



DID JESUS RISE FROM DEATH?

Part 4 of Vintage Jesus

Pastor Mark Driscoll | October 29, 2006

You're listening to Vintage Jesus, a sermon series answering 12 common questions about Jesus presented by Pastor Mark Driscoll. The following is a presentation of Mars Hill Church in Seattle. For more audio and video content please visit Mars Hill Church do.org. The following interview does not necessarily reflect the views or the opinions of Mars Hill Church.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: This is Pastor Mark here at Hemp Fest. Yes, that's Hemp Fest, in Seattle where I'm wearing my Jesus is watching you smoke the weed T shirt. And a, we shot a bunch of interviews with some very interesting characters to see if we can get some vignettes on culture and spirituality, religion, Jesus and whatever else they have smoked enough to give us their insights on, so thanks for joining us.

So you think this is what heaven will be like, kind of like Hemp Fest?

Male: Maybe, maybe. I don't know. I don't actually believe in heaven or hell or the —

Pastor Mark Driscoll: None of that kind of stuff?

Male: or the Pearly Gates.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: Any religious background? Did your mom drag you to church against your will?

Male: I've been to church and I've read the Bible and stuff. But, it just confuses me more, and more, and more. I just don't why, why, why.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: What's most confusing as you read?

Male: Like, like check this out. If you try and explain Noah's Ark—

Pastor Mark Driscoll: Yeah.

Male: to a nine year old retarded kid. One you get into starting to say, okay they took the lions and the giraffes on there and then the kids going to go, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, I'm not that retarded." Lion eat giraffes. So this is kind of crazy, you know. I see all this, these dichotomies in it; you know confusing as _____—

[Crosstalk]

Pastor Mark Driscoll: Have you ever tried to smoke weed and read it and see if that helps?

Male: Oh, one of my favorite songs is, "Let's get high and read the Bible, Let's get high and read the Bible. I always like to learn about Jesus when I'm stoned. Let's get high and read the Bible. Let's get high and read the Bible. I always like to learn about Jesus when I'm stoned. You know because Jesus probably faked the resurrection, using cannabis. (Singing)

Pastor Mark Driscoll: How do you think he did that, faked it with pot?

Male: Yep.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: Do you think he got everybody high?

Male: He, he, he —

Pastor Mark Driscoll: Like secondhand smoke and they all had an illusion?

Male: He was like a trust fund kid and he had all the money, and all the magi and stuff would bring him all kinds of gifts, frankincense, myrrh, hashish. And he got a whole bunch of hashish and he just ate, ate a ton of hashish, when he knew, you know, it was his last supper. So it's like —

[Crosstalk]

Pastor Mark Driscoll: So at his last supper he just ate so much weed he just passed out for awhile?

Male: Yeah.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: and three days later it wore off —

Male: Yeah.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: and the brownies cleared out of system and he was good to go?

Male: Yeah. And then he ran off and went to Hemp Fest.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: Cool. Good to meet you bro.

Male: See you guys.

Pastor Mark Driscoll: See you buddy.

Pastor Mark Driscoll

(sermon): Unbelievable, love that guy.

Good to have you all with us. My name is Mark. I am one of Pastor's here. Put the fun in fundamentalism here at Mars Hill this weekend. We are the only mega church in the country quoting Hugh Hefner and showing pot heads.

A lot of churches that are our size they have drama, and they have skits and stuff. No way can't you pay for stuff that good, that stuff's gold right there. That's gold. Carlos Mencino rip it off now. He steals everything, so.

Good to have you guys out. We're gonna look at a question tonight. "Did Jesus rise from death? We are taking 12 weeks to look at 12 of the biggest questions about the person and the work of Jesus. "Some on you may ask isn't that an Easter sermon?" Well, of course. We'll talk about it at Easter, too. But, every Sunday is resurrection Every Sunday is a good day to talk about the resurrection of Jesus. You got the loop notes. It will help you follow along.

I'll go ahead and pray and just so you know this week's T shirt, is "Jesus is my guild leader" for those of you who are online video game fanatics and World of War Craft addicts. So, Jesus is our guild leader. So I'll go ahead and pray and we'll get right to work it's a good one tonight. And glad to have you all out.

"Father, we, we want this time to pleasing to you and profitable for us. So, I am asking that the resurrection of Jesus would be clear, that you would allow me to speak persuasively and cogently. I pray that you would give those that have gathered an opportunity to come to a certainty. And assurance for the resurrection of Jesus for themselves, for that to happen we invite you holy spirit to lead us, guide us, convict us, instruct us and have your way with us. We ask this in Jesus' good name. Amen."

Well, as we get into tonight's topic is did Jesus rise from death? That's a question we will answer in our time together. And I will start with a quote from Hugh Hefner, founder of Play Boy, and my wife wanted me to tell you that I didn't get this out of an issue that showed up at my house, in the mail. That I do not subscribe Play Boy, I do not endorse subscribing to Play Boy and if you do, and if you have a blog, don't say that I do. A – But – the reason I'm quoting it is because I think Hugh Hefner is living sort of the dream life, for at least a lot of men. A lot of men wish they had Hugh Hefner's life. And he is living the dream life and one day he will die and the question is what happens to him? What happens to us when we die?

So I found this quote on the internet, and no it didn't accompany any pictures. It was just all words. And they interviewed him for Play Boy. They asked what do you believe happens after death? And he's living the dream that so many men want to live. What happens when you die? He says quote, "I haven't a clue." And then at the end of the interview he says, "Because we have no such answers."

That is a very common position that maybe even some of you have. You live your life. When you die, who knows what happens. Some say you go to heaven. Some say you go to hell. Some say you reincarnate. Some say you go to purgatory. Some say nothing happens you just become mulch in the ground. No one knows. And that is the position of many.

Now as Christians what we believe is that death is our enemy. That's what Scripture says. We hate death. That's why we buckle up. Drink bottled water. Right, we want to live we don't want to die but eventually death wins and we all die and death is the result of sin. So, we all sin. We all die. Sin and death win and we die. The question then begs to be answered. What then? What happens after we die?

~~All of the answers there is no answer to the question that Jesus died and~~

died. Jesus was buried. And three days later Jesus came back from death and he is the Lord of life and death. And he tells us what awaits us on the other side of the grave because he is the only person who has crossed over and then returned conquering death. To tell us what awaits us on the other side of death, of death.

