



**Am I a Fool to Believe in the Resurrection?
Easter 2018
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Well here we are on Easter morning, which also happens to coincide this year with April Fools Day. A day for pranks, a day for practical jokes, which, believe it or not, dates all the way back to the Middle Ages. In various countries in Europe you could find evidence of people pulling pranks and jokes on people, for many, many centuries. But in the modern era, I suppose the biggest public prank that was ever pulled on people was by the BBC in the UK 61 years ago when they aired a story. It only ran for three minutes long, but on a serious news story, about a Spaghetti Tree Farm where they were harvesting spaghetti. Now apparently in the UK, spaghetti was not something that everyone ate all the time and millions of people bought this. They were calling the BBC wanting to know where they could get a spaghetti tree. They wanted to grow their own pasta in their backyard. People bought it hook, line and sinker. They talked about in this little village in southern Switzerland on the Lake Lugano that there were people there harvesting this pasta and through generations of perfecting the process they got all those spaghetti strands to be exactly the same length and they showed them putting them in baskets. Amazing! And people were calling and calling for weeks trying to find out how they could get their spaghetti tree. BBC, notorious. Look it up on YouTube, it's worth a laugh.

And when it comes to public pranks, I suppose in the modern era, it's Google that's kind of taken over the public pranking. Even this morning they put out a video about an app you can put on your phone that will take all the bad jokes out of your phone, which I thought was good. They start very seriously, like last year they had the Google Wind, they called it, which I thought interesting. On the small print, it said powered by Google cloud. That was a nice touch. But they talked about how in Holland they've repurposed all of the windmills there, and with Google's technicians and all their software engineers, they come up with a way to have them all in synchrony be able to put out the weather patterns and control the weather. So when they want rain, they can just stop them or move them in one direction, when they want good weather, they can move it in the opposite direction. And if you start listening to these, at the beginning you think it's all serious but then it gets ridiculous. And if you're really gullible, I suppose, you'll go all the way to the end thinking they're controlling the weather in Denmark.

There was one, I think, that should have been pretty easy to suss out. Google Fiber, a few years ago, they talked about a new process of putting the Internet to your phones and to your computers that slowed everything down so that you could have time to do things. They talked about how you could call your grandmother more often, more hugs in your family, you can eat more popcorn, because everything has been reduced to dial-up speeds. So that will be great for you. I didn't buy that one for a second.

My favorite though was Google Chrome. They put out this on April the 1st, a video about how you could multitask on Google Chrome, a lot of you use that browser, and it talked about how they were now going to allow you to use two mice on your computer. And at the beginning you start thinking, "I don't know, maybe that will work," and it looks real serious and then it gets absolutely ridiculous and you realize you do not want two mice on your computer.

Now they've got to be careful about these kinds of pranks because they always release these videos and all these products, these apparent products, on April the 1st. Well, they did put one out on April the 1st, back in 2004, and they'd already been putting out these prank videos on April the 1st. But

they launched what was called Gmail back on April the 1st in 2004, and they claimed in all their advertisements that they were going to allow you to have a gigabyte of storage for e-mail and that was absolutely unheard of in 2004, not to mention a completely free service, wasn't going to charge anyone. Well, there are a lot of people that said, "You Google people have cried wolf long enough. There's no possible way we're going to have a gigabyte of storage on April the 1st, of all things, wink, wink, and it's not going to cost us anything." Of course, as you know, most of you use Google Mail, that was all true. Not only that, they up it to two gigabytes within a matter of months. And so you got to be careful. People are looking at that saying, it's just too good to be true.

Well, as we happen to coincide the most important holiday on the Christian calendar with April Fools Day, I think a lot of people have thought about the central tenet of the Christian faith as being too good to be true. I mean, really, how can it be that, when it comes to the problem we all face of death, that this is something that is going to be reversed, that Christ has done something for us 2,000 years ago, that really has an effect when you stand at the graveside of your loved one and you think about the hopelessness of the end of this life that we have, and to really believe, as we sit there and say, "Wow, is this person really gone forever?" Or do we look back at the center of Christian theology and say, "No, no, this is something true, that has happened, that has a very pertinent, applicable effect to what we feel and think and anticipate when someone we know has died. That for many people, certainly in our age, in our skeptical age of people who have a lot of lies told to them in advertising, not to mention in popular culture every day, they've come to say to us, increasingly so, I think, certainly to people like me as a pastor, say, "Well, your doctrine is just too good to be true."

Well the Apostle Paul was the first, I suppose, in First Corinthians Chapter 15, to suggest the fact that if it is not true, you need to rethink this whole thing called Christianity. He gave five reasons in this passage why you need to think about whether or not you believe, literally believe, that the resurrection of Jesus Christ took place. First of all, he said if he has not been raised, if that's not true, if it is not literally true, then you can take the whole of the Christian message and you can just throw it out. Matter of fact, he says that's what you ought to do. You cannot have Christianity without the resurrection of Christ. Our message, our preaching, everything we've been teaching, is absolutely useless and no one should bother with it anymore.

Secondly, he said, when it comes to Christianity, you need to see that all the Christian preachers out there, not to mention the first century apostles, they're all liars. They've been deceiving you, they've been saying Christ rose from the dead, they've been talking about that historic fact having something to do with our future resurrection and all of that is just a lie, it's all deception. So you need to see who you're dealing with. If our faith is futile, you ought to throw it all away. We're unforgiven, because our faith is in Christ who's going to do something to make me right before God.

And really, when it comes down to it, when you do stand at the grave of your loved one and you think about the loss that you experience, that loss, come to grips with it. Stop talking about going to heaven and walking on beaches or playing golf with Uncle Jim who's already up there, being reunited with all the loved ones in your family. All of that is nonsense. And when it's over, it's over. Now I know you know a lot of people in your lives who probably say just that to you.

They are very cosmopolitan people, very modern, very secular and they'll say, "You know, you Christians are believing in something that's too good to be true. You guys should come down to earth and just realize, that when it comes to what we're talking about in everyday life, it has nothing



to do with your fancy fairy tales as it relates to religion."

