

## **Matthew 28:11-15 — The Lie That Proves The Resurrection**

**March 31, 2024**

Good morning, CrossWinds! Jesus is risen! He is alive!

It should be no secret that we will study the resurrection this morning. We will look at Jesus' resurrection from a different angle. Today, we are looking at the lie that proves the resurrection. It is found in Matthew 28.

The Gospel of Matthew spends 28 chapters presenting Jesus as our Savior and King. It is 28 chapters of convincing arguments that Jesus is God in the flesh as he casts out demons, heals diseases with a touch, and even raises the dead. You would think the Gospel of Matthew would end on a high note, with stories and convincing proof that Jesus rose from the grave. That is not the case.

The very last part of Matthew's gospel is the great commission. Right before that, the last narrative portion of Matthew's gospel is the lie created to discredit the disciples and disprove the resurrection.

It seems strange that Matthew closed his gospel by telling us about this lie that was told to undermine confidence in the resurrection. Why did he do that?

Matthew told us about the most common lie used to undermine confidence in the resurrection because he wants us to look at the lie and think about it. When we do, this lie proves the resurrection is true, not declares it false.

The Holy Spirit knows that the resurrection of Jesus was and always will be under attack. Most people will reject it. Some will simply refuse to believe it. Satan, as the father of lies, will do his best to create believable lies to undermine the resurrection in hopes of steering people away from the truth.

If Satan can get people to believe the resurrection of Jesus is fictional, not factual, he destroys the Cornerstone of the Christian faith. If the resurrection of Jesus did not take place. We are still in our sins. There is no reason we should gather for worship. If Jesus died, like everyone else, and his body is buried someplace in the ground, every Christian loses hope. We are still in our sins. We are fools for believing a lie. The resurrection is the hinge upon which the Christian faith turns. The Christian faith stands and falls based of the truth of the resurrection.

If the resurrection of Jesus is true, then Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins. Jesus' resurrection to new life proves Jesus' payment for our sin is valid and complete. That changes everything. That means Jesus' resurrection to new life isn't just the forgiveness of our sins. It also means a new life for us who have trusted in him. If the resurrection is true, that means Jesus is alive today. He hears our prayers. He is at the right hand of God the Father, making intercession for us. If the resurrection is true, then everything the Bible tells us about Jesus returning one day to save and reward those who are his is true. Everything hangs on the truth or falsehood of the resurrection.

This is why Matthew closes his gospel with the most commonly circulated and the most widely believed lie used to discredit the resurrection. In telling us this lie, he wants us to realize why it can't be true and help us realize that the resurrection is based on historical fact, not historical fiction.

Before we look at the most common lie to disprove the resurrection of Jesus, I want to briefly survey the last 2,000 years of church history to tell you other lies that have circulated as others have attempted to undermine the truth of the resurrection.

### **How have people tried to deny the resurrection?**

1. **The Swoon Theory** — A man named Kari Venturini, at the beginning of the 19th century, was the first to suggest this. His theory is that Jesus never died. Instead, on the cross, Jesus was so traumatized that he went into a state of shock. They only thought he was dead. He looked dead, but he wasn't dead. As they would say in the movie Princess Bride, he was mostly dead, not all dead. Venturini claimed that after they took Jesus down from the cross, wrapped him in strips of cloth and spices, and placed him in the tomb, the cool air and smell of the spices in the tomb revived him. The disciples thought he rose from the dead when he exited the tomb but he had been mostly dead, not all dead. This theory, in whatever form it takes, doesn't make sense. First, it wasn't considered a possibility for 1,800 years of history. That should make it suspect. Second, Venturini forgot the Roman proficiency when it came to killing people. Nobody came off the cross alive. If they did, the executioner was the next one to go on a cross. Executioners did their job well. In addition, in the last part of Jesus' crucifixion, a Roman soldier thrusts his spear through Jesus' side, piercing his heart. The Romans did that to make doubly sure Jesus was dead. Nobody lives when a spear is through your heart. Third, people do not survive three days without food and water in a tomb, then roll aside a stone rock weighing a thousand pounds, then overpower an entire

squad of trained and armed Roman soldiers, then walk 7 miles on the road to Emmaus using the same feet that only hours before had a nail the size of a railroad spike driven through them. This theory is a ridiculous.

