

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Easter

PART

TITLE

Of First Importance

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 15:3-8, 14-18, 30-32



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Providence family, it's great to see you this morning. If you call Providence home, welcome home. If you're a guest, we are thrilled that you are here. It's an honor that you are here. And this is obviously a special day.

Happy Easter. He is risen.

He is risen. There you go. If you have a Bible, turn with me to first Corinthians chapter 15. And we're going to pause one week in our journey through mark. If you call Providence home, you know that we're going verse by verse through mark.

But not today. We'll be in first Corinthians 15. And today, in just a moment, I want to pray that the Lord is going to make us glad. For some of us, he's going to renew our gladness as we hear truth that echoes what we already believe in our heart. And this is going to be an encouraging time.

This is going to reinforce what you already love and know and cherish, and that's going to create gladness for some of us. For others, it's going to be a different kind. And the kind for some of us is it might be hard at first, but once he makes you glad, you're going to be so glad that you endured through it. And that is that for some of us, we have risen intellectually to a belief that Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead. And yet we live every day of our life as though those things aren't important.

And nobody is more miserable than to actually believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and therefore is the son of God. And to begin to live our life and practice our relationships as though his instructions and his authority and his wisdom has no place within our daily life. And for some of us, what's going to take place is there's going to become an alignment. When you see the evidence that demands a faith verdict and the resurrection of Christ, you're going to see by default that he has authority to speak into our lives. And if he can be trusted with our soul, he can also be trusted with every other part of our life.

And he's going to make some of us so glad. And for others, he's going to make us glad. The reason is because for some here, you don't have a relationship with Christ. Maybe you've come and you've heard about Jesus. Maybe someone brought you here, and maybe you're even curious this morning as to why people would gather and sing to somebody named Jesus.

What's so significant about him? You're going to see the truth today in his word. And for some of us. We're going to put our trust in him today, and he's going to forgive us of our sin, give us eternal life, and that's going to create gladness. And so it's a really good day.

So let me pray, Father. No matter where we're at today, whether we're full of unbelief or full of apathy or full of pain or guilt or shame, whether we're full of appreciation and adoration, whether we're utterly confused about life, where things are a little bit clearer, would you make all of us glad, more glad than when we came in? And so would you speak? Would you glorify yourself, bring good to your people? Be pleased with my

words and the meditations of our hearts.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen. So in these moments, I want to share with you just a few things about what Jesus has done. The story of the Bible. It begins with God's creation.

He creates things. He creates humanity. And then the Bible says, we sinned against him, broke fellowship with him, and that creates an avalanche of brokenness personally as well as within all of society. And in that moment of offense when he could have crushed us, instead, he responded in love, because that's who God is. And what he did was he made a promise that one day he would send a special son, a son who would be born of a woman, who would be a special son.

He would grow up and he would live without sin, and then he would crush the head of evil itself. And he would provide an opportunity for people to be reconciled once again to God, to be able to experience life the way that he always intended for it to be lived. So we're supposed to look through the Bible on lookout for this special son? When you get to the New Testament, it leaves no doubt who the son is. His name is Jesus, and he is the Christ, the messiah, the promised one.

For over three decades, he faced what you and I face, siblings that poked and prodded him. Inconsistency in society, inconsistency in government, inconsistency in weather, in everything where. Where things are happening, stress is happening. His circumstances were like I was, except for him. He never sinned.

He never responded towards all of those places that irritated, exasperated, or made him tired with sin. Instead, he responded with perfect love. He spoke with wisdom. God's word says he spoke in a way that he had authority, literally, that he had jurisdiction, as though he created all things and therefore understood all things. And then at the end of his time on the earth, he was approaching Jerusalem.

He was leading his twelve disciples to Jerusalem, and he tells something that is pretty amazing. He predicts what he's about to walk into. He knows it full well. And this is what he says in Matthew, chapter 20. He says, we're going up to Jerusalem, and the son of man will be delivered over to the chief priests, and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified.

And he will be raised on the third day. Now, promising these things would happen don't prove they did happen. Promising these things ahead of time gave an invitation to the entire world, including you and me, to observe if they happened. And when Paul, the man who wrote the letter I asked you to turn to in the Bible, one corinthians, when Paul first heard about Jesus promise to his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem and he knew what he was walking into, it did not change Paul. It did not melt his heart.