Well, we talked on Friday, if you were with us, about the cross. We talked about how important that theology is and it almost seems like that's the central doctrine of the New Testament. And yet we have more ink spilt in the New Testament on the resurrection. Because what the Bible says is you really can't have any of the benefits that the Bible talks about when it comes to the death of Christ if you do not inextricably link it to the resurrection. In other words, all that we're claiming took place on a cross is in no way applicable to anyone, as the apostle Paul says, all of our faith in it is absolutely futile unless Christ physically rose from the dead three days later. You can't have one without the other. You can't talk about the value of a cross. You can't have a cross on a building or around your neck and say, "that did something good for me before the living God who created me," if you don't have an empty tomb. Those two are inextricably linked and it's important for us to recognize that link as we think about the claims of Christianity. And speaking of claims, let's be very clear about what we're saying as Christians, certainly what I'm saying as a preacher of God's Word. I'm making a claim about what truth is when I start speaking about things like the resurrection of Christ.

For instance, what I'm saying is that there is a correspondence to the words that I am using to reality, to what actually happened. It's called the Correspondence Theory of Truth and what it means is that when I use the word truth, what I'm saying is that those words actually have a connection in leading your mind to envision something that genuinely, specifically, historically happened in time and space. Now that's what you're going to find in any dictionary that you look up the word "truth" in, but that's not how we're using the word truth anymore these days. Because what I am saying, as it relates to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I'm saying that right now Jesus is actually either, as the Christian faith teaches, he's literally alive, or when it comes to what Jesus is right now, he's physically dead. Either he's living or he's dead. You can't have it both ways. I can't walk into church and say, "Jesus is alive." You can't have someone get up on a stage and say, "He is risen." And then you go to your workplace or you go to the universities of our country and then say, well, you just need now to admit, now that you're on the secular territory here, you're standing in a marketplace of free exchange of ideas in our very modern world, now you have to agree that when you really think about the resurrection of Christ, he's not really alive. I mean you can say that at church but you really can't say that outside of church and be taken seriously.

When you speak of truth, and it's interesting that Harvard, probably the most prestigious university in our country, has as its motto that one-word slogan, "Veritas " in Latin, which means "truth." I mean the whole slogan of the school is truth. We're all about truth. And of course you send your kids there, if you can possibly afford it, if they can get in, and they're supposed to learn what is true. A matter of fact, they rate the research papers, they listen to professors lectures, they're talking about things that they would assert has a correspondence to reality. OK? Now, what they would say to you when you start talking about the resurrection of this religious leader, Jesus Christ, is you can believe that truth if you want to. But let's just put that word in quotes because as we're using it in relation to religion, we're saying it's a kind of truth or religious truth but it's not factual truth, it's not historical truth. Just don't try to claim in a classroom or in a work room or in some kind of discussion in the marketplace that that actually is literally true. You can believe your religious truth, just don't claim that it really actually happened.

See, they make the distinction on university campuses and probably in most of your discussions with non-Christians today that there's real truth, and by that, we mean objective truth, and by objective truth we mean that when it comes to a proposition that is true and real and corresponds

with reality, whether you want to believe it or not. If you believe it, fine. If you don't believe it, well you get an F on your paper, but it's still true and you're wrong. There's a right and there's a wrong. There's a true and there's a false, there's reality and then there's make believe. That's the way objective truth is discussed. I'm sure at Harvard University when we throw up our word Veritas and talk about truth and what truth is all about, that's what we're talking about 99% of the time.

But if your professor is a Buddhist and you're a Christian and you're going to have a conversation about Jesus Christ, then we start talking about a different kind of truth, we start talking about religious truth. What most people want to force you to agree is that that is a different kind of truth, that's a subjective truth. Now you're talking about heaven and hell and God and Jesus and right and wrong, and those issues, those are religious truths, those are subjective truths, and those are true and we'll say they're true, but they're true for you if you believe them. Now if you don't believe them, then it's not true for you, and how many haven't had that discussion? Right? When it comes to Christianity that's true for you, but I'm not a Christian, so it's not true for me.

Well we hear that all the time, but you need to think about what we're saying. We're using a word that really has absolutely no possible way you can define it in the way they're using it. As a matter of fact, to quote your favorite movie, "I don't think that word means what you think it means." It's not what the word means. Don't use the word "truth" if that's not what you mean. See, you've got to go back to the reality of the Christian truth claim. And it is not about your preference. That doesn't change anything, your preference. All truth is objective truth. There is no subjective truth even though we talk in those terms. We talk about preferences. If I say, "Talk to me about a true pizza. What is a true pizza?" Right? And I would suggest to you, as I throw up a graphic on the screen, starting to get hungry so close to breakfast but still thinking of lunch, there's a true pizza right there. That's real pizza, that's true pizza. And you say, "Well, you've spent some time in Chicago, obviously. I'm from New York. This is true pizza." I don't know how you come to that conclusion, but that's what people say. They'll use the words true, like truly, and I would say in your humble opinion truly, "truly this is the best pizza." Well, when you start using comparative terms like that, better and best, when you start saying "this is what I like." "This is what you like," those are called preferences. You can say, "I prefer Christianity," you can say, "I prefer Hinduism," you can say, "I prefer Buddhism." You can say what you prefer but it has nothing to do with the truth of any of those truth claims. You understand there's a big difference there.

As long as we're talking about best pizza, if I wasn't clear in how I said it, here's a picture of the best pizza. I can say this. That's a true affirmation of my preference right there. All right.

What's the truth claim of Christianity as we come together today on Easter morning? Well the truth claim is very simple, Jesus rose from the dead. That's not a preference, that is a statement that we're saying corresponds with a very real reality, that Jesus rose from the dead. He was dead and then he stopped being dead. That's the claim.

Jews will say, with a very big important monotheistic religion, "No, that didn't happen. Jesus did not rise from the dead." Fastest growing, most seemingly ardent and militant religion in the world today, Islam, would say, "You guys, you're way off. Jesus was not crucified and he didn't rise from the dead." So he didn't rise, he didn't even get crucified. The Jews are going say, "Well, he got crucified but he didn't rise." The Christian is going to say, "Wait a minute, he was crucified and he rose."

I mean, the Christian earliest creeds, they come down to this. The Christian claim is: Jesus was

crucified, he was buried and he rose from the dead. I mean that is the basic message of Easter. It starts on Friday and we talk about him being dead, and then he comes alive, that's the Christian claim. It's been said from the beginning, the first century, that is the historic claim.

