

The New Beginning

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Mark chapter 16, verse 1. When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Salome, brought spices so that they might go and anoint.

Meet Him. That is Jesus Christ. And 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 from the entrance of the tomb?

And looking up, they saw that this stone had been rolled back. It was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe.

And they were alarmed. And he said to them, do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.

[1 : 18] He has risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go.

Tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you.

And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of God abides forever. May God bless the hearing and the preaching of his word. One of the books I own begins this way.

Book by D.A. Carson. He says, I would like to buy three dollars worth of gospel, please. Not too much.

[2 : 29] Just enough gospel to make me happy, but not so much that I get addicted. He continues along these lines, saying, I would like just enough gospel to make my family secure and my children well-behaved.

I think I'll take a little bit of that. I would like just enough gospel to rescue me from hell, but not so much that it gets out of hand. See, I don't want so much gospel that I begin to love those unlike me.

I don't want so much gospel that I begin to give my money away or begin to deny myself or long for the next life more than living my best life now.

Now, none of us would be so bold this Easter morning to say, I would like three dollars worth of gospel, but I wonder if our lives agree.

One of my friends tells me that after he became a Christian, his dad said to him, it's okay to go to church, but just don't get too carried away with it.

[3 : 40] I wonder if that's where many of us are. It's okay to give some of your devotion to the Lord. It's okay to give some of your time away. It's okay to give some of your money away to others.

It's okay to go to church sometimes, but let's not get too carried away. But that's not what Jesus died for because that's about three dollars worth of gospel.

And I want to plead with you, don't settle for it. This morning, we come to the end of our series on Mark's gospel. I think this is the 46th message you've heard on this gospel.

How about that? That's the longest series to date. We still have time to beat that record. Among other things, Taylor will spend time next week explaining why we, along with many other scholars, believe the gospel of Mark ends at verse 8.

So he'll answer all your burning juicy questions. But it's a bit of an odd ending. It's an odd way to tell the story of the resurrection.

[4 : 54] Unlike the other gospel, Mark does not include the risen Jesus appearing to the 12. Doesn't include the walk on the Emmaus road with the disciples when they said, did our hearts not burn when he began to teach us all the scriptures say about me?

It does not include doubting Thomas who stuck his fingers into the wombs of Jesus Christ. The only thing Mark includes is an empty tomb and a couple scared women.

And that's it. But why does the gospel of Mark end this way? And he wants us to see something very important.

The news of the empty tomb is not the end of the story. It's only the beginning. It's not the conclusion. It's the introduction. It's the beginning of the new creation.

It's the opening of a new and living way to God. It's the giving of new life into the world. And it's the launch of a mission to every tribe, tongue, people, and nation. It's Mark's way also of turning to you and me and saying, what are you going to do with it?

[6 : 01] What are you going to do about the empty tomb? Will you believe this good news? Will you embrace it? Will you enjoy the nameless many who did not save their life?

Or will we settle for \$3 worth of gospel? Just enough to keep the children well behaved and the family safe. I want to plead with you. Take all that you have and buy as much gospel as you can get your hands on.

Take all that you have and buy as much gospel as you can get your hands on. And so I'm going to break this text out. It's a little bit different. Break this out with three reasons, three surprising reasons why the gospel is worth all that you have.

And what I mean, not merely monetarily, I mean your life. It's worth everything. And so three surprising reasons in this text that the gospel is worth all that you have. The first is the first eyewitnesses of the empty tomb are women.

The first eyewitnesses of the empty tomb are women. Now that's a very obvious point, but it's a compelling, although surprising, reason why the gospel is the only thing worth all that you have.

[7 : 01] In verse 1, Mark mentions several women going to the tomb. Look at verse 1. Mary Magdalene. Mary, the mother of James and Salome, brought spices so that they might anoint him.

And now this is the third listing of women in about 10 verses. You flip back if you need to. Verse 40. He mentions Mary Magdalene.

Mary, the mother of James, the younger and of Joseph. And Salome. Verse 47. So the first mention was witnessing his crucifixion.

Each of those three women witnessing his burial. Verse 47. Mary Magdalene. Mary, the mother of Joseph, saw where he was laid. And then now, going to his tomb on that first Easter morning is Mary Magdalene.

