

Jesus Truly Died

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we ask that you would gently pour out the Holy Spirit deep within us, that we might think about Jesus, that we might think about death, that we might think about his death upon the cross and his being buried in the tomb, and that you might bring that home to our hearts.

And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So I spent some time in a grave. Some of you have heard this story before.

I've been ordained for three years. I've done lots of funerals here in the city. And then I got sent to look after four little country churches up the valley in places called Eganville, Killaloo.

Famous Killaloo Sunrise was invented there. Tremor and Clontarf. And I did a lot of funerals when I was in that church, actually. And I'd only actually been in that little rural church about a week and a half.

And I did my first funeral. And then about a week later, I did another funeral. And the second funeral was one of the things they have in small rural places, which they don't have in the city, is they have private graveyards. And I went to this.

[1 : 1 2] I did a funeral for this person. And the burial place was going to be in a private family burial plot. And one of the things I liked to do in the city when I could, when I was doing a funeral, was not to be in the funeral director's car.

But I often liked to sort of zoom up in my own car so I could be there a little bit in advance. And just later on, I didn't have to wait for the funeral director for me to leave the reception.

I could leave when I wanted, either stay longer or earlier or whatever. Anyway, so I zoom up early, quite a bit faster than a funeral procession. I get there. I park. I walk up.

And I thought I'd just sort of walk to see where the grave is. And if any of you have been to a grave site in Canada, there's usually artificial grass off on the side.

And I'm walking up to the grave. And all of a sudden, before I know it, I fall into the grave. Because the green artificial grass, there are like planks to step on.

[2 : 1 3] And if the plank is over here, the green artificial grass went all the way up to here because there was a hole there, which I did not know about. So I slid into a seven or eight foot deep grave.

Was I ever embarrassed? I was so terrified that I would have to be, when the family would come, that I would have to be rescued from the grave and then do the funeral.

And it was really dusty. So I'm in black, but I'm all covered in dust. And so I'm trying to scramble up the side of the grave. I'm also now, I have this double worry that I'll actually make the hole bigger and the grass won't cover it.

Anyway, I eventually am able to scramble up covered in dust. I go off to the side. I do the best job I can to beat the dust off my black. Nobody ever commented on why I was so dusty.

And I never made any reference to it that I actually spent some time in the grave. So that's been my one time in the grave. I know that's a very silly introduction to this, which is a very, very serious story.

[3 : 19] But we're looking today at the death of Jesus and the death of Jesus and ultimately his burial, entombment in a tomb. So it would be a great help to me if you got your Bibles and turned to John chapter 19.

And we read here of John's account. There's a movie reviewer that I quite like. I read him almost every week.

I won't say what his name is, but there's a movie reviewer that I like quite a bit. And just a couple of days ago, on Friday, he did a movie review of a new movie that's just come out from Hollywood about Mary Magdalene.

And at the end of the movie review, he made a couple of – it was such a typical type of comment to be made. He made a comment about how some pope in the 500s made this determination about what Mary Magdalene was.

And then he made a comment about how this movie will help to dispel the inaccuracy, you know, the misinformation that comes from religious bureaucrats or something like that.

[4 : 25] And I thought to myself as I read it, I thought, well, you're a really good movie reviewer, but you know absolutely nothing about how the Bible was put together. Like, your ignorance is unbelievably deep. If you're here this morning, I don't think you ever come to the church.

I didn't mean to insult you. So anyway, that's funny. But so the fact of the matter is that there are four, as we all know, ancient biographies of Jesus. And so actually, I mean, I think that particular pope was wrong to say what he said about Mary because it was based on tradition, not on what the Bible actually says.

But what we're looking at here is an ancient eyewitness biography of Jesus. And the way that John has told the story, because that's what you tell when you're telling a person's life story, you tell the story.

It's a biography. And John has now he's gone through the capture of Jesus, the trial of Jesus, all the shenanigans that went around with this. And as I said, as introducing the reading, the decision is made to crucify Jesus.