Now the reason that people are going to say it didn't happen, some may be motivated by the fact that we don't want to switch horses in the middle of our religious race. That may be one thing. That may be a preference, I prefer the trappings of Judaism or I prefer the trappings of Islam. But when it comes to the claim itself, people struggle with it when you're in the marketplace and you're dealing with your co-workers because they say, "Crucified. OK, that happened. I know that happened," and it may be then that the Muslims say, "Well, I don't think Jesus got crucified. I don't think that would happen to one of God's prophets, so a stand-in must have gotten crucified. I know there was a crucifixion but it wasn't Jesus." But I think your co-workers might say, "Well, it's, you know, it's probable, I suppose. All you guys have said he's been crucified and the cross was a big part of this. I don't think they would get duped about who was on the cross." They'll say that, "buried, that's no big deal, it happens all the time, I've been to funerals. People get buried. The problem we have is your last part of the claim," which we're here to commemorate this morning.

And that is that Jesus rose from the dead. And that's when they say, "Now you're being foolish. You're being a fool. Why would you believe such a thing? I know people get crucified. It's a horrible, horrible thing. They don't get crucified any more today because we've outlawed that. The Phoenicians started this horrific persecution of people that was really about torturing them before they die, called crucifixion. The Romans perfected it and made an art out of it. And I understand that happened historically and I understand people, once they're dead, get buried in tombs or in crypts or in coffins, but being raised from the dead, that just is not something that happens."

The apostle Paul was brought in to defend himself, as he often was, as I said spilling the most ink in the New Testament on the resurrection, so it was in the preaching in the book of Acts. They spent more time talking about the resurrection than any other aspect of the Christian message.

And so Paul often got himself in debates with people because he was speaking of the literal, corresponding with reality, resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was hauled in before King Agrippa the second, King Agrippa was Herod the Great's grandson. And as he sat there trying to defend himself regarding his preaching, which was about the physical, bodily resurrection of Christ, and Festus, the governor, was sitting there, he said this in Acts 26 verse 8. He said, "Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead?" That's a statement, I think, that you might read contextually in the first century and say, "Well, I don't know, you guys believed a lot of things back there. You're full of superstitions and I can see why you might say that to Festus and to Agrippa."

Please rethink that. I mean, I think Paul has already spent a lot of time in the book of Acts, as he's recorded by Luke preaching sermons, making this statement as a philosophical statement about the reality of a God who has no problem raising the dead, in part because when it comes to everyone's reality, their experience and the phenomenon of life, he's saying, that shouldn't be a hard hurdle for you, that it can happen. Matter of fact, he ends this discussion by saying, after he preaches his way through this, "Listen, I'm speaking true and rational words." They are true. I believe that they correspond with reality. I'm here to tell you Christ rose from the dead and I'm telling you they make sense. This is not a leap. It should not be to you an impossible thing.

Now why is that? Think through that with me if you would. We experience every day the phenomenon of life. I mean we interacted with people this morning, you talked to people, shook



hands, hugged some people perhaps, you'll be out on the patio over here after the afterwards, I hope, taking pictures of your family, talking to people, go to lunch. You'll have the experience of these constituted bodies being animated.

Follow me now. You got bodies there, physical beings and they're animated, they're conscious, they're thinking, they're enlivened, and they have this thing called life. Well life is a phenomenon, look it up, it's a weird thing everyone struggles to define. I mean the biggest intellects, speaking of Harvard, at Harvard University have a hard time telling you what this thing is called life, consciousness. The reflexive nature of you being able to think within this body and then express yourself in this body. It's a phenomenon. Life. Constituted material now animated with this thing called life.

Now we see it in more than human beings. We can see life at a cellular level with plants, we can see life certainly in animals, but we see a special kind of life, a kind of intellectual, a kind of emotional, a sentient, a volitional, willful, kind of life that we see in human beings. It's why we spend all of our time dealing with people every day, because that's what we are, human beings.

Paul had talked a lot about life in his preaching in the book of Acts, and I've got to tell you it becomes real crystal clear and a part of our society we've swept under the carpet, we don't deal with very much, but all of you have to, at some point, when a loved one dies. The phenomenon of life comes into sharp focus when you experience death up close. You have a loved one who dies.

Now in my line of work and us as pastors we experience this all the time. But I often walk people through this for the first time they have a loved one die. They'll be holding their hand in the hospital or even an accident scene. There is life one moment, a constituted, physical body that is animated with this thing called life, that everyone has trouble defining what that is. Then it's gone. That's a profound moment. Some of you can sit here looking at me and you've had that experience, some of you haven't. But when you have that experience, that sticks with you. And if you started having that experience a lot, I mean think of my position as a pastor walking people through the death of their loved ones, being at the hospital when they die, going through the process of getting them to the mortician and going through the process of embalming or whatever it might be to put their body in a cemetery, that's an experience, at some point, you start realizing is really weird that I'm walking around with people who are not only constituted, physical beings, I can go up and touch your hand and shake your hand and hug your neck, but you're animated.

Because you know that very same body with all those same cells at one point stops working completely, we call that working life, and you become inanimate. You're no longer enlivened, you no longer have life. You no longer have consciousness. You're done, at least as far as we can see. Now there's a big separation. I mean you go in high school biology and dissect a frog, well, that frog has every single cell that it had when it was alive five minutes ago, we didn't kill them in class, but let's just say we did. Maybe we're in Louisiana, I don't know. But you have live frogs, they're dead frogs, and everything about that frog is there but then it's life is gone.

When you're dealing with human beings, intellect, emotion and will, that is a phenomenon that will get you thinking. And the point of the Bible is this: God constituted an animated human being and the very first story of that, in the first scene of the Bible in Genesis Chapter 2, is basically this: "God formed the man of dust out of the ground and then he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." The picture is he constitutes something physical, he now enlivens it with something spiritual and immaterial and then we stand back and we all experience the phenomenon of life and the man



becomes a living creature.

And he gets another living creature made here, Eve, and they have other children, living creatures, and they interact with living creatures, and here we are today still interacting with living creatures. What are we? We're physical and were immaterial. We have this biological constitution and we have this thing called life, that we don't quite understand, that animates these bodies until this thing called death. We recognize that throughout the Bible, the God of the Bible is here credited with giving life to everyone. That's all over the Bible.

Speaking of Paul's preaching as he speaks to the Athenian philosophers in Athens, the professors of the universities there, he talks about the giving of life. He says, God gives people, and I love the way he puts it, "He gives to all people, all mankind, life and breath." The ability that you have to live and be animated. This action that you have directing biology, the Bible says, that's a gift from God, it comes from God.

Now, against that backdrop you might say, "Well, that's not what we're taught. I've watched the Discovery Channel or I went to the university not long ago or my kids were at the university and they know that we don't need God for all of that. We're not sure at all how it happens, but we know this: when it comes to who we are, we're just chemicals. There's no immaterial part to us, we are all physical. This is called naturalism. Right? We know today most people in the ivory towers of the universities are going to tell you we are just physical beings. There's nothing immaterial or spiritual about us.