Mary, the mother of James and Salome. It's the same three women each time. These three lists are verifying the facts of the gospel.

[8 : 00] They're verifying the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Now, Mark doesn't write. We've seen this. Mark doesn't write his gospel the way many of the other authors write their gospel.

Mark's writing is very simple. It contains no fluff. It's fast-paced and fat-free. It gets right to the point and right to the action. But suddenly, in these verses, Mark just slows down and gives us lots of names.

And the reason is, Mark is not only a compelling storyteller. Mark is a careful reporter. Mark is writing from the city of Rome. I've told you this if you've been here.

But in AD 64. And he gives the list of these names because they were eyewitnesses of what happened. He's saying, if you don't believe all this has happened, go and ask one of these women.

They were there. That's why I'm telling you, it's Mary, the mother of James, the younger and of Joseph. So you know exactly the one.

[9 : 01] They saw the empty tomb. Now, one of my favorite things in life are footnotes. Endnotes are demonic. Endnotes are demonic.

They will not be in the new creation. But footnotes. I was reading a book last night that was endnotes. It drove me nuts as I was going to bed. Footnotes immediately. What he's saying, the author's saying, if you want to learn more, just go to this book.

Well, that's what Mark is doing. These names are footnotes. They're Mark's way of saying the Gospels are not stories passed down like a long telephone game and ending up someone like Mark compiling them together.

The Gospels is the careful reporting of eyewitness testimony. That's what these names are all about. And I could go into a lot more detail there. So Mark is telling us and verifying the facts of the Gospel.

But we should be surprised that the eyewitnesses he mentions first are women. Because in that culture, it's a patriarchal culture.

[10 : 05] Men were educated, held power, led in governing, owned property. Women were not able to do any of these things. It's a culture very unlike ours. As we've seen throughout the Gospel, Jesus treats women very differently than that culture does.

And in fact, in this moment, he's demonstrating yet again the important place women play in the kingdom of God. In fact, as we saw, the whole scene about his suffering, his vicarious death, his death in our place, and his resurrection, all of it's been bracketed by the devotion of godly women.

We saw the woman in Mark 14 who anoints him, anoints his head. This faithful woman when all the disciples didn't see what was going on.

And now we see in Mark 16, these women going to anoint him on the morning. All the men are afraid, but these women are not. But the fact that women are the first eyewitnesses also confirms the truthfulness of this account.

As we've seen, it's not surprising that Jesus would have women included and occupy an important place, but it's very surprising. The most important event in human history is verified by the eyewitness testimony of women.

[11 : 24] Women were not even allowed to testify in court, and yet they're written in the scriptures. This surprising fact actually confirms the truthfulness of this account.

If Mark and the other gospel writers were trying to convince people that Jesus really did die and really did raise from the dead, if they were trying to get a new movement off the ground, they would not have included women.

And that is not a knock at women. They would have done what we do, it's like scrub our path of anything potentially offensive so that this message can be received.

They definitely wouldn't have included women. The Greek philosopher Celsus of the second century said, Christianity can't be true because it's verified by women. But I think the reverse is actually true.

In a patriarchal culture where the testimony of women is not accepted in court, why do each of the gospels include women as the first eyewitnesses? Because it's true. It's what happened.

[12 : 27] There can't be any other reason. That's what Mark is helping us see, along with all the other gospels, that it's women verifying this in a patriarchal culture so that we would receive it as true.

Several years ago, I read an article by Rachel Held Evans, who's from Dayton, Tennessee. She died a couple years ago, right across the river. She was writing about the women going to the tomb with spices and ointments.

She was writing about this passage. She was teaching about the resurrection. At that point, she had already become a skeptic in a lot of ways. She said, I quote, I can't promise you resurrection, but I can promise you friends for the journey.

I can promise you fellow travelers to help you carry those burial sacrifices. So she's saying, I don't believe that anymore.

But I can say, you'll have some friends for the journey. Well, Mark's reason for including this community of women is not for friends.

[13 : 32] It's so that you would believe that this one actually died and was raised again. Point two, no one expects the tomb to be empty.

No one expects the tomb to be empty. The second surprising reason why the gospel is the only thing worthy of all that you have is because no one expects the tomb to be empty.

