

Death Defeated

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Date: 04 April 2021

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[0 : 00] Father, thank you so much that we are able to gather here in person, and thank you so much that there are these electronic means whereby others can enter into worship as well.

Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would fall with gentle power and deep conviction upon us at this time. And Father, bring the gospel home to our hearts in a new and powerful way that we might learn to live and that we might, so refreshed and gripped by the gospel, that we might live humble, winsome, confident lives in Jesus, filled with joy, so that we will bring you glory in this world.

And this we ask in Jesus's name. Amen. Please be seated. So I was ordained on a Wednesday. Actually, it makes me feel like I'm unbelievably old.

You know, this May 15th, I'll be ordained 36 years. It's a long time. And anyway, I was ordained on a Wednesday, and the rector was very, very big-hearted and told me I didn't have to show up for work the next day or Friday. But I had to show up on Sunday at both the 8 o'clock and 10 o'clock services, and that was fine. And between the two services, he told me that the next day there were two funerals, funerals, and I was going to be expected to help him with the funerals. And that was fine. Sort of an interesting way to begin your job is to go to two funerals. It's a story for another time, but in fact, the first funeral was one of the saddest funerals I've ever been to in my life, actually.

One of the things about me going to these two funerals is I'd never attended a funeral before I had to assist at one. So anyway, I go, and two different funeral directors, and the funeral director in the morning and the afternoon, told me the same thing. He said, you know, when you go to the grave, here's how you move, and here's how you do this. But they all warned me, you be careful, because there's the frame that is used to lower the casket down, and there's two planks along the side of it, and there's artificial grass, and you have to be careful, because nobody ever cuts the hole for the grave, for the casket, just really, really tight like that for the casket. There's always a bit of room, a bit of give, and so you just need to be careful. You don't get too close. Stay on the wooden planks, and both the morning and the afternoon, and over the first couple of months, funeral directors would regularly give me that advice, and I'm a slow learner, but I did learn.

[2 : 26] Anyway, you fast forward about three years and, you know, a month and a half. In fact, interestingly enough, when I went to my new church, a rural church, within the first week, I did a funeral. I don't know, join the Anglican Church of Canada and die. I don't know, but I did a lot of funerals while I was part of the Anglican Church of Canada, and anyway, and about a week later, I had to do another funeral, and in this second funeral, the grave, we did the service in the church, and the burial was going to take a place about a 25-minute drive away, and the reception afterwards was going to be like another 10 minutes past that, so I didn't go in the funeral director's car. I hopped in my own vehicle, went ahead of the procession because I wanted to get there early. One of the things I learned, my boss was a big believer in that, so I arrive early at the graveside. I park, I go up, I'm looking around, and I thought I'd just go up and get a bit of lay of the land about where I was going to speak. I'm very careful, of course, about the fact that, you know, the planks and all that, but what I didn't know was, well, as I'm walking towards it, all of a sudden, I fall into the grave. I step on the green covering, and I fall right six feet plus into the grave. I'm less than six feet tall. It would mean you couldn't see the top of my head. I'm, of course, completely, you can just, you can imagine what it's like. I'm in this rural parish a week in the job, week and a half, two weeks in the job. I'm in the grave. What I didn't realize was that the soil there was very, very, very sandy, so that as they dig the hole, the sides, you know, it's as if your kids go to the beach, and they want to dig a hole, and the side sand, unless it's very wet, just keeps going in, and so there was about this far from the planks to the edge of the hole, and I'd slid right into it. So, of course, I try to climb out, and it's hard to climb out of the grave. Why? Because it's sandy, so all I'm doing is just making this side edge bigger, but finally, desperation gives you extra superpowers. I'm finally able to crawl out

of the grave, terrified that the two, that the cast, you know, the funeral procession is going to arrive any second.

So, fortunately, I still had my white robes on. By the way, if you're thinking of getting ordained, you don't use your white robes for this, but it was desperate, and there are washing machines, so I use my robes to try to get all the dust off my black clothes, and, of course, I pull the green stuff a little bit even farther, just so you could actually see the little bit of the edge there, that it didn't get covered by the green grass, and the car came, and they never knew. It wasn't until later on that I shared what had happened. Now, I share all of this because there's a big problem that we Christians have when we try to commend the Christian faith to our non-Christian friends, and maybe if you're watching this, you would know exactly what I mean, and that is this.

