

He Shall Prolong His Days

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[0 : 00] It comes as no surprise to us really that Mark's account of the resurrection is the shortest of the four gospels. And as with most of the events about which he wrote, Mark summarized the details of the resurrection to provide for us what he felt like was most important for his purpose and for his audience.

Which is why his ending to his gospel is so different from the other three gospel authors. And that's why I say on a routine basis that as you come to the gospels, you don't only need to read one. You need to lay the four gospels alongside one of another. They're all reporting about the same events, but like a different reporter writing for different newspapers. They're going to cover it in just a little bit of a different way based on their audience, based on their target, based on the point that they're trying to get across.

And so you need to do that. Some point this week, maybe this afternoon, if you have time, lay the four gospel accounts of the resurrection beside one another and trace them and see exactly how all of this unfolded.

Mark's is a very, very short account and it's unique. It's unique in that the entire account of resurrection in Mark's gospel is seen exclusively through the eyes of these women who had come to the tomb early on Sunday morning.

[1 : 24] And you'll find them present in all of the gospels, but it's only in Mark's gospel that we find only their account and their record listed.

Which in fact is another gauge for the authenticity of Mark's account of the resurrection. And I mentioned this last week in first century Palestine, as significant as eyewitness testimony was to establishing a fact, they would not count women's testimonies as credible in establishing those facts.

So those who would come and would suggest, well, Mark made all of this up. This is a fabrication of things to try to amass a following of this great teacher who actually was truly dead.

He never really did rise from the dead. Well, if Mark was intent in the first century on fabricating a story that would actually be useful in amassing a following, he certainly wouldn't have used the exclusive testimony of a group of women.

Because no one would have counted that at that time as authentic testimony. And so there's a uniqueness to this in that this is what provides some of the authenticity of this account.

[2 : 40] Part of the reason we can trust it is because of this. But then his structure conveys the reliability of his record.

James Edwards takes this even further, and I think this is helpful for us all to remember. That the testimony of women is entirely in character with the divine economy.

Those whose testimony is discounted in human society are the first to be included in the divine society. And he quotes 1 Corinthians chapter 1, when Paul says it's the foolish things of this world. The things, in other words, not that are truly foolish, but that are considered foolish by the world. That confounds them. It's the ones that the world considers to be weak that actually are able to overcome.

It's the ones who God has chosen to use. Those who are humble. Those who no one else would use. It's interesting. It comes as great encouragement to us in that.

[3 : 46] Because if we're all honest with one another, there's no reason for him to use us. There's nothing strong about us. There's nothing particularly wise about us apart from the goodness and the grace of God at work in us.

And yet, he still uses us. So as we use the balance of the day to examine this final chapter, it should be our joy to consider the testimony of these women.

So what I wanted to do this morning is somewhat quickly, somewhat is a relative term, somewhat quickly work through the narrative.

And then I want to conclude by looking at two crucial questions. The first question being, is it true? And then the second question being, is this relevant?

Even if it is true, why does it matter to me? Why should it matter to me? Why should it matter to anyone else? Okay, let's work through the narrative then together. If you want to keep notes in your journals, if you've done that over the last couple years, the first thing that I have in my notes is simply preparing for the tomb.

[4 : 59] Preparing for the tomb. Look with me at verse 1. When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint him.

Very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb, and they were saying to one another, Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?

So again, Mark mentions this same group of women that were present for Jesus' crucifixion. He mentions the same group of women that were present at the burial of Jesus, and all of this is important because it is a consistent witness to the events of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Now, these faithful women went to the tomb for the purpose of anointing the body of Jesus with certain oils, spices, which was a customary sign of love and respect for deceased loved ones.

And they've had to wait till Sunday morning to do it. If you'll remember, there was such a small window of time between Jesus' death on Friday afternoon, about 3 o'clock. Then Joseph had to go to Pilate after Jesus died at 3.

[6 : 15] He had to go to Pilate, get permission to actually take Jesus' body. But before he can get permission, Pilate has to send to the centurion, who is back at Golgotha, to ensure that he's truly dead.