2. **The No-Burial Theory** — This was first put forward by Johann Edelman in 1746. He claimed Jesus wasn't in the tomb on Sunday because they never put him there on Friday. He claimed Jesus was thrown in a pit for executed criminals. On resurrection morning, when the women went to the tomb, he was gone simply because they never put him there. This theory also doesn't work. Why would the Jews and the Romans put a guard at the tomb if nobody was in the tomb? Why would they later invent the lie that the disciples stole Jesus' body out of the tomb if they never put Jesus in the tomb? All the Jews and the Romans needed to do to disprove the resurrection would be drag the dead body of Jesus around town for a few hours, telling people he looks dead to me!

3. **The Hallucination Theory** — This was first proposed by David Strauss in the 1800's. He said all the appearances of the resurrected Jesus were not physical. They were hallucinations, like people seeing Elvis in a crowd. Because people wanted to see a resurrected Jesus, they hallucinated and thought they saw a resurrected Jesus. This lie also doesn't work. The Bible tells us of more than 10 appearances of the resurrected Jesus to people. They were not just one at a time. Sometimes it was 10 of the disciples at once. Another time, it was 11 of the disciples. Jesus ate food with them. He cooked breakfast for them. In 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul says the

resurrected Jesus appeared alive to more than 500 people at one time. He talked with them. Hallucinations are individual events, not group events. 500 people do not hallucinate Jesus at the same time. How could the resurrected Jesus have a conversation with groups of people, and everybody in the group hear the same conversation if it was a hallucination? In addition, the disciples did not expect to see a risen Jesus. Why would they hallucinate one? The disciples did not want to believe that Jesus had been resurrected. He appeared to them the evening of the resurrection, and they were forced to believe Jesus rose from the dead after they touched him and talked with him. What do you do with Thomas? He was the disciple who wasn't in the room the first time the resurrected Jesus showed up. Thomas refused to believe his friend's words, that Jesus was alive. He said he would only believe if he could put his fingers into the wounds in Jesus' body. A week later, Jesus showed up and said, "Touch me!" Initially Thomas refused to believe that Jesus rose from the dead, but he was forced to believe after he met, touched, and talked with the resurrected Jesus. That is what happened not just to Thomas, but to many people.

4. **The Earthquake Theory** — R.L. Steiner popularized this over a hundred years ago. He claimed the earthquake, which took place on resurrection morning, shook the tomb. It created a crevice in the tomb floor. The body of Jesus rolled into the crevice. The earthquake continued and closed up the crevice. Then, the earthquake rolled the stone away. Presto! The body was gone! We have a resurrection! This explanation also doesn't make sense.

What about the grave clothes? These were linen and spices wrapped around the body still in the grave after Jesus rose from the dead. The Gospel of John tells us they were still in the position of being wrapped around a body. Jesus' body passed through them. It was only the face cloth that was folded and set aside. In addition, a missing body doesn't create a resurrection. It creates a missing body. If you listen to the True Crime podcast, you know a body goes missing all the time, but we don't consider that a resurrection. The resurrection is when someone comes back to life and is walking around town talking to people.

5. **The Impersonation Theory**—I call this the Mission Impossible Theory. If you have seen any recent Mission Impossible movies, you know they use a 3D printer to print a rubber mask of a face so someone can wear it and impersonate somebody else. This is what the impersonation theory says happened at the resurrection. Somebody looked like Jesus and impersonated him, so people thought he rose from the dead. Maybe it was someone wearing makeup. Maybe Jesus had a twin. We don't know. This also doesn't make sense. If someone impersonated Jesus, it would be easy to prove Jesus was still dead because you still had the dead body of Jesus. In addition, if someone wanted to impersonate Jesus, he needed to take his job seriously. He would have to pound holes through his feet and hands with nails. He would need to put a spear through his side. He would need to completely disfigure his body with whips and a cat-o-nine tails since Jesus went through that torture before the cross. The disciples lived day in and day

out with Jesus for three years. Do you think somebody dressed up to look like Jesus would fool them?

