

## **“Jesus Rose from the Grave”**

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There seem to be two types of people in the world: dog people and cat people. My wife and I are decidedly dog people. We’ve had dogs for most of the nineteen years of our marriage. More than half of that time, we’ve simultaneously had two dogs, as we do now. But the first two dogs have, sadly, died.

We put our first dog, Jasmine, down almost ten years ago. And when we did that, I wept. I felt terrible. Most of the time we had Jasmine, we had our second dog, Tucker. They got along very well. They often slept right next to each other, and when I let them out to do their business, they would play: Jasmine would nip on Tucker’s legs to get him to run, and then she would chase him. Every night I used to let the dogs go outside one final time. I would open up the door to the backyard, and the dogs would go out racing into the dark night, beyond the reach of the floodlight that only illuminated the patio.

But now that Jasmine was gone, I just had Tucker to let out. I remember one of those nights after Jasmine died, I let Tucker out to do his business. And a thought occurred to me: what if out of the dark, she came running back into the house? It was a fleeting thought, but it expressed something very powerful: hope for life after death.

Now, I know this is just a dog. But I wonder if you’ve experienced the loss of a person, a relative or a friend, and hoped that you might see them one more time. Perhaps, in the wake of a death, the phone rang, and you hoped you would hear their voice on the other end of the line. Perhaps you were out shopping and saw someone who looked sort of like that person, and you hoped that you could see your loved one again. I think about people who were members of this church who have died in recent years. We feel their absence. Sometimes I think of what it would be like to see them here again.

I think we all have some hope for life after death because we know that death is wrong. Death separates us from the ones we love, and the threat of death scares us. According to Christianity, death is an alien intruder into God’s world. When God made everything, he made it good. Yet the first humans did not obey God. They did not listen to God. They didn’t trust that his rules were good. Because of the way they acted, there is a fracture in the relationship between

God and people. Because of that broken relationship, life is hard, and death came into the world. We all sense that death is wrong. It is an enemy to be defeated, something that shouldn't exist.

Christianity tells us that death shouldn't be. But it also tells that death can and will be defeated. Almost two thousand years ago, a man died and two days later he rose from the dead, in a perfect body that cannot die again. That's what we celebrate on Easter. We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And this resurrection changes everything. It gives us hope and it should change the way we live.

This morning I want to tell the story of the resurrection of Jesus. Then I want to give us some reasons why we can believe the resurrection actually happened. And then I want to show us why it matters.

In the Bible, there are four Gospels. Gospel means "good news," and each of the four Gospels in the Bible is a sort of theological biography of Jesus. The four Gospel writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—each construct their biographies in different ways, but each of them shows that Jesus died, that he was buried, and that he was later seen by his disciples.

Jesus died on a Friday, probably in the year AD 33. (The year 30 is the other possible year.) He died for a number of reasons: he died because the Jewish religious leaders were jealous of him, and because they thought he was wrong when he claimed to be God. Jesus died because he was betrayed by a follower of his, Judas. He died because he was opposed by the devil, Satan. And he died because it was part of God's plan. Because all of us have rebelled against God and broken his commands, we deserve to be punished. God is a perfect judge who must make sure that all evil is punished. But God is also merciful and gracious, so he provided a way for us to be made right with him. For those who put their trust in Jesus and have a relationship with him that is marked by love and obedience, their sins were punished at the cross.

Matthew tells us that when Jesus was buried, a number of women were there. This is what it says in Matthew 27:55–56:

<sup>55</sup> There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, <sup>56</sup> among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

Jesus had healed Mary Magdalene,<sup>2</sup> and she became his follower. There was also another Mary, not Jesus' mother, but the mother of two other men, James and Joses. The mother of James and John, two of Jesus' disciples, was also there. This is an important detail because two of these women see where Jesus was buried, and they also see the empty tomb.

In the next few verses, Matthew tells us where Jesus was buried. We read this in Matthew 27:57–61:

<sup>57</sup> When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup> He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. <sup>59</sup> And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud <sup>60</sup> and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. <sup>61</sup> Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Normally, someone who was crucified would be buried in shallow grave. But a rich man named Joseph, who was both a follower of Jesus and a member of the Sanhedrin (Luke 23:50–51), asked for Jesus' body and placed him in his own tomb. This fulfilled a verse in the Old Testament written over seven hundred years earlier. Isaiah 53:9 says,

And they made his grave with the wicked  
and with a rich man in his death,  
although he had done no violence,  
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

In the next few verses, we see something interesting: some of the Jewish religious leaders who didn't believe in Jesus decided that Jesus' tomb needed to be guarded. We find this in the next few verses in Matthew. This is Matthew 27:62–66:

<sup>62</sup> The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate <sup>63</sup> and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' <sup>64</sup> Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." <sup>65</sup> Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." <sup>66</sup> So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

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<sup>2</sup> He had driven seven demons out of her; see Luke 8:2.