Look at verse three. They're saying to one another as they go to the tomb, who will roll away the stone? From the entrance. They're just kind of wrestling with it.

They're expecting the tomb to be exactly the way it was Friday night when Joseph of Arimathea laid him in the grave. They're expecting to find the stone over the door. That's why the conversation discussing, what are we going to do?

We got the oils and spices, but we totally forgot. There's a stone over the door. What are we going to do? They're wrestling. We can't roll that thing away. It took all of Joseph's might.

[14 : 33] We can't roll it away. So they're expecting to find the stone over the door. Quite obviously, they're expecting to find Jesus in the tomb. They're not expecting the tomb to be empty.

But the women are not the only ones not expecting the tomb to be empty. The fact that the women are discussing who's going to roll the stone away underlines the more painful fact that none of the 12 disciples are there.

They're holed up in Jerusalem under lock and key for fear of the Jews. An astonishing fact of the New Testament is that no one expects Jesus Christ to raise from the dead.

Now, we know from studying this gospel, they should have expected it, right? As we see, each of the three times Jesus tells them what's going to happen to him in Jerusalem, he says, after three days, I will rise again.

After three days, I'll rise again. Three times. After three days, I'll rise again. It couldn't have been more clear. This is what's going to happen. And everything we saw happened according to plan.

[15 : 41] But no one is waiting. No one is expecting him to come out of the grave. I mean, this is a problem for anyone thinking about Christianity.

It's a historical problem. When you look at the text, no one expected him to come out of the grave. See, the disciples find the resurrection just as unbelievable as we do.

And so we must see this again. If Mark and the other gospel writers were trying to convince people that Jesus really rose from the dead, even though he didn't, if they were trying to get a movement off the ground, they would not have included this fact. They would not have included these things.

They would have deleted. These would have been not even roll at the end. After the credits, I mean, these would be completely deleted. But the fact that no one expected Jesus to rise from the dead actually confirms the truthfulness of this account, in my opinion.

Let me explain. If the women didn't expect the tomb to be empty, and if the disciples didn't expect the tomb to be empty, then the only way to explain how the apostles went from a bunch of cowards to a band of death-defying movement leaders is the empty tomb.

[16 : 54] That it was actually empty. Look in verse 5. Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side. This is kind of an angelic figure.

I think it's better to call him an angel, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, don't be alarmed. You see Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen.

He's not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples that Peter, and Peter, that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.

Now, Jesus, I mean, this angel could have said, go tell those backstabbing disciples that Jesus is coming for. But he doesn't.

He says, tell them that Jesus is going before you to Galilee just as you told you. He's reminding them of the promise. Look up here, Mark 14, 27 to 28.

[17 : 58] And Jesus said to them, you will all fall away. For it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.

Jesus knew they would all fall away. But he also knew that their falling away would not have the last word. Now, get this. The first thing Jesus does when he begins preaching the gospel in Galilee is call the disciples.

Call these fishermen to become disciples. And the first thing Jesus does when he rises again is call together this group of disciples. I love this. The first thing Jesus does when he rises from the dead is not get a new group of disciples.

Maybe a better business plan. You know, scrap that old one. He does not start over. He doesn't redraft the team. No, he says, I'm going to them. What do you mean by Galilee?

Tell him to come to Galilee. Tell him to come to headquarters. That's where we saw it in the house in Capernaum. Tell him to come to base camp. Tell them I need him.

[19 : 03] And look who he mentions first. Go tell his disciples and Peter. The one who denied him three times.

Now, if we could just pause for a minute, let me just tell you. Your mother may have given up on you. Your wife may have given up on you. Your children may have given up on you.

Your friends may have given up on you. You may be very close to giving up on yourself, but Jesus Christ has not given up on you. That's what this text tells you. And he wants you back. So come to headquarters.

Come to Galilee. Now, Mark doesn't describe what happened in these encounters. But the rest of the New Testament displays a remarkable transformation.

Let's just take Peter. Peter, this is Peter's gospel. A lot of people said it's based primarily on his eyewitness testimony to Mark. That's why he forms the main character in a lot of ways right behind Jesus Christ.

[20 : 04] But last we saw, Peter, he denied Jesus three times. And when the rooster crowed, he wept. Because Jesus said, you'll deny me before the rooster crows twice.