And this is the fact upon which the Christian faith is built, okay. Christianity is not built just on good teaching, moral principles, philosophical inquiries. Christianity is rooted in this historical fact, so much so, in First Corinthians 15, which is the most lengthy treaties of the resurrection. Theologically in the New Testament we are told by the Apostle Paul that if Jesus is still dead then we are just pitiful fools and that, there is no reason for us to have any hope beyond the grave. And sin and death win and there is no possibility of Good News beyond that. And so he rightly establishes everything in conjunction with the resurrection of Jesus.

And for us as Christian if you can disprove the resurrection of Jesus. You literally pull the bottom piece out of the Christian jenga game and the entirety

of our religion crumbles and falls apart. And so we'll answer the question of the resurrection of Jesus and I will do so looking at three different lines of evidence. I'll look at Biblical evidence. I'll look at circumstantial evidence and historical evidence.

I will begin my inquiry into the Biblical evidence by telling you that Jesus repeatedly, emphatically and clearly said, "I will die. I will be buried. And three days later I will rise; conquering death like no one else ever has or ever will." I've got the references in your notes. This is something he said very often.

It was clearly what he believed and taught. And in so doing, he was preparing people for the fact of his resurrection. I'll give you one example to illustrate my point, Out of Mark, Chapter 8 verse 31, "It says that Jesus, then began to teach them, that the Son of Man" – that is a title he took for himself from Daniel – "must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priest and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and after three days rise again."

Here's what Jesus said, "I'm alive now. Everybody's gonna turn their back on me. They're gonna kill me. They're going to bury me but three days later I will rise conquering death and I'll be back," stole Schwarzenegger's line. "I'll be back. I'm coming back three days later." So, Jesus did live and he was killed. And I – let me emphasize this point. He died. I tell you that because some will say that he didn't. Many Muslim scholars, we're not Muslims we're Christians. We don't believe in the Koran. But many Muslim scholars that study the Koran will tell you Jesus didn't die on the cross. He passed out he swooned. It looked like he died. He looked like he died because he died.

Additionally Christian Scientist will tell you based on the teaching of their founder Mary Baker Eddy. She says emphatically, "Jesus did not die on the cross." And we're not Christian Scientist either. By the way, I think Christian Science is false advertising, 'cause their not Christian and they don't have science. It's kind of like grape nuts. If you ever bought a grape nut cereal box, you open the box and you're like, "Hey, there's no grapes and they're no nuts. Why do they call this grape nuts?" I think that same thing about Christian Science. Hey, there's no Christians. And there's no science. This is like grape nuts. Somebody, somebody put the wrong name on the box.

Anyways, those kind of people say Jesus didn't die. Jesus died. Okay, I'll tell you what happened to him and you'll see he died. And if he didn't die then we have a bigger miracle than the resurrection. He was run through a series of false trails at night. Then he was beat up by a mob. And then he was flogged. Right, where they ripped the flesh off his body. Many men died from the flogging, the beating, scourging was so severe. And then they made him carry about 100 pound wooden cross across his totally devastated, broken, bloody, beaten body.

And then they took five or seven inch spikes and they pounded them into his feet, which was the professional mode of execution, their version of the electric chair. They crucified him. A professional executioner saw him breathe his last and confirm he's dead. And just to make sure they took a spear and ran it under his rib cage while he was still on the cross. And it punctured and shattered his heart sack. So that water and blood flowed out. Right, he's really dead he's stopped breathing. And then they caused his heart to explode. I mean, you're really dead if you don't have a heart. I don't know if you know this, there is no back up. (Laughter) My heart went out. Good thing the other one works. This is not like having dual tanks on a pickup truck. Once it's gone. It's gone, that's all you got.

And then they took him down and they wrapped him in about 100 pounds of linen and spices, like a mummified state. If he was still alive breathing without the heart, then he would have suffocated. They put him in a cold tomb, honed out of rock, so it's freezing. So now his body, if he was breathing without the heart or the ability to gather air 'cause he's in the mummified state, then he would have died by shock. No medical treatment. No food. No water for three days. You know why it looked like he died. He died. Even if you went to public school, you go, "Yeah, that's definitely what it seemed like. Yeah, he died." Okay, so he died, I mean. Some argue against that, and it's like, alright, fine that's cute.

Jesus said he would die and he died. And he was buried in a rich man's tomb. Isaiah 53:9, prophesized 700 years even before Jesus was born. That he would be buried with the rich in his death. Now Jesus wasn't a rich guy. He was flat broke, homeless, carpenter, peasant, didn't have money he was a broke guy.

But when he died one of his more secret quite disciples a gentleman named, Joseph of Arimathea, stepped forward and said, "Well, Jesus has nowhere for his body to be laid. He has not where to be buried. So what I am going to do is gift him my tomb. I will give him my burial plot for departed, dead Jesus. And Joseph of Arimathea was a well known man. He was affluent. He was educated. He was powerful.

He was part of the Jewish Sanhedrin, which was the ruling council of 70 leaders who voted for the execution of Jesus. As such that was the equivalent of ruling in the Jewish people's community like a Supreme Court Justice, in our nation. These are people everybody knows. They're really powerful. They're really successful. They're really smart. They're really respected as a result everyone would have known where his tomb was.

It wasn't an unknown location. And if per chance they got the wrong tomb someone said, "Well, maybe they went to the wrong tomb. And they thought Jesus had risen because his body wasn't there. Well, they would have been able to easily confirm that, going to Joseph of Arimathea a very well known prominent man and saying, "Where is the tomb that you gave Jesus?" And he could take them there to verify whether or not Jesus body still remained in the tomb.

Jesus was laid to rest in that tomb wrapped in the burial linens and spices. And three days later he rose. He rose from death. There was a stone, a large stone that would have taken a few men too moved. There was the seal of the Roman government on it. Saying that, "No one was to tamper with the body. There were guards posted outside. You know the equivalent of the Marines or the Seals. The navy Seals were protecting the tomb. I mean this was very official state business. Everybody knew where it was, the guards were there. The government placed a Seal there. Joseph of Arimathea owned the tomb. This is not in some obscure location.

And he rose from death, Jesus did. And within weeks, months, maybe at most a year of two, after his resurrection, Christians started putting together their creed. And their creed was about their death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. This was a succinct doctrinal statement, that the early Christians put together to lay out the central beliefs of Christianity, that now 2,000 years later we still believe, Orthodox Christians, Catholic Christians, Protestant Christians, all agree on these facts.

