

# The Burial of Jesus

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[ 0 : 01 ] Join together in the worship of God singing from Psalm 40. Psalm 40, we're to sing from the beginning to verse 4.

Four stanzas from the beginning. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear At length to me did incline my voice and cry to hear He took me from a fearful pit and from the mighty clay And on a rock He set my feet establishing my way He put a new song in my mouth for God to magnify Many shall see it and shall fear and on the Lord rely O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies Respecting not the proud nor such as tongue as I to lies These verses, Psalm 40 from the beginning I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear

But after me He did incline my voice and cry to hear He took me from the fearful pit and from the mighty clay And on a rock He set my feet He stood my feet establishing my way He put a new song in my heart for God to magnify He put a new song in my heart for God to magnify He put a new song in my heart for God to magnify He put a new song in my heart for God to magnify

He put a new song in my heart for God to magnify He put a new song in my heart for God to magnify He put a new song in my heart for God to magnify Many shall see it and shall fear and on the Lord rely O blessed is the man who is lost upon the Lord rely O blessed is the man who is lost upon the Lord rely Rights We shaker in the name of the Lord verde C'mon Amen T existing

Inalnya■■■■ O blessed God come before you in this time of worship. We give thanks that your word gives to us an insight into what is true of your people, that they are those who have been given a new song to sing, that they understand something of the wonderful nature of the mercy of God as it is in Christ Jesus. We give thanks for the many that are able to praise God with the singing of the Psalms and that they have been doing so from their childhood and many of us have had that privilege. But the change wrought by your own spirit means that there is an added quality to the singing of the saints of God when they come to experience the salvation wrought by Christ. When the eyes of their understanding are opened and when they are able to see for the first time what it means is for a sinner to be saved by grace. Not only have they come to appreciate what a sinner is, no matter how carefully expounded the scriptures are, how meticulously the word of truth is applied, a sinner is unable to appreciate the extent of the damage wrought by sin in the whole man until the spirit of the Lord comes to open the eyes of the understanding. And we give thanks that you do that and that you have done it and will do it still. And it is our prayer that all who have come to have that experience would also be pleased to sing the new song and to do so wholeheartedly. Not because their voices are better than the voices are better than the voices of others, there is no doubt, but that some of us can sing and some of us are unable to sing in the same way that those who are gifted with the voice of melody and the voice of of the one who is attuned in so many different ways as singers. But we bless you and thank you that there are those who who have an element of heavenly in their voices, even though to themselves and perhaps to others, their voices are cracked and their voices are less melodious than others.

[ 7 : 35 ] And we know that there is something of the quality of heaven in the voice of the redeemed. And we know that the Lord Jesus appreciates those who come by faith, lifting up their voices with an understanding of what true praise is.

So help us to appreciate that today and to decide it for ourselves and to be fearless even in joining with others and praising our Lord.

Remember us today as a worshipping people. We give thanks for the privilege of gathering together. We give thanks for the good gift of health and strength that enables us to be present in this place.

With others, give thanks for all the privileges that we enjoy that allow us to go out and about when others, because of indifferent health, are unable to do that.

We remember any of our number who may be present or who may be concerned for the well-being of their loved ones.

[ 8 : 52 ] We bring all such to your attention by way of prayer, thankful that we can bear one another's burdens at a throne of grace. Remember all who are heavy-hearted and laden with the burdens of life.

Some who have trouble within their homes, some in their workplace, some in their community. Different things assail us and assault us from time to time.

And there is no better place to bring our sore hearts but to God and to surrender ourselves to your care and keeping.

We pray for your blessing upon any who are unable to be present today, remembering them in their homes, remembering them in hospital if they are in hospital, or those who are now by reason of infirmity confined to care homes, being nursed by others.

So remember all such. We pray for the grieving and sorrowful. And remember the state of our nation before you afresh.

[ 10 : 07 ] We have departed from our moorings and there is nothing that describes our spiritual condition if it were not the picture that you give tools of, in your word, of a vessel that is adrift in a stormy sea with the rocks waiting to dash in pieces, that which will be thrown upon it by the storm.

Were it not for your grace, this would have happened a long time ago. Because not only have the many turned their back upon God, but those who govern us and rule over us are themselves leaders in making such take place.

