walking papers. And what's even stranger, they said, and you begin to wonder, is the light in the road beginning to get a wee bit brighter at this point?

And they begin to say, you know, this is the third day since all these things happened. That's a key phrase, the third day, because Jesus used it a lot. Jesus had warned them all.

[ 21 : 52 ] He had told them all, three days later, I will rise. So here they are saying, this is the third day and strangely enough, the women went to the tomb early in the morning and they say they saw a vision of angels who said he had risen from the grave.

But they didn't see him, they saw the angels. And then Jesus begins to turn up the light and he says to them, oh foolish ones, what a self-inflicted misery you're putting yourselves through.

All you have to do is trust what the prophets have written. All you have to do is get into the scriptures. Stop talking with each other. All you're doing is sharing your confusion.

Get into the scriptures. Look at what the prophets have said. It's all coming through. True. True. was it not necessary, he says, that the Christ should, there's that word, there's that must again, the divine must.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? Yes, it's an absolute must that he should suffer these things.

[ 23 : 19 ] It's the set plan, the deliberate plan and foreknowledge of God that's at work here. This has been settled since the beginning of time.

The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. God knew from the very moment that man sinned that man would need atonement. The mystery of God's wisdom is astonishing here.

But there's nothing that's taking God by surprise. And this is all just God's purpose working out here. And the prophets had all testified to it for centuries.

You think of some of the things, some of the astonishing things that are in the Old Testament because when Jesus says to these believers here, he says, you know, you're so slow to believe what the prophets have written, he's actually saying to them, the scriptures you need to read are what you and I would call the Old Testament.

You see, he had done that already with the Pharisees and the religious critics who came to him. He said to them, John chapter 5, he said, you search the scriptures because you think that by them you have eternal life.

[ 24 : 46 ] you think eternal life is a matter of study and academic acquisition of knowledge and information. You think that's how you get eternal life.

He said, these scriptures speak about me, these scriptures testify to me, and you will not come to me to have eternal life. so Jesus has already said to his critics, the scriptures testify about me.

What scriptures was he talking about? Was it Matthew, Mark, Luke, John? The Acts? Was it the letters of Paul? Was it the letter of James?

Was it Jude's little letter? No, he wasn't talking about any of those. Those were not the scriptures that Jesus referred to because they hadn't yet been written. They weren't going to be written for a good couple of decades after Jesus had died and gone back to heaven.

So what was he talking about? He was talking about the scriptures of what we call the Old Testament, the Hebrew scriptures. Genesis to Malachi in our book.

[ 26 : 06 ] Genesis, and it says here that beginning with Moses, what does that mean? It means the first five books of the Old Testament, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, the books of Moses.

Beginning with those five books, and all the prophets, how many prophets can you think of? the big ones like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.

You know, in a wee while we're going to celebrate communion, and we're going to remember that Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and he took wine, and he held a cup, and he said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do you know what he was doing when he said that? He was looking back 500 years to the time of Jeremiah when God had promised, I will make a new covenant. with the house of Israel, an unbreakable covenant, a covenant that won't depend on their faithfulness because I will keep that covenant secure.

Jeremiah had prophesied the New Testament, the New Covenant. Testament means covenant. Isaiah had prophesied the suffering of Jesus.

[ 27 : 28 ] Isaiah 53, who has believed our report, to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed. He grew up before him like a tender shoot and as a root out of dry ground.

But then he goes on to say, he was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, and as a man from whom men hide their faces, so we esteemed him not.

Isaiah said his visage was so marred that people couldn't look upon him. Isaiah prophesied all that about 750 years before the events.

And even earlier than that, about 200 years earlier, maybe about 1,000 years before the crucifixion, King David wrote Psalm 22. You go and read Psalm 22 when you go home, and it's almost like a description of the crucifixion.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? I mean, what do we think Jesus was doing on the cross? Was he just so much in control of his wits and his concentration that he was thinking liturgically like it was a church service and thinking, this would be a good moment to read Psalm 22?

[ 28 : 57 ] I don't think so. Jesus was in agony. His body was being torn apart. His mind was being torn apart.