Word comes back. Yes, he's truly dead. And then permission is granted. And then once the permission is granted, they have to actually go to the market to get the things that they need to quickly take him off the cross, to cleanse his body, to wrap it in a shroud, we're told, and then to actually get him to the tomb and seal it all before sundown, which would have been about 7 o'clock. This is a very short window. So what these women are doing is they're coming on Sunday to essentially pay their last respects to the Lord because they didn't have an opportunity to care for his body themselves on Friday.

So that's what's taking place here. That's why they're actually coming to the tomb. So at the end of the Sabbath, which would have been probably sundown on Saturday, they purchased some oil and spices because they were not anticipating Jesus' death.

They did not bring this with them. They're all from Galilee. They wouldn't have brought this with them. So they have to go and purchase it. And then as the sun is coming up on Sunday morning, they go to the tomb to, again, essentially pay their last respects.

[7 : 36] They even debate as they walked, we're told in verse 3, how they might gain access to the tomb. They had seen the tomb sealed because they had been waiting around on Friday to witness that.

But it's like in the perhaps emotion of the weekend and in maybe the hurried nature by which they got the oils and the spices, no one stopped to consider we need to take someone who can actually roll this stone away.

And so as they're walking, they're contemplating these things that they hadn't considered up to that point. How are we going to get the stone open? How are we actually going to accomplish this thing that we want to do? And again, their goal was to care for what they thought would be Jesus' decomposing body before they traveled back to Galilee.

Now what's necessary for us to understand here is that this was a sincere act of devotion that was absolutely absent of any expectation of resurrection.

The whole purpose for them going to the tomb is not to wait around to see if Jesus walks out of it. That's not why they're there. And sometimes we, maybe we would never say this out loud, but maybe sometimes we get this thought in our heads.

[8 : 57] We look back at the disciples who were completely absent in the whole deal. And then we see these women who had a severe lack of faith in the words of Christ at this point about his own resurrection.

And we think, you know what, if it was me, I would have been there that morning. Because I would have heard everything Jesus said and I would have listened to it. And I would have been there. Like, I remember a couple of years ago when we were still living near Harrisburg.

They opened up a new Chick-fil-A in Harrisburg. And I guess the first, like, hundred people, Julie, something like that, the first hundred people in the door on the first day get a year's worth of free Chick-fil-A.

And for days beforehand, the parking lot was full of tents. People were camped out for days because they wanted free chicken sandwiches for a year. And sometimes we think, you know what, I wouldn't do that for Chick-fil-A, but you better believe I would have done that for Jesus.

I would have been camped out since Friday night just waiting for him to walk right out of the tomb. No, you wouldn't. And they didn't. They had zero expectation for resurrection.

[10:01] They fully expected Jesus to still be dead so that they could anoint his decomposing body as really just an emotional response to his death. And then they were going back to Galilee to get on with their lives.

That's what's happening here. They loved Jesus. They followed Jesus. They believed in Jesus. But the thought that he would rise from the dead was the furthest thing from their minds.

They'd witnessed him raise others. They had seen him in Bethany stand outside of the tomb of Lazarus and say, Lazarus, come forth. And then immediately see him walk out of the tomb.

They'd witnessed Jesus do this, but the thought of him raising himself, because some type of healer like this, some type of power like this is only possible so long as the healer himself is alive.

But if the healer is dead, who's going to raise him? So there's no thought of resurrection here. So their preparations were for a dead Jesus, not a living Savior.

[11:04] A dead one. A dead loved one. That's preparing for the tomb. Number two, arriving at the tomb. Arriving at the tomb. So being that they expected a sealed, guarded tomb containing the corpse of Jesus, what they discovered upon their arrival produced an incredible amount of shock and then immediate fear.

But what's interesting here is that their discovery did not cause them to contemplate the possibility that Jesus had risen. Let's look at it.

Two things I want to point out. I want to point out what they saw and then what they heard. Okay? Let's first look at what they saw. Verse four. Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back.

