

Walking the Tightrope

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[0:00] If you would please take your Bibles or devices and go to the Gospel of Matthew. If you're visiting with us and you need a Bible, there should be one that's shared in front of you.

There's a black Bible there. If you pull that out, go towards the back. They renumber the New Testament, so you can go towards the back and find page 25. Matthew 28, Matthew 28, Matthew's Gospel, chapter 28, page 25 in that black Bible.

25 in that black Bible. Matthew 28, I'm going to read the first 10 verses. Resurrection Sunday, of course. I've got to talk about the resurrection.

Notice my verbiage, got to talk about the resurrection. I say that on purpose. You'll know why. Matthew chapter 28, I'm going to read the first 10 verses.

Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.

[1:15] And his appearance was like lightning. And his garment as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. And the angel answered and said to the women, Do not be afraid, if I know you're looking for Jesus who has been crucified.

He's not here, for he is risen. Just as he said, Come, see the place where he was lying. Go quickly and tell his disciples that he's risen from the dead.

And behold, he's going before you into Galilee. There you will see him. Behold, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to report it to his disciples.

And look, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, verse 10, Do not be afraid.

Go and take word to my brethren to leave for Galilee. And there they shall see me. The technical name is called phunambulism.

[2:24] Phunambulism. Are you, is anyone here a phunambulist? Nobody? Okay. A phunambulist is someone who has the skill of walking along a thin rope.

A tightrope walker. Phunambulist. Hey, what do you do? I'm a phunambulist. You're a what? Right? This is according to Wikipedia, that is.

Acrobats who are tightrope walkers, they maintain their balance by positioning their center of mass directly over their base of support, shifting most of their weight over their legs, arms, or whatever part of their body they're using to hold them up.

When they're on the ground with their feet side by side, the base of support is wide in a lateral direction but narrow in the back to front direction. In the case of high wire walkers, their feet are parallel with each other.

One foot position in front of the other while on the wire. Therefore, a tight wire walker's sway is side to side, their lateral support having been drastically reduced.

[3:26] In both cases, whether side by side or parallel, the ankle is the pivotal point. Some famous tightrope artists, I'm sure all of you know about this, but I'll just, you know, humor you and let you know about these.

It's Jorge Ojeda Guzman. He was Ecuadorian high wire walker. Listen, he set the Guinness Book of World Records tightrope endurance record for living 205 days on the wire.

Now that's just sick, you know what I'm saying? I mean, wow. I don't know. 205 days. How do you... Well, never mind. I won't go there. Okay. Another one, Charles Blondin, a.k.a. Jean-Francois Gravelet.

Is that good French? Bonjour, comment allez-vous? Whatever. He crossed the Niagara Falls many times. And then this guy, I'm going to botch his name up.

Freudor Motsofov. He's Russian. He's known to perform numerous tricks as rope walking while shooting, carrying another person, wearing stilts, dancing, even being unbalanced by pyrotechnical explosions.

[4:45] Now that's a Russian for you. Yeah, that's cool. So what in the world does this have to do with the resurrection? Hmm? I title the message, Walking the Tightrope.

We have to walk the tightrope when we're talking about the resurrection. You might say, why? What are you getting at? We are walking the tightrope between orthodoxy and orthopraxy.

We can't go too far on one side or the other. There's danger on both sides. Orthodoxy means right thinking. Orthopraxy means right living.

You must maintain the balance with your focus upon Christ Jesus himself, the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your love, your devotion to Christ.

You walk, we walk on the tightrope. And if you go too far on one side or too far on the other, there's danger. Why do I say that?

[5:58] If you go too far towards orthopraxy, right living, then we have the potential of being theological liberals. You have people filling churches right now that do not believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus.

The historical, physical, real resurrection of Jesus. And people come to church. Come to church. But they don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus.

If we go too far towards orthopraxy, we have the potential of being theological liberals. On the other side, if we go too far towards orthodoxy, we have the potential of being practical impotency.

Or, in other words, dead orthodoxy. No power. We just believe in some fact, and then we just go about our business.

This is the danger. So, notice I said, because we have to talk about the resurrection. No, we don't. But we do. But we must maintain this balance.

[7:21] So, please, you can get your poles out and maintain this balance and walk with me on this tightrope. Now, look.

Understand. I'm not saying I don't believe in the physical, historical, real, true, genuine resurrection of Jesus. Nor am I saying it's not important. Because it is. I mean, that's... Next thing.

The resurrection is the central event of God's redemptive history. The cornerstone of the Christian faith. The climactic event of Christian history and New Testament theology.

