

The Resurrection of the Son of God

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Date: 31 March 2013

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[0 : 0 0] I'm going to begin reading in Mark chapter 15 in verse 40. We have all been walking through the Gospel of Mark for over a year now. So I know there are a lot of you here who haven't sort of taken that journey through the Gospel of Mark with us.

But that's what we've been doing for over a year. We've been walking with Christ in the Gospel of Mark and seeing all the great things He's done, learning at His feet. And now, last week, we covered the crucifixion of Jesus.

And so we're going to pick up in verse 40 where Christ has just died on the cross. We're going to pick up with some eyewitnesses of His death. And we're going to read down through chapter 16, verse 8.

Now, there's a reason that we're stopping at verse 8. And most of you will know in your Bibles, there's a little note in your Bible that verses 9 on down through the end of Mark are added in later on. Okay?

And so Mark originally ended his Gospel at verse 8. And so that's why we're going to stop there. You'll see later on, there's a reason why Mark stopped writing right there. It leaves an impact.

[1 : 0 1] And we're going to see the impact that it leaves later on. The rest of the verses in Mark are really just sort of a compilation of things from some of the other Gospels, a couple of events from the book of Acts, just to sort of summarize.

Because Mark ends so awkwardly, it ends strangely at verse 8, but it ends that way for a reason. You'll see as you read. So here we are, chapter 15, verse 40.

We have a bit of a tradition here. We stand as we read God's Word together here before the sermon. So I want to ask you all to stand with me as we read. Mark writes,

And it says, they went to the tomb.

And they were saying to one another, Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb? And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back. It was very large.

[3 : 0 6] And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe. They were alarmed. And he said to them, Do not be alarmed.

You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him? But go. Tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee.

There you will see him, just as he told you. And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Thank you for your word. In Jesus' name, amen. You guys will be seated. There was a, in the 17th century, a mathematician and theologian and philosopher, that many of you have probably heard of, known as Blaise Pascal.

Now most people today remember Blaise Pascal as a great mathematician, but in reality he was equally well versed in philosophy and theology. And during Pascal's day, the Renaissance was sort of nearing its end, but still in full bloom.

[4 : 25] And among the intellectuals of Pascal's day, atheism was on the rise. Agnosticism, the belief that, well, we don't know if there's a God, and we're just trying to kind of remain neutral on the issue, and let it kind of be sorted out in the end, was also on the rise, and had become very popular among many of the sort of intellectual people of the day.

And so Blaise Pascal, himself being an intellectual and an academic, was constantly interacting with him in his writings. And one of the things that Pascal wrote, in one of his most famous books, has become known as Pascal's Wager.

And he said, essentially, and I'm just kind of summing up here, Pascal said, essentially, that if at the end of the day, if at the end of it all, at the end of his life, he dies, and it turns out that he was wrong, that Christianity was not true, that the scriptures were not true, that Jesus was not who he claimed to be, that he had never been raised from the dead, that there was no heaven, no hell, no eternal life.

Pascal said, if that ends up being the case, that at the end of my life, I will have lived a good moral life, I will be respected by others because of the way that I've lived my life, I will have lived my life in generosity and kindness, and I will have lived my life with a very great degree of joy and meaning and purpose.

And then, nothing. No consequences for the way that he lived his life. Just a good, meaningful life. On the other hand, Pascal said, for the agnostic or the atheist, or even just for the non-Christian, if on the other hand, Christ's claims are true, if the scriptures are his word, and they are true, and Christ has been risen from the dead, then all the claims that he made are real, and no matter how they live their life, there will be literally hell to pay.

[6 : 28] And so Pascal's point was, I wager nothing. I live my life full of meaning and purpose, and it's a good life, and if I'm wrong at the end, who cares because there's nothing awaiting me.

But if you're wrong, all is lost. And you can see how that kind of argument would, if not be persuasive to someone, it would at least be an attention gathering.