And now we have the crucifixion of Jesus. It gets right to it. In those days, that's the way they did it. And so it begins like this, chapter 19, verse 16.

[5 : 34] So they took Jesus, that's the soldiers, and he went out bearing his own cross to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

Now, just pause here for a second. This is a silly little thing. Some of you might know, I make some jokes, that if I was ever going to plant a Baptist church, I'd call it 13th Baptist Church.

Why? I don't know. I think that's just sort of funny, you know, not First Baptist or anything like that, 13th Baptist Church. But I now have a new name for a Baptist church. It would be called the place of the skull Baptist church.

Because actually, there's a place of the skull Baptist church in every city of Ottawa, and maybe in North America. They just don't realize it. Because you see, this is really funny.

The place of the skull is the literal translation. And then he says Golgotha. But what happened is when the people who translated the Greek Golgotha into Latin, they used a different word.

[6 : 32] And then, and for many, many years in the West, that Latin word was what people heard in the church. And then people took the way to pronounce it in English.

And the way you pronounce the Latin word in English is Calvary. So those of you who are members of Calvary Fellowship, you were a member of the place of the skull fellowship. Our friends who go to Calvary Baptist, that's the place of the skull Baptist church.

I just think they should just be out front and just claim it, you know. Just embrace such an unbelievably non-postmodern name. Actually, it sort of is postmodern to do something like that.

But anyway, that's an aside. That's so Calvary is how, that's, it's not mentioned here, but that's where the word Calvary comes from. It comes from Golgotha, and it means in Aramaic, a place of a skull.

Verse 18, there they crucified him and with two others, one on either side and Jesus between them. And there they crucified him and with him two others, one on either side and Jesus between them.

[7 : 36] It's really interesting how the writer here helps us now to remember something which we need to think about a little bit more, and we often don't think about as Christians, is that on one hand, the crucifixion of a Jewish man was nothing special.

Like even here when we're hearing about Jesus being crucified, he's one of three people who are being crucified. Because there's so many historical references between the ancient biographies, what we now know of as the Gospels, and Roman and Jewish life, and you can cross-reference these things with what Roman and Jewish historians have said.

Depending on how you put things together, we know that Jesus was crucified either in the spring of the year 30 or the spring of the year 33. One of those two years. It depends on how you put some things together. But one of those two years is when Jesus actually died.

You can actually go back and you can figure out the actual day because there's so many historical cross-references in the Gospel. And because they're writing history, right?

It's an historical biography by eyewitnesses. But in the year 70, so either 40 years after this or 37 years after this, depending on how you put some cross-references together, the Roman armies surround Jerusalem and they put it under a siege.

[9 : 00] And at the end of the siege, they win the siege. Jerusalem is overrun and the city is destroyed. But here's the thing. Historians say that during that, I think it was a four-month siege.

During that four-month siege, as part of the way to terrorize the population within the walls, the Romans crucified 500 Jews a day. 500 Jews a day for four months.

That's a lot of crucifixions. In fact, the Roman historians say because the Roman practice of crucifixion was that you'd put the person up on the cross to die.

And that might take, I mean, they might die. Sometimes people died just by the whipping. But if they, and then some people would die very quickly on the cross. But a young, fit person could maybe go three days or whatever.

And the Roman habit was then to leave the body on the grave long enough that some of the decomposition would happen, as well as the animals being able to eat parts of the body. And it was just all part of the way to spread terror, of course, right?

[10 : 08] And so the Roman historians say that they were crucifying so many Jewish people that they actually started to have problems getting enough wood for the crosses.

And I just mention that because whatever we're going to say about Jesus and what's going on here is that the crucifixion of a Jew is nothing special. But there's something particularly of interest about this person.

And that's sort of what we need to think about a little bit. Jesus dies by a way that was commonly used to terrorize indigenous people, I guess we would now say, and by their political masters.