But we pray for them as we are required. We commit to you the king, his family, and all who form part of it.

We pray for his officers in the parliament, the first minister, the prime minister, and those who serve in Holyrood and Westminster.

We pray, Lord, that you would turn us again to yourself with penitent hearts and with the contrition that beholds our fallenness and the way that we have embraced sin.

[ 11 : 49 ] We confess it before you and pray for Mary. Remember the world in which we live with all its calamities and all its terrible, terrible situations that confront us daily.

We think of the disaster that has affected India, where there has been a terrible incident on the railways, and we think of all other places in the world where such events are perhaps unreported, maybe because they're not so great in the loss of life.

But nevertheless, there's a constant stream of dire circumstances that leave men and women young and old, plugged from time into eternity, and many of them unprepared.

It is an awesome thought to think of leaving this world without the knowledge of Christ Jesus to prepare us for it.

We pray, Lord, for mercy, that a day of power would be experienced the world over, that you would rend the heavens and come down.

[ 13 : 10 ] You have so done in times past, sometimes localised, sometimes in nations, sometimes with a wave of your Spirit passing over the whole of the earth, and that is what we pray for, knowing that you are just as able to convert an individual as you are able to convert the masses.

We pray for a day of such power. So watch over us now, we pray, and grant mercy for our sins. In Jesus' name we would ask it.

Amen. Amen. So boys and girls, I believe in Sunday School today you're going to be looking at the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

And the reason that Jesus gives for the parable is that there were those who trusted more in themselves rather than trust in anyone else.

They had a high opinion of themselves. And their opinion was what mattered. And not only did they have a high opinion of themselves, they had a low opinion of others.

[ 14 : 33 ] And Jesus saw that for what it was. And it was something that he chose to teach by way of parable, by teaching the parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee.

One prayed to God and told God everything about himself, how good he was, and how wonderful he was, and everything about him.

And the poor tax collector had nothing to say but, Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner. I wonder which of them was right.

They were both sinners, and yet one did not see his own sin the way the other did. I came across this story, and there's a story about somebody who'd been given a diary.

And, you know, I have a diary. It's a very posh diary. It's got a picture of a collie on it. And it's full of pictures of collies. But if you have a diary, many of the diaries today will have interesting information in it.

[ 15 : 55 ] There's a conversion chart. Unfortunately, it's nothing to do with spiritual conversion. It's all to do with the metrical system and converting liters to whatever it is, meters to inches or inches to meters.

It's got a list of useful websites. All kinds of helpful information. But this man had been given a diary. It was given a diary by the AA.

The AA are a motoring organization. And one of the lists that was in the diary was a very helpful list. It was a fault-finding list.

A fault-finding list. And the faults were faults that you could identify as being wrong with your car. And if anything went wrong, if your wipers weren't working, if there were indicators that weren't working, you would take a note of them and remember them.

But unfortunately, many people might well have a fault-finding diary. And they write down faults, but not their own.

[ 17 : 13 ] But the faults of others. And it's amazing. And we're all guilty of it. We're very meticulous in taking note, even a mental note, of the faults of others.

And we're not as good at taking a note of our own faults. Now, I wonder if that was something that Jesus was teaching the Pharisees.

There you are, and you're finding fault with this man because he's not like you. He's not somebody who knows God.

He's not somebody who serves God. And yet, here am I. And I'm somebody who knows all about God. And I serve God.

And I do all kinds of good things. So, in this man's diary, perhaps he would have all the faults of others, and not so many of the faults of his own.

[ 18 : 15 ] Which one are you? And if you do recognize that your faults are more important, is it simply a matter of writing them down?

No. You go and confess your faults to Christ. And you confess them and seek his help for forgiveness for them.

And that they'll be taken away, that they're no longer there. Well, I hope that you're given help to the members of that. Now, as you go out to Sunday School, we're going to sing on in Psalm 40.

We're singing on in Psalm 40 from verse 5. And we're going to sing to verse 9. O Lord, my God, for many are the wonders thou hast done.

Thy gracious thoughts to us were far above all thoughts are gone. In order none can reckon unto thee. If them declare and speak of them, I would, the more than can be numbered are.