It could grab someone's attention and cause them to at least, sort of shake them out of their malaise, and cause them to at least begin to think over the claims of Christ, think over the claims of the gospel, or add them to simply, kind of sort of passively say, I don't know, I don't really care, or we'll figure it out later on, or I'll see in the end what it's like.

The argument is designed to sort of shake people out of that kind of apathy and complacency. And I guess, for that purpose, it may do what it's intended to do.

But at the end of the day, I don't think it's a particularly strong argument. It works in Pascal's world, where Christian morality, even among those who are not Christians, even among atheists of his day, the morality of the Bible was still the morality of the day.

[7 : 41] And so yes, Pascal, at the end of his life, would have been honored as a moral good man. But that's not the case today in many areas. If I'm wrong about the claims of the gospel, if I'm wrong in what I believe about the resurrection of Jesus, if he has not been raised from the dead, I will not be viewed by subsequent generations as a nice, good, moral person.

I'll be that hateful preacher who told people they were sinners all the time. I'll be the guy who wasn't willing to stand by and not say anything while millions of babies were aborted.

I'll be the guy who was mean about issues of homosexuality. If I'm wrong, if I'm wrong, I'm not judged to have a good moral code anymore in today's world. Many aspects of Christian morality are at odds with our culture.

So it works in Pascal's day as persuasive argument, but maybe not so much in our day. Or consider what weight would his argument hold in a world in which Christians were being persecuted, the kind of world in which Paul lived.

The apostle Paul was beheaded at the end of his life because he proclaimed the gospel of Christ. You cannot say to Paul, well, Paul, if it doesn't turn out to be true, it's not a big deal.

[8 : 58] He hadn't really lost anything. He was beaten multiple times. He was imprisoned multiple times. He was shipwrecked twice in his lifetime. He was beheaded at the end.

It cost him everything. You cannot say to the apostle Paul, well, if Christ was not raised, that's okay because you still lived a good life of meaning and purpose and full of joy and everything's okay.

The apostle Paul takes a very different view in the scriptures that I read to you earlier from 1 Corinthians chapter 15. He says, if Christ has not been raised, we are of all men the most to be pitied.

Everything hangs upon the resurrection. Either he was raised from the dead or he was not raised from the dead. Because if Jesus was raised from the dead, then all of the claims that he made about himself were true.

Everything that Jesus said and taught is verified, is vindicated, if he came out of that tomb on Easter Sunday. It's all true.

[10 : 05] It's the dividing point for all of humanity. Either he was raised and everything in your life, everything in your life should be affected by that and changed by that and shaped by that or he was not raised and you can move on with your life.

everything. Everything hangs on whether or not Christ was raised. So before we look at his resurrection, I want you to think about, I want you to consider some of the claims that Jesus himself made about himself.

Now those of us who have been walking through the Gospel of Mark sort of have the benefit because we've been slowly marching through these 16 chapters for over a year now and so we've seen Jesus do and say all kinds of amazing, incredible things.

But for the rest of you, let me just sort of summarize what Jesus claimed about himself. I'll just focus on two things because they were the two things that ultimately led to his crucifixion.

Two basic claims that Jesus was continually making about himself and that others were making about him that led to his demise at the hands of his Jewish persecutors who brought him to Rome and ultimately at the hands of the Romans.

[11 : 21] There was first of all the claim that Jesus was the Christ. Christ is not his last name. I know we think of it that way often times because Jesus Christ and we have a first name and a last name and we just assume that Christ is his last name.

It's not a name. Christ is not a name. It's a title. It's the Greek translation of the Hebrew word that you find in the Old Testament many times the Hebrew word Messiah or Mashiach which means the anointed one.

It was used specifically among the prophets of the Old Testament to describe their future hope. They were hoping for a Messiah. They were hoping for an anointed one from the line of David the rightful king of Israel.

They were hoping for an anointed one a descendant of David who would come and claim his rightful throne in Jerusalem. and that he would rule over Israel once again.