The other gospels tell us that after Jesus was crucified, Peter joined the other disciples in the upper room, hiding behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. But then several pages later, several, I mean, 40 days later, he's publicly proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem while 3,000 people get saved.

Then he goes on to face persecution and suffering without flinching. Historians say by being crucified upside down. Because he didn't believe he should be crucified in the same manner as our Lord.

Now, what happened to Peter? Did Peter and the other disciples gather courage and decide to spread the lie that Jesus is alive today?

Promise to keep a secret, cross their hearts and hope to die. Promise to never falter no matter what. No. I love the way Chuck Colson talks about it.

[21 : 20] Chuck Colson worked for President Nixon and was a part of the Watergate scandal. And he says, I know the resurrection is a fact and Watergate proved it to me.

How? Because 12 people testified that they had seen Jesus raised from the dead. Then they proclaimed that truth for 40 years, never once denying it. Everyone was beaten, tortured, stoned and put in prison.

And we could list that out. I got a book on my shelf called After Acts that tells about both the biblical and the historical death of each of the apostles.

Except for John. He stayed alive to almost 95. They would not have endured that if it weren't true. He explains, Watergate embroiled 12 of the most powerful men in the world and they couldn't keep alive for three weeks.

You're telling me that 12 apostles could keep alive for 40 years? Absolutely impossible. The only explanation for the transformation of the disciples is the resurrection.

[22 : 31] The fact that they didn't expect Jesus to rise. The fact that they were all hiding away under padlocked doors. And the fact that they're suddenly death defying movement leaders is only explained by the empty tomb and the resurrection.

It's a stubborn fact that must be dealt with. If you haven't trusted in Jesus Christ, it's a stubborn fact. It won't go away.

The transformation of the disciples is perhaps the greatest evidence that Jesus is alive because Jesus appeared to them. He restored them and sent them out. Point three, the empty tomb brings trembling and alarm.

Now, how could this be a reason for anything? But the empty tomb brings trembling and alarm. I think it's actually a surprising reason that the gospel is only worth all that you have.

Because the empty tomb brings trembling and alarm. Look at the way they respond to the empty tomb. Verse 5, and entering the tomb, now you can, well, entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.

[23 : 42] That same word, do not be alarmed. Verse 8, and they went out, and they fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Now, the tomb is rolled away. They expect something good to have happened, right? The tomb is rolled away. It's like an invitation to walk in. When they walk in, nothing good happens.

They see the angel. The angel does not say, surprise, here he is. The angel says, surprise, he's not here. No wonder they were freaked out.

You know, once the angel is done speaking, they immediately scatter. They run away, trembling and astonished, they seize him, and they have said nothing to anyone, they were afraid. How's that for the first Easter? I mean, those Easter bunnies get a little spooky, but this is much spookier.

Cancel the reunion. Cancel the party. The empty tomb, it seems, is not an open road, but a dead end. It's not good news. It's terrible news.

[24 : 50] Again, we must see that if Mark was trying to write a gospel message, a story that would be well received by everyone around him, he wouldn't have included this story.

He would have included a reunion, a feast, a picture-perfect, happily ever after ending. Of course, some of the gospels include scenes like those, but why does Mark refuse to do that?

Why does he end this way? Because the women respond to the empty tomb in the only appropriate way, with awestruck wonder.

When they're walking into the tomb, or walking to the tomb, they're talking about how the stone is so large, how they're unable to move it. They're talking about how they wish there were some guys around to move it.

When they arrived, it's moved. Who moved the door to the tomb? The Lord. That's what they suddenly realized. The Lord opened this tomb.

[26 : 00] Something different is going on. This is not somebody sneaking around at night. Someone has opened this tomb. Someone is here, and so too the angel says he is not here. He has risen.

The point is not that Jesus decided to get up. The word literally is he was raised passively. He was raised.

Who raised Jesus Christ? The Lord. The Father. The women are not astonished and alarmed and trembling because of fear-filled terror.

They're alarmed, astonished, and trembling because of awestruck wonder. Again and again, as we've seen throughout Mark's gospel, the response to Jesus Christ most often is not joy.