As a matter of fact, you want to go back to how it started it's all just a big cosmic random accident. It's chance plus time equals something that comes to a physical being and somehow through a zap of lightning that came from somewhere, we now have this thing we know of as life. I guess it's basically... it's just kind of like we're, you know, a bunch of cells and it just needs kind of the electricity to run through it. And so now we animate the body and now we can even say as people die, we got brain death, we've got system death, we got respiratory death, and I guess it all kind of dies. But I don't know what that is, but we kind of got it figured out, we can talk about this without God. We don't have to say God gives life and breath.

What's interesting is people look very sternly at the hard facts of who we are. Even reflexively thinking about what we are as human beings and then trying to describe it. Even the most pugnacious, if I can put it that way, pejorative atheist in our day, and many of you know Richard Dawkins, of course, wearing his famous shirt, "Religion. Together We Can Find a Cure." Of course he wants to get rid of all religions. He first started with Christianity, taking potshots at that. Now he's a little more scared taking potshots at Islam, but he's working at it. And what he wants is all of us to believe that there is nothing about our existence beyond the material. We're all physical, we're just chemicals. That's all that we are. But the more he's forced, even with good thinkers across our country saying we have something so complex here we struggle with it, it can't be made in a way that gives us easy answers by what we know of in terms of the laws of physics. These guys step back and begin to try to explain things in ways that seem quite remarkable.

Matter of fact, I want you to think through some of the things that they'll say when they're faced with the irreducible complexity of life or they think about the issues of who we are consciously, they'll start saying, "Well, we don't know how any of that works as it relates to what we see here in our world, but as Dawkins says, it could be that at some earlier time, and I've seen this for myself, you could look up the video. This is his quote, "Somewhere in the universe, some corner of some

millions of light years away, a civilization evolved." Now, we're trying to figure out how we evolved and how that works, but he's saying it must have evolved there. "They designed some kind of form of life, with some set of rules and some kind of way to do it that sits outside of our experience. And they," here's the quote, "then they came to our planet and they seeded it here. They planted it here on our planet."

I just want you to think through what's being said here. Faced with not just the complexities, as it's put in intelligent design theory, the irreducible complexities of life, but more than that, as one of his fellow atheists has tried to really write about in his life work to figure out the consciousness of humanity and what life is, and I think he dismally failed at trying to explain that in naturalistic terms. Nevertheless, he's saying, all that we experience, it must have somehow been a project, a science project, that was brought here from some other planet. I just want you to think about what's being said here. Right?

Aliens have come and given a kind of a little project of life, seeded it on our planet and then from that everything evolved into the complexities that we know and your experience of crying at the graveside of your loved one. That is the explanation. Now, this might seem quite odd to the rationale that still keeps working in people's minds today, when you think about why people would say, "Yeah, people get crucified. Yeah people get buried all the time, but don't tell me he really physically rose from the dead. Don't try to claim your religious truth is real truth, true truth. Don't claim that."

It all goes back to David Hume, the Scottish philosopher in the 18th century. He wrote and made popular an argument very simply as to why people don't rise from the dead, and that's all he's trying to say. When it comes to the resurrection or any other miraculous event, you just need to realize, that doesn't happen. And not only doesn't happen but it can't happen.

Here's his argument, a little syllogism, very simple structure, a proposition, not hard, follow it with me, he says, basically, "This world is a closed system. We really function within a set of rules here that are closed. The rules that we see are all the rules that we have. As a matter of fact, those laws that govern it, they don't ever change. They don't change. What you're claiming as Christians is that a miracle, like the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is a break in that natural law. And I just told you those laws don't change. Therefore, let me just make very clear, you guys are fools to believe in the resurrection because those miracles don't ever happen."

Now notice the logic. "The world's a closed system. The laws that govern it, they do not alter. What you're claiming is there's some God outside of all this world, not a closed system, and that God can step in and do things with a set of laws that apparently we don't have access to. And, that thing is called a miracle. You're saying that happens, we're saying that doesn't happen."

Oxford professor C.S. Lewis responded to this in 1947 in his book on miracles, a preliminary study. I think I have the biographical information on the back of your worksheet this morning. He simply said, this is the Mike Fabarez paraphrase to shorten this paragraph of his, that he says, "You know, we've got to agree with David Hume that if miracles have never happened, well then they've never happened." Now that's just the master-of-the-obvious statement, you don't have to be an Oxford professor to say that. We agree with you that, if it hasn't happened, then it hasn't happened. I mean, we have to agree. "We only know that it hasn't happened, that there's never any miracles, no one ever rises from the dead, if all reports of them rising from the dead are false." That's the only way we would know it doesn't happen. And he says, "We can only know that all reports are false, not

because I've investigated them, but if we already know that they have never occurred." Do you follow that? They don't happen if they don't happen.

But the only way I know they don't happen is if every report of them, like Christ rising from the dead, if we know they're false. Well, I only know it's false, Jesus didn't rise from the dead, as most people in our secular world will tell you, because we know it doesn't happen.

That's called reasoning your way in a circle. In logic class you might remember the phrase "petitio principii." Petitio principii means you're using your conclusion as part of your argument. You're saying I know it doesn't happen because it can't happen. But all he's saying is you got to look at every individual case and assume on its own merits whether it happened. But that presupposes part of this argument that we'll have to say, maybe we don't receive that proposition, we don't accept that proposition, like the world's a closed system.

Well I've already expressed to you, our friend Dawkins has already told us, when it comes to the observable things in this world that we have, he's already suggesting when I can't explain what goes on here, maybe it's not a closed system. Maybe what's going on outside of our world is something that needed some help from the outside the closed system. And if you do know your physics, Albert Einstein, certainly with his special and general theories of relativity, has certainly opened up our eyes to the fact that we don't live in a closed system. Or if you know Werner Heisenberg, the Heisenberg Principle of Uncertainty, you certainly know at a quantum mechanic level of where we live on its atomic structure of our universe, we know even there that there's verifiable proof that we don't have a closed system. More on that another time but that's a good place for us to start. Maybe we don't have a closed system.

Secondly, the laws that govern this world, they do not alter. I just want you to think this through. They say that the laws never alter. Well, do any research, if you would, on the Big Bang, the Big Bang. If you just start reading about the Big Bang, let's not start millions of years ago, let's not start just a few billion years ago, let's go back to this thing called the Singularity, when all of existence popped into being. Popped is a small way to put it, banged into being. Right? Bam! The Big Bang. OK?