That was the hope of the Jewish people that wanted a king from the line of David. They wanted a Messiah. And over and over throughout the Gospels both Jesus and those who surround him proclaim that he is the chosen one.

[12 : 31] He is the anointed one. He is the Messiah. He is the rightful king from the line of David. That's who he is.

So for instance when Jesus was walking along the road a blind man cried out to him Son of David have mercy upon me recognizing that he is the descendant of David.

Son of David have mercy on me. Jesus doesn't walk over to the blind man and say I'm not the son of David what are you talking about? Why would you ever refer to me in that way?

I'm just a teacher. I'm just a rabbi. I'm just here to spread I'm just here to spread good things. Don't call me the son of David. Don't single me out as your Messiah.

He doesn't do that. He gives the man his sight back. Or consider when Jesus sits down with his disciples and he looks around at these men who have been following him for two or four years and he looks at them and he says who are the people saying that I am?

[13 : 39] There are lots of rumors. When you're feeding thousands of people with just a few loaves and fish when you're making blind people see and people who can't walk walk rumors begin to spread and so they say well there are some out there who have been saying that you're Elijah.

Some people think that you're the prophet Elijah who has come back. Some people think that John the Baptist has come back from the dead and you're John the Baptist. People are saying all kinds of things and Jesus says okay but who who do you say that I am?

You're closest to me. You know me the best. You've heard my teachings. Who do you say that I am? To which Peter replies you are the Christ.

You're the Christ and Jesus does not say that's not true Peter. I'm not the Messiah. I'm not the King. He says Peter flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you.

In other words you didn't figure this out on your own Peter. My Father in heaven has revealed this to you. And then of course there's there's Jesus entry into Jerusalem which we celebrate on Palm Sunday the week before Easter Sunday every year.

[14 : 52] As Jesus entered into Jerusalem the people lined the streets. the people put palm leaves on the streets which is how you welcomed a king a royal figure into his capital city.

They put palm leaves they put branches on the ground and covered the streets. Jesus himself told his disciples go get a colt go get a baby donkey I'm going to ride into town on a donkey and he did that because the prophet Zechariah had prophesied years before behold your king is coming to you humble and mounted on a donkey Jesus proclaims to everyone in Jerusalem I'm coming into my capital I am the king I am from the line of David there's no other reason for him to ride in on a donkey like that there's no other reason for him to receive the cries of the people as they cry out to him and call him son of David son of David as they cry out praise the Lord for his entrance into the city Jesus never denies that he is the rightful king from the line of David he is the long awaited Messiah he never once denies it that's who he is and in fact the inscription at the top of his cross read this is Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews because when the Romans crucified him they crucified him as one who was an insurrectionist one who made himself out to be a king and the Romans would not tolerate anyone who threatened their rule over their territory and when Pilate himself questioned

Jesus and said to him straight Pilate the Roman governor says are you the king of the Jews because Pilate wants to release Jesus Pilate did not want to condemn Jesus he saw Jesus as a good man and so he asked him straight forward they are saying that you proclaim to be a king are you the king of the Jews to which Jesus says you have said yes I'm king he's the right of king claims to be of course that wasn't the claim that originally got him in trouble that wasn't the claim that riled the Jewish religious leaders who handed him over to the Roman authorities the Jewish religious leaders became angry with Jesus very very early on in his ministry in fact if you read through the gospel of Mark as we've done you see they began to get angry with Jesus as early as chapter 2 in the gospel of Mark and they're angry with Jesus for one very simple reason they continually charge Jesus with having committed blasphemy so for instance there is the story of Jesus being in a house and the house is swollen with people because it's become so popular at the time the house is full of people and there are crowds outside people are clamoring to get to him and there were some friends who needed to get their friend to Jesus he was paralyzed he couldn't walk but they couldn't get through the crowds they certainly couldn't get into the doorway of the house that Jesus was and so you may be familiar with the story they dug a hole in the roof the roofs were made out of straw and mud in those days they dug a hole through the roof literally tied ropes to his little cot and lowered him down there to