I could tell you, truly, that, in fact, what we read now, what we read earlier, Matthew 28, it sounds very fancy and all, but it was originally a book, and it was, in a sense, a biography of Jesus. The biographer is Matthew. He was an eyewitness to most of the things that happened in Jesus's life. He wasn't, obviously, an eyewitness of the story that he just told, but he would have known all those people, and he was an eyewitness that saw Jesus rise after he was resurrected, and the same would be true of Mark, and Luke didn't see the resurrected Jesus, but he interviewed witnesses. It was written while lots of people were still alive and could have said that it was wrong, and we have this spectacular, unparalleled in the history of the ancient world, unparalleled in terms of the math that we can trust, that what we read here, whether it's Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, is an eyewitness account, and we know that the words are, and all of that stuff, and so we have an eyewitness account of the resurrection, and then we say, so therefore you should believe in the resurrection, but there's a big problem, and the big problem is this, George, no amount of historical evidence will overcome the fact that dead bodies don't come to life. I mean, George, it's very funny, and we're quite prepared to see a live body coming out of the grave. I don't know how many of you have ever lived in small towns, but if the locals had seen me trapped in the grave, I would not have been able to do a single thing for the rest of my ministry there without being coming up in my face and being a source of jokes, by the way, but that's just a whole other thing, but they're all you, everybody's used to the fact of a live body, well, not, I mean, it's not that common to see a priest at the bottom of a grave alive waiting to be rescued, but if you get out of it, it's no big deal.

Live bodies come out of graves all the, you know, potentially it's no big thing, but we all know, no amount of historical evidence will convince us that Jesus was dead, and then he came alive.

[7 : 11] It doesn't matter how good the eyewitnesses are, all of that, we just don't believe it. So here's three reasons why you should reconsider your certainty on this particular thing, and the three reasons are not just some special clever type of argument, but three reasons that if I can tell you this, that if you were to go to the Ottawa U, if you were to go to Carleton, if you go to the National Research Center where all the brainy scientists are, there's brainy scientists at Ottawa U and Carleton, if you were to go to CBC or the Globe and Mail, if you were to go to any high school teacher, all of these groups will teach you things, and all of them believe in three cases that life came out of death. All of them believe in three cases that not only did life come out of death, but that if you don't believe this, it shows that you're stupid.

It shows that you're ignorant. You don't know what you're talking about. You're knuckle-dragging, fundamentalist, whatever. But all three of these groups, Ottawa U, Carleton, National Research Center, Globe and Mail, the CBC, high school teachers, they all teach you, in three cases at least, that life came out of death. What are they? Well, first of all, how did all things come to be?

If you go and ask, in any of those places, they'll tell you that it's the Big Bang. But what is the Big Bang? The Big Bang is that trillions and trillions of years ago, all of reality, so to speak, was a singularity, something which was infinitesimally small, and that exploded. And out of that explosion came everything that exists, including life. In other words, what do they believe? Life came out of death. Life came out of death. That's what they believe. And in fact, if you went to the to Ottawa U and told the physics department that it was nonsense, that that didn't happen, that it's no way that the Big Bang is true, they would just say, oh, come on. Like, they wouldn't even, I mean, they'd maybe talk to you about it for a few seconds, and they would just dismiss you as a kook. Yet they teach that life came out of death. Second example, they're sort of all from that, but the second one is how they teach evolution in any of those different places. And normally, when they talk about evolution, naturalistic evolution, they normally focus on the fact that, of course, there's this single cell organism that comes to be, and then out of that, there's genetic mutations. And from those

genetic mutations come eventually multiple cell and then different, more complex organisms. And out of those more complex organisms come other types of things, everything from trees to human beings. And it's all to do just with genetic mutations. But what they miss in all of that is the first bit. That before there was anything that was life, before that there was no life. In other words, before that first little bit of life came, all there was, was matter and energy. And out of death, they say, life emerged.

And if you tell them that they're wrong, that you don't think that just all of a sudden, all by itself, out of death, life emerged, they would once again tell you that you don't know what you're talking about. They would tell you that you're foolish and uneducated. So educated people, smart people, say that science proves, in two cases here, that life comes out of death. The third one is sort of just a bit of a development of it. It's a development of mind. Human beings have minds.