[ 19 : 29 ] We'll sing to verse 9. O Lord, my God, for many are the wonders thou hast done. O Lord, my God, for many are the wonders thou hast done.

Thy gracious thoughts to us occur.

again, detour■■■ Pythen, We'reel bugün. prithers, You are the bartender of the world above all thoughts are gone.

Then somewhere alone can reckon unto thee. After all thoughts are gone, in order none can reckon unto thee, And speak of them I would be more than can be numbered are.

No sacrifice, not offering.

[ 21 : 07 ] Didst thou at all desire my ears, thy voice, still offering thou.

And purchase not require, then to the Lord declare my words.

I come, behold and see, within the volume of the book.

The greatness of me. To do thy will I take delight.

O thou, my God, thou art.

[ 22 : 37 ] Yea, that most offering of thine I have within my heart.

Within the congregation great.

High righteousness yet preach. Nor thou dost know, Lord, that I reclaimed not my speech.

Amen. Amen. We are going to hear God's word now as we have it in the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Mark. Reading from chapter 15.

And we're going to take up the reading of verse 33. Reading to the end of the chapter. The Gospel of Mark chapter 15, verse 33.

[ 24 : 06 ] And it is part of the account of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama, saphachthani, which is being interpreted, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

And some of them that stood by when they heard it said, behold, he calleth Elias. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar and put it on a reed and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone, let us see where the Elias will come to take him down.

And Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly, this man was the Son of God.

There were also women looking on afar off, among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less, and of Joseph, and Salome, who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him and ministered unto him, and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

[ 25 : 48 ] And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in, boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead. And calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulcher, which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulcher.

And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of Joseph, Jesus beheld where he was laid. Amen, and may the Lord add his blessing to this reading of his word, and to his name be the praise.

I'm going to sing some verses from Psalm 69, at the middle of verse 6. Psalm 69, at the middle of verse 6.

[ 27 : 14 ] O Lord, the God of Israel, let none whose search do make, and seek thee be at any time confounded for my sake. For I have borne reproach for thee, my face is hid with shame, to brethren strange, to mother's sons, and alien I became.

Because the shield had eat me up, which to thine house I bear, and the reproaches cast at thee upon me fallen are, my tears and fasts, to afflict my soul, were turned to my shame, when sackcloth I did wear, to them a proverb I became.

The men that in the gate do sit against me, evil speak, they also that vile drunkards wear, of me their son did make.

But in an acceptable time, my prayer, Lord, is to thee, in truth of thy salvation, Lord, and mercy great, hear me.

Let us sing these verses from the middle of verse 6, Psalm 69, O Lord, the God of Israel, let none whose search do make. O Lord, the God of Israel, let none whose search do make, and seek thee be.

[ 29 : 00 ] As in any time, comforted for my sake, for I have borne reproach for thee, my faith is ill, with shame, to brethren's change, to mother's sons, I came, and I I became, because the seal did keep me up, which to thine house I bear, as thy reproach has touched thee, upon me fallen are.

my tears, my tears, and foulds, afflicted my soul, were turned into my shame, when such a clonight in the grip to them, a proverb I became, the man that did not give to sin, I can't keep and shake, they also love the comforts there, and of me their song did make,

But in an acceptable time, my prayer, Lord, is to thee.

In truth of thy salvation, Lord, and mercy great, hear me.

Amen. Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counselor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate and craved the body of Jesus.

[ 33 : 13 ] And Pilate marveled if he were already dead. And calling unto him the centurion, he asked whether he had been any while dead.

And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen and took him down and wrapped him in the linen.

And laid him in a sepulcher, which was hewn out of a rock and rolled a stone to the door of the sepulcher. And Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Joseph, beheld where he was laid.

He laid him in a sepulcher, which was hewn out of a rock and rolled a stone to the door of the sepulcher.

I have to confess that it was not until I was a Christian that I began to understand many of the verses of the scripture that I had learned by heart.

[ 34 : 33 ] And many of the passages of the shorter catechism, the answers to questions that I had learned and that I memorized diligently from the time I was very young.

And yet most of what I had memorized, I did not understand. Even though much of it was committed to memory, it didn't really make a lot of sense to me.