Jesus where Jesus could heal him but rather than healing him Jesus looked at the man and he said his sins are forgiven which really really made the religious leaders and the Jews angry you see if somebody sins against you somebody says something to you or if they gossip about you or they take something that belongs to you and they've done something to offend you you have the right to forgive them you can forgive someone who wrongs you but if somebody does something to me you can't forgive them right you can't forgive someone for something that they did to someone else Jesus does not forgive people of the things specifically that they've only done to him he forgives them of all of their sins he's wiping the slate clean with this man and the Pharisees know only God can forgive sins and when they confront

Jesus he doesn't say I'm so sorry you must have misunderstood what I was doing there because I certainly wasn't claiming to have divine authority to forgive sins or anything like that Jesus looks at them and he says just so you know that the son of man has authority to forgive sins he looks at the man and he says get up and walk and a man who could not walk who had to be carried by his friends stood and walked there's no apologies to Jesus absolute divine authority belongs to him because Jesus claims to be the divine son of God not merely a king from the line of David the divine son of God that title itself riled the religious leaders because in their culture if you refer to yourself as a son of someone what you meant was their characteristics belong to you and so people are often given nicknames you have for instance in the book of Acts you have a man named

[20 : 35] Barnabas bar means son and he's called Barnabas the son of compassion because Barnabas was known as a compassionate man Jesus nicknamed James and John his disciples boanerges the sons of thunder because they were so boisterous at times if you're the son of someone their character their nature belongs to you and so for Jesus to continually call himself the son of God and allow others to call him the son of God is for Jesus to claim to have a divine nature over and over and over he makes those claims in fact if you go back to that confession of Peter where he says you are the Christ he says more than that Peter actually said to Jesus you are the Christ the son of the living God to which Jesus of course responded the father in heaven has made this known to you the father has made this known when Jesus was finally arrested by the Jewish religious leaders the charge was blasphemy the charge was blasphemy because they understood better even than many people today they understood what Jesus was claiming about himself they understood that Jesus was claiming to be divine he is

God in the flesh as the gospel of John tells us and because he made those kinds of claims and because he did things that only God himself had the right to do they condemned him as worthy of death blasphemy they didn't hand him over to the Romans for blasphemy because the Romans could care less that Jesus thought he were a God they had dozens of gods they didn't care so when the Jewish leaders handed him over to the Romans they had to switch the charge he makes himself to be the king of the Jews but these these two claims that Jesus makes about himself and that he allows others to make about him with no rebuke that he willingly goes to the cross for these charges against him these claims make all the difference in the world and if he's raised his claims are true I want you to take a look with me here at the end of Mark and we're going to walk through these final verses in

Mark and I want to point out to you the signs of authenticity that we find here in Mark there are a number of them the gospel of Mark of course is not a book that was written 100 or 200 years after Jesus lived this is not a third or fourth hand account of the ministry and life of Jesus Mark himself was from Jerusalem Mark's mother was one of Jesus earliest disciples he knew Jesus more importantly Mark's gospel is not really Mark's gospel Mark was Peter's assistant Mark took down what Peter had brought this is Peter's resurrection of Christ this is Peter's account of the life of Christ there are signs of authenticity all through we started reading early in verse 40 and we did that for a reason we didn't just pick up with this burial because there are three women who are mentioned who were there at the crucifixion and it's important that they're mentioned here at the end of the account of the crucifixion their names are given

Mary Magdalene another Mary who has two sons at least James and Joseph and then a third woman named Salome we're told that they came with him from Galilee and they were with him for quite a while these are women who are very close to Jesus and his disciples they were disciples of Jesus themselves just not a part of the twelve and so they're important because they're going to come under the scene in just a moment but there's a bit of a strange turn of events that takes place after Jesus dies you see according to the Old Testament if a man dies on a tree he is cursed Jesus Paul tells us became a curse for us and I'm surprised Jesus in his death is taking the curse that we deserve but according to the Old Testament if you leave the man on the tree the dead body if you leave a corpse on a tree overnight the land itself the nation itself is cursed by God so it's very important for them once someone has died on the cross to remove the body but there is a bit of a problem here all of Jesus disciples have run away and fled they're in hiding because they're scared and the