6. **The Delirious Woman Theory** — Renan, a French atheist, came up with this explanation in his book of why the resurrection isn't true. He claimed the resurrection is based on the testimony of Mary Magdalene, who claimed to have met Jesus on resurrection morning. Renan claims it makes no sense to trust her word. She was an eccentric, frightened, immoral woman with 7 demons, and she was hysterical to the point of insanity. Why would anyone believe her when she said Jesus rose from the grave? Renan didn't know his Bible, or he would know Mary Magdalene was only the first person to meet the resurrected Jesus. She wasn't the last. Hundreds met the resurrected Jesus after her.

7. **The Evaporated Body Theory**—G.D. Arnold, in his book against the resurrection, claims the tomb was empty because Jesus' body evaporated into gases during the three days it spent in the tomb. I am not sure what to say about that. When Cindy and I were first married, we had a mouse in the house. It died behind the refrigerator next to the warm compressor. After three days, it was definitely giving off gases, but the body was still there.

Why am I giving you these completely foolish explanations for the resurrection? To show you how completely foolish are the alternative explanations for the empty tomb given in the last 2,000 years. In 2,000 years, nobody has come up with a decent explanation on resurrection morning to explain away Jesus rising from the dead, as the Bible tells us. I saved the best

and the longest-lasting alternative explanation often used to explain away the resurrection for last. Here it is.

8. **The Theft Theory** — This is the most popular and longest-lasting alternative explanation for why the tomb was empty on resurrection morning. It makes the best sense. It is the theory that somebody stole Jesus' body, so when the women went to the tomb on Sunday morning, he was gone. The problem is that we have to ask questions about this theory. If someone stole the body of Jesus, who stole the body? It wasn't the Jews. They set a guard at the tomb to ensure nobody took the body and could claim Jesus rose to life. It wasn't the Romans. They were the ones protecting the tomb. The only people left who could steal the body of Jesus were the disciples. It is hard to believe they pulled it off. They didn't believe Jesus was going to rise from the dead. They were disoriented, fearful, and confused after Jesus' death. Peter had denied even knowing Jesus three times. Even when they were told about the resurrection of Jesus by the women who met him on the way back from the tomb, they refused to believe it. According to Luke 24:11, the disciples said the woman's claim that they met the resurrected Jesus sounded foolish. In addition, how would 11 disciples successfully conquer an entire squad of of armed Roman soldiers guarding Jesus' grave?

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard. Matthew 27:65–66 (ESV)

These guys were not mall rent-a-cops with toy spears riding Segways. They were trained Roman soldiers, battle-hardened killers, who were told by the Jews to make the tomb as secure as they could. There were many soldiers. They



sealed the tomb. How would 11 scared disciples, who were taught to love their enemies, somehow overpower an entire squad of soldiers, roll aside a rock over a thousand pounds, then somehow slip the body of Jesus out of the wrapping of cloth and spices around his body, which was over a hundred pounds, then escape? How would they do this without the Roman guard knowing while they slept in front of the tomb?

If the disciples stole the body, and they knew the resurrection was a lie, why would every one of them be willing to be tortured to death, claiming Jesus was alive? *People will die for a conviction they hope is true, but they will not die for a concoction they know is false.*

The lie that the disciples stole the body is the earliest and best attempt to refute the resurrection. It is found in Matthew 28. Let's read it. As we study it, you will see that it is a lie that proves the resurrection is true, not explains it away by proving it false.

While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day. Matthew 28:11–15 (ESV)

Before we study this lie, let's back up and read the verses immediately before it so we can see how the resurrection unfolded that first Easter morning.

Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became

like dead men. But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” Matthew 28:1–10 (ESV)

When Jesus rose, two different groups were at the resurrection. One was the Roman soldiers. The other was the women. Both of them saw what happened when Jesus rose. We don't know what they were thinking, but we know what they experienced. There was an earthquake. The stone rolled away. There was a blazing angel who told them to check out the contents of the tomb. He told the women to tell the disciples he was alive and that he would meet them in Galilee. The women left and were on their way to find the disciples. On the way, Jesus met them.

That leaves the other group, the Roman soldiers. After shaking in fear and either passing out or being so traumatized that they couldn't move, we read this.

