

The Resurrection Cover-Up

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[0:00] A very warm welcome to the evening service for Calvary Evangelical Church Brighton and an extra special warm welcome to you if this is your first time visiting us on our YouTube page.

My name is Aaron. I'm a member at Calvary Church and with God's help and with God's grace I'll be leading us through our service tonight. So tonight we're going to be looking at Matthew 28 verses 11 to 15 and investigating what happened to the guards who were stationed at the tomb of Jesus.

But first let's sing. We're going to go to our praise books in praise 548 and we're going to sing How Sure the Scriptures Are which open with these words.

How sure the scriptures are God's vital urgent word as true as steel and far more sharp than any sword.

Let's sing. Let's sing.

[1:39] So deep and fine at His control they pierce where soul and spirit join.

They test each human thought refining like a fire.

They measure what we ought to do and to desire. For God knows all.

Exposed it lies before His eyes to whom we call. Let those who hear His voice confronting them today.

Reject the tempting choice of doubting or delay. For God speaks still. For God speaks still.

[3:11] His word is clear. So let us hear and do His will. Amen to those who hear and do His will.

Amen to those wonderful truths. Let's spend some time in prayer together and seeking the Lord to praise Him and to ask for forgiveness of sins and to ask for His help tonight.

Father God, you are worthy of all praise. Let us pray. through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of your grace Lord we thank you that you do not deal with us as we deserve but you are a merciful God we thank you that you've given us your word and your Holy Spirit and we pray that by your grace we will be bearing fruit pleasing to you we pray again for the forgiveness of sins tonight and that you would cleanse us once again as we approach you our Holy God we pray for our brothers and sisters at Calvary there are so many things to mention Lord and many maybe not appropriate to say aloud at this time but you know every thought and every need and we'll just take a few seconds of quiet

Lord for each of us to lift those names up to you we pray for this somewhat dark time of Corona Lord and we pray in thankfulness for the light of Jesus and for your mercy and we ask humbly that you would continue blessing us with a measure of good health each day and that we would all be able to meet together soon without the restrictions we pray for the matter of leadership in our country and that they might have wisdom and that they might too see your mercy and your help even if they do not ask you themselves Lord we pray that you would reveal yourself to them that they might be serving you in their work we pray for your hand of restraint over lies and misinformation we pray that our government and media would be genuine in their reporting of information

Lord and not seeking to mislead we pray for our time together tonight Lord and ask for your hand of protection over not just us but over your whole church tonight we think of Ebenezer and Park Hill and New Life Church Lord that you would be with our brothers and sisters there also and so Father we commit all these things into your hands in the name of Jesus we pray Amen From your tears comes our joy from your death our life shall spring by your resurrection power we shall rise well

we're thinking into something of the resurrection tonight in our verses from Matthew so let's sing this song this is praise 415 come and see come and see a song ¶¶ ¶¶ Come and see, come and see, come and see the King of Love ¶¶ ¶¶ See the purple roguen crown of thorn he wears ¶¶ ¶¶ So does love, ruthless still ¶¶ ¶¶ As he lifts the golden cross ¶¶ ¶¶ Gone and friendless now ¶¶ ¶¶ He climbs towards the hill ¶¶ ¶¶ We worship at your feet ¶¶ ¶¶ Where wrath and mercy meet ¶¶ ¶¶ And a guilty world is washed ¶¶ ¶¶ By love's pure stream ¶¶ ¶¶ For as he was made sick ¶¶ ¶¶ Oh, help me take it in ¶¶ ¶¶ He wounds of love cry ¶¶ ¶¶ And Father, forgive ¶¶ ¶¶ I worship ¶¶ ¶¶ I worship ¶¶ ¶¶ The Lamb ¶¶ ¶¶ Who was pain ¶¶ ¶¶ Come and weep ¶¶ ¶¶ Come and born ¶¶ ¶¶ For your sin that pierced him there ¶¶ ¶¶ So much deeper ¶¶ ¶¶ Than the wounds of thorn and hail ¶¶ ¶¶ All our pride ¶¶ ¶¶ All our greed ¶¶ ¶¶ All our fallenness and shame ¶¶ ¶¶ And the Lord has laid ¶¶ ¶¶ The punishment on him ¶¶ ¶¶ [10:32] ¶¶ We worship at your feet ¶¶ ¶¶ Where wrath and mercy meet ¶¶ ¶¶ And a guilty world is washed ¶¶ ¶¶ By love's pure stream ¶¶ ¶¶ For as he was made still ¶¶ ¶¶ Oh, help me take it here ¶¶ ¶¶ Deep wounds of love cry out ¶¶ ¶¶ Father, forgive ¶¶ ¶¶ I worship ¶¶ ¶¶ The land who was saved ¶¶ ¶¶ And a land born to earth ¶¶ ¶¶ To restore us to your hand ¶¶ ¶¶ Here we bow in awe ¶¶ ¶¶ Beneath your searching eyes ¶¶ ¶¶ From your tears comes a joy ¶¶ ¶¶ By your death our life shall spring ¶¶ ¶¶ By your resurrection power ¶¶ ¶¶ We shall rise ¶¶ ¶¶ We worship at your feet ¶¶ ¶¶ Where wrath and mercy meet ¶¶ ¶¶ ¶¶ And a guilty world is washed ¶¶ ¶¶ By that pure stream ¶¶ ¶¶ For as he was made still ¶¶ ¶¶ Oh, help me take it in ¶¶ ¶¶ Deep wounds of love cry out ¶¶ ¶¶ I am Father forgive ¶¶ ¶¶ I worship ¶¶ ¶¶ I worship ¶¶ ¶¶ The land who was saved ¶¶ ¶¶ ¶¶ Amen.