Sabbath is very very quickly approaching so they couldn't they couldn't take him down in the middle of the night off the cross because at sunset the Sabbath begins Jesus died at three in the afternoon it's going to be dark around six there's very little time to get his body off the cross and his disciples are scattered to the winds and so there's a very interesting turn of events here we are told that when evening had come and that's the period between three and six o'clock it's not yet dark the sun is beginning to go down when evening had come since it was the day of preparation that is the day before the Sabbath Joseph of Arimathea a respected member of the council the council is the Sanhedrin the Jewish religious council that charged Jesus with blasphemy and handed him over to Pilate the Roman governor Joseph is a member of that council and yet he was apparently not there for the verdict we're told a couple of things about him he's a member of the council and Mark tells us that he himself was looking for the kingdom of God that's a key phrase in the gospel of

[26 : 43] Mark this gospel opens up in chapter one by telling us that Jesus began to proclaim the gospel and to say the kingdom of God is at hand the message of Jesus had this idea of the kingdom at the center so Joseph of Arimathea as someone looking for the kingdom of God is a follower of Jesus in fact the other gospels tell us explicitly that he was a disciple of Jesus but secretly so he's a secret disciple of Jesus who's on the council that's very strange very strange secret disciple of Jesus he's not the only one there was another one named Nicodemus who was one of the rulers in Jerusalem who had become a follower of Christ and the other gospels tell us that it wasn't only Joseph of Arimathea but Nicodemus came to help Joseph which makes sense Joseph probably would have come with Nicodemus and a few of their servants who aren't mentioned here because it would have taken a few people to take a dead body off the cross and carry it to a tomb well

Joseph comes to Pilate and says he took courage and he went to Pilate and he asked for the body of Jesus and he said why is that important because that's the Roman world that's the law and so if you were telling an authentic story about someone who died on the cross in Judea who was removed from the cross this would be a very important detail to show that you knew what you were talking about that you're not just making up a story about somebody this isn't made up stuff these are very authentic details you could not remove a man from a cross according to Roman law without the consent of the Roman governor and most of the time most of the time the Romans would grant the request and allow family or close friends to remove the body but it's a little bit strange here because Joseph has to build up his courage he's neither family nor an open public disciple of Jesus

Joseph has to build up his courage because he's outing himself to go and ask for the body of Jesus he does but something else happens we're told in verse 44 that Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus should have already died why is Pilate shocked because Jesus was only on the cross for about six hours and most people who died on the cross were on the cross for at least minimum of two to three days two to three days it would take to die from crucifixion because as we looked at Jesus crucifixion last week crucifixion was a slow painful death by supplication because you were so stretched out on the cross that you had great difficulty breathing in expanding your diaphragm and taking in air so that what you would have to do is you would have to push up with your feet on the nail that was through your feet you'd have to push up and pull up with your arms in order to be able to expand your lungs and take in a breath and of course after a couple of days of breathing like that you finally just run out of energy and you can no longer push yourself up you can no longer breathe and you simply suffocate

Jesus however did not die in that way we saw that there were two possible causes for the very quick very speedy death of Jesus last week one of those was the fact that Jesus did suffer physically more than most people suffer that is true we know that's true because Mark adds a detail in verse 21 of chapter 15 that as Jesus was carrying his cross they compelled the passer by Simon of Tyrene who was coming in from the country to carry his cross it was customary for those who received the sentence of execution by crucifixion to carry the cross beam one that their arms would be attached to to carry that out to the place of crucifixion that was normal everybody did it Jesus would have been expected to carry it out and yet Jesus had been beaten so severely that he's unable to carry the cross beam so we know that his physical anguish was greater than most of those who were crucified