Some will tell that the legend of Jesus' resurrection is just that, a legend. It's myth. It's a fable. It's a folk lore. It's like the Easter Bunny. The tooth fairy, or the Mariners getting, starting pitching, I mean, it's, it's just a fantasy, right. And they will say it was invented by Christians hundreds of years after Jesus lived. After the eye witnesses were dead, and gone. And that Jesus is fine but the church has corrupted the truth about Jesus and we've invented this mythic resurrected figure. And they will say that they love the Jesus of history but not the Jesus of faith. And they will distinguish the two.

But, the creed that early Christians started believing and articulating was put together shortly after the resurrection of Jesus, when the eye witnesses were still alive long before there was time for myth, legend, fable, folklore and fairytale to accrue.

Somewhere between the year 30 and 36 AD, right after Jesus resurrection this creed was put together that became popular and spread throughout Christianity and it is mentioned in First Corinthians, Chapter 15. And there we read, this creed says, "Christ died for our sins according to Scripture." So, Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures. "He was buried, He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and he appeared to Peter and then the 12."

The core beliefs, doctrine, theology, creed of the early Christians was; Jesus lived, Jesus died for our sins. Jesus was buried. Jesus rose like he said he would. And he appeared to a lot of witnesses. So, this is a widely known verifiable fact. Okay, so this is the centerpiece of Christian faith. Again, if this is not true Christianity ceased to exist; literally it has no foundation upon which to be built.

Jesus lived. Jesus died. Jesus was buried in a known tomb that was guarded. Three days later, Jesus rose from death and lots of people saw it. And the Bible goes on to talk about those who were eye witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus. And this is important because some will tell you that the resurrection of Jesus is a myth borrowed from other religions. And other religions may have some concept of a resurrection. And they will say that, "Christians stole the concept of the resurrection from these other religions. That is not true. And one of the reasons we know it was not true, is that those accounts tend to be very mythical and fanciful.

The account of the resurrection of Jesus is very historical. It's very factual. And it is very verifiable. That's the way the story is told. And we're told repeatedly. This person saw him risen. This person saw him risen. And the result is as I will show you in a moment. There is a list of a hundreds of eye witnesses, different times, different places, circumstances, young, old, rich, poor, male, female, all kinds of appearances.

The Bible says, "The following is resurrection, Jesus appeared for 40 days to make sure that everyone knew that he was alive before he returned to heaven as God where he had come from." And in that day, the day where there wasn't such a thing as a video camera to record things, eye witness testimony was the most assured way to come to factual truth. And having a list of hundreds of eye witnesses is the Bible's way of seeing, saying essentially, "Go and interview them and double check the facts for yourself. Because they will all say the same thing. Jesus died. Jesus was buried and then they saw him alive.

And there are many lists. I will go through them briefly they are in your notes. But Mary Magdalene saw him. Cleopas and another disciple on another occasion, on another occasion ten apostles, as well as others saw him, seven Apostles on a different occasion, all twelve Apostles on a few occasions, a crowd of 500 people at one time saw him.

First Corinthians 15, says, "At least 500 people were out to see Jesus risen from death." And this is unbelievable, this not an obscure unknown historical tidbit. 500 people, some have said, "Well, they missed Jesus so much that they kind of invented the resurrection. They had a hallucination." 500 people don't have the same hallucination, right.

Hallucination is a private experience. If any of you have done shrooms you know that, right. (Laughter) I'm not saying you should. It's a sin. But if you have, you have a private hallucination, not shared by 500 people, right. People have individual hallucinations, not 500 people. If 500 people walk into court and all testify one after the other and say the exact same thing it's because it's a fact. That's what it means.

Furthermore Paul saw Jesus risen from death. We will deal with that momentarily. Other women saw him. Eleven disciples as well as other people on another occasion, Thomas as well as the other Apostles, as well as the other Apostles, and Thomas was the doubter. He said, "I've heard Jesus is alive but like some of you. I won't believe until I see of for myself." "And he went on your behalf and he touched Jesus crucifixion scars. And he verified that Jesus had risen from death." And he fell down at Jesus feet and said, "My Lord, and my God. And he worshipped Jesus."

"Following the resurrection the disciples as did Peter and Jesus brother James." Now some of you may say, "This is not trustworthy historical information." "The answer is, well of course it is. The Bible if it were lying wouldn't give the list of all the eye witnesses, to go double check and verify. I mean, if this were to end up in court, all they would have to do is pull out the Scriptures and say, "Let's call in all of these witnesses. They are still alive and let's see in, they in fact saw him risen from death."

Another reason that we know that these accounts of eye witness testimony are accurate is because they are so heavily weighed on women. This may surprise some of you but before the advent of Christianity women were not well treated. Women were not treated well in most religions and considered second class citizens. And in that culture they were not, for example allowed to testify in court because the testimony of a woman was not widely respected. Yet, Jesus loved women. Jesus, confirmed women. Jesus encouraged women. And women loved Jesus very dearly.

So much, so that when he died they went to visit his tomb to mourn and grieve. And when they got there, it was the women first on scene to see that the stone had been rolled away. That the tomb was empty, that Jesus' burial clothes were just lying there because he had risen from death. And the women came back and gave the first report of the resurrection of Jesus.

Why is that important? Because if the story of the resurrection of Jesus were a lie, and it were falsified and made up, there would not have been heavily weighted eye witness testimony about women, because they are not the most credible witness and not fit to come in for court proceedings. So the reason that there are women mentioned in the story because that is what really happened.

Not because it was made up. It was made up; it would not be made up this way. This is not the best way to tell a lie. This in fact is not the most effective way to tell a lie. But because it talks about women, that's a line of evidence that it's the truth. That it lists all of these eye witnesses and it lists women as credible eye witnesses. Additionally Jesus' most ardent enemies converted. Believed he was God and began worshipping him as God, and had a total transformation.

Chief among them was a man named Saul of Tarsus, you may know him as Paul. What was he doing before he became a Christian Pastor? Remember? He was murdering Christians. He was the terrorist in his day. He hated Jesus. He hated Christians. The first time we meet him in the Book of Acts, he is present at the murder of the early church deacon. A man named Stephen. He was murdering a Christian because he was saying that Jesus rose from death. And he later on became a Christian because he was convinced that Jesus rose from death, because he too, saw the risen Jesus.

Now this may shock you, but Paul had no inclination to become a Christian. He was in no way predisposed. It is the equivalent today of Osama bin Laden becoming a Christian. So much so, that in his day when he became a Christian, the Christians were still freaked out by him and didn't trust him. Right, because when the guy who murders Christians comes to your Bible study, (Laughter) and says, "Hey, 'I got saved. Let's all close our eyes and pray.'" You're like, "No, no – pray with one eye open but, um – I'm not closing both eyes, Osama." (Laughter) "We're going to make the two big guys sit next to you. And if you screw around there gonna send you to see Jesus, alright. We're not puttin' up with any of this. We don't trust you."