But then when the Lord Jesus came into my life, he revealed much to me about himself and about myself.

And much of what these words began to flood back, much of what I had remembered began to flood back.

And it began to make some sense to me. And the word of God is a bit like that in any case. I know that there are Christians here who have been Christians for decades.

[ 35 : 55 ] They've been Christians for a long time. And they read the Bible faithfully every day. More than once every day.

And they'll read a passage which was read dozens of times before. And then all of a sudden they come across a verse of scripture. Which they may well have committed to memory.

And all of a sudden it begins to make perfect sense to them. In a way that it hadn't before. Or it may mean something different to them.

And that's just the wonder of the guiding of the Holy Spirit. The way the Holy Spirit works in the life of believers.

I mention that because this verse here tells us something that is extraordinary. It tells us about something that is truly remarkable.

[ 36 : 59 ] It tells us about the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ died and was buried. And that might seem ordinary to you.

It may seem a natural course of event. If a man dies then it is necessary that that person is buried.

But in the shorter Catechism this is an answer that is given to the question. What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?

Christ we are told as our Redeemer executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest and of a king. Christ being my priest.

Christ being my king. And I understood better what I didn't understand well at all to begin with. But then there's the other part of the question or the answer to it.

[ 38 : 33 ] It says both in this, in his estate of humiliation and exaltation. That is something that you might think.

What does that mean? I understand what it is for Christ to be my prophet, my priest, my king when he lives in this world.

But in what sense is he my prophet, priest and king when he ceases to function within the world.

When he has left the world. When he has gone to heaven. That requires a more close study of what the Bible teaches.

We know that his humiliation, which is what the Catechism speaks about, talks about not somebody who is experiencing humiliation in the sense that we see him experienced in the passage that we read.

[ 39 : 45 ] Because in that passage, if you go back even to the start of it, you'll find how terribly treated Jesus was prior to his death.

But his humiliation begins the day he was born. Because if you understand anything about what is said about Jesus, Jesus was always God.

He is God, he was God and ever will be God. And as God, he possesses a title that is rightfully his.

He is king over all. He is a sovereign head of his own creation. In the triune trinity, God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he is king.

And yet, though that is true of him, when he was born into the world, all the trappings of his sovereignty were put, as it were, to one side.

[ 40 : 53 ] Nobody would look at the infant who was born in a stable and say, here is the king. Although Herod was warned that a king was born and he wanted to destroy him because he saw the threat of a newborn king.

But anybody who looked with a physical eye at the infant born in a stable would say, is this a king? So this was part of his humiliation.

His birth, his poverty. He was obliged to obey the law. The law that he gave to mankind, he willingly placed himself under that law to obey it perfectly.

The Catechism tells us he experienced all the mysteries of this life, even to the point of death itself.

And the focus was directed towards him of the wrath of God. He was experiencing in his humiliation all that the curse of God for sin involved.

[ 42 : 08 ] Now that's not the end of it. You would think it is. That once he comes to the point of death, you can't do any more to a passion.

That's the logical conclusion we come to. That's the logical conclusion of many people in the world. When you come to die, once you die, that's the end.

That's the end of it. Well, for Jesus, his humiliation continues because it involves his burial and it involves him in continuing under the power of death for a time.

And that's really the focus of what we want to look at today. The importance of understanding this.

The importance that the Bible places upon it. You know, one thing that you can marvel at is if you have time and if you have a shorter catechism and if you have an interest in theology, you should look at how these theologians of old looked at every aspect of Christ's experience in the world, before the world was, after his exaltation to glory and all that he dealt with and the reasons for it as it is expounded and explained and entered into in great detail by these great men of old to help us understand the significance of all that Christ was doing and why they left nothing to our imagination.

[ 43 : 57 ] Well, our Lord himself draws attention to the need for his burial and the need that he has for remaining under the power of death.

Remember, he compared himself to an Old Testament prophet. Do you remember that? For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Now, you could argue and say, well, that's just an explanation of or a description of what actually happened in his experience.

What we've read here in part describes to us how Jesus' body was taken by these good men and interred into a vault and the stone rolled on top of that explains what Jesus anticipated was going to happen to himself.