It's wonder. It's fear and astonishment. Who, when he's teaching in the synagogue and casts out an unclean spirit, they're all amazed.

[26 : 57] What is this? A new teaching with authority. When he rebukes the wind and causes it to be calm, they're filled with a great fear, saying, Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey him when he heals the demon-possessed man?

You remember the legion? The demon-possessed man left all alone. And he goes and he heals this man. He sends all the demons that were in him into a gang of pigs, and they run over the cliff.

And then the townspeople gather around. They see legion again just sitting there, clothed in his right mind, and the one that could break every chain around him.

They see him clothed in his right mind, and they're afraid. Of course they are. Who is a man who conquers demons? Who is this man? When the woman touches his garment, the woman that had been bleeding for 12 years, disease ravaged, she touches his garment and is healed.

She comes to him in fear and trembling and falls down before him. Who is this that heals diseases? Who is this who raises that girl, Jairus' daughter, from the dead?

[28 : 01] They're all overcome with amazement. Who is this who raises the dead? And so when they see the empty tomb, they realize this man is no man at all. This man is the living God.

This man is the king of kings, the Lord, the Lord, the one to whom everyone, no wonder they bow in amazement. It's like Isaiah in the throne room when he saw the Lord high and lifted up.

He crumbled in amazement. Oh, it's Ezekiel 1, seeing the Lord. It's Luke 5, when the Lord told Peter to throw his net out again.

And he'd been fishing all night. He threw out his net again. And then he pulls in 153 fish and immediately swims ashore and says, depart from me. I'm an unclean man.

You are the Lord. That's what was happening. These women, they weren't encountering a tomb. They were encountering evidence of the living God.

[29 : 02] in one of the most wonderful scenes from C.S. Lewis' book, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, which I happen to quote like every week.

It's just so good. One of the children asked Mr. and Miss Beaver about Aslan the Lion, who represents Jesus Christ. Lucy asked Mr. and Miss Beaver, is he quite safe?

I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion. That you will, dearie. And make no mistake, there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking.

They're either braver than most or else just silly. Then, is he safe? Lucy asked. Safe?

Mr. Beaver said. Who said anything about being safe? Of course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the king, you know.

[30 : 21] He's the king, I tell you. Their eyes saw that Jesus Christ is the king. But why are they silent?

Why are they silent? Surely it's wrong to be silent, right? This is the greatest news. How are they going to hear unless someone tells them? I mean, it's the greatest news. Why are they silent?

First Easter morning, they're silent. It appears to me that their silence is not disobedience, but actually obedience. The angel tells them to go and tell the disciples that he will, go and tell the disciples, and that is what they immediately do.

So it seems to me that's what's going on. They go immediately to disciples to tell them that Jesus is alive.

So, the empty tomb is not the end of the story. It's a new beginning.

[31 : 33] It's an opening of a new and living way to God. We saw that last week with the curtain ripped in two. It's the giving of new life into the world. It's the launch of a new mission to every tribe, tongue, and nation.

And Mark's gospel ends this way without a big party to say to you and me, what are you going to do about it? What are you going to do with the empty tomb?

what are you going to do with it? If it's true, I've given you three reasons I believe it's true among others, it's not enough to seek but not find.

If it's true, it's not enough to seek but not find. The women went to the tomb seeking to find something. They said, you seek Jesus of Nazareth. Now, it's very cool to be a seeker in our culture but not cool to be a finder.

It's very cool to be open but not cool to be committed. That's why you see, I saw it yesterday on the back of a car, not all those who wander are lost.

[32 : 56] Yeah, I usually see that and I think you look lost but anywho. But, you know, you know, because it's not cool. It's kind of cool to be found. Not cool to be committed.

Not cool to hold on to absolute truth. Not hip but Mark wrote this gospel so that you might find the empty tomb and find forgiveness and life but you'll never find it until you receive it for yourself.

So, have you received it? Have you believed in the empty tomb and what it means? Read recently about a story about Albert Einstein, the great physicist circling social media.

This story was a few weeks back. Einstein was once traveling from Princeton on a train and the conductor came down the aisle punching the tickets of every passenger when he came to Albert Einstein who had that very famous hair.

I assume that's what he saw. Einstein reached for his best pocket. He couldn't find his ticket anywhere so he reached to his trouser pockets and it wasn't there either.