And that's how they viewed Paul. They didn't trust him, right. It took awhile for the church to build trust with this guy. I mean you can imagine, you know, terrorist comes in and wants to be a deacon. Like, "Oh, yeah, what service is he going to? I'll be at the other one, you know." That was Paul. And so when your most ardent opponents, those who hate and despise you and your followers, convert and say Jesus rose from death. That is good evidence that it is just true.

Furthermore, Jesus' own family worshipped him as God. He had a mother and he had two brothers, at least. Right, we're gonna deal with this in a few weeks. Jesus, mother was a virgin when she got married. But, she wasn't a virgin in the marriage. We highly encourage women to be virgins, until their married. And then we highly discourage virginity. You know what I'm saying. (Laughter) Most husbands do as well. Their like, "I married a virgin, and she still is." I want to kill myself. (Laughter) she had intimacy with her husband as she was supposed to, later on in the marriage. She gave birth to two boys, James and Jude. And they marry, Jesus, mother, James and Jude as brothers did not think he was God, did not worship him as God until after the resurrection.

In fact during his life, they thought (whistle) "He's lost it." Right, "He's who, who, he lost it" And then went to him on one occasion, when he was teaching. And they wanted to bring him home because he kept saying he was God, came down from heaven, could forgive sin. And they thought, "No, the poor kid's gone nuts." So, they came to pick him. They were like, "We'll get you some meds. We'll take you to see Doctor Phil, you know, we'll get this all figured. You're bipolar. You're obviously having a manic episode. You think you're Jesus," – you know, I mean – and that's what they thought about Jesus.

They thought that he was a little nuts. Yet, after his resurrection they were convinced. He is God, like he said. He beats sin and death like he said. So much so that his two brothers became Christians and worshipped him as God.

Now how many of you have brothers? I have two brothers. Have you ever thought my brother might be God? (Laughter) More likely my brother might be Satan. That's what you thought, right, because brothers are Satanist. They do horrible things, right? I mean, so many of you spent half your childhood looking out the hole in your underwear because your brother pulled your underwear over your head. I mean he just did that, to do it, right. He was sick, mean.

Brothers can do horrible things. What would it take for you to worship your brother as God, at least a resurrection, right, at least a resurrection? Jesus' brothers, James and Jude became Christians and pastors. They wrote books of the Bible, bearing the names, James and Jude. James became the Pastor of the Church at Jerusalem, one of the most prominent churches in early Christianity. And we're talking about a Jewish family. Who don't just worship people as God, right?

The first two commandments are, "There is one God. Don't worship anyone of anything but that one true God or you are going to go to hell." For these good Jewish boys and their mother to worship Jesus as God, it took the evidence of the resurrection. So much so that Jesus' own mother worshipped him as God. I love my mom, but anyone who has changed your diaper, probably isn't going to worship you as God, unless they get the kind of evidence that resurrection provides.

Yet what we find is following the resurrection, there were the 120 early Christians gathered in the Upper Room worshipping Jesus. He had risen, appeared for 40 days ascended back in to heaven and then he early Christians got back together to sing to him and pray to him and worship him, among them was Mary his mother. That's what the early Chapters of Acts record. That she would sing to her son as God. Pray to her son as God. Her trust was in her son as God. That is the Biblical evidence.

“Jesus said that he would die and rise three days later. Jesus died. Jesus was laid in a well known, marked guarded tomb of a known affluent man. And the government knew exactly where that body was laid. Three days later Jesus rose from death. He appeared over the course of 40 days to hundreds of people, different times, settings, circumstances, backgrounds, genders that he then ascended into heaven. His enemies like Saul believed it was true, had a change of heart, became Christians. His brothers also had a change of heart, worshipped him as God, became Christians, as did his own mother Mary.”

Those are the Biblical lines of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. Let me proceed from there to the circumstantial lines of evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. In giving these I want to express the burden of proof is answered by Christians and it remains on those who are not Christians who would disprove the resurrection to give some of other cause for these affects.

What I am saying is this. I will explain to you all the changes that happened after the resurrection of Jesus. That are only explained by the resurrection of Jesus, and if you doubt the resurrection of Jesus, or if you want to deny the resurrection of Jesus the burden of proof is on you to say, “Well, how did, all of these things happen if Jesus was still dead?” There needs to be a cause that explains these corollary effects.

The first being; the disciples had a total transformation of character. Before the resurrection of Jesus they were cowards. They were not ultimate fighters. They were ultimate chickens, that’s what they were, right? They were cowards. They didn’t conflict. They didn’t want to get hurt. They didn’t want to get persecuted.

Perhaps the most stark example of this is, Peter the leader of the disciples, who as Jesus was going to his place of crucifixion. Peter was hanging back in the shadows not wanting to get hurt or in trouble or have any conflict or controversy. A young gal, maybe a junior high girl, came up to him and said, “Hey, aren’t you one of the followers of Jesus. He’s, “oh, no, no, no, I don’t know him. He cussed her out. I never met the guy. I don’t know anything.” Why? Because he wet himself in the presence of a teenage girl because that’s what a chicken he was. I’m expanding the story, but, you get the point right? There’s wet pant Peter who can’t even take an accusation from a teenage girl. That’s what I’m saying.

Yet Jesus dies rises, Peter sees him risen from death. And then his voice drops. He enters into his spiritual man state and all of a sudden he’s courageous, bold, preaching, persecuted Peter. That’s what he is. So, much so that they go to him and they say, “Peter, if you don’t renounce the resurrection of Jesus we’re gonna kill you.” He says, “Bring it on. I saw Jesus come back. I’ll see you later. You can kill me. It doesn’t scare me. I’ve seen the resurrected Jesus. I know what happens to those who die with faith in him. We come back.” They said, “Then we’re gonna crucify you.” “Fine, fine, crucify me upside down.” “I’ll go out like a man.” “I’m not wet pant, Peter anymore.” I’m Peter the Preacher. I’m Peter the man. The courageous bold man, who saw the resurrected Jesus and got his courage,

The question is how do you explain the transformation of these men. Men like Peter. Jesus was dead. You wouldn’t have seen him get more courageous and die for the lie. Not gonna happen.

