

Disbelieve for joy

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 April 2025

Preacher: Dave Bott

[0 : 0 0] Mark 15, verse 16 to 20 we'll be starting with. And the soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is the governor's headquarters. And they called together the whole battalion.

! And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. And they began to salute him, Hail the King of Jews! And they were striking his head with a reed, and spitting on him, and kneeling down in homage to him.

And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him. And then same chapter, jumping to verse 37.

And Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion who stood facing him saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, Truly, this man was the Son of God.

Then we're moving to the book of Luke, chapter 24, starting at verse 36. Luke 24, verse 36.

[1 : 1 7] As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, Peace to you. But they were startled and frightened, and thought they saw a spirit.

And he said to them, Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet. That is, I myself. Touch me and see me.

For a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have. And when he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marvelling, he said to them, Have you anything here to eat?

And they gave him a piece of broiled fish. And he took it and ate it before them. Then he said to them, These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you.

That everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures and said to them, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.

[2 : 3 7] You are the witnesses of these things. Thank you. Well, good morning. My name is Dave. I'm one of the pastors here. Well, the young Aussie sprinter sensation, Gout Gout, did you see the pendant on his necklace?

It was three soldiers aimed with rifles at a figure kneeling between them. Did anyone see that? That's because that's not true. The media would have gone nuts if that was his pendant. It was much, much, much worse than that.

It was a crucifix. Anyway, I won't go into detail. There's kids in the room. We see crosses everywhere and we just think it's normal.

It is not normal. What's the cross mean? I like how someone else put it. The message of Good Friday, of the cross, is that given half a chance, the human race will do away with its maker.

[3 : 4 7] That's what the cross means. Given half a chance, we'll do away with our maker. We heard some of the story read to us in the children's video.

I'd like to just look at that story again and look at it, at what the choices some of these people made that night, that day.

The night before he died, his close friend Judas arranges a secret meeting to have Jesus captured for a handful of cash. Judas did away with Jesus for money.

Then Peter, his most devout follower, when Jesus willingly hands himself over, Peter three times says to strangers, I don't know him.

I don't know him. I have nothing to do with him. Peter did away with Jesus to protect himself. The religious top dogs, envious of how popular Jesus was getting, that they're losing their top spot.

[4 : 54] How would you feel if you were in a courtroom and you knew the judges had already decided guilty before proceedings began? These religious top dogs, they did away with Jesus.

They chose power. Then we've got King Herod. We didn't hear his story, but King Herod, he throws parties for pleasure.

There's drinking, there's girls dancing. He took someone else's wife. Jesus is brought before him and all he wants is the thrill of seeing a miracle firsthand. And Jesus doesn't perform.

And so Herod, he could have set him free, but he did away with Jesus. He wanted pleasure. He chose pleasure. Then we've got Pilate, the Roman governor.

He had the authority of Caesar. He tries to set Jesus free knowing he's innocent, but he gives the order to crucify. He can't wash his hands. He can't. Pilate did away with Jesus because he was a coward.

[5 : 59] Not willing to do what was right. He didn't protect the innocents. He chose a hassle-free life. He chose a hassle-free life.

When you see a cross, what does it mean? It comes in different forms. Money, self-protection, power, pleasure, just a hassle-free life, but it's all choosing self.

Given half a chance, if you're here today, if you're religious or not, it doesn't matter. That's not what I'm talking about. We choose self. We will all do away with our maker.

I can see myself in this story. I can see myself in the choices of these people. So many of my choices for self do harm.

Do so much harm to other people. Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice. Call out among the scoffers.

[7 : 05] It's my voice. Crucify him. Crucify him. That's my voice. It was my sin that held him there.

Can you see yourself? Can you hear your mocking voice? Well, what did Jesus choose? One of my favorite memories in high school was on one Friday night playing rugby.

I'm a soccer person, but I was forced to play rugby for my school. Now, you may not have noticed.

You can barely see my head above the pulpit. I'm not a very tall person.

Some dare to call me short. Now, I was playing fullback. And the opposition's biggest player broke through our defenses.