His emotions were being torn apart. There wasn't a part of Jesus being that wasn't under attack at that point. And Jesus cries, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Because he was literally forsaken at that time. The Father turns his face away. We sing it often. The Father turns his face away.

Because Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. the Father. Hallelujah is the only thing you can say, really.

You see, these people on the Emmaus Road, they were so sad, they were miserable. They had pinned so much of their hopes on Jesus, but the hopes they had pinned on Jesus were so much less than Jesus was giving them.

[ 30 : 15 ] Their hopes were for some great political or military leader who would come and deal with their immediate enemies there and then. And it's the same with you and me all the time. You know, a pandemic comes along, COVID comes along, or bereavement comes along, or redundancy comes along, or any number of other things can afflict us.

And we're always concerned about what's actually happening. And when we get to know God our Father better, we discover that He's more concerned about why certain things need to happen.

You see, Jesus' death needed to happen. They were concerned about what was happening. The Romans have still got the upper hand. Death has still got the upper hand.

They were concerned about what was happening. God was concerned about why the death of Jesus needed to happen. God's plan was bigger. It was bolder. It was more beautiful.

It was more wonderful than you could possibly imagine. And all they were looking for was just a quick political or military solution to an immediate problem. So much less than what was in the plan of God.

[ 31 : 29 ] How often are our particular plans and our difficulties so we're so preoccupied with them that it never occurs to us that the pain that's in our life at this point is the very pain God needs to have in our life because through that something wonderful is going to come.

Romans 8 28 God works all things together for good to those who love him and who are the called according to his purpose. What's going on in your life right now that you would put an end to if you could if you had the choice?

And there doesn't seem to be any way of bringing it to an end. There doesn't seem to be any way of sorting it. And you feel so powerless and you feel Lord how long will you forget me forever?

However the psalmist knows exactly how you feel. But Romans 8 29 goes on to tell us why these things are happening in our lives.

Because those God foreknew he predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his son. And all the stuff that's going on in your life right now do you know what that's for?

[ 32 : 53 ] That's because God is going to make you more like Jesus than you would ever in your wildest dreams think you could be like. I'm not even going to ask you if you think I should look a bit more like Jesus.

Because I know what your answer would be. You know folks the Christ had to die. It was an absolute must.

he couldn't help us by avoiding death but he could help us by dying because then he could take death and throw it off and it could not hold him prisoner.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. So it's getting brighter all the time and Jesus has taken them through the scriptures. I wonder sometimes what scriptures did Jesus actually use for that Bible study?

I mean I presume he didn't go to every scripture in the Old Testament that could be related to himself because I don't think they would ever have reached Emmaus. Do you? It might have taken them 70 years to get there but he certainly gave them a big overview of the Old Testament.

[ 34 : 23 ] I remember one day I was up in Putlochery I was out having my lunch from the office and I went down to the loch side and I was sitting there munching my sandwiches and minding my own business and all of a sudden one minute one second it wasn't there the next minute it was there and the noise was colossal and it was a military jet and it was flying so close I could hear the pilot changing his mind I mean really it was so low it was so fast it was so noisy and it took me 15 minutes fully afterwards to sit there and stop shaking I got the fright of my life it was literally skimming the treetops and shooting down the loch it was just incredible I've never seen anything like it before or since but that's what Jesus did with the scriptures he took them on a low flight landscape hugging flight right across the landscape 4000 years of history and he showed them in the scriptures all the things concerning himself he didn't take them through every text but he took them all through everything they needed to see now where would have been the first text do you think he might have gone to some people would say

Genesis 3 15 you know the seed of the woman will be the one who crushes the head of the serpent I think it goes further back than that now mnemonics are a great idea I love memory tricks you know these things that help you remember things like my Latin teacher used to say an anus of a certain tribus sat in the porticus of her domus with an acus in her manus on the aedus of July there you go so he did his job well and I can still remember it and all that mean is an old lady of a certain tribe was sitting in the porch of her house on the eyes of July with a needle in her hand but the reason he gave us that was because all the nouns in Latin that end in US are masculine except for the ones in that rhyme they're feminine and that was his way of getting us to remember and I love mnemonics when it comes to these things it's good to have something that helps to just lock something into your mind so have a go at this