And with those minds, we have imagination, we have creativity, we have all of these things that flow. And yet, mind had to emerge out of non-mind, out of death. That's what they teach. They'll teach it at Ottawa U. They teach it at Carleton, the National Research Council, CBC, Globe and Mail, CTV.

[11 : 01] All high school teachers teach the same type of thing. That all on its own, out of, in a sense, a non-functioning brain, no brain, no mind, right? I mean, one of the ways that they measure that somebody has died is that there's no brain activity left whatsoever. So there's a, it's still alive, but there's no brain. And if that body was held there with no brain activity for three days, and all of a sudden it started to work, and well, but you see, they, once again, they see that out of death comes mind. And that's just what educated people have to believe. So you see, if you think about it, we have in our culture three very, very powerful, in fact, foundational beliefs, part of the foundational beliefs of secularism as it's practically, as it's practiced right now, are these three fundamental ideas. And they all teach that life came out of death. And so if that is, in fact, the case, surely, it is at least open to possibility that there's a fourth case of life coming out of death, because we do know that that happens. Of course, as Christians, we would disagree that that could happen by itself. But even on their own terms, they have to be open that there might be another case. If there's three, and I could give you other examples as well, all from educated things, where, in fact, life comes out of death. So maybe this is evidence of a fourth one. You have to at least consider that. And so let's look at the particular text. In fact, actually, another thing which is very interesting about this text is, if you ask yourself, how did they come up with the idea of the Big Bang? Well, what they've done, I have to be careful here, because there might be a physicist in the room. And if there is, we're really glad you're here, or a physicist watching. But what they basically noticed is that everything is moving away from everything else. And so scientists started to track how everything was moving away from everything else. And they traced it back and traced it back, and they traced it back. And they come up with this idea that at the beginning of all things, in fact, if people asked what was before the Big Bang, they'd say there's no before, because time doesn't begin until the Big Bang happens. That would be the scientific answer.

And so you trace back all of the movement, and it goes back to a singularity, a singularity which is infinitesimally small, which somehow or another explodes and explodes rapidly. And everything that we see, hundreds of millions and all years later, is everything still moving away from that original bang. But it's very interesting. One of the other reasons that you could consider this, and I got this idea from Glenn Scrivener, an Aussie living in England. But if you think about it, today, what is the largest religion on the planet? The most practiced faith on the planet is the Christian faith.

In North America, the Christian faith is in decline. But in fact, at a world level, the Christian faith continues to grow and expand. It's very interesting to think that it might very well be, although obviously they have to live secretly, that there are estimates right now that there might be more practicing Christians in Iran than in Canada. And there are definitely more practicing believing Christians in China than there is in all of North America.

And so in places like this and all around the world, in fact, one of the things that we're going to see between the sort of the word part of the service and the communion part of the service is something from all over the Anglican communion, people saying Christ is risen, he is risen indeed, hallelujah. So what you can look and you can see here we have the Christian faith continuing to expand all around the world. And what happens if you trace that back? Just the way they discovered the Big Bang, what happens if you trace that back and trace that back and trace that back? It all comes to a singularity. It all goes back to this singularity of Easter Sunday, that on Good Friday, they know that

he's died. And if you go back and you read all of the evidence, all of the eyewitness evidence, you read the early letters, it's very, very clear that they, that Jesus died. And in fact, if you go back and you read the eyewitness accounts in the early letters, which we have records of, they all believed that he was dead and they all believed what the average Canadian says, which is that dead people don't come back to life. Jesus was dead, he was dead, he was dead. And by the way, did I tell you that he's dead?

[15 : 31] He was dead. And all of the eyewitness accounts are that people who are going to the tomb on this particular day are going to deal with a dead body, not a live body. And the early, many of the early Christians suffered martyrdom. And it's not like people to die who give their lives for Islam or give their lives for communism or give their lives for capitalism or give their lives for some other ideology or belief.