And Jesus was just one more example of an indigenous person being killed by an imperial power. And even in the story, he's just one of three.

He's the guy who happens to be in the center, but he's just one of the three. And the story continues. Pilate also wrote an inscription, which was very common, and put it on the cross.

[11 : 13] It read, Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. Many of the Jewish people read this inscription for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.

In other words, in the local language, Aramaic. In Greek, which was the language, the common language of the empire. And in Latin, which was the imperial language used by their imperial masters.

So the chief priest of the Jews said to Pilate, do not write the king of the Jews, but rather this man said, I am the king of the Jews. And Pilate answered, what I have written, I have written.

And those of you who have been following the story, there's lots of irony which is going on here. One of the ironies is actually the way that it's written here is that the king of the Jews, and when it says Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews, and then just a few lines later it says the chief priest of the Jews, there's a type of a balance that the language is exactly the same, showing the contrast between Jesus and the religious leaders.

And of course, another important part of all of this is that these same spiritual leaders, just an hour or so earlier, had actually publicly acclaimed an act of blasphemy, that Caesar was their king.

[12 : 34] And so part of the irony of this story is that the religious leaders claim that Caesar is their king, and Caesar claims that Jesus is their king, which is very ironic.

And the story continues. Verse 23. When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts.

One for each soldier, also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. And just sort of pause here. There's one of the things here which is very interesting, if you think about it for a second.

My parents are still alive, so I haven't had to bury them, and I haven't had to clean out their house or anything like that. As many of you know, what often happens is when you reach a certain age, you have to downsize, maybe go into some type of a smaller facility.

You have to get rid of a lot of your furniture and possessions. It doesn't happen with everybody. Louise's father died, owning two properties with lots and lots and lots of stuff to get rid of.

[13 : 51] But often, one of the things you have to, often, I mean, not in every case, in every case, one of the things you have to dispose of is the clothes. And it's just this very, very small little item, and we're going to mention another thing about it in a moment.

But if you think about it, the soldiers are so certain of Jesus's death that they dispose of his clothes while he's hanging above them.

See, one of the things the story is going to do time and time and time and time and time again is emphasize that Jesus dies. The guarantors of his death are the Roman soldiers.

It's not the disciples of Jesus. Okay, he's dead. He's dead. And then he's not really. No, the guarantor of the death of Jesus is, in fact, the Roman soldiers.

And the text, time and time again, in small, subtle ways, crucified, his body, the embalming, even this very simple act of disposing of the possessions, something that we usually do.

[14 : 48] It would be as if I go into the hospital and because I have a bad, a bad, you know, whatever, and then I find out that, you know, in Louise's, I'd say, pre-decease me, which will definitely not happen, but just for the case of this story, she's a vegetarian.

I eat meat. She eats way healthier than I. She's going to outlive me by a long time. Anyway, and so, you know, it'd be as if I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm in the hospital and it maybe doesn't look too good for me and I find out my kids have sold the house, my house, and they've sold all my stuff.

And in fact, they actually come and come into the closet and take the clothes I have in the closet and say, you're not going to need these clothes because all you have left is the hospital gown and that's all you need, dad. Like, they're so certain of my death and so quick to get rid of it.

And, and that's what's happening here. It's a, it's a small thing, and we read it all the time without realizing the significance of it. The soldiers know he's dead. He's still alive, technically, but he's dead. You get rid of all of his stuff now.

And time and time and time and time again in the story, it's going to be emphasized, Jesus died, Jesus died, Jesus died. They do it with different words, crucifixion, body, this, the piercing of the side, the embalming process, all different ways of indicating he dies.

[16 : 02] But there's something else here, which is also significant, which comes right up in verse 24. So they said to one another, remember, they're dividing up his clothes, and he must have had like five pieces of clothes, and they take, or a big piece that they can sort of separate out the fabric or whatever, but they come to one piece, and they decide it's a bit more precious, and, and there's four guys, and just, anyway, they decide that we'll gamble for the last piece.