I won't go through the details of all the beatings that he received but they were extensive and so he is physically weak but I also said to you last week those of you who were here that I don't think that the physical beatings were the primary reason that he died early on the cross if you look back in chapter 15 verse 34 we're told that at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice which means my God my God why have you forsaken me and I said last week that in that moment when darkness came upon the land Christ cried out in abandonment by his father why have you forsaken me in that moment the wrath of God the father for our sins was being poured out upon Jesus his son that's why he cries out and that's why in that moment he breathes his last as he cries out to his father he doesn't die the slow death of suffocation those who die slowly of suffocation and take smaller and smaller gasps of air do not scream out as they die

[32 : 12] Jesus does I think the primary reason that Jesus died after only six hours on the cross was because he cannot endure the wrath of God in the home even if you're the son of God that he bore!

promise on the cross Pilate is surprised to hear the Jesus who died so early but Pilate is no fool and he will not take Joseph's word for it and so he asks a Roman centurion one who would have had knowledge who would have been there at the cross he asks a Roman centurion we're told summoning the centurion he asked him whether he was already dead and when he learned from the centurion that he was dead he granted the corpse to Joseph all rings of authenticity everything all little details that are included here are details that you wouldn't include if you were making up a story you'd have to be there you'd have to know how that system and that world works and so we're told Joseph bought a linen shroud took him down from the cross wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb these sorts of tombs were generally the kind of tombs that were reserved for wealthier people which means that this tomb belonged to

Joseph of Arimathea in all likelihood it was his tomb and it was nearby in a garden we're told in the other gospels so Joseph already owns a tomb probably reserved for himself and his family members he takes the body of Jesus with the help of others I'm assuming and he carries the body of Jesus wraps it in the shroud and lays it in the tomb this is all according to normal Jewish custom every bit of it and then he rolls a stone in front of it now this stone would have been fairly large fairly thick and extremely heavy and it probably would have been sort of almost like you've seen in the pictures probably would have been sort of a cut out cylinder kind of thing almost like a mill stone and the way that these tombs archaeologists have discovered the way that these sorts of tombs were designed is at the entrance of the tomb there was sort of a little cut out notch spot so that you could with some amount of ease not a great amount it would take three or four men you could roll this large stone into place it would sort of roll down into the notch but you couldn't get the stone out and that was a very intelligent design because you don't want the stone being moved in any way you don't want it shifting you don't want even the slightest bit of opening because you don't want wild animals coming and disturbing the bodies that you've buried and so this tomb would have been rolled put in place it's virtually immovable and it's there all followed according to

Jewish custom in the first century and then Mark adds a curious little note he says in verse 47 here are the ladies again Mary Magdalene and Mary mother Joseph they saw where he was laid they saw whether they were watching from a distance or following closely behind we don't know but these ladies they saw where Joseph had buried they wanted as most of those who would have been close with the person who passed away they wanted desperately to go and give to Jesus all the all the honorable rights that you would give to someone you cared for after they had died they wanted to anoint his head and anoint his body with oil and prepare him properly this was a hasty burial by Joseph he did all the right things at a minimum that you've got to do for a proper Jewish burial it was a hasty burial and they wanted desperately these ladies to give him sort of a burial of honor but there's nothing they can do on the next day because the next day is Sabbath you can't do work on the

Sabbath you can't even walk far enough to get to the tomb on the Sabbath according to the Pharisees rules so there's nothing they can do on the next day and so Jesus lays in the tomb Friday evening all day Saturday all night Saturday night and then finally the Sabbath passes as the sun rises on Sunday morning which is where we pick up chapter 16 where we are told that when the Sabbath was passed Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome brought spices so that they might go and join them the three ladies are back on the scene to open witness where he was buried so now they're headed to the burial verse 2 and very early on the first day of the week when the sun had risen they went to the tomb and they were saying to one another who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb so that they want so desperately to honor Jesus by anointing his body with oil that they're traveling there and don't even know how they're going to be able to get to his body they are frantic mourners!