¶¶ So if you have a Bible handy, please open it at chapter 28, and we're going to be reading from verses 11 to 15. ¶¶ ¶¶ While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened.

¶¶ ¶¶ When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, telling them, ¶¶ ¶¶ You are to say, his disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.

¶¶ ¶¶ ¶¶ ¶¶ Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for revealing the truth of your word to us.

¶¶ ¶¶ And we pray that you would teach us now, Lord, by your Holy Spirit, that we may be equipped for every good work, for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[14:50] ¶¶ And in his name we ask. Amen. ¶¶ ¶¶ So tonight we're in the last chapter of the book of Matthew, and we continue the story from last week where we heard from Jerome on the resurrection of Jesus.

¶¶ So let's recap where we've got to so far. ¶¶ ¶¶ We read that Jesus' body was buried in a tomb by a man named Joseph of Arimathea, ¶¶ and with help from another man named Nicodemus.

¶¶ We established that this process would be a fairly public event, ¶¶ with Roman soldiers being onlookers to the bringing down of Jesus' body from the cross.

¶¶ Mary Magdalene and another lady named Mary were watching at a short distance as Jesus' body is placed in the tomb.

¶¶ The event was monitored also very closely by the chief priests and Pharisees. ¶¶ And at this time they visited the Roman governor Pilate and requested that the tomb be guarded.

[16:02] ¶¶ So the tomb was guarded and sealed. ¶¶ Until three days later the two Marys come back to the tomb.

¶¶ And a violent earthquake occurred. ¶¶ As the account says, the earthquake occurred for an angel of the Lord came down, ¶¶ rolled away the stone from the tomb and revealed to the Marys that Jesus had risen from the dead.

¶¶ The angel came with such power that the guards became like dead men, ¶¶ meaning they were petrified, totally incapacitated with fear.

¶¶ The two Marys were charged with the task by the angel to go and tell the disciples of the good news of Jesus' resurrection.

¶¶ As they were on their way to do this, Jesus himself came to them. ¶¶ The two Marys worshipped him, clasping at his feet.

[17:11] ¶¶ And that brings us up to our passages tonight, which tell of the other events that were occurring whilst the two Marys were on their way to Galilee.

¶ So coming to verse 11, the focus of Matthew's account shifts from the two Marys over to the guards from the tomb.

¶ Matthew's is the only account that tells us what happened to these guards. ¶ So the information we have here is limited at just these five verses.

¶ But nonetheless, as a whole, we can learn a lot by the circumstances that were presented, that are presented. ¶ So I'd like to pose to you a question.

¶ I'm going to show you three images and attached to each image will be a statement. ¶ I'd like you to tell me, or tell your device, what do all these three statements have in common?

[18:14] ¶ This is the famous Tower of Pisa in the province of Pavia, Italy. ¶ This is the famous museum in France known as the Louvre, known for being the smallest museum in the world.