Before Jesus died, he predicted several times that he would rise from the grave. It occurred to these leaders, the chief priests and the Pharisees, that the disciples might steal the body. They thought Jesus was wrong. They assumed he couldn't be raised from the dead. But they also thought his disciples were deceptive. They wanted to guard against anyone stealing Jesus' body and then saying later that he had risen.<sup>3</sup> It seems that the tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers. It would have been sealed with some clay that bore the stamp of the Roman Emperor.

In the next passage, we see that the two Marys went to the tomb. In Mark (16:1) and Luke (23:56; 24:1); we're told they went to the tomb to put spices on Jesus' body. Since Jesus was buried quickly, they probably thought his body wasn't properly prepared for burial. It was a custom to put a mixture of aromatic spices on a corpse to lessen the smell that would naturally come with decomposition. When the women arrive at the tomb, they see an angel, whose appearance is accompanied by an earthquake.

His is what we read in Mathew 28:1–10:

<sup>1</sup> Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup> And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup> And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup> But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup> He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup> Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." <sup>8</sup> So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

The women are afraid. That's an interesting detail. Now, if you experienced an earthquake, saw an angel, and the stone that sealed a tomb was moved, you would probably be afraid, too. But they're afraid when they see Jesus. That might sound strange, but think about how you would react if you were to see someone you knew to be dead alive again. They weren't expecting Jesus to be alive again. None of Jesus' followers were.

Matthew continues the story in the next few verses. This is Matthew 28:11–15:

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<sup>3</sup> Justin Martyr (100–165), writing in the middle of the second century, states that this was the Jewish claim regarding the origin of Christianity.

<sup>11</sup> While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. <sup>12</sup> And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers <sup>13</sup> and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ <sup>14</sup> And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” <sup>15</sup> So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

That’s what we find in Matthew’s Gospel, and that’s what we find, more or less, in the other Gospels.

If we are going to understand the resurrection, we need to know what it is. The first thing to know is that when Jesus rose from the dead, he rose in a body that can never die again. There are a few other times in the story of the Bible when people come back to life.<sup>4</sup> But the difference between those miracles and Jesus’ resurrection is that those people would die again. Jesus’ body will not and cannot die again.

The second thing to know is that Jesus’ resurrection is the first resurrection of many. In 1 Corinthians 15:20, Paul says that Jesus is the “firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep,” which is a nice way of saying those who have died. When Jesus comes back to earth, everyone who has ever lived will be resurrected. Some will live in a new creation, a new earth, that is perfect. It will be only God and his people. Others will be separated from God and anything good. We call that hell. The good news is that God is committed to his creation. One day, he is going to remake it into something amazing. There will be nothing bad. In Revelation 21:4, it says, “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” So, Jesus’ resurrection is like the first installment or the down payment of what is going to come. The whole universe will be renewed, God’s people will be raised in bodies that can never die, and they will live with him forever.

I’ll come back to the significance of the resurrection. Right now, I want to give us reasons why we can believe that the resurrection happened. After all, it’s a hard thing to believe that a dead man came back to life. Even though we hope for such a thing, we have never seen a dead person alive again.

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<sup>4</sup> Outside of Jesus’ resurrection, we have mention of eight individuals coming back to life: see 1 Kgs. 17:17–24; 2 Kgs. 4:20–37; 13:21; Luke 7:11–16; Mark 5:35–43; John 11:1–44; Acts 9:36–41; 20:7–12.

First, let me address a basic objection. Some people don't believe in the resurrection because they think that miracles are impossible. They don't believe in anything beyond what they can see and observe and measure. They don't believe in anything supernatural.