I'm pretty sure he was a grown man. He should not have been playing in our league. And he saw no need to run around me. He just ran straight at me.

[8 : 13] Now, to everyone's surprise, including my own, I picked him up and put him on his back. And I just want to end the sermon there. So that that's the point you go away with.

Now, isn't that the kind of strength and power and success and applause that we love? That the world goes, that's great.

Whatever life throws at you, you pick it up and put it on its back. You push through. You succeed. See, can you see in Jesus true strength?

True greatness. In what he chose again and again and again out of love for you and me. Can you see his true strength?

He's the son of God. And he chose to get trampled by little Judas, betraying him. He gets trampled by his friends, abandoning him.

[9 : 17] And still acts in love towards him. He gets trampled by the soldiers blindfolding him and hitting him and spitting on him. He doesn't even... This isn't in the text, but I reckon he didn't even clench his fists in retaliation.

He gets trampled by false accusations. He is silent before Pilate. Pilate is amazed. He makes no defence.

Do you see his strength? He shows his love for you and me that on the cross, he stayed.

That's his strength. He got trampled and trampled and he stayed there. That's great. I hope you take that point away.

That's greatness. Do you see what God the Father chose? If you're a parent, what would you give up your child for?

[10 : 25] Five, six things coming... No, I'm guessing nothing, right? Nothing.

For what reason would you hand your child over to killers? Now, Jesus chose to go to the cross. He chose it. But doesn't that tell us something?

That the Father... The Father would give up his son. Doesn't that tell us something of how captive and in danger we are? If that's what it took.

That's what it took. To give us freedom and life. Could God really want me that much?

That he would give up his son to have me? To have you? The cross hanging around Gaut's neck, it means all of this.

[11:27] What we choose. What Jesus chose. What the Father chose. It means all that. If. If Jesus was raised back to life with a new body on the third day.

Do you agree with me? The resurrection is unbelievable. It is. It is.

We live in a scientific age. We aren't superstitious like those ancient people. His followers probably wanted to believe it. Maybe it comforted their grief.

Maybe they wanted their religion to keep going. But I love the authenticity of what we read. Look at these followers. They do not sound superstitious.

They don't sound gullible. When the women report that the tomb was empty, they don't believe them. Only two of them go see for themselves. They don't believe it.

[12:29] Two of them, another two of them, are walking and talking with Jesus all day. They are so depressed because their hopes are dead and gone. It takes them ages to recognise him.

They are just not expecting it. And then he appears in a room with all of them and they didn't cry, yes, we knew you could do it. They are terrified.

They think they are seeing a ghost. He has to convince them. I am not a ghost. If you are going to write a fictional story to make this up, what comes next, frankly, I don't know why you would write it. It is not very inspiring. You would expect something like, and he shone with the brightness of the sun and everyone bowed down and worshipped. But what do we get? You got anything in the fridge?

And he took a piece of broiled fish and he ate it before the...

[13:37] It's not very inspiring. Why would you write that unless that's what happened? Jews believed there would be a resurrection, but they did not believe it would happen until the very end of history.

And they did not believe one person would be raised, but everyone at the same time. The Jews were not expecting this. That's why the disciples are just like, this doesn't fit in my head.

The Romans and Greeks thought the spirit is what matters. The body, it's dirty. It's weak. The idea of a bodily resurrection, unbelievable.

So if we struggle in our scientific age to believe this, let's join the club. It's always, always been unbelievable.

Jesus invites them. He invites us to look at his hands and his feet where the scars are. His body that he'll have for all eternity have the scars where the nails went in.

[14:51] And I love the description once they looked and touched his hands and his feet. They still disbelieved for joy.

They still disbelieved for joy and were marvelling. To believe in Jesus is to move from saying the resurrection is unbelievable because it just doesn't fit in my understanding.

To struggling to believe because of all that the resurrection means. For joy. That's the movement. It's from unbelief to unbelief. In joy. At this one time, I was negotiating with someone to buy their car.