Verse 24, So they said to one another, let us not tear it, but cast lots, or dice, to see who it shall be. And here's this thing, which is very important.

This was to fulfill. The scripture which says, they divided my garments among them, and from my clothing they cast lots. So the soldiers did these things.

I was walking with Jason the other day to have a coffee with him on Friday, and I made a joke to him that if you want to have, I hope there's no weatherman here, sorry, I said, if you want to have a job where you can be wrong almost all the time and still have job security, become a weatherman.

Because as we were walking, the weatherman got it wrong about the weather. But I've never heard, maybe they do, maybe they fire weathermen because, you know, you said it was not going to rain until the evening, and it rained at three or whatever.

[17 : 17] I don't know, maybe that happens, but it seems as if you can make predictions in that field, and it doesn't affect your job security. But what we see here is something which is very, very interesting.

It's not, prophecy is more than a prediction, although it is a bit of a, like a prediction. But what we're going to see here time and time again, and if you go back and read the other parts of John, beginning at John chapter 18, you'll see this constant refrain, it was fulfilled, it was fulfilled, it was fulfilled.

In other words, the Bible is saying that whether, as Daniel introduced Psalm 22, whether it's David writing over a thousand years before the death of Jesus, but writing a psalm which describes the crucifixion.

In fact, he describes some of the terms and some of the ways that a crucifixion works. My bones out of joint, my heart, my lips dry, and crucifixion hadn't even been invented.

And time and time and time again in the story, they're going to say that Jesus fulfilled this, he fulfilled this. And in some cases, they're even going to say that Jesus not just fulfilled a specific prophecy, but as we're going to see, you'll see that he fulfilled the general promises and longings and types of the Old Testament.

[18 : 30] Like one of the things which is happening here is that Jesus is dying at the same time that in another part of the city, they're killing the lambs, the spotless lambs, as part of the Passover celebration.

And Passover is the profound act that makes Israel Israel when God delivers the Jewish people out of slavery, of bondage in Egypt.

And after Pharaoh refuses and refuses and refuses and refuses to let these slaves go, Moses says God is going to do his final punishment.

And if you want to be saved and spared and be delivered, you are to kill a lamb and you are to take the blood of the lamb and you are to use some hyssop and take the blood of the lamb to cover the entranceway of your house.

And if you put the blood of the lamb using hyssop on the doorways to the house, then you will be spared God's judgment of death and you will be free and be delivered.

[19 : 31] And at the same time, we'll even see that using the hyssop branch in a few moments, the same time that these lambs are being slaughtered is when Jesus is dying, that he fulfills not just specific scriptures, but the types.

Jesus is introduced by John as the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And here we see the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world dying at the same time that the lambs are dying.

And we're seeing here that the death of Jesus is a fulfillment of the promises and the words of God that have been made over centuries by many, many different writers. And the other thing which is so remarkable about this, and the word fulfilled, you'll see it repeated time and time and time again, is that Jesus and his disciples could not have orchestrated these fulfillments.

In fact, the enemies of Jesus unwittingly act to fulfill the prophecies. How on earth could the disciples organize it that they have, Psalm 22 would be fulfilled of somebody gambling for Jesus' clothes?

It's the soldiers, the pagan soldiers, the enemies of Jesus, the imperial power that does it. And later on, you're going to see in a moment that the reason normally, remember I said the normal Roman practice is that you left the crucified body on the cross and whether he died in a couple of minutes or whether he died in three days or five days or whatever, after he dies, you leave him on the cross until his body, you know, all the decomposition and the putrefaction, the smell, and that all happens and he wouldn't have been buried.

[21 : 17] And so all of the prophecies of Jesus rising from the grave would not have been fulfilled. The reason that those are fulfilled, of course, is the power of God, but that would not have happened if the Jewish leaders did not insist that the bodies die before the normal Roman practice not be followed and Jesus is put in a tomb.