It was very large. Now this whole statement at the very end of verse five, they were alarmed, might be the understatement of Mark's gospel.

I mean, can you imagine? First, there's the shock of the stone has been rolled away, which immediately in their mind associates with someone has stolen his body.

[12:21] How low can these people get? Shock. Then it's fear. Because when they go inside the tomb, suddenly there's a being who wasn't there when they first walked in the door.

Now he's there. Alarm is an understatement here. In fact, if you get into the Greek language here, this is probably not even the best translation. What they were was absolutely terrified.

They were terrified. So the first thing they see is the large stone. Matthew 28 says that the soldiers guarding the tomb had fainted out of fear.

So we can assume that as they walk up, they also see the limp bodies of these soldiers next to the tomb. And their first reaction is someone has come.

They have assaulted the soldiers and they've stolen Jesus's body. And we know this was their thought because as we lay out the gospel side by side, John chapter 20 tells us that Mary Magdalene, before getting to the tomb, the women see that the stone has been rolled away.

[13:30] They automatically assume he's been stolen. And before going further to look, Mary runs back to tell Peter and John. So she doesn't even see the empty tomb yet.

She just sees their stone rolled away, assumes that the body has been stolen, and she runs back to Peter and to John and gets them so that they could come and check it out themselves.

Their assumption here was not resurrection. Their assumption was conspiracy. And not only does this explain further their expectations, it reveals, hear me, that an empty tomb is not sufficient in and of itself to affirm Jesus's resurrection.

It's not enough. We're going to come back to that in a minute, okay? That brings us to verse 5, which was the next thing that they saw. After Mary Magdalene left to get help, the others mustered

up the courage.

And what courage this must have been, honestly, to actually go into the tomb to see what might have happened. And when they enter, we're told that an angel suddenly appears with them.

[14:41] Now, I recognize that Mark says a young man, but the description that Mark gives of the clothing of this young man and his sudden appearance in the tomb, clearly Mark intends to communicate that this was an angel who has taken the form of a young man, a human-like form.

It's the best way that he knows to express it. And again, if you lay out the other gospels side by side, they all affirm this was an angel. In fact, a couple of them actually mentioned there were two angels. Mark only mentions the one.

But they walk inside. It's empty when they first get in. And then all of a sudden, this angel suddenly appears before them. And what is this all about? By God's grace, the empty tomb was accompanied by a revelatory message from God.

So if all we have is an empty tomb, there's lots of explanations we might come up with. But it wasn't just an empty tomb that the women found. There was a supernatural messenger from God who brought a revelation from God about the nature and the circumstances of Jesus's body.

So that's what they saw. Let's look at what they heard. Verse 6 and 7. Now here's how I want to break down what they heard.

[16:26] There's three pairs of statements here. Each one contains an imperative, a command, something that they're being instructed to do. And each instruction is paired with an indicative or a statement of fact that is to support the instruction that they've been given.

And when you read the Bible, you see that God works like this all the time. God never gives an imperative without an indicative. And sometimes the indicative is simply like we would do with our kids. Do this because I said so and I'm your father, right?

And sometimes God does that. Do this because I am the Lord. That's what he does with the Ten Commandments, right? So Jesus is doing, or excuse me, this angel is doing this same thing here. Let's just look at them quickly.

In the first pair, in verse 6, the imperative is do not be alarmed. That's the instruction. Calm down. Don't be afraid. The indicative that supports that is you seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. In other words, this angel looks at the women and he says, don't be afraid. I know who you are and I have a message for you. Don't be afraid.

[17:34] I know who you are and I have a message from God for you. Now there's a difference between the way they respond and the way the soldiers respond. The soldiers see the angel.

Matthew says they pass out and who knows when they come to, right? It's different with these women. Why? Because the angel has a different purpose with these women. He immediately tells them, don't be afraid.

I know you. I'm from God. I have a message for you. They're terrified. Number two. This time Mark reverses it.

The indicative comes first. Here it is. He has risen. He is not here. That comes with the following or preceding the imperative.