But I think we need to remind ourselves and marvel at what happened. So there are three particular things that I would like us to think about.

[ 45 : 30 ] The burial itself was remarkable. And that's where we begin. And there's nothing that saddens me as much as the trend in modern society to divorce the mind almost entirely from the reality of death and the significance of it.

there are so few people who actually think about death and what death means and what about what happens after death.

many funerals you could argue most funerals are intent on remembering the life of the person that lived.

Not just remembering but celebrating the life without one moment's thought being given to what lies beyond.

not one thought given to what now. Where now? And there's nothing more important for you or for me to think about well I know I'm going to die but then what?

[ 47 : 13 ] As if the mind is so intent on this thought the last breath is the end. it's the last thing but Jesus is not thinking about his own last breath he gave up the spirit he gave up the ghost he surrendered himself to death but he knew that there was something beyond for him and he knows there is something beyond for all who are in the world who came before him and will follow after him.

I was recently conducting a funeral in Prager and as always I have to think what am I going to say at the graveside and my thoughts went to the dignity that we must afford a person who leaves this world the dignity that we give to that person who lived his life in this world or her life in this world all the moments that we have by way of responsibility to taking the remains and in tearing them into the dust the solemn thing to do anything with the last remains of one of her peers I was thinking what do I say and I was reminded of of Abraham and when his wife

Sarah died and Abraham was a stranger and a pilgrim in a land that he was sojourning in when Sarah died and he had to go to the people who owned the land and purchase a portion of ground in order that he might lay his wife's body put the body in the dust as it were and in his own words what he said so that I may bury my dead out of my side and I explained that when I spoke there the thought that was in my mind when I read that I thought you know this is Abraham talking about the most precious precious person in his life probably more precious than the son that

God gave them although God gave them much in the promise and yet you saw that when he spoke of her he said it was still my dead let me bury my dead out of my sight because it wasn't that that there was any dulling of his senses in the love that he showed this woman but he understood what it was just to leave that person and treat that person like a brute beast but we need to remember that here when we read of the death of Jesus Christ there is a mystery surrounding it because even when we go to that person Abraham who was so well known so elevated in the eyes of God's people throughout the generations the man of faith the father of the faithful yet when he buried his wife he buried his wife for one reason and that reason was that she died and the reason that she died she died because of sin sin was in her heart sin was in her life and as a reason of sin she experienced death there was no escaping from it it was something that was common to all from the fall of man and that's where the perplexity begins to arise because if your knowledge of Christ is focused on the scriptures of the



Old Testament and the New Testament prophetically declaring them in the old bringing flesh to the bones of these prophecies in the New you know that the Christ who was born of God is the son of God he is shown to be a holy and a harmless and a undefiled and a separate from sinners man but the God man the one who can rightly say of himself I am the beginning and the end I am the alpha and the omega I am the light of the world and he can say these things without shame or without embarrassment without any thought entering his head perhaps I am saying too much about myself he can even say I am the resurrection and the life whoever lives and believes in me will never die remember what he said to

[ 52 : 45 ] Martha when he spoke to her in her grief at the death of her brother whoever believes in me though he were dead yet shall he live these are the words of the Lord Jesus these are the words of the Lord Jesus to every person in the world who will die because of sin and yet he died because of sin even even though these sins were not his own now if you don't think of anything else you have to surely take time to ask the question why did Jesus have to die on the cross if death is the consequence of sin and death must follow sin and

Jesus is without sin Jesus is somebody who was born into this world he came into this world from glory and as he lived his life in this world without sin how could death touch him how could death lay hold of him and Paul says when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly Paul says much more than that he says that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was for sin and the only thing you can do to unravel this puzzle is look at the scripture and see what the scripture is saying and the scripture is saying that he died for sin the sin of the world sin that was not his own but that he made his own so when we are here confronted by his burial literally his funeral we have to ask the question why doesn't matter who it is