Time and time and time again, the enemies of Jesus unwittingly fulfill the prophecies. It is not something that Jesus and his disciples orchestrate. And this is, just to think about it, that God could say something through David a thousand years earlier and then he keeps his word.

That's why we read the Bible. He keeps his word. So what happens? There's still, look at verse 25. Remember I said this is an eyewitness biography and we hear now of some of the eyewitnesses.

In fact, we hear of five of the eyewitnesses that are going to be very important probably even in the writing of this. Verse 25, but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, second woman, and Mary, the wife of Clopas, a third woman, and Mary Magdalene, the fourth woman.

And when Jesus saw his, and just pause here, in the original language you can't get this in the English. And I'm not going to say very much of it because on Friday we're going to have people talking about the last words of the cross, but, you know, the Old Testament, what we call the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, but very early on, like at the time of Jesus, most people, when they read the Old Testament, most Jewish people, they read it actually in the Greek version, the Greek translation of the Hebrew.

[23 : 05] And in the Greek translation of the Hebrew, if you're reading it, if you read Genesis 2 and Genesis 3, whenever it talks about Eve in Genesis 2 and Genesis 3, it uses the word woman, the same word that Jesus speaks to Mary.

I don't know what it means, and maybe Peter's going to say a few things about it come on Good Friday, but it's the same word, and there's ties in between this because, as you see, Jesus is crucified in the garden, he's buried in the garden, and in the garden, there's a woman who uses the same word to refer to all women, or Eve, is used to refer to Mary.

It's just one of those interesting, there's so many things in here, there's so many things in here that poets and theologians and musicians and hymn writers and philosophers and dreamers, you can look at it and meditate upon it for year upon year upon year and never plumb the depths.

Go back to it, verse 25 again, but standing by the cross of Jesus where his mother, the first woman, his mother's sister, the second woman, the third woman, Mary, the wife of Clopas, and then the fourth woman, Mary Magdalene, when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, Woman, behold your son.

Then he said to the disciple, Behold your mother. From that hour, the disciple took her to his own home. And I just want to pause here for a second.

[24 : 33] There's a really important thing. You know, we take these last words of Jesus for granted, but one of the things out of the four biographies, there's things in this biography that John doesn't talk about that the others talk about.

There's not going to be the darkness, there's not going to be the earthquakes, there's not going to be the rending of the temple. There's things that John doesn't tell us about. He tells us other things. Three of Jesus' final seven words from the cross are recorded by John.

But do you know what the final words of Buddha were before he died? Like, Buddha was probably an historical person. And do you know what the final words of Buddha were? They were, I exhort you, all compound things are subject to vanish.

And his final words, strive with earnestness. In other words, unceasingly strive. It's very, very interesting, right?

When he says the compound, when he says all compound things are subject to vanish, right? It's a key part of Buddhism that I might think that I'm different than Helen, but I'm mistaken.

[25 : 40] That's an illusion. I might think that I want to have more money or I'd like to have a nicer car or a nicer house. If you're single, you might think you'd like to have a wife or a husband, but that's all, it's an illusion to think that there's difference.

And at the end of the end of the end of all of the processes, you come to realize that it's all illusion, that there is no difference between things and that all is one.

And then he says to keep striving for this unfailingly with earnestness. And it's so interesting, isn't it? Jesus' final words are so different. We're going to see here in a moment that he looks at his mother whom he loves and he looks at the disciple and he looks at the woman and he doesn't say, Mom, you're just an illusion.

I hope you come to realize that there's no you and me. It's just, it's all going to vanish. He says, no, Mom, this guy's going to take care of you.

Friend, take care of my mom. He's going to say, I thirst. He's going to say, it's finished. Very, very different. But the difference between the dying words of Jesus and the dying words of Muhammad are terrifying.

[27 : 03] Muhammad died in the home of Aisha. Aisha. Aisha is the woman that Muhammad married when she was six. I'm not making that up.