See the place where they laid him. So then it's only at this moment of revelation that these women can actually begin to understand what happened with Jesus.

[18:35] If all they see is an empty tomb, it's not enough. All it is enough to say is that Jesus isn't there, but it doesn't explain why he isn't there. But now God has sent a revelation to them through the messenger, his angel, who has now said he has risen.

Literally, he has been raised. It's one word in Greek. It's a one word sentence. Egerthe. Egerthe. He has been raised.

And with a single word, the angel announced the most incredible miracle to have ever occurred. Jesus was raised from the dead. And the imperative that follows is for the women to look.

Look, he's not here. And the reason he's not here is because God has raised him. You see, the observation of the empty tomb is worthless without the revelation that God has raised Jesus.

Edwards is helpful here. It's not simply the empty tomb that proves the resurrection. It's the resurrection. It's the resurrection that makes the empty tomb meaningful, he says.

[19:49] So we could give many explanations. Like I said, perhaps somebody stole the body. And skeptics have given all kinds of options for us to consider. But no skeptic can explain the supernatural appearance of an angel with a message from God.

And the point is that God in his marvelous grace gave these women a word of revelation that was necessary for their faith.

And that is precisely what he has done for us through the scriptures. Suppose we found the tomb that Jesus was laid in today.

And we knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that this was it. And we walked in and it was still empty. That wouldn't be enough for us to put our faith in Christ.

But God in his grace has given us a revelation through the words of the Bible that help us to understand. It's not an epiphany that just happens.

[20 : 52] No, it's the scripture. The objective truth of God. Third step. The imperative is go and tell. Go and tell. Go tell the disciples.

And then there's a specific emphasis on Peter. Of course, we've looked at this before. This is probably meant to be, in one sense, an encouragement to Peter. Because Peter had failed so miserably before.

There's a reminder to Peter specifically that restoration is coming for him in Galilee. But then if you think, none of the other gospel authors really point that part out. Only Mark does. Well, why? Because Mark is writing Peter's eyewitness testimony here. And it's important for the people in Rome who he's writing to, who was his immediate audience, to know that we know these things because Peter's actually the one that told us.

He's the one that experienced this thing. And then the indicative is this. It's a promise. There you will see him just as he told you.

[21 : 52] There you will see him just as he told you. So they're commanded to go and tell. A pattern we find repeated in the New Testament. So that the gospel revealed in the death and resurrection of Jesus is not a private matter.

But it's something that must be shared with others. Peter and John said in Acts chapter 4, we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard. 1 John chapter 1, that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you so that you too may have fellowship with us.

Because our fellowship is with the Father through his Son, Jesus Christ. That's a pattern that passes down to us. We have this same indicative. Go and tell.

Go and tell what? Jesus has been raised. Why would we be motivated to do that? First, because it's been commanded for us to do it. Second, because like John said in 1 John chapter 1, the only way that people will begin to truly have fellowship with us is when they have fellowship in the Son.

So we go and tell. But then there's this promise to consider again. You will see him. Which was not a promise that originated with the angel. But that came directly from Christ himself.

[23 : 10] Chapter 8, chapter 9, chapter 10. All affirm Jesus plainly speaking of his resurrection. I think the one that is probably in view here is from Mark 14.

After Jesus tells the disciples that they're all going to fall away. He says, but after I am raised up, in verse 28, I will go before you to Galilee.

In other words, I'm going to die. I'm going to die, but I'm going to raise. That's a promise. And after I raise, I'm going to meet with you again in Galilee. And when we meet there, you're going to be restored. That's a wonderful promise that is reminding the disciples here.

So what an encouraging message this must have been for Peter and the others. It's a promise that we can all cling to, isn't it? Jesus has risen, and you will see him.

Just as he said. One day, you will see him. City of Light came out with a new album this week.

There's a particular song on there that I really have enjoyed the last couple of days.

[24 : 24] On that day, we will see you shining brighter than the sun. On that day, we will know you as we lift our voice as one. Till that day, we will praise you for your never-ending grace.