[37 : 21] at this point but they're headed anyway verse 4 looking up though they saw that the stone had been rolled back it was very large huge even and so then they stooped down and said entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting on the right side dressed in a white robe and they were alarmed you notice how Mark Mark doesn't try to play up the story Mark plays down certain elements of the story reading in the other gospels the young man is clearly identified as an angel Mark just notes that he was wearing white clothes which would have been a way for Jewish readers to identify him as an angel but Mark is not trying to make his story sound fantastic he is not doing that at all he is presenting a bare bones account of the resurrection no fancy details leave that to the other gospel writers Mark is saying bare bones as he does for most of his gospel he is just giving you the basic story as was handed down to him from Peter

Fisherman you can imagine that Peter would tell the story this way there is a man sitting dressed in white and they're scared verse 6 and he said to them do not be alone you seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified he has risen he's not here see the place where they lay him now we know from the other gospel accounts that they do get the other disciples and the other disciples come they see the word of this angelic messenger to believe that Jesus has been raised from the dead that's all they have and what you and

I have is a word tell us he's not in the tomb anymore he is risen risen oh the apostle Paul tells us that yes there at least in the first century there were very reliable sources to be questioned about the resurrection Jesus appeared to all the apostles and when Paul wrote first Corinthians the majority of the apostles were still living Jesus not only appeared to the apostles Paul tells us he appeared to over 500 people and when he was writing first Corinthians he tells the Corinthians you can go talk to these people go to Jerusalem they're still there if you want to talk to hundreds of witnesses of the resurrected Christ go ahead and do it that's fine and well for the Corinthians but we're 2000 years later those 500 people are long since dead and what we have is the same thing that the ladies have we have a word that tells us he's not in the tomb he is risen and we have to decide what to do with that word everything in your life hangs upon it everything if he's risen if this word is true if this angelic message is true rearrange your life reorder all of your priorities everything changes everything changes he is the king he is the divine son of

God his word is true all that he has told us in this book is true if he is raised from the dead and I ask you do you believe this word if I had the persuasive powers to convince you that he was raised from the dead I would put them all to work in this moment to convince you and I do not have them and no one on the face of earth has that kind of persuasive power only this word can do that in your heart and so I bring it to you he's not here he's raised do you believe that do you feel it now do you know it to be true does it challenge you oh there are marks of authenticity all through the text yes there were multiple witnesses in the first century no there is no other viable explanation for all the disciples did after the resurrection yes we have all of those arguments that we could lay out for you but at the end of the day there is a word that he's raised and everything hangs upon this word everything hangs upon

C.S. Lewis many of you have heard of him he's most well known for his Chronicles of Narnia series of books but C.S.

[42 : 43] Lewis was also a very ardent passionate defender of the faith after he did convert into atheism of course C.S.

Lewis made an argument that has sort of become known like Blaise Pascal's wager C.S. Lewis' argument for Christianity has become known as the trilemma not a dilemma not a choice between two things but a trilemma a choice between three things and C.S.

Lewis said he originally sat in on a radio program and it was written down later but C.S. Lewis said that we have three choices to make with regard to Christ he was either a liar because he made audacious claims we've seen them audacious claims he's either a liar and if he's a liar he's a bad bad man or he's a lunatic he's out of his mind he's insane someone came up to you on the street and said I'm the son of God you'd say this guy's insane he's a lunatic Jesus is either a liar or he's a lunatic or what he said is true in which case he's Lord but what C.S.

Lewis went on to say I think is a word that we need to hear today C.S. Lewis said but let us put aside all of this nonsense about him being a good man and a good teacher because he has not left that option open to us he's a liar or he's insane or he's the Lord of all and if he's raised from the dead he is Lord of all but do not leave here this morning do not leave this place and go through the rest of your Easter weekend with some notion that Jesus was a good man and a good teacher because if he is not raised and if he is not Lord he is anything but good but I assure you this word is true and he has been raised let's pray