Second line of circumstantial evidence is; If you believe that disciples lied and made up the story of the resurrection. You have to answer the question of motive, right? You and I when we lie we tell lies that are to our advantage, right? I’m mean that’s what online dating is all about. (Laughter) You photo shop yourself. “I’m witty and funny.” “No, you’re not. You’re peculiar and drunk.” You know, but you don’t say that, ‘cause that’s not advantageous. You lie.

Lie’s get us more fame. More pleasure, more money. You know, more of whatever it is we value. We tend not to tell lies that get us killed, right. We don’t lie – we don’t call the government, “Hi, “It’s Mark. I’m a terrorist. I’m going to blow some stuff up.” You know, – and just make that up. We don’t make up those kind of lies. Lies are only to our advantage.

The question is if you’re going to say that the disciples lied you have to ask, “Well, why, what did they get fame? No. Did they get glory no. Did they get money? No. What did they get murder? I don’t know about you but I don’t tend to tell lies that get me murdered. I tend to tell lies that get me ham sandwiches and friendship but not murder, right? I mean that’s how lies work.

Plus you have to look at the character of these guys. They fed the widow the orphans the poor. They walk away from they’re good paying jobs to go do lives of service and mercy. Are these liars? And if they were liars and if they were liars do you think all the liars would tell the lie until the end, to the point of being murdered?

I mean 11 out of the 12 disciples were murdered for telling the resurrection of Jesus as historical fact. The only one, who didn’t die, a murderous death, was John who was boiled alive and didn’t die and was exiled off to Paphos which is near modern day Turkey. I don’t know about you. If I made something up as soon as I’m going into the fry cooker at Jack in the Box, that’s when I change my story, Amen. Like, “I’m in the fry cooker at Jack in the Box, I was just kidding about that whole resurrection thing.”

John’s the only one who didn’t die a martyr’s death. But, they tried and he suffered mightily. How many of you when they went to crucify you or boil you alive, you would recant if you’d been telling a lie. Yet, not one of the 12 disciples recanted. They all held firmly to their story, even though they were scattered. Being picked, murdered and killed. Not one of them recanted. There was much pressure on them to do so. Had they done so, they may have been rewarded. Their life may have gone much easier and they may have been off the hook. But, they said no Jesus died. Jesus rose. I believe in Jesus. Kill me if you want. You can’t scare me with death. He has already conquered it. And I will live forever with him.

That’s the burden of proof. [Applause] Somebody’s awake this is awesome. You guys are the most Emo Indy rock crowd. I mean. It’s just crazy. I

feel like pumping red bull into the air just to wake the whole room up.

But, third line of reasoning is you've got – you have to explain the alteration of the day of worship. Orthodox Jews for a millennium worshiped on what day, Saturday. Because in the Old Testament that was the day of the Sabbath, it's one of the Ten Commandments. You obey God. You worship him on Saturday. That's the Sabbath day, following the resurrection of Jesus.

When did the Jews, and the early church was in large part Jews, those Jews who believed in the resurrection of Jesus, saw Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament, promise and prophecy. Therefore all of the Old Testament is fulfilled in Jesus. It's not just about Saturday. It's about Jesus. "Come to me and you who are weary and heavy laden and I'll give you Sabbath," Jesus said. Jesus said, "If you want rest it's not just Saturday you need it. It's me."

They said you know what it's not Saturday. It's Jesus. Saturday was just getting us ready for Jesus. Jesus has come. He has fulfilled everything. We need to worship Jesus now on Sunday, 'cause it's a whole new world. Sunday is the day of what, the resurrection of Jesus.

And so good Orthodox Jews stopped worshipping on Saturday, started worshipping on Sunday. Why? Well, that was the day of Jesus resurrection. And they probably had to meet early in the morning or late at night, because Sunday was a work day. It was their Monday. Right, this is another line of reasoning. Can you imagine if I started a religion that required all services be a 5:00 a.m. on Monday? It would not get off to a fast and furious start, would it? 5:00 a.m. on Monday, but that's essentially the kind of time they would have had to meet. They would have to meet in the morning before work. They were used to having Saturday, off. But, they all started going to services on Sunday because that was the day of Jesus resurrection.

Some of you say, we'll I thought Easter was the day that we celebrate Jesus resurrection? No, Sunday is the day we celebrate Jesus resurrection. Easter just happens to be one of those Sundays. Every Sunday is the celebration of the resurrection of the Jesus. And that is why Christian churches tend to meet on Sunday, that's resurrection day.

If didn't rise why did everybody start worshipping on Sunday? Not only was the day of worship changed. The next line of evidence circumstantially is the object of worship was, changed. Again, the first two Commandments, there's only one God worship that God or go to hell, that's the deal. And now people began worshipping Jesus as God.

Good Old Testament, Bible believing devout folks started worshipping Jesus as God. Why? Why? I mean two guys were killed with Jesus, one on each side. Nobody's worshipping those two guys. Right they didn't get a religion out of the deal. People began worshipping Jesus. Because he rose from death unlike the other two men that nobody worshipped.

Fifth line of reasoning is there were theological changes in the early church that apart from the resurrection, make no sense at all. Christians began celebrating and continue to celebrate today, Communion and Baptism. Communion remembers the death of Jesus. Baptism remembers the resurrection of Jesus.

In Communion we remember Jesus' body broken in bread. Jesus blood shed in drink, in our place for our sins. We remember the death of Jesus. We celebrate Communion every week, or the Lord's Table, at Mars Hill, because Jesus told us too. And that was the practice of all Christians until there was a schism at the time of the Reformation at the time in 16th or 17th century. So Christians are supposed to celebrate Communion every week. That's why we make it the centerpiece of our service. It's in the middle because it's all about Jesus. And Communion is remembering his death.

And Baptism is remembering his resurrection. And what we show forth in Baptism is that if you believe in Jesus, and you're in Christ and Christ is in you, then as Jesus died you will die. And as Jesus was buried you will be buried. And as Jesus rose you will rise, right? And that's what it means to be in Christ. And just as water cleanses us from the filth of dirt so Jesus cleanses us from the filth of sin.

So Communion and Baptist are about the death, burial, resurrection, of Jesus. And they are inextricably connected. And the point is that Christians have been doing this now for a millennia. Why? Because Jesus died, was buried and rose for us. And if we trust for him, we will die and be buried and rise like him, to be with him, because he is still alive, and he is the God of life.

And so apart from the resurrection of Jesus, Communion and Baptist are nonsense. They make no sense at all. Why would they have come into existence?