¶ And this is the Apollo 13, which launched in the mid-90s, ¶ and famously took film star Kevin Bacon into space.

¶ So what do all these three statements have in common? ¶ Let's go over them. ¶ The Tower of Pisa is in the province of Pisa, not Bavia.

¶ The Louvre isn't the smallest museum in the world. ¶ In fact, it's the largest museum in the world.

¶ And believe it or not, it's not pronounced Louvre.

¶ It's something like Le Louvre. ¶ And I apologise for my French accent. ¶ And finally, Kevin Bacon never actually went into space, as far as we know.

[19:30] ¶ That was just a film. ¶ And the Apollo 13 launched in 1970 and not the mid-90s. ¶ So you probably got it.

¶ The correct answer to the question, what do they all have in common, would be, well, none of them are true. ¶ They're all make-believe.

¶ They're false statements based on truth. ¶ But more than that, they're the kind of questions ¶ That would lightly stir somebody up to say very loudly, ¶ He's got that completely wrong.

¶ Or, that's just not true. ¶ And our text tonight also deals with a truth that has been turned into a lie.

¶ And it should provoke us into saying the same thing. ¶ The text tells us about guards of the tomb.

¶ And their reaction to the resurrection of Jesus.

[20:35] ¶ So the first thing that we're going to do is take a look at who we think these guards were. ¶ Then we'll be looking at the three main sections of the text, ¶ Which I've titled ¶ The Report of Truth.

¶ And we'll cover the responses of the priests to the truth. ¶ Next we'll look at the cover-up of truth.

¶ And we'll be going over the risks involved for the guards. ¶ And finally, we'll look at the report of make-believe.

¶ And we'll go in-depth into the strategy behind the lie and its tenuousness. ¶ Or in other words, the reasons why this report is so flimsy, unreliable and insubstantial.

¶ After these, we'll pull all our thoughts together into some conclusions. ¶ So who were the guards?

[21:47] ¶ There's much debate over this, but really there are only two schools of thought. ¶ Mostly derived from the end of chapter 27, the chief priests ask for the tomb to be guarded.

¶ So some people believe that the guards were Jewish temple guards. ¶ Other people believe that they were Roman guards or soldiers.

¶ Now there's a few arguments for the guards being Jewish. ¶ One being that the guards returned to report the incident to the Jewish leaders and not the Roman governor, Pilate.

¶ Also, Pilate initially never actually specified particularly that the chief priests should take a Roman guard. ¶ Seemingly placing the responsibility of guarding the tomb solely on the chief priests.

¶ This being said, my personal conviction is that the guards were in fact Roman soldiers and not Jewish temple guards.

[23:03] ¶ And I'll go through a few reasons why I am leaning this way. ¶ So in verse 12, the chief priests bribe the guards.

¶ I don't think the chief priests would need to bribe their own guards if they were Jewish temple guards. ¶ It's much more likely that they would bribe people outside of their own circles, such as Roman soldiers or like they did with Judas.

¶ Also, despite the Roman occupation, the chief priests as religious leaders over the entire Jewish community pretty much had the say over religious duties and tradition.

¶ So think about this. Jesus was a Jew. ¶ His body had been given over to a Jewish leader by Pilate and buried in that Jewish leader's tomb.

¶ So I think it would have been well within the remit of the chief priests to place a Jewish temple guard outside that tomb without really having to involve Pilate in any way.

[24:16] ¶ So it seems a little strange to me that the chief priests would go to Pilate just for permission to put their own Jewish temple guards there. ¶ I think a big part of this was about intimacy.

¶ So it was about the same way that the chief priests had a hand of control and influence over the Jewish community and could have put their own guards in place.

¶ Nothing would have said, stay away from this tomb, more than the presence of trained soldiers on the entrance. ¶ This would also explain why when the chief priests approached Pilate in chapter 27, they asked Pilate to give orders, or the word apparently is closer to, command the securing of the tomb.

¶ I think what they were asking is for Pilate to put the stamp of his authority and his power on the entrance of the tomb by way of his soldiers.

¶ And Pilate agrees to do this. ¶ And according to the NIV, he says, ¶ Take a guard and go. Secure the tomb as best as you know how.

[25:39] ¶ But apparently, the Greek verb used here is not so much translated as, take a guard, but more commonly translated as, you have a guard.