Genesis 1 3 and Revelation 21 23 Genesis 1 3 and Revelation 21 23 because you see Jesus said John 6 I think it is he says I am the light of the world I am the light of the world and in Genesis 1 3 God says let there be light and there was light there was light and that was clever do you know why do you know how clever it was because there was no sun or moon or stars they weren't going to be made for another four days so where did the light come from in Revelation 21 3 says the city of God will have no need of a sun or a moon or stars for light because the lamb will be the lamp the lamb will be the lamp now I think Jesus might well have started at Genesis 1 3 to take them through the scriptures and show them the things concerning himself

I am the light of the world he could even have gone right back to Genesis 1 1 in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth but then they didn't have the benefit yet of John chapter 1 in the beginning was the word and the word was God and the word was with God he was with God in the beginning without him was nothing made that has been made it's okay to shout awesome right now okay he's awesome he's absolutely awesome the saviour of ours the path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn shining of a brighter to the full light of day and the light is dawning the light is growing here as Jesus takes these people through the scriptures and shows them all the things concerning himself there's a there's a there's a lovely there's a lovely book it was written by the

Reverend Henry Henry Law in the 18th century he wrote a book called the gospel in Leviticus hands up all those for whom Leviticus is their favourite book yeah you see we're all having a wee bit of a laugh because Leviticus is one of those books you think oh Lord did you have to put this one in the Bible it's a difficult book to get to grips with and it's all about sacrifices and atonement and hygiene laws and all the rest it's it's quite hard going and here's a man who has found the gospel all through Leviticus and by the way if you happen to own a kindle and you want to read it cheap it's 99 pence to download it to your kindle the gospel in Leviticus you need to allow for the fact that it's in 18th century



[ 40 : 51 ] English so it's not going to read like we speak today but it's all there and he looks at all these things the blood sacrifices all the things that Jesus could have picked up on in Leviticus and say here I am there I'm there and look at Abraham my goodness Jesus would definitely not have missed that episode on Mount Moriah where Abraham is asked to sacrifice his son and his hand is raised with the dagger it's ready to strike the fatal blow why?

because Abraham doesn't love his son no he loves his son he loves his son more than his own life he would rather be taking the dagger to himself but he's obeying God who has asked him to sacrifice his son and he's just about to strike the blow when an angel stops him and God provides the sacrifice to take the place of Isaac God doesn't ask Abraham to give up his son but Hebrews says that nonetheless even metaphorically it's as though Abraham got Isaac back from the dead because Isaac was as good as dead if God hadn't intervened how could Abraham go through with that how could he go through with that terrible deed well Hebrews tells us the answer to that too I love the way that Bible explains the Bible and Hebrews gives us the answer to that how could

Abraham go to the point of actually being willing to sacrifice the life of his son answer because he reasoned that God who called him was faithful he reasoned that God would never break a promise he knew the character of God over many years and God had never failed to keep a promise to him and so he said if God's promises all depend on Isaac being alive and they do if I kill Isaac God will still answer his promises which means God will bring Isaac back from the dead oh my goodness brothers and sisters where is our excuse for worrying and fretting and questioning and doubting God where is our excuse because here's a man who was pushed to the ultimate of his testing his testable powers and he was able to come to that point of saying

God will not break a promise to me even if it means bringing my son back from the dead and Abraham got his son back from the dead because Isaac was dead unless God had intervened and what did Jesus say about himself he said our fathers ate manna in the wilderness but he says I am the bread that has come down from heaven he was he was saying the manna in the wilderness was pointing forward to me and what was manna for what do you do with manna you consume it don't you you consume it you devour it what was Jesus saying about himself about the manna the manna was pointing forward to one who was going to be consumed for the benefit of others you see the death of Jesus was there in the