All that we are, all that we have, all that we hope in as followers of Jesus is the resurrection. This is the climax of Matthew's gospel. In every gospel, Mark, Luke, and John.

All our hope as Christians is based on this. But this is why we must focus on the risen Christ, not on some theological truth, or the implications of the physical, or of the theological truth, how we live.

[8:34] God has vindicated His Son by resurrecting Him from the dead. The most spectacular of all miracles.

The most incredible of the claims of Christianity. Yes, it's true. If there's no resurrection, there's no Christianity. We read that in 1 Corinthians 15.

Because if He didn't resurrect, it means Jesus was an imposter. He was a nutcase. He was a nutcase. It means that His death was not a true atonement. And it means there's no point in us being here today.

But see, this is why it's important for us to make sure we're walking this tightrope. Because there's some that have gone too far towards orthopraxy, and now it's just theological liberalism.

We'll talk about that in a moment. I'll unpack that more. We'll look at Matthew's gospel, the first 10 verses, but we're gonna spend most of our time on the implications of this resurrection, okay? But let's walk through it.

[9:37] I have points for you. Just like the good preacher does. Resurrection discovered, verses 1 through 8. Oh, by the way, this is not an account of how Jesus rose. You understand this, right?

is how his resurrection was discovered. No one ever saw Jesus leave the tomb. Also, keep in mind, the stone was removed, not so that Jesus could get out.

Help, help, help. Gabriel, let me help. Okay, hold on a second. Jesus, gosh, crying out loud. That was a joke. But it was there to let the women in and the disciples to come and see the empty tomb.

So notice, it says the first day of the week, which is Sunday. Mary Magdalene, verse 1, and the other Mary that came, there was a severe earthquake. The stone was rolled away. Verse 3, the appearance of the angel who was sitting upon the stone was like lightning, white as snow.

The guards shook for fear. The angel came to show them that Jesus had already risen. He removed the heavy stone. Notice what he says to them, verse 5.

[10:50] Don't be afraid. I know you're looking for Jesus who's crucified. Verse 6, he's not here. He's risen. The Father resurrected God the Son. Notice he says, just as he said, it shouldn't surprise you.

They were told this by Jesus himself. You should have known. Durr. Notice he says, come and see the place where he was lying. This is the correct tomb.

It's not the wrong tomb. It's not the wrong location. Come see where he was lying. And then notice he says, verse 7, go quickly, tell his disciples. He's risen from the dead. He's going before you into Galilee.

As far as the angel was concerned, this was truth. This is a reality. We cannot deny what's being said here. And notice the response from the women, verse 8, they departed.

They're both afraid and yet they're excited. Fear and joy, a natural response to this type of appearance. They had hope now in place of their despair.

[11:58] The promise of seeing Jesus again. And notice all of a sudden, which is the next point, Jesus himself appeared. Lord Jesus met them, verse 9, and greeted them.

They came up and took hold at his feet and worshipped him. Now they knew with even more certainty. Adoration praises what happens when we see Jesus for who he is, the resurrected sovereign Lord.

Worship happens. This testifies to his bodily resurrection, not a spiritual resurrection, bodily resurrection of Jesus. And by the way, in the first century, women were outcasts.

Nobodies. Inferiors. In Jewish culture, big time. So all you ladies, what an amazing thing that Jesus appeared to in that society were outcasts.

Women got the news first because God is arms wide open to outcasts. Anyways, notice Jesus himself says don't be afraid, verse 10.

[13:03] Take word to my brethren, I'm gonna see them there, go to Galilee. So, Jesus truly, historically, factually rose from the dead.

Okay? That's just there. There. Okay, but why the tightrope? Because the fact of the resurrection brings two implications.

Careful doctrine and careful life. What do I mean? Let me unpack this more for you. If we go too far towards orthopraxy, we may lose our focus, our mission.

Orthopraxy means right living. doing good. If we go too far to this side, we may lose our focus, our mission.

Well, the next question that comes to your mind is, what's our mission? It's not to pursue a political agenda.

[14:15] It's not to eradicate slavery, sex trafficking, human trafficking.

It's not to eradicate the poor. That's not our mission, people. Here's the mission of the church. From what is the mission of the church?

The book. Go into the world and make disciples by declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit and gathering and gathering these disciples into churches that they might worship the Lord and obey His commands now and in eternity to the glory of God the Father.

That's the mission of the church. That's our mission. That's our focus. this is why we're on this earth.

That very reason. To put another statement, we are on this earth to proclaim God's excellency in the gospel that sinners who are not worshipers of the one and only true God and Jesus Christ from the assent may become a worshiper of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[15:23] That's our mission. To focus on Christ, to lift up Christ, to love Christ, to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. That's our focus. That's our mission.