And I took it for a desk drive. I asked all the usual questions. I was negotiating a price. And he gave me a call one night. And he said, I've got a proposal for you.

[16:04] You can have the car for free. Now, my mind just went in a few different directions all at once.

Did he just say that? Is the lion breaking up? Like, does his wife know about this? She did, by the way. What's the catch?

I was just waiting for the catch. I'm still waiting for the catch. It still hasn't come. Why would he do that? Anyway, I was just trying to think of a time where I felt this disbelief for joy.

I just can't comprehend it. Now, if I can feel that about a car. Like, it's just a car. Jesus invites us to look at his hands and feet.

And God is, he wants all the world to know. It's like he's calling you and I up going, I've got a proposal for you. You're waiting for the catch. It doesn't come.

[17:05] Look at my hands and feet and enter the joy that all my death and resurrection means. All for free. But you struggle to believe it.

What does it mean? Well, what does he say? He says, peace. Peace to you.

We think of peace like this moment in the room. There was a bit of quiet. We think of peace as in, like, the kids not fighting over toys. But peace for Jews, shalom, it means so much more than that. It means wholeness. It means everything, everything is put right. I'm craving that.

I think we all crave that. The peace of his resurrection. It means so many things. I just want to point out three. It means peace, wholeness of a new forever body.

[18 : 14] A lady named Jodie became a quadriplegic as a teenager. And in a church service once, the minister asked everyone to get out of their seats and kneel to pray.

And this room of 500 or so people got out and knelt. And she was just, I knew I couldn't get through this. She was just sitting there. She knew the rest of her life she could never do that.

But she wasn't just crying because the rest of her life she couldn't do that. This thought came to her. She said this. It made me think of the day when I too will be able to get out of this wheelchair on new resurrected legs.

I can't wait for that day. Because when I get my glorified body, the first thing I'm going to do with my resurrected legs is to fall down.

On grateful, glorified knees.

[19 : 33] The resurrection gives that kind of hope. And the resurrection means peace.

It means wholeness knowing our lives matter. I was talking with a man and he said that when he was approaching retirement, he questioned what life was all about.

Even suicidal thoughts. But when a famous Christian from centuries ago was asked, what would you do if you knew Jesus was coming back tomorrow?

He said, I'd plant a tree. I said, I'd plant a tree. Do you get it? What a great response.

He understood. If you understand the resurrection, that God is committed to remaking this world, our choices matter for eternity. If we're working towards the same goals that God is.

[20 : 39] Everything we do for God will last. It means peace of a new resurrected body. It means our lives matter if we're living them for God.

And it means the peace, the wholeness of forgiveness. We see what's going on at that cross very clearly at the end of the Mark reading.

Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

Now the curtain in the temple was a barrier saying you cannot come to God. No one could come to God. You can't come into his home. And so we see very clearly in that moment what's going on.

When Jesus breathed his last, God the Father is saying to the Son, to forgive you and me, you've got to get out. And he's now saying to you and me, come in.

[21 : 46] It's that peace. Come into my home. It's peace with God. Forgiveness with God. A survivor of the concentration camps in World War II, her name was Corey.

Her father and sister died in the camps. And after the war in a church service, a man approached her afterwards and he was one of the SS prison guards.

And he held out his hand, asking for forgiveness. And Corey writes this. I tried to smile. I struggled to raise my hand.

I could not. I felt nothing. Not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I prayed, I cannot forgive him.

Give me your forgiveness. And as I took his hand, the most incredible thing happened. And into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

[22 : 55] The resurrection means peace. It means wholeness. It means forever body, that hope.

It means our choices matter when we live it for God. It means peace with God. It is a forgiveness that will heal the world. And it means so much more.

The resurrection is unbelievable. I pray that each of us would struggle to believe because your joy is so full that God has called you up.

I've got a proposal. I pray that God would do all this for you. All for free. Look at his scars on his hands and his feet and embrace what the cross really means.

It means I am so sinful that Jesus had to die for me. Yet I am so loved and valued.

[24 : 06] He was glad to die for me. To give you peace. May our joy be full. Thanks for listening.