[34 : 08] He looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat beside him but he still couldn't find it. The man said, Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are.

I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it. Einstein nodded in appreciation. The conductor continued down the aisle punching more tickets as he's moving down the aisle punching these tickets and as he's ready to move to the next car he turned around and saw Mr. Einstein, the great physician down on his knees, hands and knees looking under his seat for the ticket.

Where is it? We all know that feeling of losing something you're trying to find and you're all over the place looking for it. The conductor rushes back to him. Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry. I know who you are.

No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one. We're all good. Einstein looked at him and said, Young man, I know who I am.

What I don't know is where I'm going. You'll never know where you're going until you stop seeking and hide in Jesus Christ.

[35 : 36] Until you run to this man, Jesus Christ. John Newton says it like this. The life of Christianity says Luther, and there's Newton quoting Luther.

So there you have it. But the life in Christianity says Luther consists in possessive pronouns. It is one thing to say Christ is a Savior.

It is quite another to say he is my Savior. My Lord. The devil can say the first.

The true Christian alone can say the second. I don't want a single person to walk out of this room just saying Christ is a great Savior.

I want by the power of the Spirit you be able to say Christ is my Savior. They just could not be more different things. It's a wonderful thing that Christ is a Savior.

[36 : 35] But until he is your Savior, until he is my Savior, all his saving benefits are outside you. And so Mark wrote this gospel. We have preached through this gospel to proclaim the truth that this morning Jesus can become your Savior.

The way is to agree with the sentence of death that you deserve to agree with the sentence of the crucifixion that you have gone astray and that God has laid on Jesus Christ all your sins.

And if you do not have Jesus Christ or you don't have someone to stand in the place for your sins that judgment and wrath is being stored up for you. But it's also to agree with the reality that Jesus Christ did not stay on the cross but rose again the third day to triumph over sin and death.

And just as Jana read this morning if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved. That's the news I offer to you if you'll believe in Jesus Christ.

Today could be the day of salvation. You're going to walk out a different man who doesn't say that's such an unhelpful way to live. Christ is a great Savior. Savior. Do you know that he's your Savior?

[37 : 56] It doesn't matter how long you've listened to these things. It doesn't matter what the people around you think. On the last day none of them will be there.

And only someone who says he is my Savior by the power of the Spirit will be saved. So I beg you come to Jesus Christ.

It's not enough to seek but not find. It's not enough to watch but not follow.

Not enough to watch but not follow. The crowd you know we saw this all throughout the March. The crowds are amazed at Jesus. If Jesus came to town he would gather quite a crowd right here. They're amazed.

But they didn't follow. I think that's what's going on. He's not here like there's no reunion. You know why?

[38 : 58] There's not a reunion here. Painfully there's not a reunion here. There is this little taste of reunion for two hours a week where we taste a little bit of what the reunion would be but the reunion has been postponed.

the reunion will become when he makes all things new and we eat and enjoy and drink the good wine and eat the good food and enjoy eternal life forever and ever but it's not here.

What he's saying is you've got to get back to work. It's not enough to watch. You must follow me. You must take up your cross and follow me.

One person said that the path of discipleship is a series of woes and Jesus is saying come out and endure those woes with me of persecution of suffering of mocking.

He's not interested in people who like the signs or like the company. He's interested in people who follow him on the road. So, please, don't settle for \$3 worth of gospel.

[40 : 13] It's not enough. It won't save your soul. Follow these women. Follow these disciples. Follow our Lord.

Take all that you have. Buy as much gospel as you can get your hands on. Thank God help us. Father in heaven, we offer ourselves to you sincerely and completely.

Father, we refuse the temptation to hold anything back. Instead, we come to you and leave everything behind.

Our desire is to be found in you, not having a righteousness of our own, but having the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, the righteousness from God that comes by faith in him.

So, we praise you. Thank you. We praise you that you have conquered sin and death, triumph, and our seated at the right hand of the Father on high, awaiting the day when you will put every enemy under your feet and take us home.

[41 : 43] for all those who loved his appearing, who loved his words, fly immediately to home with him.

We thank you and we praise you. We hide in you this day and always. In Jesus' name, amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

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