The early Christians didn't die for a religion or an ideology. They died because they would not bend on a fact, what modern people call a fact. And what was that fact? That the grave was empty. The body was never found. And they saw Jesus physical and alive. And you can take this two billion plus strong movement that continues to expand. And it's very unique. It's the only religion that expands in virtually every people group of the planet in Africa and Asia and South America, North America and Europe, that this movement, and you trace it all back, and it goes back to this singularity, this explosion, so to speak. And it goes back. It's not like Islam, where Islam grew because their armies were top-notch and they were very good at killing people and striking terror. This singularity is the death of a man who was powerless, who died a shameful death, who was crucified naked between common thieves to completely and utterly humiliate him. And he had no armies, no empire. He had no educational qualifications. And his enemies taunted him that he didn't even have a legitimate birth.

And it goes back to the singularity which is described in these historic origin documents of eyewitness testimony. And what does it say? Let's listen. Just Matthew's account. Matthew chapter 28, verses 1 to 10. Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. By the way, this is an old thing. Remember the old New Heart show? Was there Bob and my brother Bob? Every time I read this, I think of the New Heart show. I mean, I know I should be thinking of holy things, but I think of the New Heart show. Bob and my brother Bob. Anyway, we'll read that again because I just ruined it for some of you. But anyway, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him, the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the woman, do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay.

Now, just sort of pause here. There's lots of very interesting things here on the right off the bat. One of the reasons that the Christian faith has grown, of course, is it's very interesting here.

[18 : 47] Right at the original origin document, it shows that Christians are open to questions and open to evidence and open to reason. The angel says, don't just believe me. It's not as if the angel shows up and says, he's risen. And if they said, well, we'd like to go in and see if we can find the body. No, no, no, no, no, no. Just take my word for it. If you don't believe me, read Isaiah, read Psalm 22, and pray more. Now, there's lots of Christians who, in fact, part of the group that was responsible for me becoming a Christian, as I started to raise some of my intellectual doubts, their response was I needed to read the Bible more and pray more. They also probably thought that if I spoke in tongues, I'd believe it as well. And that's not putting down the gift of tongues, by the way. If you have that gift, praise God. And if you don't have it, feel free to pray for it. It's a gift that's mentioned in the Bible. But there have obviously been some Christians who've been afraid of evidence, afraid of reason, afraid of questions. But in fact, that is not part of the Christian faith. Why?

Because we're Canadians? No, because of the gospel. Like right at the very beginning, the angel says, he's risen. Come and look, in a sense. See, he's not here. And another thing which here, which is very, very interesting, it goes in a complete opposite type of way. Some Canadians are very bothered with the idea that there's an angel mentioned in this story. Of course, for many other Canadians, that's actually a very interesting feature, because many Canadians believe in angels and demons and spiritual things. And in fact, throughout the world, there are many people who

believe in such things. But here's the thing, which, one of the things which is very wonderful about this story. There is a deep, you see, part of the reason, part of what people don't understand about the Christian faith, and I know that some of us struggle with depression, and some people, some Christians struggle with anxiety. And I know that we have dark nights of the soul. And I know we have times when life is very, very dry and very, very hard. But the fact of the matter is, is that there's a deep emotional truth and power to the Christian faith. There's a deep imaginative power to the Christian faith. And it's partially seen even here in this story. Because the fact of the matter is, is that we human beings have a longing to talk to the non-human.

Human beings have a longing to be in a world where you can talk to the non-human. One of the reasons people have dogs is that they can talk to them. There's lots of dog owners who say, the more I meet people, the more I like my dog, that would rather spend time with their dog than with a person. And in fact, at the eight o'clock service, I said this, and then Barbara, who's very helpful around the church, she said, I talk to my birds all the time. But it's not just that we talk to dogs and wish that they could somehow talk back to us. But you look at what most, look at what many of the most popular movies are, and what many of the most popular stories are.

There are stories that win prestigious awards that are just full of depression and suicide and death and despair. And they win prestigious literary awards, but they end up selling like 500 books in all of Canada or something like that. But the books that actually sell, well, there's elves and there's extraterrestrials and there's beings that aren't, they're non-human that we talk to, that they talk to, that you see portrayed. You look at the literature of history of other cultures, it's filled with talking to talking to gods and talking to trolls and talking to monsters and talking to heavenly beings and talking animals. There's this fundamental human desire and longing to talk to that which is non-human.