And we will keep on singing till that glorious day. And we come here to this promise. I don't think this promise is just for the disciples. It's immediately for the disciples.

There's a promise in this for you and me. Believe Jesus. One day, you will see him. Paul says, right now, we just know in part.

But one day, we will know him in his fullness. We will sing our songs to him in his physical presence. And until that day comes, we will sing, Christ the Lord is risen today.

Until that day comes, we will sing, come behold the wondrous mystery. Until that day comes, we will sing in Christ alone and the other songs, lifting our praise to the Savior that we long to see, clinging to the promise that he gave here.

[25 : 36] You will see him. He has risen. Thirdly, there's fleeing from the tomb or running from the tomb or getting out of there, however you want to write it down.

Because that's essentially what they're doing. Verse 8. It's a really strange way to end, isn't it? Three words immediately pop out.

Trembling, astonishment, afraid. Now, for those of us who have grown up in a Christian culture, that surprises us.

But we're so familiar with the gospel story. We're so familiar with the resurrection narrative that sometimes we assume that the people involved in the resurrection narrative were just as familiar with it.

And that's just not the case. These women's immediate reaction was not to sing, Christ the Lord is risen today.

[26 : 51] They didn't sing that. That's not their first reaction. They don't fall on the ground and begin to worship or pray. They didn't have a prayer meeting at the tomb. That's not what happened. They ran.

Why? Because they're terrified. And before we drop the hammer on them about that, for running in fear instead of stopping and considering a moment of faith, before we give them a hard time, we need to recognize that their fearful, overwhelmed response is the same reaction any of us would have had too.

They're probably exhausted in every way you can think. So downtrodden since the sudden, in their perspective, sudden crucifixion of Jesus, that they probably haven't slept since Friday.

They've probably been with the disciples emotionally, mentally, physically, absolutely depleted. And they come that morning, already mourning over the death of Jesus, prepared to mourn even further and express this grief as they anoint his body.

And the first thing that they see is shock because they think someone has actually stolen his body, which just adds to the stress of this moment for them. And then they go inside and they're terrified because an angel appears before them.

[28 : 15] And at this moment in verse 8, they haven't had time to process this. They haven't had time to process all that's happening. They did what any of us would do. They got out of there because they didn't know what else to do.

They ran in fear. We should also remember that as these truths begin to settle on their hearts and on their minds, perhaps as they're running, Matthew and John both write that their fear began to turn to joy.

Perhaps not because there's a complete understanding of what exactly has happened, but the fact that there is hope that something has happened and their fear starts to begin turning to joy.

But the struggle with Mark 16 is this is where Mark leaves it. He gives us no resurrection appearance like the other gospel authors do.

And what are we supposed to do with that? What I'd like to point out to you, at least at this point, is a progression of faith that we find here. We've already noted that the empty tomb itself is not enough to produce a saving faith because there's lots of ways we could explain that.

[29 : 31] Revelation is necessary. But even the revelation itself on its own is not enough. In order for these women to express a saving faith, at least the way that the gospels begin to lay it out, is that there must be an encounter with the risen Lord.

You see, it's not a subscription to a set of given facts in the revelation that produces saving faith. James talks about this, and I want to be really careful because I don't want to confuse you here. The word gives life, of course. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. I'm not denying that. I hope you understand what I'm trying to say.

I'm not denying that at all. But in this moment, James says, and is it James chapter 2? He says, you believe that God is one? In other words, you believe the scriptures? Great.

So do the demons, and they tremble as a result of it. So we're not talking here, in terms of saving faith, we're not talking about subscribing to the facts of Christianity and some type of agreement with the scripture just because you're not an atheist, so you're going to choose something, and this seems to work, and so you're going to ascribe or give assent intellectually to these particular facts.

[30 : 58] That's not enough. So the empty tomb on its own is not enough. It needs revelation. But the revelation, just subscribing to the facts of it, isn't enough either. What's necessary here for saving faith?