And he didn't consummate the marriage with this six-year-old right away. He waited until she was nine before he consummated his marriage. And he was with this woman nine years later.

She was 18 when he died. And it's recorded that he talks about four things as he's dying. The first thing he says is he curses all Christians and Jews.

Curses them. The second thing he says is gives orders to his followers to make sure that every pagan is expelled from the peninsula.

They can convert. If they don't convert and they don't get expelled, they are to be killed. The third thing he says on his deathbed is that he hopes that when he dies, which will be very soon, that he will get the highest place in heaven.

[28 : 11] And the fourth thing that he says is he's recorded begging Allah for forgiveness. And Jesus says, Mom, here's the guy who's going to take care of you.

friend, take care of my mom. And he's going to say, I thirst. And he's going to say, it is finished. And these are the final words of Jesus in comparison to the two great alternatives to Christianity in the Western world of Buddhism and Islam.

You see, we take for granted these final words of Jesus without realizing how profoundly radical they are in the sea of religious options before us.

The story continues. Verse 28. After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the scriptures, I thirst.

A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, it is finished.

[29 : 32] In the original language, that's one word. It is finished. It takes three words in English, but it's one word in the original language. And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

And in the original language, the phrase gave up his spirit in all of the Bible from Genesis 1 to the end of Revelation, that way of expressing death is never used of any other person.

And it, in the original language, implies that Jesus couldn't have died against his will. that he had to actually allow death, in a sense, to consume him.

And that he willingly allows death to take him. And his final words here are, it is finished. And it's a telos word.

It's a word that's very foreign to how we tend to think of in terms of our own lives. It's a word that implies that there's a purpose, not just a purpose that he has grasped for himself, but a real purpose, an ontological purpose, a purpose that's been given to him by God, by the creator of the universe, and that his whole life had a series of things that he had to accomplish and that he had to finish on behalf of others, and that as he's dying on the cross, that has occurred.

[30 : 56] Everything that had to be completed was completed. Everything that had to be accomplished was accomplished. It was finished. There was nothing left over. Everything that he came to earth to do was done with not a drop left over.

That's what he's saying there in his death. And then we have here in a very small and subtle way this continual critique of religion in verse 31.

Since it was the day of preparation and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath day for that Sabbath was a high day, the Jewish religious leaders, the spiritual leaders, asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

How is this a critique of religion? They have just spent weeks if not months and an intense, intense eight hours or twelve hours capturing Jesus and hectoring for his judicial murder.

But they're worried that a tiny little commandment in Deuteronomy will be broken by having the bodies displayed.

[32 : 07] It is a profound critique of the inadequacy of even the best religion in this small aside.

And as I said earlier, against their will they act to fulfill the scripture. Verse 32, so the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him.

But when they came to Jesus they saw that he was already dead and they did not break his legs. Why? They'd see that he was not breathing. Not only that, they'd see that he'd stopped bleeding. Remember, he'd had thorns in his head.

He'd been whipped mercilessly on his back. He stopped bleeding. These guys were used to death. He wasn't breathing. But one of the ways that they might have, there's lots of historical evidence of this.

One of the ways they would just see if he's still alive is you go to, you poke him. You make some pain and if the person jerks, obviously, oh, there's a bit of life left in that person still and it was an ungentle pricking, a pricking that actually went and pierced between the ribs and went right up to the heart.

[33 : 14] But when they came, verse 33, to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and at once there came out blood and water.

He who saw it has borne witness, his testimony is true and he knows that he is telling the truth that you may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled. Not one of his bones will be broken.

And again, another scripture says they will look on him whom they have pierced. And after these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.

Remember all these times, the piercing, the body, the language, he's dead. And Pilate gave him permission. So Joseph came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 75 pounds in weight.