And here in this story, we have an angel non-human in conversation with the angels. In fact, as C.S. Lewis put it, that what you see in the gospel is myth becoming fact. And what you see here is that we live in a world where there is a longing, and it's in many, many cultures and even powerfully in our day, that we could talk to something and commune with something which is non-human. And that which is fiction, and that which is fantasy, and that which is myth becomes fact here in this story. That in fact, it's talking about a longing, an emotional longing, and resonance of coherence. There's a non-human world. And what the Bible is saying is that the original normal, which got broken in the fall, and the end of all things, there will be the conversation with the non-human.

[23 : 29] Amen. And there's something else which is very powerful here in this opening thing. Our charismatic friends are familiar with the thing called being slain in the spirit. And many evangelicals and reformed and other types are very uncomfortable with that. And I'm not saying, I've prayed for somebody who got slain in the spirit. And I have to confess, I think they want it to fall down. But on the other hand, I know people, hard-headed people, I have a friend who was a hard-headed Scott, who did not believe in falling down, did not believe in falling down, said he would never fall down. And he went to, I think it was a John Wimber event. And as he's walking down the aisle, saying, I'm not going to fall down, I'm not going to fall down, I'm not going to fall down. But eight feet from the guy, the guy raised his hand, and my friend fell down. It's called being slain in the spirit. And we see that here, this supernatural thing, the angel just appears, and all of the tough soldiers do FaceTime without conversion. Now, it's very interesting that two women don't experience it, just the enemies of

Jesus. And this, of course, shows the overwhelming power of God over imperial ambitions, that God is, in fact, still sovereign. But here's the other thing that helps to show this in the story, that in the story, it said, Jesus, if you really are God, prove that you are God by coming down from the cross. And what this story shows is that Jesus could have just asked one angel, the least angel, and the least angel, all the Roman guards, all the tormentors, they would just fall down. In fact, if you read, I think it's one of the accounts of Jesus, when the people go to arrest him, he just says, I am Jesus, and they all fall. There's two times in this last little period of time where people just fall down at the mere presence of God declaring his presence in his reality. And so what we see in this is it helps us to understand why it is that Jesus died on the cross. You see, he died on the cross not because he was captured, not because they overpowered him, because one angel would have meant that he could have just gotten down effortlessly. But he died on the cross out of love, out of love for you and for me. You see, this, once again, is why, if you think about why it is that there's this deep emotional and intellectual coherence and beauty and power to the gospel, it speaks to the

mind, it speaks to the imagination, and it speaks to the heart and the emotions that Jesus would die on the cross out of love, and not out of love in some abstract way, but out of love for Ian, and out of love for Harold, and out of love for Susan, and out of love for Andrew and for Lisa, not out of a, not out of any type of abstraction, but because he loves you as an individual, and that's why he died. And the grave, that the tombstone is blown away, not so that Jesus can get out, but so that witnesses can see that in fact the body is gone. And it is from this singularity, this spiritual equivalent of the Big Bang, that this movement has continues to expand, as people are gripped with the coherence and the emotional depth and beauty and power and resonance of the Christian faith. It continues, verse 7, then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee, and there you will see him. See, I have told you. Just by the way, what this isn't saying, it's not saying that they're only going to see him in Galilee. What it's saying, it's actually, when Louise and I had our children, when we have the ultrasound, they'd always ask us if we wanted to know what the sex of the baby was. And Louise and I, old-fashioned, said, no, we don't. We wanted that experience of being in the delivery room, and the baby comes out, and they say, it's a boy! It's a girl! And we wanted that experience. So we didn't, you know, nothing wrong. If you want a different experience, that's fine. That's just, old-fashioned, that's what we wanted. But nowadays, there's a very, very common thing that people will find out what the sex of the baby is, and they have a reveal party, right? I mean, many of you have probably gone to a reveal party. Come to our house, and at a certain point in time, and you have different ways that you do it, and we reveal that we're going to have a boy or a girl. And that's, in effect, what's going on here. It's in Jesus. The angel isn't saying that Jesus isn't going to appear to any of them until Galilee. He's saying that there's going to be a special reveal in Galilee. And in fact, just to see that that's, in fact, what he's saying is, look at verse 8. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, greetings. And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, do not be afraid. Remember, that was what the angel said as well, do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.