While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. Matthew 28:11 (ESV)

While the women were on their way to the disciples, some guards were on their way to the chief priests to tell them what happened. Their message was, “Guys, we have a problem! I thought guarding a dead person would be the easiest job of my life. But there was an earthquake; a bright angel rolled the stone away. The angel left us paralyzed in fear. We looked inside the tomb, and Jesus was gone. He even left the grave clothes behind.” We saw it with our own

eyes. Then they told the chief priests the angel's message about Jesus being alive and that he would meet his disciples in Galilee.

The women's report of Jesus' resurrection to the disciples was good news, while the soldiers' report of Jesus' resurrection to the chief priests was bad news.

Let's remember why the guards were at the tomb in the first place. After all, we don't usually see armed guards watching a tomb in a cemetery to make sure dead people stay dead.

The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard. Matthew 27:62–66 (ESV)

The chief priests and the Pharisees were given a guard of Roman soldiers and told to make the tomb as secure as possible. They also set the Roman seal on the tomb. The large contingent of soldiers was to ensure that the tomb could not be opened. They would know if it were tampered with because the seal would be broken. They took every precaution.

The soldiers at the resurrection gave the Jewish leaders a first-hand account of everything that occurred on resurrection morning. When the women gave the disciples a first-hand account of the resurrection, Peter and John ran to the grave to check things out for themselves. That isn't what the chief priests did. They didn't check anything out. Instead, they sat in their chairs, further hardening their heart in unbelief.

When Jesus died on the cross, look at what the religious leaders said.

He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. Matthew 27:42 (ESV)

The religious leaders mockingly told Jesus that if he could get himself off the cross, they would believe he was the Son of God. Jesus did something better. He didn't come off the cross while he was still alive. He came out of the grave after he was dead. Yet the religious leaders, who said they would believe in him if they had enough supernatural evidence, still refused to believe.

Isn't that the way some people are regarding the resurrection? It doesn't matter how much evidence you give them. They will always refuse to believe.

And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers Matthew 28:12 (ESV)

The chief priests, the Pharisees, and the elders assembled and took counsel together. This was the Sanhedrin, Judaism's ruling body. I am sure it looked like a January 6 case in Washington, where the religious leaders grilled the Roman guards about what happened, just as the January 6 committee grilled the Capital Police. All the guards could do was tell the story of what happened. Everybody told the same story.

They refused to believe it after having eyewitness evidence of the resurrection and discussing it. As far as we know, nobody went to the tomb to check it out for themselves. They simply dismissed the facts. Dead people stay dead. Dead people don't come alive. We know it appears that Jesus rose from the dead, but we need a plan to trick people into thinking Jesus is still dead.

Here is their plan.

And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' And if this comes to the

governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." Matthew 28:12–14 (ESV)

They decided three things.

1. **Bribe the soldiers to lie.** They bribed Judas for 30 pieces of silver. Now, they would bribe the soldiers. It was a lot of hush money, but everybody has their price.
2. **Get the soldiers to spread the lie.** Have the soldiers tell people that the disciples came by night and stole the body while they were asleep. This was the only lie that made sense. They knew the disciples would be spreading the truth that Jesus was alive, so they had to spread a lie that the disciples stole the body while the soldiers slept.
3. **Protect the soldiers.** If they were going to have the soldiers lie, they needed to back them up. If Pilate found out his soldiers lost Jesus' body while they were guarding it because they fell asleep, all of them would lose their lives. If you want the soldiers to spread your lie, you need to keep them alive long enough to do that.

So they took the money and did as they were directed.... Matthew 28:15a (ESV)

The soldiers knew it was a lie. The religious leaders knew it was a lie. Everybody knew it was a lie, but the soldiers had early retirement and were making a lot of money.

...And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day. Matthew 28:15b (ESV)

This lie of the Jewish leadership worked. Many people believed it. Matthew says this lie was still being circulated as the reason for the empty tomb, 25 years later when he wrote his gospel.

A hundred years later after that, there lived a Christian named Justin Martyr. In his day, he wrote that this lie of the Jews, that the disciples stole the body while the Roman soldiers slept, was still being circulated in his day.