A personal encounter with the risen Lord is. And let me walk you through a couple of examples here. Remember Mary Magdalene. John says that she ran from the tomb when she saw the stone. She gets Peter and John. They run to the tomb, and she follows after them. They see that the tomb is empty, and then they hit the road. They just go back home. It's the strangest thing.

They just go back home. But Mary sticks around for a moment. And do you remember what happened with Mary? Then she saw the two angels. She didn't see them in Mark 16.

She sees them in John 20. She's alone now. They pass on the revelation. And you remember what she did? She didn't believe. It's not that she thought they were liars.

[31 : 56] She didn't know how to believe that. And she stands at the tomb, and she weeps. And then she hears somebody behind her, and she thinks it's the gardener. And she says, please tell me, what have you done with my Lord?

Just tell me where you put him. I'll go get him myself. And it's Jesus. She doesn't realize it. And you remember what Jesus said? One word. Do you remember what the word was? Her name.

That's it. Mary. And something in that moment, in this encounter with the risen Lord, Mary immediately finally recognizes that this is indeed the risen Christ.

And you know what she does? She falls on her face, and she clings to him in this moment. My Lord. My God. You see, the word is great, but there's a lot of people that sit Sunday by Sunday in church services, and they hear the word, and they let it go in one ear and out the other.

They would tell you that they're Christian. They wouldn't necessarily deny the things that they've heard. But unless they've had a personal encounter with the risen Lord through the work of the Holy Spirit, they will not have saving faith. We can take it further.

[33 : 03] It's not just Mary. Remember the two disciples in Luke 24 on the way to Emmaus? Jesus walks with them on the road for hours, explaining the scriptures to them, but they don't recognize that it's Jesus until at the last moment he reveals himself to be who he truly is.

And it's at that moment that they say, did not our hearts burn within us as we walked along the way? And they believed. Why? Because of this personal encounter with the risen Lord. And they run back to Jerusalem where the rest or 10 of the disciples and the women are there, but they're not believing yet.

They've seen the empty tomb, but they don't have the saving faith yet. They've listened to the testimony of the women, but they're not sure if they should trust that yet. Perhaps that was just a hallucination on their part is perhaps how they reasoned it.

And they're not believing. And then suddenly, while the doors are locked in the room, Jesus suddenly appears in the room. They think they've seen a ghost, that it's just an apparition.

So Jesus says, I would like to have some dinner. And he sits down at the table and they watch him in his bodily resurrection, glorified body, but in his resurrection, begin to eat fish in front of them.

[34 : 17] And then he opens the Bible and he rehearses for them all over again. What Moses and the prophets and the Psalms said regarding his crucifixion and resurrection. And it's at that moment that their hearts open and they begin to believe.

Why? Because of the resurrected Lord. There's a fourth one I'll point out and we'll move on. Do you remember Thomas? Thomas wasn't there that night.

It was 10 of the disciples. Judas has already killed himself. Thomas is somewhere else. We don't know where. He's just not there. He comes back later and everybody says, you're not going to believe this, Thomas.

Jesus was here. And he spoke to us and he told us all this stuff. It was really amazing. Thomas says, I don't believe you. Unless I can touch the nail prints in his hands, unless I can force my hand in the spear mark of his side, I will not believe.

And he has to wait eight days. Eight days later, Jesus appears again. This time Thomas is with them, probably in Galilee now. And as they're sitting there, Jesus singles out Thomas.

[35 : 22] And he says, Thomas, I want you to look at these nail prints in my hand. Why don't you stick your finger in that one? Let me show you the print of the spear in my side. Why don't you stick your hand in that one so you can know?

And what does Thomas say? My Lord and my God. You see, it's not just the empty tomb. It's not the revelation just subscribing to it intellectually.

It's an encounter with the risen Lord that produces saving faith. And we don't need to be confused by that. I don't mean to confuse you by that.

This was actually the thing that was a mark of a true disciple in the book, or a true apostle in the book of Acts, was the fact that they had encountered the risen Lord. But there was no expectation beyond those apostles that anybody else would see physically the risen Lord.