Sixth line of reasoning is that, early Christian church grew and spread not based on just the moral teaching of example of Jesus. Some of you will say Christianity grew because it's good for families, love your neighbor, help the poor, that's why it grew. Well all of that is true. But, that's not why it grew. That continual heralding of the early church was the Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive! He was dead. He was buried. But now Jesus is alive!" And that was the issue of the early Christian preaching and teaching that is recorded in the Book of Acts, which is the history book of early Christianity.

Awhile back I went through Acts and I just highlighted for every occasion where the resurrection of Jesus is spoken of and it appears in the 12 of the 28 Chapters. And, and the general flow of the book is that they would go out and proclaim, the eye witnesses would, "Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive! Jesus is alive!" and then it explains the reactions; persecution, Christian conversion, baptisms, all kinds of controversy. It changes everything. Then they go to another city, "Jesus is alive! We saw Jesus. Jesus is alive!" And then it explains the reaction of that community of people that is the flow generally speaking of the Book of Acts.

Why would people be quitting their jobs and taking time off from work and going from town to town to get beat up and drug into court and hated,

saying, "I saw Jesus alive! I saw Jesus alive, if Jesus wasn't alive. How do we explain that motivation for ordinary folk?"

Additionally, the seventh line for circumstantial reasoning for the resurrection for Jesus is that his tomb was not enshrined. Now in that day, like our day, when someone dies that we deeply love we visit their graveside to memorialize them. We leave cards and flowers and food, light candles, shed tears and we remember them. In our city there are famous people like Kurt Cobain, or like Jimmy Hendrix, that you will have memorials and shrines to where people still gather and leave gifts and cards and prayers and flowers and light candles and such. Yet, that was not done at the tomb of Jesus, right.

In the day of Jesus, there were some 50 religious leaders who had died in that generally vicinity whose tombs had been enshrined? If you had gone there you would have seen piles of flowers and gifts and art work and – there are places like that even in our own city. I was driving from our West Seattle service today, and someone had apparently died on the side of the road and there were large shrines built there in their memory. And people had brought gifts and left them there in memory of the deceased. That's what we do.

Yet in the day of Jesus 50 such tombs of holy men were enshrined and people would go there and weep and write prayers and give gifts and remember their life, yet, at the tomb of Jesus, nothing. No flowers. No cards. No indie rocker kids listening to Emo, all depressed nothing. Why? He wasn't there. You don't go to the tomb. "Jesus I miss you. Jesus why did you die? (Crying Voice) "You want to do lunch?" I mean that's the way it went. He is alive and well. You could go in and have lunch with him. There's no need to go to the tomb. He was there for three days. He's not there anymore. He's alive and well. If you want to see Jesus you don't go to the tomb and cry. You go into town and celebrate, that's what you do. And if the tomb wasn't enshrined, that's 'cause everybody knew the body wasn't there.

And the eighth line of circumstantial reasoning is. How do you explain the growth of Christianity without the resurrection of Jesus? Christianity started off with a 120 people meeting in an Upper Room. By the reign of the Emperor Constantine in about the fourth century, Christianity had become the most popular religion in the most powerful long standing far reaching nation on the earth and it had overtaken the Roman Empire.

Today on planet earth one of three human beings worships Jesus Christ as God. A few billion people worship Jesus Christ as God. And the question is, if Jesus is still dead how in the world to explain the explosion of Christianity in its early days to its present popularity. There is no other reason, its cause and effect. Dead guy, billions of worshippers, how does that work, unless Jesus isn't dead but he's alive.

Again, two men were crucified with Jesus. Jesus has one third of all human beings worshipping him. The other two thirds are not split between Jack and Hank, or whatever these guys' names were. We don't even know their names. They didn't get a religion. Nobody worships them. Billions aren't singing songs to them. We don't have holidays to them. We don't get together to honor their legacy. But they all died in the same way. They all died on the same day. They all died in the same place. Yet only one is worshipped why? That one came back from death, Jesus, that's why.

So in addition to the Biblical evidence those are eight lines of circumstantial evidence for the resurrection of Jesus. And again, this point I am anticipating resistance among some. Some people say, "But, that's a lot of Bible. I know this is a church and you're a pastor, but I'm not a Christian and all you gave me is Bible." I'm a skeptic. I like history. I like objective sources", as if there were such a thing, right.

I had that same perspective until I was 19 years of age. I was a freshman in college. I did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus. And then I began examining the evidence because it kept coming up in philosophy and world religion classes and history classes and such, as we dealt with the legacy of Christianity. And I thought, "I'd better come to my own conclusion of the resurrection of Jesus." I didn't think he had risen. But I thought I'll double check and see. And I began looking. And I looked at the Biblical evidence and I looked at the circumstantial evidence, but what was helpful to me was the historical evidence. I wanted to know are there any non Christians and say that Jesus rose from death, from the early days of the Christian faith. Because if I could find creditable sources like news anchors or historians who were not Christians who would tell me that Jesus rose, then that would help to verify the factuality of the New Testament account of the resurrection of Jesus.

Now as a Christian today I believe the Scripture is the highest authority. But in that day, it was helpful for me to see that supplemental and additional authorities were in complete agreement and harmony with Scripture. It verified what Scripture said.

So, I will share those with you. There are more that I could share but I will share three for the sake of time. And the primary cultural groups of that day were Greeks, and Romans and Jews. So, I am going to look at some people who did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, who were from different cultures then being Christian, the first being a historian name Josephus, okay. And again, we're talking about creditable historians who worked for the Emperor. Right, they were commissioned by the government as leading historians.

We're not looking at a 13 year old kid, with a blog and a bunch of crazy ideas, right. We're not looking at The Stranger, you know, as a new source. We're looking at major network anchors, dependable trustworthy news reporters. We're looking at established historians who are going out and doing investigative research like a journalist, for Emperors for powerful political leaders. These are the best mind and the best thinkers of the day.

The first is Josephus; he was born just a few years after Jesus died. Eye witnesses were still alive, so he could interview them. The most celebrated passage that he has is called the Testimonium, Testimonium Flavianum, and it comes from his book the Antiquities. And I'll read to you a fairly lengthy section.

He says, "About this time there lived Jesus." So he's talking about Jesus. "A wise man if one ought to call him a man. For he was one who brought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people that accept the truth gladly. He won over many of the Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Christ. When Pilot, upon hearing of him accused by men with the highest standing among us had condemned him to be crucified, those who had the first place, come to love him, did not give up their affection for him." I'll stop there and read the rest in a moment.