So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths really tight with the spices as is the burial custom of the Jewish people. Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

[34 : 27] No one had yet been laid. Setting the stage for the resurrection, there's no other bodies in there. It's not like it would be very common to have a grave that had many bodies in it.

They found them. Archaeologists find them all the time. But in this particular grave, it's brand new. No other bodies in there. There's not going to be any confusion when they come in and say, did Jesus rise? Okay, let's just all these other bodies to see if...

We're one short, but is it Jesus? No, no. It's setting the stage and it's going to be a tomb, a limestone cave, no other way into it, no way to dig into it. It's setting the stage for the miracle of the resurrection.

Verse 41 again, And now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden and the garden a new tomb in which no one had been laid. So because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Now just a couple of things to bring this home as a bit of a conclusion. I was watching a movie this week, no surprise to many of you. I like watching things like movies and all, and I was watching a movie this week and part of the movie is that a young boy, six or seven year old boy, his mom dies and he gets sent to live with his eccentric and scientific uncle.

[35 : 36] His uncle's consumed with science. And so the little boy, his mom has died. They don't make any comment about the biological dad. Seems to be out of the picture.

So the boy comes and he's with this eccentric scientific guy and the boy out of the blue says that my mom died and the guy says, oh yeah, I know, that's sad.

And she said, well, she's in heaven. And without thinking, the guy says, that's a fairy tale. That's a fairy tale. She's dead.

When you die, you die. And he sees the little face start to crumble. And he says, but if that gives you comfort and makes you feel good, then you should believe that.

You should believe that. Don't listen to me. You believe that. So he's not completely hard-hearted. But he just speaks like a scientist. When you're dead, you're dead. So here's, there are not going to be points that are up on the screen.

[36 : 35] I might put them in some type of writing later on. They'll be posted later. But there's two things going on here. You see, what people are observing, remember I said the death of a troublesome Jew is not particularly significant.

There's no religious significance for it in particular. And what the people there were seeing was the tragic death of a problematic man. What people were seeing was the tragic death of a problematic man.

But what God wants us to see and understand is fairy tales becoming fact. Myth becoming fact.

What the crowd sees is the tragic death of a problematic man. But what God wants us to see is that fairy tales and myths have become fact.

See, the fact of the matter is that if Jesus just stays dead, then really that is just one more case that in fact all life is tragedy.

[37 : 45] All life is tragedy. When you die, you die. And some people die young, some people die old, but when you die, you die. And you lose everything. And you can't even hope that you'll be remembered for very long.

Conan O'Brien has this very interesting thing where he realizes one day that he won't be remembered very long. within a certain period of time, nobody remembers you that long and you'll be completely and utterly forgotten and when you die, you die.

That's just the way life is. It's all life a tragedy. But the fact of the matter is that we human beings, we don't like tragedies. Movies that are made where everything ends with the bad guys win, the good guys all die, those movies don't go very well at the box office.

On one hand, science and serious philosophy tells you that it's all just tragedy, that in fact, you know, the fact of the matter is in the real world, Idi Amin did horrendous things in Uganda, but he died a rich man in another country.

Stalin did horrendous things, but he dies in his bed. Yeah, you have Hitler who died, but you know, lots and lots of times, horrendously evil people die natural deaths, not facing any type of judgment and that's the real world and the fact of the matter is even for them, when you die, you die.

[39 : 05] But the fact of the matter is that what we, the movies that do well end with a wedding. They end with applause. They end with justice. Triumphant and being reestablished.

That's the movies that we actually watch. It's the movies that serious thinkers say are fairy tales. And what we're to see here is that fairy tale has become fact.

That myth has become fact. And that's what God wants us to understand. The only reason we can believe this, of course, is that as we'll see next week, that Jesus really rises from the dead.

If he didn't rise from the dead, then in fact, all life is tragedy. It is not comedy. All life is tragedy. But if in fact, he rises from the dead, that makes this particular death and the fulfillment inherent in all of his life and in his death and in his resurrection, it means there is a God that does exist.