¶ And this is where the thought comes from that the guard might be Jewish temple guards. ¶ But I think what Pilate was saying here is, ¶ You already have my soldiers. Just get on with it as you know how.

¶ And this would also fall in line with John 18, which tells us that the chief priests used Roman soldiers for the arrest of Jesus just a few days earlier. ¶ So that's my reasoning on who I think the guard were.

¶ But just to reiterate, whether they were Jewish temple guards or whether they were Roman soldiers, the implication and the application of the text still stays the same.

¶ So let's get back to our text, verse 11. ¶ The verse opens by telling us that only some of the guards, after being absolutely terrified, went into the city.

[26:59] ¶ I did wonder after reading this what became of the guards who didn't return to the city, but I don't think we're given that information. ¶ Nobody knows for sure how many guards were present.

¶ I think for some to be absent and some to go into the city, there'd need to be at least four. ¶ We know from the text that the chief priests were taking no chances with the body of Jesus.

¶ So I say it probably would have been more than four, but that's really just pure speculation. ¶ So this extraordinary event happened at the beginning of the chapter.

¶ These guards witnessed a supernatural being come down from heaven, roll a weighty stone from the tomb entrance, probably with just a gesture. ¶ And they could only watch, completely frozen out of fear, as the angel declared the body that they were supposed to be guarding as gone, ¶ because Jesus had risen from the dead.

¶ It's no wonder that they didn't take the news back to Pilate. ¶ I would invite you to imagine his reaction to the news.

[28:21] ¶ On the one hand, Pilate was an intelligent man who, despite sentencing Jesus to death, actually believed that Jesus was innocent.

¶ And I suspect that Pilate was remorseful over the whole situation. ¶ On the other hand, it would have been a real blow to Pilate's reputation ¶ If it was discovered his guards couldn't do something simple like protect a tomb.

¶ This dereliction of duty would usually carry the punishment of death. ¶ So it's likely that this fear of Pilate was the reason that some of the guards never actually returned to the city.

¶ So some of the guards went back to the chief priests, ¶ Which would have been the natural thing to do anyway, since the guards were under their authority for this particular job. ¶ But also because the chief priests were the only ones who could have possibly rectified this situation for them.

¶ So the guards go to the chief priests and they report to them everything that they had seen. ¶ The guards went with honesty.

[29:42] ¶ As eyewitnesses to the greatest event ever to occur in the history of the world. ¶ And we go on to see how the chief priests and elders responded to this truth.

¶ Verse 12. ¶ The chief priests came together with the elders. ¶ Interestingly the root of the word used here in the Greek sounds something like sunago.

¶ And again, I apologise for my pronunciation. ¶ And means to bring together. ¶ And actually is where we get the word for synagogue from. ¶ It would have taken some time to bring the elders and the chief priests together.

¶ And once they had met, they devised a plan. ¶ So I think there's some emphasis here that this wasn't something that was thought up on the fly.

¶ But instead this was deliberated over and thought carefully about as they sat down and they discussed this issue of the truth.

[30:52] ¶ And once they had finished deliberating, the chief priests went back to the Roman soldiers with a bribe and a cunning plan.

¶ Verse 13. ¶ The plan was for the guards to speak and tell people that what happened was they fell asleep on duty.

¶ And whilst they were sleeping, the disciples came and stole the body. ¶ But this make-believe version of events presented a massive problem for the guards.

¶ Because as we touched on already, if Pilate found that they were sleeping on the job, it would have meant their execution. ¶ The only other alternative to this was to risk the consequences of telling Pilate the truth and seeing how he would respond.

¶ And this is why the priests not only presented a large sum of money, ¶ but also the promise that they would pacify Pilate if he heard this story, most likely with further bribes.

[32:05] ¶ So the decision for the guards was on the table. ¶ There's two options. ¶ There's a low-risk option and there's a high-risk option.

¶ So the low-risk option would be to take the money and be complicit in the world's greatest lie that Jesus did not rise from the dead. ¶ And let the chief priests take care of keeping them safe.

¶ That's the low-risk option. ¶ Or the high-risk would be that they decline the chief's bribe and they go back to Pilate with the truth of the resurrection and they face the consequences of his reaction.

¶ Verse 15. ¶ We see the guards sadly took the low-risk option and they abandoned the truth.