And to tell other people, hey, I want to become a follower of Jesus. Hey, I want to become a worshiper of Jesus. That's to you if you're here, you're not a follower of Jesus.

You're not a Christian. You're here and you just come or whatever. This is what it means to be a Christian. You repent and put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ who had to die and he was resurrected from the dead.

That's the gospel. We proclaim this message to all. So why did I say theological liberalism?

I didn't say political liberalism. Theological liberalism. Because theological liberals have divorced doctrine from living from living like a Christian.

[16:29] They've ripped out doctrine and the thought process for theological liberals is to be a Christian means to be a nice person.

You do good things. You help somebody who's in distress. You help the poor. You eradicate sex trafficking.

So now that equals Christianity. So that you have major denominations Episcopalians Methodists Lutherans not all Lutherans there's some that are still conservative actually theologically conservative and Baptists and at one time we're part of the Southern Baptist Convention at what time at one time the Southern Baptist Convention they were liberal.

They're the only denomination that was liberal and has come back to being conservative theologically. But these major denominations they have these have rejected the truth of the physical actual factual historical resurrection of Christ.

Christianity is divorced from that. That's not even part of Christianity. And then you couple along with that that there is there's other ways to God there's other ways to Jesus he's not the only way.

[18:06] I have up there Galatians chapter 1 Paul says even though we are an angel from heaven should preach to you another gospel contrary to that which we preach to you let him be a curse as we've said before verse 9 of chapter 1 so I say again now if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you receive let him be a curse what gospel that Jesus physically actually historically resurrected from the dead that gospel you can't divorce orthopraxy from orthodoxy you can't do that you gotta walk the tightrope you have to have both if you go too far on one side there's danger you're gonna fall but that's what happens what has happened to theological liberalism in other words to them it's all about living a good moral life advancing your political agenda helping the poor it's the social gospel what the salvation army is now it didn't used to be like that the salvation army used to proclaim the resurrection of Jesus as a physical actual historical reality you don't bear not say that now salvation army does not teach that now if you go too far being a good nice person then we're just really good nice people but the reason for us being good nice people doesn't come out by the way we don't need to give a handout in order to have a voice to give someone the gospel nowhere in the bible does it say we have to give someone something to someone monetarily speaking in order to have a voice to give them the gospel there's nowhere in the bible in short the main focus message or focus of scripture is not to alleviate the poor not to mention the fact almost all references to the poor in the bible is the poor within the covenant community so it's the pious poor or the righteous poor or the godly poor it's not to alleviate the poor it's not to advance a political viewpoint that's not the points of scripture it's not it's not the point of the bible the church is not called to be as one writer put it the social custodian for everyone in their society that's the danger of going too far towards right living towards orthopraxy it's not our focus or our mission to advance social justice and the world friends that's not the point of Christianity and if you think that with all due respect you're wrong you're wrong if we go too far living a good life we end up losing sight of our mission our mission we preach

Christ and him crucified and resurrected from the dead that's the gospel because people need forgiveness of their sins you can feed them all you want but they can be fed right into hell but what about this side if we go too far towards orthodoxy we may lose our heart or our power in Christ practical impotency the focus must be Jesus the focus must be worshiping and loving and adoring the Lord Jesus Christ if we lose our focus and we go too far that way towards orthodoxy then it's just powerlessness no passion in other words we may lose our heart or passion for Christ and the power to live out

Christ in our everyday lives in short impotency a powerless gospel dead orthodoxy here's a maybe I guess you can call this like an illustration basically like the Pharisees it's just religiosity that's all it is look we do serve a God who promises to rescue the needy we serve a God who calls for justice toward the helpless Jesus called us to lay up treasures in heaven not on earth he told the rich man sell everything give it to the poor and come follow me we're called not to be greedy but to give generously to others especially those in need this is how we should live our lives in the public sphere within our government with our neighbors this is the corporate life and witness for us as a church how do our neighbors perceive the way we live do we have lives that display concern and care for others do we really love people do we reach out to the outcasts do we reach out to those in need you see what I mean the church has a stigmatism in the world people may feel inferior

because of us because they know their lives are screwed up so you mentioned church and they feel guilty not to mention the fact

I say this carefully not flippantly or abruptly we come across hypocritical ignorant and judgmental of their struggles with sin especially the sin of addiction or with their psychological classifications you know we should be the hospital for spiritual problems for those who deal with addictions drugs alcohol pornography gambling prostitution food those who struggle with depression anxiety PTSD the local church listen is God's primary agent for change because we believe in the resurrection we have resurrection power that's just we have and yet people dealing with they go to a psychologist who goes to this big book the DSM and says you're bipolar you're dealing with depression you have