Miracles may be hard to believe in, but if we believe in the existence of God, they are not. By definition, God can do anything he desires to do. If he can create the universe out of nothing, what is it for him to bring someone back from the dead? The best mainstream science suggests that the universe emerged out of nothing: no matter, no energy, no space—absolutely nothing. I've mentioned this before, but this argument for God's existence is called the cosmological argument. In one sense, the creation of the universe is the grandest miracle of them all.<sup>5</sup> It certainly sets the stage for any subsequent miracles.

The existence of God accounts for all the design that we see in the universe. This includes everything from the orderly movements of the planets to the laws of physics to the amazing details we find in our cells. A great example is DNA, which is a type of code, or language. DNA is information, and chance does not produce information. An agent, an intelligence, is needed to produce information, and that intelligent agent is God.

God's existence also accounts for objective moral facts. We know certain things are right and certain things are wrong. Why are certain things right and certain things wrong? Because we said so? Because we like it that way? Honestly, I don't think anything accounts for our understanding of morality other than that God is the basis for morality. Also, we all believe humans should have certain rights. Why should humans have rights? I think human rights only make sense if we acknowledge we are created by God, and that each human being is therefore valuable.

There are many other arguments for God, but my point is that the existence of God is a rational idea, and if the best scientific evidence points to the fact that God made the universe out of nothing, then miracles are possible.

God not only created the universe, but at every moment, he sustains it. In fact, the Bible says that Jesus sustains the universe by his powerful word (Heb. 1:3). Often, God sustains the world by allowing nature to do what God created it to do. But every once in a while, God acts directly in the world, often to communicate to us, but also to do what only he can do. If God

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<sup>5</sup> To read more about the cosmological argument, see <http://wbcommunity.org/cosmological-argument>.

doesn't act directly, everyone dies and stays dead. But if God decides to act directly, he can raise the dead.

Let me put it another way. Imagine a little boy in a gym, with his hands on a heavy dumbbell. What is the probability that he could lift that heavy weight? You would probably say zero, and I think you would be right. But what if his very strong father is with him, and the father grabs both ends of the dumbbell when the boy attempts to lift the weight. What is the probability now? It's now 100 percent. That's how miracles work. Without God, they're impossible. With God, they are very much possible.

So, philosophically and theologically speaking, the case for miracles is strong.

But what about the evidence of the resurrection?

I don't have time to go through a lot of details, but I will mention a few. If you want to learn more, I have posted an article on the church's website, [wbcommunity.org](http://wbcommunity.org).<sup>6</sup> You can find a copy of that article on the table in the back of the room.

First, the New Testament documents are historically reliable. They were written by eyewitnesses or by those who had access to eyewitnesses, and they were written within a few decades of the events they describe. That may not sound impressive, but it is compared to other ancient histories. And they were written far too early to be legends.

Second, there is simply no evidence that the content of the New Testament has been tampered with. We have no evidence of anyone adding legendary accounts to earlier writings. But we do have evidence that the earliest teachings in Christianity emphasized the resurrection. Consider what Paul, a missionary sent by the risen Jesus, wrote to the church in a city called Corinth. We find this passage in 1 Corinthians 15:3–8:

<sup>3</sup> For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

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<sup>6</sup> The long version is available here: <http://wbcommunity.org/resurrection>. Here is a shorter version: <http://wbcommunity.org/evidence-resurrection-jesus-christ>.

In this passage, he uses technical terms: he received this teaching from someone else, and he passed it on to the Corinthians. This passage appears to be like a creed, because it has a structure that makes it easy to memorize. Even in the English translation, we can see that in the first half “that” appear four times: “that Christ died,” “that he was buried,” “that he was raised,” and “that he appeared to Cephas [Peter].” In the original Greek, the second half has four “then” clauses: “then he appeared to more than five hundred” people, “then he appeared to James,” “then to all the apostles,” and then to Paul. Paul probably received this statement of belief from the apostles Peter and James.

Paul wrote 1 Corinthians around the year 54, give or take a year. Since Paul converted from Judaism to Christianity within a couple of years of Jesus’ death,<sup>7</sup> and since he visited some of Jesus’ disciples, Peter and James, in Jerusalem three years later (Gal. 1:18), it would seem likely that Paul received this teaching within about five years after Jesus died and rose from the grave. This is the original Christian teaching, not a later legend.

We should also notice that there are details in the Gospel accounts of the resurrection that no one would ever make up. In the Gospels, the first eyewitnesses to the resurrection are women. In the first century in Palestine, a woman’s testimony was almost useless. In that male-dominated society, a woman’s testimony would be heard in court only in rare cases.<sup>8</sup> If you were making up a story, you wouldn’t have women as the first witnesses. You would likely have rich men see the empty tomb first.