¶ All they had to do now was talk and tell people of this make-believe version of events, that Jesus' body was stolen.

[33:17] ¶ Matthew comments that this make-believe story was still circulating, as he puts it, to this day, which is thought to have been some 20 or so years later, maybe more.

¶ In fact, variations of this story are still circulating today, 2,000 years later. ¶ So on that note, I think it's worth assessing the strategy of how this cover-up of Jesus' resurrection was implemented. I think we can break it down into three parts. I've labelled these as misinformation, misdirection and pacification.

Let's look at those. Misinformation. First of all, the guard are commanded to speak.

Verse 13, the chief priests command, ¶ You are to say. ¶ The fact of Jesus' body disappearing would quickly become widespread news anyway, since everyone knew of Jesus and was following his execution.

[34:29] ¶ Therefore, the Jewish leaders' first task was to make sure that the guard, as eyewitnesses, were to present a different story altogether and swap the truth for a lie.

¶ So that when people came to speak of these events, they were perpetuating the lie and not the truth.

¶ The second step to this process was misdirection. ¶ The spotlight of blame for the disappearance of Jesus' body is placed squarely on the disciples, making them out to be criminals.

¶ Because whilst people are considering the disciples as deceitful grave robbers, they aren't scrutinizing the flimsy cover up of the guard concocted by the chief priests.

¶ And the third part of this process is pacification. ¶ This is pacification of Pilate mostly, as he would have been the only considerable opposing force to the chief priests.

[35:40] ¶ So if Pilate was to question why the guards were sleeping at their post, which as we established would be punishable by death, ¶ The chief priests would then step in and pacify and quiet Pilate, most likely with bribes.

¶ So on the surface, this technique of misinformation, misdirection and pacification, ¶ It seems quite advanced and a solid technique for deception.

¶ But really, that only works on the surface. ¶ In fact, this cover up suffers from two sets of glaring problems that show it to be completely tenuous.

¶ As we said earlier, it's weak, pathetic in its effort. ¶ So the first set of cover up problems are, as I've labelled, Jesus' disciples as grave robbers.

¶ The problems that come with Jesus' disciples stealing the body are many. ¶ Here's just a few. ¶ Firstly, if the guards were asleep, how would they know that the disciples took the body?

[36:57] ¶ Quite obviously, they wouldn't. ¶ Also, how did the guard not wake up as the disciples rolled the stone from the entrance?

¶ You think that an experienced guard, if they were to fall asleep, they would have fallen asleep somewhere against the entrance, ¶ or very near it, so that if it was disturbed, they would wake up.

¶ You know, Matthew 27, 66 tells of a seal placed on the tomb. ¶ So commentators and other smart people have suggested that this was a soft clay that was placed on the entrance, ¶ and then imprinted with a Roman stamp of some kind.

¶ And what would happen is the seal would quickly harden over a rope connecting the stone to the tomb. ¶ So if anybody were to open the tomb, they would break the seal.

¶ It would be obvious. ¶ But whatever that looked like, it's highly unlikely, excuse me, ¶ it's highly unlikely that any guard would have slept through all of this movement.

[38:13] ¶ Problem number three would be, ¶ Why would a handful of disciples risk raiding a tomb with trained Roman guards guarding the entrance?

¶ Roman soldiers were highly trained experts in death. ¶ I'm not sure that they would risk it. I certainly wouldn't risk it. ¶ Even if they were Jewish guards, the operation couldn't have come off without a lot of commotion and problems, ¶ which would have drawn a lot of attention.

¶ There's also the matter of the linen wrap and cloth that clothed Jesus' body, ¶ which in Luke 24 and John 20 tells us was left behind folded after Jesus rose.

¶ These would have taken considerable time and effort to remove and then to leave behind neatly folded. ¶ That would be a very strange thing to do if you were in a rush.

¶ Any grave robber probably would have taken these too. ¶ So you see, even under basic scrutinization, it doesn't take long before this cover-up story logically completely falls apart.

[39:26] ¶ That brings us to our second set of cover-up problems. ¶ And I've labeled these as Jesus' disciples as witnesses. ¶ The second and by far the biggest problem with this cover-up story is that for it to have any kind of legitimacy, ¶ you have to ignore everything that came before and after it in the biblical sense.