PTSD you're this you're this you're this because you got this this this this this I'll give you a prescription there you go but what does it not tell them how do I deal with this then right well you know how to deal with this because there's someone who's called the great psychologist psychology means the study of the soul psuche is the Greek word for soul psycho psuche soul ology means study of the study of the soul who is the studier of the soul friends it's the one who wrote the book we have it that's why oh do I have it up here on the screen no darn it oh well Ephesians chapter 1 verse 18 I thought I was going to put it on the screen but that's okay I'll tell it to you anyways Ephesians chapter 1 verse 18 Ephesians 1 18 through 20 Paul writes [26:57] I pray the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling what's the rich glorious inheritance in the saints verse 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us to believe in accordance with the working of the strength of his might verse 20 which he brought about in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places and that theme of power is throughout the book of Ephesians so that Paul is telling the Ephesian and other believers you have the same power in you that resurrected Jesus from the dead so Jeremy Camp Song the same power that rose Jesus from the grave the same power that commands the dead to wake lives in us lives in us the same power that moves mountains when he speaks the same power that can calm a raging sea lives in us lives in us he lives in us he lives in us even more the song that Chris

Tomlin just had he has now resurrection power you call me from the grave by name you call me out of all my shame I see the old has passed away the new has come now I have resurrection power living on the inside Jesus you have given us freedom no longer bound by sin and darkness living in the light of your goodness you have given us freedom that song is based upon this the same power that resurrected Jesus from the dead lives inside of us Chris Tomlin again he goes on I'm dressed in your royalty your Holy Spirit lives in me I see my past has been redeemed the new has come freedom you have given us freedom my chains are gone freedom you have given us freedom you have given us freedom hallelujah that's the truth of the gospel friends don't we believe God's word is sufficient to deal with the most common sins known to man adultery pornography drugs alcohol gambling and yet we end up like this we think about living our own lives and we're just doing our duty I go to church we got all the right thinking we got all our T's crossed our I's are dotted and yet there's impotency powerlessness in a church you know it was the Ephesian church that Jesus said there's major problems with you guys you guys got right thinking oh you guys got right doctrine oh you're so good but you've lost your first love we have the answer

Jesus is the answer for all these things pornography drugs alcohol depression anxiety PTSD someone who's bipolar and friends this is why what's called the emerging church they reacted the emerging church reacted to this they saw this imbalance on this tight wire and they saw were falling into danger so they reacted and push the young people and the millennials all onto this side so now this is Christianity this is what they think Christianity is advancing your political agenda giving to the poor and that's what they equate Christianity is we got we got to be on the tightrope don't lose the power of the gospel but it's not just about doing good deeds you walk in a tightrope so in the one hand oh yeah we end up like this we think about living our own lives and doing our duty we just go to church that's what I said earlier so on one hand let's hold fast to sound doctrine calling people to repent and trust in the

Lord Jesus Christ that's truth that's the gospel okay that's what the gospel is that's our mission so we don't go too far this side but yet also in the other hand let's be a people who stand out different from this world and how we treat them but really how we treat each other and then they would come to us for help with their drug problems with their alcohol problems with their gambling porn because

we have resurrection power we're walking the tightrope with Jesus Christ and our love for him that's our focus he is our focus our love for him it's not just be about theologically right it's not just about being a good person walk the tightrope father help us to have a passion love for the
[32 : 52] Lord Jesus Christ protect us as a church from theological liberalism but protect us from a church from being powerless impotent we end up just being just doing our own thing living our own lives and then we just do our duty by going to church and yet there's people that are hurting and they need help but we're unwilling to do that we need your grace Lord Jesus to love you and as you said Lord Jesus as you said to the Ephesian church help us to remember where we've fallen help us to repent help us to do the deeds we did at first help us to do this help us to look really to Christ who is our first love love at this time I would ask for you to just take a few moments to ponder what we've heard from God's word we'll have a few moments of silence for you to ponder and think what we've seen what we've been challenged from God's word today and then we'll do our time of giving and we'll sing two more songs and have our closing prayer but take these few moments proclaim the gospel of grace to yourself maybe ask the Lord to remind you to love the Lord Jesus Christ and to worship him and after a few moments we'll continue on but just some time to ponder one time and he went to
Alex from Jen Got Holly in to see her années mad so that eracuts men said the old man bo in house one