I have conducted countless funerals and you would say some of them were believing people some of them were not without emphasis falling in any way shape or form on the extent of their sinfulness all of them were of the same cloth cut of the same cloth as it were they are descendants of a fallen Adam and as such they are condemned because of their sin they have added to their sin with their own and that is why they die one day somebody else will conduct my funeral that will be their duty and they will say he died because he was a sinner for that he was worse than others and probably this person is worse than many sinners you could explain it and say that's the nature of life we all die but you better find an explanation for it by looking to the scripture and if you know what the bible is saying the bible is not silent about death we know we are buried because of death and we know we die because of a broken law and we know we are being buried because of death and the broken law and the broken law going back as far as the first adam who sinned and went away from god and we died in him because he was our covenant head but then when we look to christ is it not true of him that the bible says that while he is not adam he is the last adam what is the bible teaches then when it speaks of the last adam and the first adam it tells us because sin was in the life of the first adam the curse of sin came upon all men his disobedience resulted in our death and paul says the last adam unlike the first adam was obedient his obedience results in life nor death and that's the wonder of the gospel he did no sin so why the grave well he views as the bible describes him and we know that he is we understand that he died for the sins of others and that's all important otherwise it is inexplicable otherwise you've got a greater mystery than you've ever seen in your life a holy person dying when he was without the reason for it in his life you know many people will say that life is not fair many people will say bad things happen to good people which is perfectly true but this is not what we have here we have the person of the lord jesus christ dying on the cross his body taken down from the cross his body being begged of pilate and pilate giving his body to be buried and it's a

remarkable fact that we have so much detail concerning his burial not only is the death itself remarkable the burial is equally remarkable there are many eyewitnesses that are sighted who were present this is where my thoughts I deviated from my original plan to preach on the cross and part of it but I was thinking about how many people were actually eyewitnesses to christ's crucifixion where they stood in relation to the cross some stood afar off looking down as it were on the cross others were passing by walking their heads as they went others were closer to the cross because they wanted to humiliate the christ who was being crucified they knew all about his sayings they knew all about his words so they wanted to act in fury against the son of god so they wanted to be close you can imagine what it was like those who were so full of hatred that they were desperate to do as much as they could against the son of god and you had others who were fearful and afraid and yet they came as close as they could the story of the burial of christ is brought home to us by a number of witnesses when we when we when we think about those who had animosity towards and the priests and the sinners but his burial most strangely enough to many is the fact that it was predicted by i'm not going to say a lot of it because we talked about it recently i think it was predicted by scripture all the detail of it is caught brought to our attention in the scripture looked at the passage in isaiah recently isaiah 53 and verse 9 and it predicted it prophesied the involvement of of joseph of arimathea it was his grave his his burial plot his tomb carved out of rock that was to be christ's resting place and all of that was predicted by scripture you can see how when you read this in verse 44 for example well read 43 joseph of arimathea an honorable counselor who waited for the kingdom of god came and went in boldly and to pilate and craved the body of jesus you know you can almost imagine yourself witnessing this thing this man where there was so much enmity in the atmosphere so much wickedness that was bubbling up to the surface and he walked boldly and asked pilate begged

the body of jesus and then we read pilate marveled he says if he were already dead he couldn't believe it it was too soon he expected him to last longer and then to authenticate it he sent for a centurion because the centurion was going to authenticate his death and that is exactly what happened you know the detail there is just astonishing and yet what do you find it's not so much what you find but don't find if you are going to interview his closest friends the disciples what did you do where were you what part did you play in taking the body of your beloved saviour your lord and taking him to the grave what part did you play where were you what did you say they're nowhere to be found we can't ask them because they weren't there and yet the people who were

[ 64 : 41 ] Joseph of Arimathea Nicodemus secret disciples and they came to take the lord's body unlikely heroes and heroines that's what I think authenticates more than anything this account a secular writer would place his heroes right in the forefront of what was happening here and they would be heroes they would be Peter and John and James and Andrew people who would stand out and be brave and fearless but they're nowhere to be found the true heroes are of the number of the Pharisees and women women you know this is the account of a Jew the account that is presented first and foremost to the