You'll notice there, if your eyes are really good, at the very beginning of the Big Bang on this structure, which they don't like to put it in structures or any kind of diagrams because it's saying it's not an accurate way to portray it because there is no space, there is no time, before this. The Singularity is something that you can't even really visualize. But nevertheless, there is going to be something because of a Big Bang, if you will. But it's here labelled, as it will be in every science textbook, as Quantum Fluctuation. There's something at the beginning of all this that is quantum, basic building blocks of the universe on an atomic level, fluctuation. That ought to concern you a little.

Well, read the textbooks. Here's what it says, "There are other laws of physics," ha, that's good, other laws of physics, "that existed at the start of the Big Bang which created the conditions for matter to occur." Now, I've got to have matter, I've got to have something rather than nothing, and that's going to be on the other side of this thing called the great Singularity and the great Big Bang.

I've got to have something, so something's got to come into existence, and how did that happen? And now all we can say is there's got to be some other laws of physics. Other laws? What do you mean, other laws? Laws that we don't have access to.



Let's just review where we are right now. Human life depends on outside, just for fun let's call it what it is, alien life, something not here, something that creates, and laws that you and I can't access, we can't go into the lab, we can't reproduce, we can't do any experimentation on. When you start really talking seriously to folks who are going to explain the phenomenon of life, how is it that we are constituted and animated, those are two important words. I'm constituted, I'm a human being, and I'm animated, I have life. We're now, at a modern era, as we increase in our knowledge that today's universities will tell us there's something maybe outside, I don't know, maybe that creates and seeds and there are laws, certainly every textbook will tell you, that we don't have access to anymore.

A little book, I didn't have room for this on the back, "Evolution Evolves," just talks about that. Just observe how everything about evolution has to rely on a changing set of physics, a changing set of laws of physics. OK? All I'm saying is if you're going to talk about outside and laws that we can't access, I'm saying it sure sounds a lot like a theology to me. We're beyond what you can reproduce. We're beyond what you can theorize about based on laws, even though they're going to tell you that's what we've got, we can do this without a god. We don't need a god. And all I'm telling you is if you've already conceded that there's something outside of what we have and we're not uniformitarians anymore, we don't believe in the steady state theory that everything's always been the same. That's what David Hume, in the 18th century, that's what he and every other intellectual believed. We have an eternal cosmos, we don't believe that anymore, we believe in this thing called a Big Bang, that started with a set of rules that we no longer can see or access.

I'm just telling you this: I started this with what Paul said, very rational and reasonable, an alien, his name was God, something outside of our world, did some things with some rules that we don't have access to anymore. He creates the fabric of the universe, he cultivates in the fabric of the universe to put together things like DNA and puts this body together, he constitutes, and then he animates, he breathes into the nostrils the breath of life. God constitutes and he animates and therefore we have the phenomenon of life.

Everyone is trying to explain life, the origins of life. They're trying to explain the phenomenon of life. The Bible has been explaining it and it seems like in the categories that now all the super smart people are starting to say, "That's how it must have happened."

I think it's helpful for us to look at really where we've gotten in this conversation. I think we've realized that in the scriptural terms to say that God gives life and breath to individuals, all in this world, is not a strange thing at all. When Jesus comes on the scene, many, many years after Genesis, and says it's God, he puts it in the words, the Father, "the Father gives life," in John 5:21, he says, listen, that is a phenomenon that is foundational. What you ought to realize now is the other side of that coin is that God, or he says in that text, "the Father also raises from the dead," that those are equal concepts. These are paired concepts. God constitutes and animates. All that resurrection is is a reconstitution and a reanimating, and all he's saying is there's some parity in that, you need understand that.

Why is it thought incredible by any of you that God raises the dead? He's not just saying that to a bunch of smart people in the first century. He says that to us in the 21st century who think we're even smarter and what we're doing is basically coming to the place where we were realizing, you know what, this is basically what the Bible has always said. And these words in the Scripture regarding constitution and animation and reconstitution and reanimation, that sounds pretty rational

to me.

Astrophysicist Robert Jastrow, head of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, he's retired now, gone, but he wrote in his book, *For the scientist who's lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream.*" Here's what he says, "We were always looking, we were always trying to uncover the answer as well. We've scaled the mountains of ignorance. We didn't know, but now we know. We didn't know, but now we know. We didn't know, but now we know." the Redshift Hubble, we talk about Singularity, we talk about the Big Bang, we talk about Heisenberg, we talk about Einstein, we're getting smarter and smarter. We're figuring this out. "We didn't know, but now we know." He says, he's about to conquer the highest peak. We're going to figure out all the phenomena about life and origins and everything else. And as he pulls himself up over the final rock, he's greeted by a band of theologians who've been sitting there for centuries.

See, this is the reality I think of our modern era trying to think through reality without God. They can call a lot of different things but when you come down to it, we have the phenomenon of the constitution of material beings animated with life. And if you want to say now that God can't reconstitute and reanimate, which is all the definition that I want to propose to you of the resurrection, then we've kind of missed, really, the logic of current intellectuals.

I mean that is what they're saying in one way or another. They may not leave room for it, they don't want to call it God, but this is where we are. I believe it's perfectly rational for God to constitute a tree and animate a tree, I think it's perfectly rational for God to constitute a baby's body and animate a baby's body. And I also think it makes absolutely no... there's no big stretch, it doesn't seem incredible to me that God could take a dead tree and he could reconstitute it and reanimate it on a cellular level. And I don't think it's any real big thing either for me, in any kind of intellectual rational stretch, to say that God could reconstitute a body on a cellular level and reanimate a body and give it life. I just don't think that's a problem at all for me. And I think the Bible's been trying to say that from the very beginning to us and maybe we're getting around to it.

What about Christ's resurrection? I'm glad you asked. Eight centuries before Christ, in Isaiah 53, we looked at this briefly on Friday, but let me put a few of the words up on the screen for you. 800 years before Christ came, there was the promise about the coming one, who, in this interesting passage, is going to die. He's going to be in a grave, he's going to be dead. I mean that's how it's depicted to us. His grave with the wicked rich man and his death. I think you can put the details of some of that together as it played out 800 years later. You've got him crucified between criminals, you've got him put in a rich man's tomb, Joseph of Arimathea, all that is great and interesting, but basically you got the hero of the story in the Bible, the son of David, the great servant of God, dying, even though he didn't deserve to die, even though he's innocent. Got no violence, no lying in his mouth. None of you in this room can say that. Matter of fact, if you want to say you've never lied, you just did.