¶ We read a few weeks ago in Matthew 27 how the burial of Jesus perfectly fulfilled a 700-year-old prophecy. ¶ Isaiah 53, 9 says, ¶ He was assigned a grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death.

¶ And as we heard, we knew that to be the wicked being the two criminals that were executed either side of Jesus. ¶ And with the rich in his death, both Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were very well-off people.

¶ Jesus being buried in Joseph's tomb, which was brand new. ¶ Secondly, in order for this theory to have any kind of legitimacy, you'd have to ignore all of the miracles ¶ that clearly displayed Jesus' power as Son of God.

¶ So he was healing the blind and healing the sick, raising the dead. ¶ Thirdly, you'd have to ignore all the biblical evidence of people meeting Jesus resurrected, ¶ particularly his disciples.

[41:05] ¶ To this day, it's common to hear people say something like, ¶ How would the disciples just saw what they wanted to see because they were overwhelmed with grief?

¶ What they saw was just a hallucination or a figment of their imagination. ¶ This argument holds no water whatsoever. ¶ So just before the guards made their report, Jesus appeared to the two Marys. ¶ They physically grasped at his feet. That's Matthew 28. ¶ Jesus appeared to Thomas in John 20. ¶ And Thomas put his finger into Jesus' hand and his hand into Jesus' side.

¶ Where the nails were driven through his hand, there would have been the hole there, ¶ and the spear presumably going through underneath Jesus' ribcage up to pierce his heart.

¶ So there were physical contacts here. ¶ In Luke 24, Jesus ate fish cooked over a fire with his disciples in the evening.

[42:10] ¶ The Apostle Paul wasn't grieving Jesus at all. ¶ In fact, he was persecuting Jesus, but he met Jesus on the way to Damascus in Acts 9.

¶ The result, leaving him physically blind for three days. ¶ And I could go on. ¶ The physical reality of Jesus' resurrection has overwhelming logic, witnesses and evidence.

¶ That does leave us with a question, and that is, why does the lie work? ¶ Why is this cover-up still functioning?

¶ The idea that the resurrection of Jesus didn't happen is make-believe. ¶ But more than that, it's not even really a good effort, ¶ because as we establish, there's so much biblical evidence to contradict it.

¶ But if that's true, why do so many people believe it? ¶ I can't read these verses without thinking of this text from Romans 1.

[43:16] ¶ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people ¶ who suppress the truth by their wickedness.

¶ Since what may be known about God is plain to them, ¶ because God has made it plain to them. ¶ It's not the strategy of the cover-up that makes it effective, ¶ and it's certainly not the story itself, which has multiple issues.

¶ The thing blinding people from the reality and the truth of the resurrection is their wickedness or their sin.

¶ Not sin by way of particular things that they have done, ¶ but by the human condition of sin and a life void of Jesus.

¶ This is a condition that was brought about in the beginning by humans believing in lies, ¶ particularly those of a creature the Bible calls the father of lies, ¶ also known as the Satan, ¶ which is actually a title that means the adversary, ¶ or as he's most commonly known as Satan or the devil.

[44:38] ¶ And let me tell you, he is still active to this day. ¶ So let's draw some conclusions. ¶ The guards saw the truth of the resurrection first-hand.

¶ God placed them at the scene and it was made plain to them. ¶ They witnessed the defeat of death and had an opportunity to embrace Jesus ¶ and tell people of what they saw.

¶ But they didn't do that. ¶ They gave up all of the promises of Jesus. ¶ They gave up all the truth of the resurrection for self-preservation and for money.

¶ They exchanged the truth for a lie. ¶ So my first application of this would be to my Christian brothers and sisters.

¶ Let's pray that God will give us courage and strength ¶ to stand up for the truth of Jesus, ¶ even in the face of fierce opposition, temptation and lies.

[46:00] ¶ Let's pray that we wouldn't be persuaded by worldly things to back down. ¶ And let's pray that our reports of the truth that we've seen be pleasing to God.

¶ Let's also remind ourselves tonight that what a magnificent thing it is that by God's grace ¶ and by the gift of the Holy Spirit we have seen and know the truth of the resurrection.

¶ Jesus lives. What an incredible blessing that is. ¶ My second application would be to the person who isn't a Christian yet or maybe searching.

¶ Maybe you are in a similar position to the God or God's. ¶ Maybe you've seen or experienced something of God working in your life.

¶ ¶ ¶