There can be purpose in life. There can be meaning in life. And it means that, in fact, death does not have the final word. That the myths and the fairy tales which we long for once became fact.

[40 : 12] And that means there is the possibility that in your life and mine, life is not, death is not the final word. Injustice is not the final word. This decomposition is not the final word, but the final word is life.

You see, this is all part of, if you go back and you read the beginning of John's Gospel, the beginning of John's Gospel begins like this. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning. All things were made through him and without him nothing was made that was made. In him was life and the life was the light of men. That's the first five verses in John's Gospel.

And so you see, what we see here in John's Gospel is John is telling not only the story of Jesus, but he's telling the story of Jesus in combination with a far bigger story. And in that bigger story, John is saying this, that what caused all things to be, all things that exist were created by a combination of life, light, and love.

Life, light, and love. That is the source of all things that exist. But human beings turned away from God to be God themselves. And what happens when you turn away from life?

[41 : 25] You walk towards death. What happens when you turn away from light? You walk towards darkness. What happens when you turn away from love? You turn towards indifference and hatred.

And human beings become addicted to turning towards death and turning towards darkness and turning towards hatred and indifference.

And so God, the Son of God, comes and dwells among us as one of us. The light of the world walks amongst those who love darkness.

The life of the world comes amongst those who will die and go towards death and even choose death. And the love of the world comes and walks amongst those who choose indifference and hatred.

And he doesn't just come as a tourist to observe, but he comes amongst us even to the point that life takes on my death and yours. Light takes on my darkness and yours.

[42 : 32] Love takes on my indifference and hatred and yours. And he, light, bears the darkness. Love bears the hatred. Life bears death.

That's the importance of this tiny phrase, I thirst. I thirst. Because Jesus is described earlier as living water, as the life of the world.

And he thirsts. He is taking the darkness, the death, and the hatred into himself in a sense swallowing and dealing with that which we cannot deal with ourselves.

And he arises, as we will see on Easter Sunday, that life conquers death. Love conquers hatred and indifference. Light triumphs over darkness.

And he does it for you and me. that when we put our faith and trust in him, we are sharing in his conquest for us.

[43 : 39] Please stand. Thank you. Thank you. Let's pray.

Father, we give you thanks and praise for Jesus, and we thank and praise you that when he dealt with death, he dealt with it, it was finished. We give you thanks and praise that when he dealt with darkness, it was finished.

We give you thanks and praise that when he dealt with hatred and indifference, it was finished. And we thank and praise you, Father, that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, that we share in his finished work over those things.

We give you thanks and praise that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, our destiny, Father, is sure. That the light is our destiny.

That love is our destiny. That life is our destiny. Father, on this side of the grave, we still have so many things within us that are addicted to darkness and addicted to death and addicted to a difference and addicted to hatred.

[44 : 58] We give you thanks and praise, Father, that the work of Jesus, it is finished. It is finished for us. That when we put our faith in him, the final word will not be those things of hatred.

But, Father, you know how much we struggle now. And we ask that you grip us with the gospel. Grip us, Father, with the triumph of life and light and love. And so help us to be confident in his finished work that with Jesus we might have the confidence and the humility to look at the darkness and death and hatred and indifference in our own lives.

And as we are gripped by the gospel to deal with it. That you might give us such a confidence in the finished work of Jesus that we might not only look at the death and darkness and hatred and indifference of our own lives, but of our families, of our places of work, of our city, of our country, and of our world.

And that you might use us, Father, to walk towards that, to share the gospel. And be used by you to lessen the darkness and lessen the death and lessen the hatred and lessen the indifference.

As we are used by you to bless the city and bless the world to your great glory. And, Father, we ask that you would do these mighty works in our lives. Imperfect people as we are.

[46 : 18] May your Holy Spirit move with might and power within us to make us disciples of Jesus' grip by the gospel. Learning to live for your glory. And we ask these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior.

Amen.