We know we have a problem with sin. Here's someone, apparently, on God's pinnacle of what he wants to do in the world, this Messiah of his, he's perfect, and yet he dies. What's with that? Well, "it was God's will, God was willing to crush him." Why would he do that? Well, because, as we talked about on Friday, he's accomplishing something, he's accomplishing our salvation. "He puts him to grief," because he's making his soul a guilt offering, like that lamb I held on Friday. That offering was only a symbol when it was an animal. But it was the reality when it was the infinite worth of the deity of God himself embodied in human form, God in man, dying as our representative. That was a guilt offering that took care of our sin problem.

And yet, after all that, here's the illusion of resurrection. "Yet he's going to see his offspring." What do you mean? He didn't have any biological children, but he had millions of spiritual children, like Paul said, my true son in the faith of Timothy and Titus. Of course Christ had a whole band of disciples. He had hundreds of people who hung on his words and he was going to be rejoined with them, he's going to "prolong his days."

Talk about prolonging his days, the teaching of the New Testament resurrection of Christ is he's still immortal, he's still living to this day, in perfect health. He's alive today. "The will of the Lord will prosper in his hand." Looking back on the "anguish of his soul." He, his soul, is Christ, he is God, he's going "to see and be satisfied." This is the picture of substitutionary atonement. God is a just God, he's got to punish sin, we're sinners. "Well, I don't want to get punished. God wants to forgive me. He loves me so much he gives his only Son." His Son now suffers as a guilt offering and God sees it and goes, "OK, I'm satisfied." The New Testament word is "propitiation" satisfaction of God's justice. The Bible says, "by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted as righteous," that I am now accepted in the beloved, as David said, "I don't have my sins imputed to me."

Paul wrote it in Romans Chapter 4, "I am perfect before God because of the work of Christ." And again, that's because he took our sins upon himself on that cross and God punished him as though he were me. That's the substitutionary atonement of Christ. And yet, is that where it ended? No, there is a chain link, it's inseparable and it's inextricably bound to the empty tomb, because God said, I'm going to have you "divide a portion with the many, and divide the spoil with the strong." You are going to be a victor over death, over sin, and you're going to be able to celebrate in a kingdom in a victorious way. Why? "Because he poured out his soul to death and he was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sins of many," noticed this, present tense, after he dies, "he's making intercession for the transgressors." What a great, great Gospel message from Isaiah Chapter 53. And that is what was promised.

Well, Jesus picks up clearly on that. He knows who he is. He knows he's that suffering servant and he says to his disciples in the middle of his ministry, from that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples and he said to his disciples when it comes to his future it isn't going to be good. As a matter of fact, he is going to suffer, that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things and that he's going to be killed and on the third day be raised. That is a summation of Isaiah 53, among other passages, that show the fact that the Messiah, before he reigns, has to die, be buried and be resurrected.

The incredible thing in people's minds is that he's resurrected. That's really no incredible thing, even today, if you were to give it enough thought. But Jesus said, "I'm fulfilling all that." He said that in front of his disciples and his disciples then privately pulled him aside and Peter spoke up and said, "Hey, that's never going to happen to you. Far be it from you Lord. You are never going to be crucified." Now, he was tone deaf to the resurrection part, but he said you're not going to be killed, and Jesus said this: he turns to Peter and he says, "Get behind me Satan." You're my adversary, you're an opponent to me, you're a hindrance to me. He said, "You're not setting your mind on the things of God."

And the things of God are: "Peter, you're a sinner, you need forgiveness, the only way to get forgiveness is to have your sins atoned for, and you need to be credited as a righteous man, which you're not." That's the only way God's going to open up his doors to the kingdom for you, so that

when you die you'll be right with your Maker. So let's put our minds on the things of God. Open up the scroll of Isaiah or any other Old Testament scroll and start looking for those pictures of the coming Messiah. "And can you recognize I need to die and I need to be buried and I need to rise again from the dead?"

Well, what is the account? That's exactly what happened. He gets tried unjustly, no violence, didn't open his mouth. He stood there silently like a lamb led to the slaughter. He stood before the Roman officials, he stood before Caiaphas and the Jewish officials, the Sanhedrin, they condemned him publicly to death, they marched him publicly through the streets with his cross. Everyone saw him, they jeered at him, they wagged their heads. They publicly executed him outside of the walls of Jerusalem, which didn't mean in a private place. As a matter of fact, the Bible goes into details talking about the road that it was by and people were going down the road seeing them and wagging their heads at him. Christ dies publicly between two other criminals. They bury him in a place that is publicly accessible, it's Joseph Arimathea's tomb but they are welcome to come in there to bring the body, they package his body as they did in the first century.

Unlike the Egyptians, instead of embalming him internally, they wrap him in spices. They say that those spices with the wrappings and the grave clothes may have weighed as much as 100 pounds. That was their way to preserve the body as best they could, that's the pattern of burial in Scripture, one way or another to preserve the body and set it aside for the resurrection. They believed in the resurrection but they didn't have, really, a clarity about what Jesus said that this was going to happen in just a matter of days. On the third day he was to rise.

It was a place everyone knew where this grave was. They dispatched Roman soldiers there, the account says. Matter of fact, they would come back a few days later, knowing the grave that he was in and they would find it empty with the grave clothes lying on that bench inside the tomb. He then made public appearances starting with his disciples, even went on to a skeptical brother, James. And then the Bible goes on to say that he appeared to all kinds of people, crowds of people. In this crowd, I don't know, maybe 60-70 people there, but the Bible says, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, there are as many as 500 people at one time. He probably appeared to thousands, but he appeared to even groups of 500 people at one time. And Paul says, "You want to cross-examine them? Many of them are still live. Go talk to them." They saw the risen Christ publicly.

Now back to Paul's scene when he says, "I'm speaking true and rational words." It's very important that this is not something like a lot of religious claims that took place in some quiet, dark closet somewhere. The Bible says that this was all done out in the open, that is the account. When Paul's speaking to skeptics, like King Agrippa and Festus, he says, "I'm persuaded that none of this has escaped your notice." You've seen it. Because this has not been done in a corner. It's not been done behind a veil, it has not been done like a lot of religions that say, "Well, you didn't see any of this and no one really saw it but I'm going to come out from behind this cloak and my closet and tell you what happened." It was all done publicly. That was the scene.