But let me summarize what he says. He says, "I went out and did all the homework. Here's the story of Jesus." 'Cause the Emperor wants to know. What's this talk about Jesus? Why is everyone worshipping Jesus? He's not even here? Why is he so popular? Why is his religion growing? He said, "Well I did all the work and here's the deal. Jesus, lived he was a teacher and a miracle worker. He said amazing things. He did amazing things. He was convicted of saying, "He was God," right, the highest accusation. And then he was put to death, executed, he died. Yet, even though he died people still worship him and love him, why, why that devotion?"

He goes on to explain, "On the third day he appeared to them restored to life." This is the journalistic, historical description of the person and work of Jesus, from a non Christian. "On the third day he appeared to them, restored to life, "the reason why everybody loves Jesus and won't quit talking about him. He died and came back to life. He resurrected. He beat death. "For the prophets of God that prophesized these and countless other marvelous things about him in the tribe of Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared."

Question, "Why is Christianity growing?" Answer, "Jesus rose from death." That's the non Christians answer. Second, Sosthenes was born a little bit after the life of Jesus. He was a Roman historian and analyst for the imperial house. Again, creditable news source, creditable historical figure. He says, "Punishment or persecution was inflicted on the Christian, a class of men given to a new and mischievous superstition. What he means by superstition, is what we would call miracle, or supernatural claim."

Here's what was going on. In that day they began persecuting Christians, particularly under the Roman Emperor Nero's Rome. For those of you who don't understand this, to be a Christian was a very painful journey to commit oneself too. Christians he said here were being punished. They were being persecuted, right. Why were they being punished? Why were they being persecuted? Because they said, "Jesus is the only God. He's the only man who has ever beat death."

Because in Rome you were allowed to have whatever religion you wanted, as long as you also worshipped the Emperor as God. And the Christians' said, "No, we won't worship the Emperor just Jesus." They said, "Then we will kill you." And they said, "That's fine. Jesus rose from death. There is life after death. You can't scare us with death." It's amazing how much power is taken away from your enemies when you don't fear death.

"And people were put to death in large numbers. Christians were murdered. Some were wrapped in pitch and resin while they were still alive. A stake was run through them. They were put in the ground like a torch. They were lit a flame to illuminate state sponsored parties, Christians. Other Christians were sown into the skins of wild animals and thrown to be eaten alive for sport and fun. Some Christians were brought into the arena where the gladiators and wild animals just destroyed and annihilated them for public sport. And some Christians were drawn and quartered." Meaning they would take ropes and tie our limbs to horses, whip the horses send them in four directions and rip our arms and legs off of our bodies. And leave us to die in the bloody painful way.

And what he's saying is this, "We punish the Christians. We persecute the Christians but they just won't go away. Because they are convinced of the resurrection and death does not scare them anymore. Jesus rose and we can't scare 'em. And they won't give up their ultimate allegiance to him, alone."

And the lastly, Pliny the Younger, again there are many I could bring. A gentleman name Tacitus. There are other historical examples but these are a few. Pliny the Younger, was born shortly after the life of Jesus. Pliny the Younger became governor of Bithynia which is in northern Turkey in the second century, again educated man, prominent man, historical figure, not some obscure secondary news source or hack historian.

In a letter written 111 AD to the Emperor Trajan, he explains early Christian worship services. Let me give you some backdrop on this. Christian worship services early on tended to be closed meetings. They didn't open to the public as we do, why? They were murdering Christians. When they're murdering Christians, you tend to meet privately, right, because you don't want someone to come in and kill the whole church. What happened then was there was a whole lot of misunderstanding about Christian church services. And people were wondering, "What do those Christians do when they get together for church?" 'Cause they heard, "Oh, they eat flesh and they drink blood. They're cannibals." That's what they heard.

So, they started doing investigation. They didn't get subtlety of metaphor. You know, the bread is representative of Jesus body and the wine is representative of Jesus blood. We are actually not eating and drinking human flesh and blood. It's metaphorical. We're having bread and we're having wine and that's what we're doing. So, there was the commissioning of an investigation to discover what do these Christians believe? And when they get together for church, what exactly do they do?

And here is the report in a letter that was written to the Emperor Trajan, He says, "I have never been present at an examination of Christians." – meaning, that worship services are closed so I didn't get into one. He goes one to say, "Consequently I do not know, the nature of the extend of the punishment usually meted out to them, nor the grounds of starting an investigation how far it should be pressed."

Since I haven't been there I'm not sure how much we should persecute these guys and what kind of charges we should bring them up on. But I did interview some of them, he will say. And here is what they report. "They also declared that their some guilt or error amounted to no more than this. They had met regularly before dawn on a fixed day." What day, Sunday. Why? It's the day of Jesus resurrection. When did they meet, at sunrise, why, because that's when Jesus rose. And what did they do when they got together to remember the resurrection of Jesus, "To chant verses alternately among themselves, in honor of Christ as if to God." They opened the Old Testament, they read stuff about the Messiah, that's about Jesus, that's about Jesus and they tie everything into the Bible to Jesus. They sing songs to Jesus. They pray prayers to Jesus. They live their life for Jesus. They get together to remember the resurrection of Jesus at day break on Sunday morning to read the Bible and pray and worship Jesus as God because the resurrection of Jesus has forever changed their hearts, minds and lives.

It's just a fact. I mean the evidence is just there. Lots of eye witness including those who are non Christians, who didn't even believe in the resurrection.

Who say, "Well, that's what happened."

So much so that the alternate explanation that was given opponents of the resurrection is not that Jesus is dead and lying in a tomb. The alternate explanation that was given by the opponents of the resurrection was that Jesus died. That Jesus was buried, not that he rose, but what happened to the body. It was stolen. That was the alternate explanation that was given.

No one even denied, in the early days of, you know, the resurrection that the tomb was emptied. That was just agreed upon. We all know where the tomb was and it's empty, how do we account for the missing body, so the opponents of the resurrection said, "They stole the body." What does that not account for, the body coming back to life? I hate to point out the big E on the eye chart, but whether or not the body was stolen, it wasn't, but even if the body was stolen, it's a live again.

You still got to explain that right? It would be like if I told you. I stole Kurt Cobain's body. You'd be like, "Really." "Yes, he's here to sing a song." You'd be like, now that, that was unexpected right there. (Laughter) The, now the solo, that, the stealing the body thing, that was, that doesn't surprise me, that could happen, but, the singing the solo thing that, I wasn't seeing that comin'." You know, that's what happened, they couldn't even account for the facts, in an effort to cover up the obvious. They said, "The body was stolen." Okay, great. Hypothetically the body was stolen, which it wasn't. This isn't Week End at Bernie's, right? I mean. (Laughter) You know. Jesus is being carted around by his buddies eating slurpees. I mean this is not how it went down.