So they had to reflect on the words of Jesus. Remember what he said. I'm going to leave, and I'm going to send the Spirit. And everybody who encounters the risen Christ now experiences Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit.

[36 : 32] As the word of God is preached and heard and believed. That's how we encounter the risen Christ. If you're a believer today, you've had that encounter. You didn't believe because you're smarter than everybody else.

Even though you might be smarter than everybody else. You believe because you've had an encounter with Christ. All right, let me conclude. Two questions to answer, okay?

Is it true? Is it true? And people have been trying to deny and disprove Jesus' resurrection since the very day that it took place.

Matthew 28 tells us that. I'll read it to you. When they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, tell people, his disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.

And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. The very day of his resurrection. And the Sanhedrin has already said, we'll just make something up.

[37 : 44] Just don't tell anybody. Here's some money. Just tell people that the disciples stole him. We'll deal with them later. But skeptics have abounded through the centuries.

Some have continued with the lie of the Sanhedrin. They insist that Jesus' body was stolen. Let me tell you why that doesn't work. If the Jews had stolen Jesus' body, they would have immediately produced that body whenever the Christians started telling everybody in Jerusalem, Jesus rose from the dead and we saw him.

But they didn't do that because they didn't have the body of Jesus. If the disciples had stolen the body, it wouldn't make sense for them to have been so willing to travel the world and literally be tortured and martyred for faith in a resurrected Lord that they had fabricated.

It doesn't make sense. It doesn't work. We can't just say his body was stolen. We have to do better than that if we're going to deny the resurrection. Others have suggested, as we talked about a couple of weeks ago, that Jesus didn't truly die.

This would be docetism. And later on, Gnosticism would have followed along these lines a little bit as well. They say he didn't really die, that he wasn't truly man, that he just appeared to be man.

[39 : 05] Therefore, he didn't really die. His resurrection wasn't a resurrection. It was a resuscitation. But that doesn't fit either because when we come to the records, we understand there was no way he couldn't have been dead.

He had to have been dead. All the evidence is there in Mark's gospel and the others in historical accounts outside of the Bible. It's all there. You can't say he didn't die.

That doesn't work either. Many people today, secular humanists, would refuse to even consider the facts of the resurrection because it doesn't fit so neatly in their scientific naturalism box.

And intent on dismissing anything that would assert itself as supernatural and claiming to only believe anything that we can observe in the natural world through science, they would say this resurrection could not have taken place.

The problem is they can't prove that the resurrection was a hoax though. They can only deny it on the basis of their presuppositions that there is no God and you can't convince me otherwise.

[40 : 15] It's the equivalent of saying, Jesus didn't raise from the dead and the reason is because I said so. It's equivalent to that. Well, that doesn't work either. There's enough evidence to take seriously the claim that Jesus rose from the dead.

And the burden of proof here is not on the Christians. The burden of proof is on the secularists. It's on the unbeliever that's intent on denying the resurrection. That's really where the burden of proof lies because there's plenty of sufficient evidence for us to take this seriously.

All right. Why? Is it true? Yes, it's true. Number two. Does it actually matter? Is it relevant?

What does Jesus' resurrection 2,000 years ago have to do with me? Perhaps you would say, yeah, of course, I believe in the supernatural. I believe supernatural things happen.

And, of course, there's probably, in fact, probably not just Jesus. There's probably been other people raised from the dead, you know. There's been lots of miracle workers through the centuries.

You say, so it doesn't necessarily bother me to think that.

[41 : 23] The struggle that I have is what does it actually matter to me? What difference does it make for me? So that's what I want to deal with here quickly as I close.

As to its relevance, the resurrection is what makes the gospel actually good news.

That God raised Jesus from the dead confirms that the Father accepted his work that he accomplished on the cross.

That he was truly satisfied by the payment that Jesus made in making an atonement for our sins. In other words, because of the resurrection, you can believe without a doubt that you have received forgiveness for your sins through faith in what Jesus Christ has accomplished for you.

Without the resurrection, there is no proof for that. But because of the resurrection, you can know it for sure. 1 Corinthians 15, Paul talking about the resurrection.