People say well it couldn't happen the way you're saying because I still have a problem with God reconstituting and reanimating life. I may think somehow, in some way, God constitutes and animates but I've never seen a dead body come to life and I haven't heard of that ever so I don't think he reconstitutes and I don't think he reanimates, so there's got to be some other naturalistic explanation.

Well it could be that all these people were lying. Right? I mean let's just start with that, real quick.

They could have lied, they could have lied on purpose. That means they would be deceivers, they would be evil, they would be bad men and I don't think you'd want them to be teaching your children, which is what is going on right now for many of you in the hallways and in the classrooms of our church. Your kids are being taught from a book that we're saying is based on a bunch of deception, at least the New Testament is all about deception because these guys were all liars. And yet, a whole presents itself as the truth. Right? I mean the worst kind of liar is the guy that keeps telling you over and over again, "I'm telling you the truth, I'm telling you the truth. Matter of fact, I'm all about the truth. I'm all about integrity. I'm all about honesty." That's what the whole Bible is about, particularly the New Testament is about that. Tell the truth, don't deceive. It's interesting that the Bible, if this is true, is based on a bunch of deceivers.

Back to the passage I quoted earlier in First Corinthians 15, Paul specifically, and here's his exact quote, "If Christ has not been raised from the dead," "then we're misrepresenting God because we've testified about God that he raised Christ, I mean we're liars, and were saying something about God that is not true." In the Jewish mindset, that was the biggest blasphemy you could commit is misrepresenting God.

Well, when it comes to people lying, there are plenty of people who have lied and pushed hard to deceive. I'm old enough to remember the Watergate hearings, you old people remember that? We only had three channels back then, you had to watch it, so that's what we were watching in the summer. It was our vacation, I can't believe I had to watch it, but there it was, John Dean testifying, Chuck Colson, all of these guys getting in hot water because they tried to cover up for the president. Well, Chuck Colson becomes a Christian and all of that, some of you know his testimony. He was a special counsel to President Nixon. He says this about the hearings and all the pressure. He said, "Watergate involved a conspiracy to cover up, perpetuated by those intensely loyal to their president. John Dean turned state's evidence to save his own skin. And he did that in just two weeks." Think about that now.

The lie couldn't be held together for more than two weeks. After two weeks everybody jumped ship. Everyone starts making deals with prosecutors in order to save themselves embarrassment or maybe prison. And as Colson rightly said, "nobody's life is even at stake." That was part of what led him to faith in Christ was the fact that all these people in the first century went to their death, they were martyred, they were burned at the stake, they were crucified upside down, they were killed, because of their testimony about Christ.

Now if they're there lying, I'm thinking at some point some of the evidence is going to be produced that these guys, under the threat of death, are going to say, "Hey, we were just making this up." Colson was convinced intellectually about the resurrection in part because he was a part of a conspiracy at the highest levels and he realized, under pressure, you're going to find out who's lying and who's not.

Well, maybe they lied about the account, but they didn't know they were lying, they didn't do it on purpose. They were just kind of crazy. Right? Well you could think they're crazy. Maybe they're just hallucinating about all this in some way or another and all these accounts of what happened are just nuts. And I will tell you and you may be a skeptic here today, but I'm going to tell you to spend some time in the Gospel of Matthew. Look at the weaving together of the quotations of the Old Testament, his mastery of Jewish culture. Read Mark and the brevity and the clarity with which he writes, the terse nature of his argumentation. Or Luke, we're in the 170th sermon in Luke here, if you come back, we'll continue through it.

Don't tell me that Luke is a crazy guy writing a crazy story about, you know, a nutty fable. I mean this is a masterful rhetorical piece. And speaking of rhetoric, go to the Gospel of John, a man who lived with him and loved him and intensely, you know, went through all the trials of Christ, even in the Garden of Gethsemane. And he writes with such flair, with such clarity, with such insight. Even if you don't believe in the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the inerrant Scripture, you're still going to stand back and look at these literary works and say, "Is this the product of a crazy person?" I dare you to spend some hours in the Scripture and you will not be able to come to that conclusion.

Well, maybe they were duped. Maybe they weren't crazy, maybe they were smart guys, but they were smart guys and smart guys can be wrong because they can be deceived, they can follow the wrong evidence and end up at the wrong conclusions. Well, maybe they concluded that he rose from the dead because he didn't really die on the cross and that is a theory. He went to the cool of the grave and after he got stuck in that tomb, he kind of got revived. Remember, they went to the first century process of embalming him, which was wrapping him in spices, so I mean you'd think they'd notice him breathing at that point. But let's just say he was in a coma and they didn't notice that and they went through the process, they put him in the grave and he comes out alive. Again, that theory, though it's been propagated many, many times, it assumes that the Romans who were experts at killing people, kind of messed this one up, it was a botched execution. I mean any reading of the historic account of the death of Christ is not going to lead you to the conclusion that these guys didn't know how to kill people. They'd been crucifying people for centuries and the Romans knew what it was to put a man to death on a Roman execution rack. There should be no doubt in your mind.

It's interesting, those who have one theory over another, will say, "Well, of course that happened." I've heard people with all kinds of theories to try and undermine the historic veracity of the resurrection and they'll say, when they don't agree with this theory, "Oh, of course, he had... of course, of course, of course..." But they've got another way to talk their way around it.

But there are still people trying to say, he didn't really die on the cross. It's called the swoon theory, but it really assumes a lot about the whole process of putting him in a grave and then having him come out. Think about this: you're recovering, you haven't eaten since the Passover meal on Thursday night, and you're coming out teaching people, talking to people, appearing to people, and people are so inspired by the way you're handling yourself that they're starting a new religion because you're a conqueror of death. That's a far-fetched theory at best.

People say, "Well, maybe they just stole the body." This is probably the most familiar reason for people to say, "it was just sincere smart people being misled. They went to the tomb, the body was gone, they just assume he rose from the dead." Now remember there were Roman soldiers at the tomb. I don't think that's disputable. I mean, you can dispute anything if you want to, but certainly that is the historic presentation of the text.

And if you're going to say someone stole the body, you're going to have to ask who? If you believe it's the disciples then we're back to the first argument and that is this entire book about honesty and integrity and truthfulness is really fabricated by a bunch of people who stole the body and preached that the body of Christ had risen. So they are a bunch of deceivers and I don't want to teach my kids from a book that's propagated by a bunch of liars.