Not only that, but Jesus’ male followers, the disciples are often presented in the Gospels as thick-headed. And they were cowards. When Jesus was arrested, they ran. Even when the risen Jesus appeared, some of them had doubts. We see that in Matthew 28:17, which says, “And when saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted.” If you were making up a story, you wouldn’t include that.

There’s also a fair amount of evidence outside the Bible that Jesus rose from the grave. As you would expect, some early Christian theologians write quite clearly about the resurrection. But there are other, non-Christian witnesses, too. For example, Flavius Josephus (c. 37–c. 100), a

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<sup>7</sup> According to John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 1999), 80, Paul saw the risen Christ in A.D. 32, if Jesus died in the year 30. If A.D. 33 is the correct year, then Paul’s conversion would have been around the year 34.

<sup>8</sup> Flavius Josephus the Jewish historian, writes in his *Antiquities* 4.8.15, “But let not the testimony of women be admitted, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex.”



Jewish man who became a Roman historian, reported that Jesus was crucified by Pontius Pilate and that he appeared to his disciples three days afterward.<sup>9</sup>

The Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus (56–117) also wrote of Christians and Christ. After a fire broke out in Rome in 64, people were looking for someone to blame, and even the emperor, Nero, came under suspicion. Tacitus wrote about how Nero blamed Christians for the fire:

Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.<sup>10</sup>

Tacitus traces the origins of Christianity to “Christus,” an obvious reference to Jesus Christ, who lived during the time of the Roman emperor, Tiberius, and who suffered death (“the extreme penalty”) under Pontius Pilate. Notice also that Christianity was “checked for the moment” after Jesus’ death, only to break out again. This detail harmonizes with what we know from the Bible: after Jesus’ death, the disciples were hiding. Even after his resurrection, the disciples did not do any public teaching. The disciples didn’t make much noise in Judea or beyond until after Jesus ascended to heaven and after they received the promised Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, some seven weeks after the resurrection.

Even if we took just the evidence from outside of the Bible, we would know that an extraordinary man named Jesus lived, that he was crucified by Pontius Pilate, and that he appeared to his disciples later. What else could account for these facts but Jesus’ resurrection? Some people think Jesus didn’t actually die on the cross. That’s what the Qur’an, the holy book of Islam says.<sup>11</sup> But that’s impossible. Crucifixion was a brutal way to die and the Romans certainly knew how to kill people. Others claim that the disciples hallucinated. But hallucinations

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<sup>9</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 18.63–64.

<sup>10</sup> Cornelius Tacitus, *The Annals* 15.44, eds. Alfred John Church and William Jackson Brodribb, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0078%3Abook%3D15%3Achapter%3D44> (accessed April 9, 2023).

<sup>11</sup> Surah 4:157.

are personal experiences. They can't be shared.<sup>12</sup> Yet Jesus appeared to many people at different times and in different places. It was no hallucination.

Some people claim that Jesus only appeared in a spiritual, visionary form, not in a real body. Yet his followers touched him (Matt. 28:9; Luke 24:39–40), he ate with them (Luke 24:41–43), and he even prepared food for them (John 21:9–13).

We should also say that there is simply no evidence of a body and no evidence of the disciples stealing the body. How could they? They had no power or money, and they wouldn't be able to get past Roman soldiers. Even if they had stolen the body, someone would have found out. We also have no writings within the first century that claim that the resurrection was a lie. The disciples preached publicly about Jesus' resurrection and the New Testament documents circulated publicly. Anyone could have said, "Those men are lying!" But apart from the Jewish story that the disciples stole the body, we don't have that.

So, what does the resurrection mean? I already said that Jesus was the first installment of the new creation. If you are in Christ Jesus, you are a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). Your spirit is being renewed now, and you will receive a new body later.

Jesus' resurrection ensures our regeneration. This is what Peter writes in his first letter. 1 Peter 1:3–5:

<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Do you get that? God has caused us to be born again *through* the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The same power that rose Jesus Christ from the grave raises our (spiritually) dead hearts to new life in him.