[42 : 30] If Christ had not been raised, then our preaching is vain and your faith is vain. And if he had not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

And those who have died believe in Christ. They have truly died in eternity. There's no life for them left. If Jesus didn't raise, we have no hope.

And then he follows that up and he says, if in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all men to be pitied the most.

Now, why would he say that? What is this hope in this life only? Because that's the distinction between Christians and every other religion. Most religions believe in an afterlife, but they have no hope of it because they're on this relentless search, this relentless pursuit of works that will merit them the best level of heaven that their religion may propose.

If it's not a heaven, if maybe it's a reincarnation type process or religion, then it's still the same thing. There's no real hope for their future. They just have to work as hard as they can and hope for the best.

[43 : 43] And if Jesus has not raised from the dead, then Christianity is exactly like that. There's no real hope that we have. The only hope we would have is whatever we might experience in this life, a coping mechanism perhaps.

But Jesus has risen from the dead, which means that we have a sure hope that because he has raised from the dead, we too will be raised from the dead in his power.

Let me just read to you just real quickly and I turn to it and just be patient with me. I want to get through it. In 2 Corinthians chapter 4, in connection with this, in verse 13, listen to what Paul says. We have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, quote, I believed and so I spoke. And then he says, we also believe and so we also speak. He's referring to their faith in the gospel that he has experienced with those who have believed in Corinth.

Verse 14, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

[44 : 54] As to its relevance, the resurrection actually makes the gospel the gospel. It's actually what brings the hope of it. The surety of it, that when we trust Christ because of what he has done, because of his resurrection, we don't look to the future just hoping for the best.

We look to the future knowing for sure that Jesus will raise us in the same way the Father has raised him. That's our hope. That's our hope.

Is it relevant? Of course it's relevant. If you care anything about eternity, it's relevant. It proves that Jesus has power over our greatest enemy, the one enemy none of us can defeat, that every one of us will face, the enemy of death.

And because he has power over life and death, he has the power and authority to give eternal life to whoever repents and believes in his name.

You don't have to doubt his ability to give you life because he's proven himself to be the God of life. And he proved it in his resurrection.

[46 : 09] John 11, I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.

And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die, Jesus said. Now, how can we trust that Jesus was being honest there? Because a little while later, he popped up out of the grave.

It's relevant. Romans 6, we know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him.

For the death he died, he died to sin once for all, but the life he lives, he lives to God. So you also, believer, must consider yourself dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15, hold death, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin. The power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

[47 : 19] Of course it's relevant. It's relevant because it validates everything that Jesus did and said. It gives us confidence that what we have is truly the inerrant, inspired, authoritative, infallible word of God because Jesus believed it was and taught that it was.

the resurrection gives us that hope. It gives us confidence in our future glory because the one who rose from the dead promised that glory.

It gives us confidence in tribulation because in Jesus, Jude says we are more than conquerors. So yes, the resurrection changes everything.

And it can change everything for you if you will believe. And so we have to leave ourselves with just two questions. The first question is, will you believe?

Not will you come to an agreement that as we lay out scientifically the facts of the case, that okay, I can affirm those things. We're not talking about just intellectually saying, yeah, all right, we can check off that box.

[48 : 38] No, I mean a real faith that trusts that not only these things are true, but receives these things by faith for your only hope in life and death.

That's the kind of faith we're talking about. A faith that only comes through an encounter with the risen Lord through the working of the Holy Spirit as you hear the word of God preached. That's the first question.

Will you believe? The second question is will you go and tell? Will you go and tell? Just tell somebody. Start with your kids.

If they didn't get enough of it this morning, give them a little bit more of it this afternoon. Call your parents today. Say, you wouldn't believe what I learned in Mark 16 today.

What do you think about the resurrection? Do you think Jesus really rose from the dead? If you're a fee about it, can you give me an explanation of why you would deny it? Will you let me give you an explanation of why I think that it's probably true and it matters?

[49 : 44] Maybe somebody will hear you. Maybe they'll believe too.