If it was someone else, I want to know who it was, most people wanted him dead. They'd have to go

in there and take that body out, and one of the interesting facts about the resurrection is that you have all the grave clothes there, you've got the shroud and it's neatly folded up, his body is gone. If I'm stealing things, and I'm not confessing to thievery, I don't do any kind of armed robbery on the side, but I would imagine, if I were going to steal things from you, I'm not going to take time to steal a body, for instance, if I'm a grave robber, and unwrap everything, in this case, a decaying body, and neatly stack the grave clothes there on the stoop in the tomb or the crypt. That doesn't seem to make sense and that is an interesting fact in the story as it says in John Chapter 20. The linen and cloths were lying there, the face cloth, the shroud, as you will. It was Christ head had been shrouded in. That was all folded up by itself.

When people say, "Well, maybe they were misguided and they were smart but they didn't have some weird hallucination of some kind. Maybe they just thought that he was alive. People have actually suggested there was a lookalike. You know when you're at the airport and you see someone, you say, "That looks like Pastor Mike. Ah, that's not Pastor Mike." Maybe that just happened after the resurrection. I mean, it's been proposed. I think it's far-fetched because you've got, not just individuals seeing him, you've got masses of people seeing him, interacting with him, he's teaching with them for over a month and a half before the Ascension. That's the claim of the Scripture. Matter of fact, you have 500 people at one time not recognizing Christ, I think you could easily say, how about those Jews and those Romans who so badly want him dead, wouldn't they say we're going to stop this growing thing called Christianity by producing the body. "He's right here. He's in the tomb. You can come in here and see it." They could easily produce the body and quell that kind of theory.

Well, if he really did rise from the dead, we can go into much more detail about those, and I have in the past. I put some sermons on the back of the worksheet if you want to go further from my perspective on those things.

All I'm saying is if it's reasonable and rational and it's historically something that I think is presented with honesty and integrity from intelligent people, well then I would say, you and I on this April Fool's Day would be a fool to ignore it. It would be dumb for us, if Christ claimed to be the fulfillment of Scripture, bearing our sins, rising from the dead as proof that the payment was satisfactory, it'd be bad for us, as we are going to face in our lives, continually, until we die, the death of those around us, to think that this is not a pertinent and very important thing for us to consider. We'd be fools to look the other way. Particularly when you think of your own death. As George Bernard Shaw said, the statistics on death are very impressive. They're quite impressive. One out of one people die and you and I are going to face our own mortality.

Some of you right now may be scared in some health crisis you've had or some diagnosis and you're thinking about it right now. Or you've got a loved one who has been diagnosed with something or maybe you're going through the grieving process of someone in your own life. To think about your mortality and recognize that the whole claim of Christianity is God is a God who has constituted us and animated us and he now can reconstitute and reanimated us. And he did it in the person of Christ in a way that is not just like Lazarus at that tomb, it wasn't an immortal body, that is forever available to us who trust in Jesus Christ.

Speaking of that, Jesus at the grave of Lazarus after several days he'd been dead, Jesus was comforting Martha and asked her to consider the whole point of his coming by saying, "I am the resurrection and the life." He personifies the whole thing. The reason that he's giving them this solution is because they're facing firsthand the problem and he says I am the solution to this. I am



the reconstitution and the reanimation of God's creative gift of life. And if you would trust in me, believe in me, that's a strong word, it's not assenting to facts, it's put your confidence in me then, even if you die, on the other side of that death, you're going to live.

Not only that, and everyone who lives on the other side of that death, and trusts in me, you're never gonna die. You're going to have an immortal body in a place that is not subject to any kind of corruption, disease or death. Then he asked a very poignant question to Martha, "Do you believe this?" Which is a good question for us on a day when a lot of people want to ignore the claim of a bodily resurrection of Christ. I want to ask you, do you believe it. Do you? I'm saying you're not a fool to believe it, I think they are reasonable words, they are rational words, I believe they are true words. She goes on to say, she responds to the question and says, "Yes Lord, I believe that you are the Christ." That's an entire Old Testament assumption about the qualifications and the meaning and purpose of the coming of Christ, the Son of God who is coming into the world.

That's a mouthful right there and I believe that Martha did understand who Jesus was. He proved it by reconstituting and reanimating Lazarus, not the way that we will be, that was just a sign of his power. There's only one reconstitution and reanimation that has the eternal, immortal body that we will have. And that's, the Bible says, what was solved on the cross.

"The wages of sin is death." I showed you this slide on Friday night. It's a relational death, it's a biological death. These are the two components of it. I'm at odds with my Creator because of my sin and I have a biological corruption that's going to end my life, I'm mortal. The cross, you understand, as we said, is inextricably linked to the tomb. Now, understand why. Because the relational problem was fixed on the cross and the biological problem, at least was telegraphed, to be fixed in the tomb. Right now, all my Christian loved ones are still dead, I understand their bodies are dead. But one day they will be reconstituted with an immortal body and that's the promise of the Christian life as Philippians Chapter 3 puts it, my relationship with God is fixed. I am a card-carrying member of God's domain. I'm a citizen of heaven. And from there I wait for Christ to come back, and when he does, he's going to transform my lowly body to be like his immortal body. Not a reconstitution like Lazarus, but a remaking of my body into, as I like to say, the manufacturer's original specs. Back to the Adam body, back to the Garden body.

Well that's a promise that's held out to us on a day we think about the resurrection of Christ. I would encourage you to think about where you stand with these things. I said on Friday as clearly as I could, it's about confession and repentance. It's about faith and love. It's about us putting our trust in the solution for our sin. And I would encourage you strongly to do that this morning.

Pray with me. God, we've just scratched the surface here this morning thinking about what it means to affirm a statement that we here not only believe as some kind of religious, subjective truth but as objective, real truth that corresponds with facts. God, I know that people today, they can easily roll their eyes at that until they look at even the smartest people in our world who continue to say things about reality, about the phenomenon of life, that necessitates the very things that are there in the pages of Scripture for us. As you've revealed to us, that you are the creator of life, you constitute us physically, you animate us spiritually. And one day you promised that everyone in the grave will be reconstituted and reanimated and they'll be brought before you and then you're going to separate the people like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And there is going to be a group of people you're going to say, "Welcome into the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And there will be others who have said, "I didn't want to look at it. I don't want to consider it. I ignored it. I don't want to be led by Christ, I don't want to be religious, I don't want to go to



church, I don't want to be a part of all that." Unfortunately, you'll say to them, "Depart from me."

God, I pray that today people might rethink the resurrection of Christ and reconsider what it means to be a follower of Jesus on this day.

In Jesus name, Amen.