He's alive and some then will say, "He didn't rise physically. Some will say he rose spiritually, metaphorically in our hearts." And Jehovah's Witnesses will say, "He didn't rise physically not in a physical body." Sure he did. Give you some lines of evidence.

Luke 24:39, "They came to Jesus – well he came to them after he had risen from death and they were all spooked. You can imagine having a funeral and three days later the guy shows up at your house. You're spooked, right. You're like, "I got to get the toilet paper. I'll be right back. You know. (Laughter) I mean it's just a spooky thing. A dead guy comes to your house after you had his funeral.

And Jesus shows up and their all spooked. And then say, "Are you – they're wondering – "are you a ghost, are you a spirit?" He says, "No, no, no, it's me Jesus I'm back, body and blood." He says, quote, "Spirit a ghost does not have flesh and bones as I do." End quote. "It's my body. I'm here physically." Thomas said, "Well, I don't believe it." Well, come on over Thomas you can touch my physical body. Check out my crucifixion scars" Jesus went for walks. People hugged Jesus. The Bible says, "That people fell at his feet and grabbed his ankles, and his legs. People came up and threw themselves on him." "Jesus, you're alive," and gave him big hugs. He ate food, he had breakfast. He went for walks. I mean, he's physically there. He's literally physically alive.

Why does this matter? We'll you trust in Jesus? We will die and rise and it is not just that we get some eternity where our soul goes to be with the Lord. "There will also be a day when we like Jesus will get a resurrection body," First Corinthians 15 says.

That this is the pattern and precedent for our resurrection, "there will be no more sickness, no more death, no more curse, he will wipe every tear from our eye and we will get a physical body and we will live forever, on the earth as God intended before sin came into the world."

Now again I will remind you, where I began, First Corinthians 15, If Jesus is dead this horrible, cruel, sadistic hoax. I mean, here we are praying to a dead guy, singing to a dead guy. Were having meetings for a dead guy.

I'm telling you, if Jesus is dead, there are better things to do then go to church. I mean, there's rum and cokes to drink. There are nachos to eat. There's a world filled with chicken wings. There are other things to be doing. There's games on TV. There are concerts, you should go to. There are people that should, go out and break commandments with. I mean, if Jesus is dead, then go the Hugh Heffner route and times a wasting. I'll give you a refund on all your tithes and you can go to happy hour since we are the evening service and you can get drunk and do karaoke, or something.

I mean, if Jesus is dead it changes everything. I tell yeah, is Jesus is dead religion is done. What a waste of time. I mean you're all here. You guys could be somewhere, else. There's so many other things you could be doing if all you're gonna do is die and cease to exist or have no consequence. If Jesus is dead, Christianity is the meanest cruelest hoax that is ever been performed. We're praying to this man. We're singing to this man. On our death bed we are trusting our eternity to this man. We bury Grandma in the hole and we long for the day of Granny's resurrection because she loved Jesus. I mean, what a cruel, false hope, if Jesus is a dead man.

But Jesus is not dead. Jesus is alive. This is the most wonderful truth. This is the most unparalleled miracle. Every other religious leader is dead. Moses, Mohammad, Krishna, Buddha, Gandhi, Zoroaster, they're dead. They're really dead. They haven't come back. They haven't conquered sin. They haven't conquered death, just Jesus. He is distinct from, superior to everyone.

So what does this mean? This means that sin does not win, but Jesus does. This means that death does not win, but Jesus does. This means that hopelessness does not win, but Jesus does. This means the grave does not win, the empty tomb is the final word of Jesus. What this means is Jesus really did die for our sin and really did rise for our salvation. And we can sing to Jesus today because he's alive. And we can pray to Jesus today. And he will hear us and answer our prayers because he is alive. And we can confess our sins to Jesus today and he will forgive us and embrace us because he has defeated sin and death. And he is alive and his words in John 11:25 are so wonderful. He says, "I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in me, even though he dies shall – what – he'll live." That's eternal life, life forever without sin with Jesus. That's what it's all about. [Applause]

I say this because some of you are here and you're not Christians. This is the issue. If I had to put one issue on the table, the resurrection of Jesus is this issue. "He said, "I'm God who came to take away sin, I'll die and rise three days later, to prove it." This is the issue.

I hope I've given you sufficient cause to be compelled to believe in Jesus. And give your heart and life to him today and become a Christian. Ask him to forgive you and devote yourself to Jesus. And he will – he's alive and well. He's seated in heaven. He is God and he can and will hear prayer. He can and does forgive sin.

Some of you are here and you are Christians but you have been wavering in your faith. I want this to solidify your faith, to give you firm foundation. For those of you who are Christians. You have friends, family, coworkers, who don't know Jesus. You may not know where to start with him, talking about Jesus. Start with this issue because this is the big one.

And loving, graciously, kindly explain to him them why you believe in the resurrection of Jesus and ask them if they have any better alternative, rendering of cause/effect, how to explain it everything without the resurrection, because we want to as many people as possible to know Jesus. And now it's our opportunity collectively to and your opportunity to individually to respond to the living Jesus. Confuse your sin to him. Pray your prayers to him. Celebrate him. He's alive and well and he's here to meet us and God inhabits the praises of his people. This is a meeting for Jesus. This is a meeting with the living Jesus.

When you're ready, those of you who are Christian or become Christian, you can forward for communion which is where we celebrate Jesus, his death, burial, resurrection to take away our sins through his body and blood. And we will give of our tithes and offerings to help the word of Jesus spread through our city and world. And we'll celebrate Jesus. And we'll live here, leave here rather, empowered by the same Holy Spirit, who rose Jesus death, living the new life the resurrection life of the victory of Jesus.

I'll pray, "Lord Jesus, you told us to sing to you, so now we will. You told us to pray to you so now we do. You said, "That you came down from heaven, to die for our sins, and then rise for our salvation, by faith we believe that." Lord Jesus I pray that you would send the Spirit the Holy Spirit to penetrate the hearts and minds of those who hear this.

Lord Jesus, that they would have certainty about your resurrection. And that would give them certainly about their resurrection. Jesus, I thank you that death is not the final word. I thank you that sin is not the final word. I thank you that tears and funerals and burial plots and sadness and grief and loneliness and loss are not the final words. But the resurrection is the final word. May we remember that every day, particularly when we get out of bed on Sunday. May we remember the great day that you rose from your place of burial" —