Jesus' resurrection also ensures our justification. Look at Romans 4:25. Here, Paul writes about Abraham, the great Old Testament example of someone who had faith. Paul shows that Abraham was counted righteous by his faith, by his trust in God's promises. All who believe in the risen Jesus will be counted righteous. Then Paul writes that Jesus "was delivered up to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification." We are declared just, in the right, not guilty,

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<sup>12</sup> Michael R. Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010), 484: "Since hallucinations are mental events with no external referent, one cannot share in the hallucinations of another."

because Jesus was raised from the dead. This is what theologian Wayne Grudem says about the resurrection: “By raising Christ from the dead, God the Father was in effect saying that he approved of Christ’s work of suffering and dying for our sins, that his work was completed, and that Christ no longer had any need to remain dead. There was no penalty left to pay for sin, no more wrath of God to bear, no more guilt of liability to punishment—all had been completely paid for, and no guilt remained.”<sup>13</sup>

Tim Keller writes something similar in his book, *King’s Cross*, “Jesus had risen, just as he told them he would. After a criminal does his time in jail and satisfies the sentence, the law has no more claim on him and he walks out free. Jesus Christ came to pay the penalty for our sins. That was an infinite sentence, but he must have satisfied it fully, because on Easter Sunday he walked out free. The resurrection was God’s way of stamping PAID IN FULL right across history so that nobody could miss it.”<sup>14</sup>

Here’s another thing that the resurrection shows us: Jesus’ resurrection ensures that we will one day have resurrected bodies. We will not be disembodied spirits floating on clouds. We don’t become angels, as I’ve heard some people say. We will receive perfect bodies. We won’t have diseases, or bad backs or bad knees or bad hips. There will be no sin, only God, his people, and a perfect universe.

This last point should give us great hope. We know how this story ends. We don’t know when it will end, but we know it has a happy ending. All the lies of this world, all the false gods, the idols, the things that we think will make us happy—they can’t compare to the glory of the new creation.

If you believe that, it changes the way you live. In 1 Corinthians 15, as Paul is writing of the resurrection, he says this, in verse 32: “If the dead are not raised, ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.’” People who don’t believe in God, who don’t believe in the resurrection, they say, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” Some people think that’s true, and they try to grab as much as they can in this life, whether it’s money or experiences. But that’s not what Christians should do. If we believe the resurrection, we are free to risk it all. In verse 31, Paul writes, “I die every day!” He spent his life for Christ, knowing that there would be a greater reward in the future. Paul viewed his life as a race to be run for Christ. He viewed his life as a

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<sup>13</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 615.

<sup>14</sup> Timothy Keller, *King’s Cross: The Story of the World in the Life of Jesus* (New York: Dutton, 2011), 219.

drink offering, to be poured out to the glory of God. He didn't sit around making a nice, comfortable life for himself.

Christians, we are free to make sacrifices, because one day we'll have far greater pleasure than we can ever have right now. That reminds of the famous quote by Jim Elliott, a young man who one day wrote in his journal: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." Let me read that again: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." A few years later, in 1956, Elliott gave his life for Christ. While on a mission to Ecuador, he was killed by some indigenous people there. He was only 28. He was no fool. He knew what the resurrection meant, and he lived accordingly.

Christians, we will have eternity to enjoy, but now we have work to do. Think about this: there are at least two things we won't do in eternity. One, we won't sin, which is good. But, two, we won't evangelize in eternity. We won't need to share the gospel, because everyone there will believe in God. But we do have this time, right now, to share the gospel. We won't have another chance to do that.

If you're here today and you're not a Christian, let me say I'm glad you're here. I really am. And I hope you've been listening. Christianity makes a grand claim: a man, who was also God, died and then rose from the grave, never to die again. Consider the evidence. Read the Gospels. Go online and read the evidence in greater detail at the church's website. Talk to me about it. But please, for your sake, don't just shrug your shoulders. None of us should do that. There's too much at stake. Eternity is at stake. Jesus rose from the grave. He is Lord, or King, over all. You will have to deal with Jesus, now or later. You may not want a King to tell you how to live, and so you push him away, but he will not be pushed away forever. You will stand before him in judgment. Your biggest regret in life might be this, that you did not take the time to learn who Jesus is, that you didn't even bother to consider the evidence, and that you did not put your faith in him.

Though Jesus suffered, he rose from the grave. Whatever we face in this life, we will rise. Will you put your faith in Jesus and live with him forever in paradise, or you will continue to live life on your terms? The way of Jesus is life, abundant and eternal.