Jews and women were second class citizens I think it's Bishop Ryle who says they were last at the cross and they were first at the tomb that's not a way to write a story in order to impress people but it's the truth whether you're impressed by it or not if the story was a fiction it was not how it would be written finally there's a remarkable internment usually those who are buried lie buried until the day of judgment well you may not believe in the day of judgment but according to the scripture wherever the remains are entailed be it in the ground be it in the ocean be it even sent into the atmosphere in a space rocket these ashes will come together on the day of judgment to give account to the God this God created them this God who created them at the outset you know in some cultures we're fortunate we take the remains of our dead and we lay them in the grave and they will rest in the grave until the resurrection some cultures are different they willfully and deliberately cremate their dead it's their religion our own country more people are cremated and are buried because of lack of room or whatever it is

I know I read recently of a few I think it's Hong Kong if a person is buried in a tomb I think they're allowed to remain in that tomb for six years or whatever and the remains are removed and they're cremated to make room for the next number whoever they are they only have a loan of the grave just borrowed it's very expensive but they still have to pay for it but in a sense what we have here the tomb that Christ was interred in was his for a time it was not his tomb it was somebody else's and it was a borrowed tomb the thought struck me more than once

Joseph who gave him his place of burial would once be buried there himself I wonder if he had any thoughts about that I wonder if he thought of the previous occupant that he was simply lying in the bed that his saviour had lain for a while I know that one of the Puritans speaks of the grave as a place that Christ has warmed for his people it's a difficult thing to get your mind around but the remarkable thing is not that he died but he died and rose again he died and rose again the end of Matthew we read he is not here he is risen as he said come see the place where the Lord lay at the end of this gospel the gospel writer said he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of God the grave of Christ was a place that he occupied for a time three days and three nights well no three days it said and according to the reckoning of the

Jews he was buried on Friday he was in the grave on Saturday and he rose on Sunday they reckoned the time from the setting of the sun to the rising of the sun and each day is not measured in 24 hours but by that way of reckoning so three days he was in the grave but he rose he rose and was seen by many and their witnesses sighted who saw him spoke with him listened to him and who saw him ascend into glory and the fact that he rose has in great measure given confidence to his people that as he rose so too will they they will go to the grave but they go to rest in the grave still united to

[ 71 : 25 ] Christ to a lot of people perhaps of a different culture will put the words or the initials R.I.P.

on the grave R.I.P. well there is solely rest for the people of God and there is rest for them because they are still united to Christ and this word is a comfort to the believer who goes to die that when they are buried that they will rise again Paul says for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him and that's what the believer is entitled to believe that by faith they are united to Christ in death they are united to Christ when the great day of the resurrection comes because they are united to Christ he will call them to himself separating the sheep from the goats and they will be with him forever what does the grave say to you today what does the grave say to you today does it fill you with fear or is it your hope that when your eyes are closed by death that's the end well if the bible is to believe then

I would seriously encourage you to believe it the bible tells you that death is not the end it's the end of your experience of life as you know it but beyond death there is not only the grave but the resurrection which will be to the judgment of God and we will be judged in accordance with how we have related to Christ how we have treated Christ how we have lived our life in the light of his word to us that invites us to come and put our trust in him may you reflect on these words let us pray oh lord our god we deal with death so flippantly and so lightly and yet it is a solemn thought that for the salvation of sinners

Christ died and he experienced the grave but we give thanks that he rose from the dead and that he ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high and as the great high priest of his people there the intercession that is his continues we pray lord for wisdom to be imparted to us so that we would be found soliciting his aid in life and his grace and death forgive us every transgression we ask all in his name amen concluding psalm 16 we are going to sing from verse 8 to the end psalm 16 verse 8 before me still the lord i set so if it is so that he doth ever stand at my right hand i shall not move it be because of this my heart is glad and joy shall be expressed even by my glory and my flesh in confidence shall rest because my soul engraved to dwell shall not be left by thee nor wilt thou give thine holy one corruption to see thou wilt me show the path of life joy is the restful store before thy face at thy right hand are pleasures evermore before me still the lord i set before me still the lord i set with it is all the deed does ever stand at my right hand i shall not miss thee because of this my heart is glad and joy shall be expressed in thy my glory my flesh and all the death shall rest because my soul and care to dwell shall not be left by thee nor else

Ò need oh inviteles take August and Whoa job to see they with me show On the path of life, of joy, it is for sure before I face the night right hand.

[ 78 : 46 ] Our pleasure, Lord.