“You, the Jews, selected men and sent them into all the world proclaiming that a certain atheistic and lawless sect had arisen from one Jesus, a Galilean deceiver whom we crucified but His disciples stole Him by night from the tomb and deceived men by saying He had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven.”  
(*Tyrpho*, 108)

Why does Matthew end his gospel by telling us the original lie, the most persistent lie, about why the tomb was empty on resurrection morning? Matthew could have given us many positive proofs of the resurrection as other New Testament writers did. The problem is he knew his critics would not accept that evidence, “Of course, you have evidence that Jesus rose from the dead. You have evidence to believe because you want to believe.” Matthew knows his readers have heard this lie by the Jews about why the tomb was empty, so he acknowledges it. But in so doing, he wants us to think about it. By doing that, he puts the proof of the resurrection into the lying mouths of Jesus’ enemies.

Think through the silliness of other parts of this explanation.

1. **How would the soldiers know the disciples stole the body if they were asleep?** That makes no sense. In a court of law, an eyewitness cannot testify about a crime that happened while they were asleep.
2. **How does an entire unit of Roman soldiers fall asleep and stay asleep while the disciples stole the body?** Soldiers had four two-hour watches during the night to maintain guard. They slept at different intervals. If they fell asleep during their watch, it was the death penalty. Even if one of the soldiers fell asleep during his watch, it is absurd to think all of the soldiers fell asleep

on their watch. In addition, how would the disciples move a stone that was over 1,000 pounds without waking any of the guards that were asleep immediately in front of it?

3. **Why did the Jewish leaders need to bribe the soldiers?** You don't bribe people to tell the truth. You bribe people to tell a lie.

This is Matthew's point. When we look at Satan's best attempts at discrediting the resurrection with a lie, all of the lies are ridiculous, even the oldest and best attempt to lie by the Jews.

The only explanation for what happened on resurrection morning is that Jesus rose from the dead.

There is not just solid evidence that all the alternative explanations for the empty tomb are wrong, but plenty of positive evidence that Jesus' resurrection is right. We covered some of that earlier, such as the resurrected Jesus having over ten appearances to hundreds of people. It was appearances of Jesus talking, eating, and being touched by groups of people. Here is additional positive evidence for the resurrection.

### **What evidence supports the resurrection?**

#### **Jesus' brothers**

Mary was Jesus' mother. Joseph was not Jesus' biological Father; God was his biological Father. Jesus had half brothers and sisters from the marriage of Mary and Joseph. The Bible tells us that while Jesus was alive, they did not believe in him. After he rose from the dead, Jesus met them, and, like Thomas, they were forced to believe. That is not because they wanted to believe but

because they found themselves forced to believe after meeting and talking with the resurrected Jesus.

Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. 1 Corinthians 15:7 (ESV)

The James Paul spoke of was James, the half-brother of Jesus. He later became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. He also wrote the book of James in our Bible. He didn't believe Jesus was God until he met him after the resurrection. Another half-brother of Jesus was Jude. He also did not believe Jesus was God despite seeing his miracles during his life. Only after the resurrection did James and Jude believe in Jesus because they saw Jesus tortured. They saw Jesus die. They saw the empty tomb and met, touched, talked, and ate with the resurrected Jesus. They were forced to believe Jesus was alive, even if they didn't want to believe he was alive. Imagine what it was like to pray to your half-brother and worship your half-brother. You must have been sure he rose from the dead to do that.

### **Jesus' enemies**

When Stephen, the first Christian martyr, died in the book of Acts, people put their jackets at the feet of a man named Saul; that way, they could get better velocity with their throwing arms. Saul was the leader of the persecution of Christians in Jerusalem. He traveled from city to city to arrest Christians, imprison Christians, and ensure the death of Christians. The resurrected Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus. Overnight, he went from hating Jesus and killing Christians to loving Christians and worshiping Jesus. Everywhere he went, he told people about Jesus. In addition, he was willing to be tortured multiple times because of Jesus. What would cause such a sudden change in the



direction of Saul's life? The only possible explanation is the one he claims, he met the resurrected Jesus.