Old Testament it wasn't a New Testament concept it was there in the Old Testament he was going to be consumed just like the manna in the wilderness hallelujah it's my favorite word today hallelujah and so they drew near to the village where they were going he acted as if they were going further but they urged him strongly saying stay with us for it's toward evening and the day is now far spent so he went in to stay with them and when he was at table with them he took the bread and blessed it and he broke it and he gave it to them how did he give it to them what would they see when he held out the bread to them what would they see the marks in his hands and their eyes were opened praise the Lord praise his wonderful name their eyes their eyes were opened and they recognized him and his job was done what was the job he was doing do we think you know

[ 45 : 51 ] Isaiah had prophesied that the shepherd would be stricken and the sheep would be scattered strike the shepherd and scatter the flock that's what the enemy did that's what he sought to do at Calvary he struck the shepherd and scattered the flock and they all ran for their lives and even if they didn't physically run they were so afraid they were paralyzed they were useless they were miserable the flock was scattered without a shepherd so what is this Jesus doing right now answer he's out on the Emmaus road because he knows that's where some of his lost sheep are he knows that's where his scattered flock is and he's gathering his flock and how is he doing it he's doing it by showing them that he's alive you know he only appeared to believers after the resurrection he didn't appear

I mean if that had been me I'd have been tempted to put my head around Pilate's door and go hello I'm back again he didn't do any of that he didn't vindicate himself before Pilate or Caiaphas or Annas or Herod or any of these people but he appeared to believers he appeared to Peter and to James to John to all the apostles to 500 at one point all together he appeared to believers and this is what he's doing here he's regathering his flock and how is he going to regather them how is he going to secure them how is he going to enable them to stand firm he's going to let them rest on this one thing all they need to know is that their saviour has come back from the dead you know they had to replace

Judas when he died he hanged himself and they could have been it would have been tempting to drop a list you know of qualities that you want in a successor to Judas Judas had zero integrity he was a thief he was disloyal he was treacherous so let's drop a list of the qualities that we want in someone to replace Judas he needs to be loyal he needs to be faithful he needs to have integrity he needs to be somebody you can really trust somebody you wouldn't want to be frightened to turn your back on but they didn't drop a list of qualities they didn't drop anything like that all they did was say we're looking for one thing we're looking for someone who with us will be a witness to the resurrection that's all that's the only qualification he needs and Matthias was chosen to succeed

Judas that's all he wanted was a witness to the resurrection brothers and sisters that's our calling in a nutshell that's all we have to do just to bear witness to the resurrection that's the good news that's the gospel and I've just lost my place it's probably time to finish so let's just remember as we close that the Lord God our Father sent his son he sent the shepherd the shepherd that King David wrote about he sent the shepherd to gather his flock and he's still gathering his flock and I would love to think that you and me in the year ahead would bring a lot of

Jesus flock in these doors to join us that we would have the shepherd's heart and that we would go out and we would seek and save the lost we can't save them in that sense we can't convert anyone but we can go and we can bear witness to the resurrection and they can see by the light in our eyes that our saviour has come back from the dead you can visit Muhammad's tomb and Buddha's tomb and Krishna's tomb you can visit all these religious leaders and founders tombs you go and visit our leaders tomb and he's not there but he's in you and he's in me give him half a chance he will show himself to the world out in the street to our first minister and to our prime minister let's pray oh god our father we we marvel at you you're just so so utterly wonderful lord we can't exaggerate your goodness your greatness your integrity your light your purity your holiness we can't exaggerate anything about you lord you're so lovely so wonderful and we thank you lord that you've given us a whole bible not just a new testament not just an old testament we've got an old testament that shows us that when we see you at work we're seeing Jesus at work and a new testament that shows us when we see Jesus at work we're seeing you at work father he who has seen me has seen the father and we go to the old testament we see you at work and all the time it's really your son that we see on every page lord it's so exciting it's so wonderful and we pray in Jesus name father give us such a passion to share the good news that Jesus has defeated him who had the power of death namely the devil and that he has freed us who otherwise would be slaves to our fears of death we bless you that you've set us free and free indeed because it's your son who has done it we bless you for that in Jesus name amen