[28 : 35] If you just skip down a few verses to 16, we see what the reveal is. And the reveal helps to show the connection to what happens on Easter Sunday to the fact that 2,000 years later, or 1,990 years or whatever it is later, here we are today. Part of that explosive, propulsive movement from the singularity of the resurrection. Verse 16, now the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. And just to pause on that, it's a whole other sermon. But basically, the word worship means either that they're prostrate or kneeling, usually prostrate. And so the doubting isn't doubting that they're seeing Jesus. It's like, do I kneel? Do I prostrate? I mean, they're still trying to get their mind around this singularity and all that it means, right? Because they deeply believe that the dead stay dead. And they're having problems processing this singularity, some of them. Maybe seeing Jesus for the first time. But then it continues. Jesus said, came to them and said, verse 18, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Actually, it would be better to say, go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. Just sort of, you know, wrapping this up. Here we see several things which are really important about the Christian faith. First of all, that you really literally are included. And that when you give your faith, when you give your trust to Jesus, you are, in a sense, put into him and he comes into you. And the thing is that you now receive, this is one of the things which is so powerful about the gospel, is that you get a new identity, a new identity based on Jesus' defeat of death and sin, a new identity that will form you and continue to form you into all of everlasting life, the new heaven and the new earth. This new identity of disciple, this new identity of child. And it's a very, very interesting thing.

Colombian Christians will have a Colombian accent. Singaporean and Chinese Christians will have that Chinese accent. Canadian Christians, that Canadian accent. U.S., that Canadian accent. The Ugandans and Rwandans and Nigerian, they'll have their own accents. But we have this new identity in Christ.

This new identity. Are you an alcoholic? That is no longer your identity. Your identity is in Christ. Do you think that your goal in life is to sleep with as many women as you possibly can? You have a

new identity in Christ. Is your identity based on sleeping with people of the same sex? You have a new identity in Christ. Is your identity the fact that you are troubled with the disconnect between who you feel you are and your body? You have a new identity in Christ. Are you a neo-Nazi or an alt-right member? You have a new identity in Christ. Are you a social justice warrior or a communist? You have a new identity in Christ. And the proper way to speak to another Christian that you meet is brother or sister.

And so part of the wonder of the gospel is this new identity. The other possible thing which is so, that still reflects those aspects of being Canadian or being Dutch or being American or or being Italian or, you know, whatever, is that in fact, that you will always have Jesus with you.

And that with Jesus with you, you can pour out your heart. The heart of true prayer and Christian growth is not pretending, but being honest. Jesus, I'm afraid. Jesus, I'm depressed. Jesus, I'm lonely.

[33 : 01] Jesus, no one loves me. Jesus, I'm having a very hard time. Jesus, I am so filled with joy. Jesus, I am just so filled with creativity. Jesus, that you can pour out your heart honestly to him. And his response to you is, do not be afraid.

Remember what? I have defeated death. I have defeated sin. I have defeated all hostile spiritual powers. All authority is mine. Even if you suffer, even if you die, there is a new heaven and a new earth.

And in your new identity, the end of your story is only good news. In Jesus, the end of your story is only good news. I invite you to stand.

And if you haven't, those watching online, if you haven't given your life to Christ, he died for you.

And there's no fancy special word, but just say, Jesus. You know, for some of us, it's a Jesus. I've been, I don't know where I am with you. I've been wandering from you. I'm so glad that you are my Savior and Lord. And help me to put aside all those things that have been just weighing me down. And I recommit to you. And there's nothing wrong with recommitting. And if you're not clear, just say, Jesus, be my Savior and Lord. And I don't know the other fancy word. Just Jesus. Jesus, be Jesus, be Jesus, be my Lord, my Savior. And he figures out the words. He doesn't care about the words. There's no magic formula. And for us, it's just really important to be reminded of this profound singularity that respects the full depth of our humanity, that our imagination, our memory, our fears, our intellect, our thoughts of the future, our understandings of our past, that that is all encompassed and dealt with in this profound act of grace that we see in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Father, pour out the Holy Spirit upon us. We ask that you would grip us with the gospel, that you would make us disciples of Jesus, gripped by the gospel, learning to live day by day out of this new identity that we have in you, out of gratitude, not out of obligation, but out of gratitude for what you have done, that you would help us to live this new life to your honor and glory.

[35 : 19] And all God's children said, Amen.