**The disciples changed from cowards to courageous.**

The disciples went from hiding behind closed doors, dejected and in fear, to preaching before thousands 50 days later on the Day of Pentecost. They boldly proclaimed that Jesus was alive. The meeting, touching, and eating with the resurrected Jesus changed their minds.

**Many Jews began worshipping Jesus as God.**

The Jews were strict monotheists. They know that worshipping any other God than the one God of the universe is an automatic one-way trip to hell: do not pass go, do not collect \$200. What would cause thousands of Jews, 3,000 on the day of Pentecost, to begin worshipping Jesus as the Son of God? What would cause them to begin praying to Jesus? What caused them to believe Jesus died for their sins? If they were wrong, they condemned themselves to an eternity in hell. Why were they so confident that Jesus was God and that he died for their sins? It was the fact that the resurrected Jesus appeared alive in Jerusalem so many times. Just like the disciples were forced to believe after meeting the resurrected Jesus; thousands also couldn't help but believe the evidence of the resurrected Jesus because it was so strong. That is the only possible reason for thousands of people with real names, addresses, and cell phone numbers to start worshipping Jesus as God.

### **Sunday became the day of worship.**

What would change Jews from worshipping on Saturday, which they had done for 2,000 years, to worshipping on Sunday, because that is the day Jesus rose from the dead? It must be something super big to make that change. The only possible explanation is the resurrection of Jesus was such a big deal that worshipping on Sunday, the first day of the week, the day of Jesus' resurrection, superseded the Sabbath day, which was given under the old covenant, and celebrated on Saturday at the end of the week.

### **What does the resurrection mean for you?**

The best explanations given to deny the resurrection do not make sense. Looking at the dramatic changes, such as enemies of Jesus turning from hating Jesus to worshipping him, the brothers of Jesus turning from being opposed to Jesus to praying to him, and thousands of people in one day turning to Jesus as God and worshipping him. These give evidence that the resurrection is real. In addition, the Jews have no good explanation for the empty tomb and resurrection appearances of Jesus. The only possible explanation is that Jesus rose from the dead. He is alive. What does that mean for us today?

### **Jesus offers to forgive all my sins.**

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.  
1 Corinthians 15:17 (ESV)

Paul's point in this verse is that Jesus rose from the dead. This means we are no longer in our sins. Jesus' death on the cross paid for our sins. He rose from the dead to prove he not only paid for our sins, but he conquered death and the power of sin. The Bible tells us that if anyone genuinely confesses their sins

to Jesus and asks Jesus' death on the cross to pay for their sins, and Jesus to be in charge of their lives, they will be saved. That means no matter what you have done. No matter how you have failed God or others in this life. No matter how far you have run from God. Jesus is alive. He loves you. He died and rose from the grave to forgive you. If you ask Jesus' death on the cross to pay for your sin, he will do that because he loves you and wants to save you.

**Jesus offers us eternal life with Him.**

Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 1 Corinthians 15:18 (ESV)

Jesus rose from the dead but will not be the only one to rise from the dead. Paul says if Jesus didn't rise, then Grandma, who trusted in Jesus, perished when she died. The good news is Jesus did rise from the dead. Those who trust in Jesus to be their savior will also not perish. According to the Bible, those who die apart from Christ go to Hades now but will ultimately end up in the Lake of Fire later. For those who have asked Jesus to save them from their sins and be in charge of their life, Paul says that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, which is better by far. He also says that when Jesus comes back, he will resurrect our dead bodies from the grave and give us a resurrection body that is just like Jesus' resurrection body. We will live with Jesus forever in our resurrection bodies. Jesus' resurrection body was the prototype for our resurrection body. According to the apostle Paul, while death is the worst moment of life for those who die apart from Jesus, death is the best moment of life for the Christian. It is going to be with Jesus.

## Conclusion

I have two challenges for us this morning.

1. If you have not trusted Jesus to forgive your sins, know Jesus is alive! Pray to him in your heart, ask Jesus' death on the cross to pay for your sins, and then ask Jesus to be in charge of your life. The Jesus who is alive will save and change you!
2. If you already know Jesus, remember today that the evidence of Jesus' resurrection is solid! It is only those who refuse to examine the evidence, like the chief priests, who will not find enough to believe.



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