Well, the Bible explains God's wrath towards sin as a cup. It's a metaphor. It's a cup. A cup that fills until it spills. And we can sort of understand this, can't we, if we have friends and they're irritating us or they're

insulting us.

And the first insult, we can kind of let it go. And the second one, we might be able to let it go. And the third one, we're a little bit more irritated, and then we don't respond. Always in love. And so sometimes we ignite insult.

Suddenly there's this outrage. What we're told is God also has a cup that fills with all the pain that he's experienced from being ignored, from being disregarded, from being rebelled against. And it's filling. And it was filling at this point in time. Well, five nights after Jesus arrived in Jerusalem, just as he promised, he went to a garden.

And Jesus so agonized, as he prepared to drink that cup of God's wrath that was directed towards ourselves, our hearts, he was going to drink it in our place. And he was so agonized over this that he prayed a prayer and he said, Father, would you remove this cup from me yet not as I will, but as you will in this humble resignation to the father's will. The first time Paul, who wrote one corinthians, heard this, it did not change him and it did not melt him. Well, there in the garden, as Jesus was praying these prayers, suddenly Judas, one of his disciples, betrayed him. He brought an army with them.

He was bound and he was arrested. And they brought him to a jewish court, where they spit upon him, where they beat him, where they falsely accused him. And then they condemned him for blasphemy because he claimed to be the son of God. The court of the Jews could condemn a man, but couldn't kill a man. And so they bring him to Pilate, who has the authority to kill a man, just as jesus promised that he would be delivered over to the Gentiles, the Romans.

And that's precisely what took place in Pilate when he saw him. After a few moments, long moments, he ordered that he be scourged and crucified. Jesus was then stripped of his clothing, and he was scourged. In Isaiah 53, it says, by his stripes, we are healed. And his body wasn't striped.

And this is how it would become. Striped is. They took a whip that was infused with bone and shards of iron, and they beat him repeatedly in order to open him up, to cause stripes and then to mock him. They made a crown of thorns and put that crown over his head. They spit upon his face and mocked him.

And then we're told, it says, so that it would remain affixed through the torture that he was about to go through. So they took a rod, and they beat him over the head in order to make sure that those thorns dug deeply. And when Paul first heard this, it did not change him. It did not melt as hard.

They then took Jesus and they nailed him to the cross. They hoisted him into the air so that everyone could see him in his shame. Then the Bible says, for six long, agonizing hours, he struggled to breathe one last time. At the end of those 6 hours, Jesus rose up upon that nail that was piercing through his feet in order to take

one more breath. But with this breath, he didn't breathe it out.

He spoke word we, one word. We translated into three. And there he said, it is finished to tell us to it literally. It is complete. It is paid in full.

He gave up his spirit, and there he died. And in first news of this Paul, he did not change, and this did not melt his heart. Instead, Paul felt justified in his unbelief. He felt relieved that the threat to his way of life and his worldview and his righteousness in his own eyes had been removed. And he felt bloodthirsty toward any foolish person that would actually go around proclaiming that Jesus rose from the dead.

That is, until the resurrected Christ stood in front of Paul on a road to Damascus. And suddenly, everything changed in his life. The great persecutor of the early church became a preacher of the gospel, he was so convinced that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was the only means by which we can be forgiven of our sin and be given eternal life in heaven. They had to tell everybody. And so he went everywhere, cities, all over the place, in order to tell them.

One of those cities was a city called Corinth. And later he wanted to care for the people who believed that message of the gospel, who gathered together in a local church. And he wrote them a letter, and it's called first corinthians, which is the letter that I ask you to turn to. Everything changed. And in one corinthians 15, he gets to the place where he wants to share the evidence that demands a faith verdict.

This is what he says, starting in verse three. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. And then he appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James and then to all the apostles. And last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

For I am the least of the apostles unworthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. Now skip down to verse twelve. Now, if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. Then if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain.

We are even found to be misrepresenting God because we testified about God, that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise. If it is true that the dead are not raised, but if the dead are not raised, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Verse 32. What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus?

If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. So you notice that within this letter,

within this chapter, I should say, there's no lilies, right? There's no flowers. There's no sentimentality. There's no bunnies.

There's none of that. There's no comfort. There's no philosophy. There's no subjectivity. It's all objective logic.

It's reasoning. And what he uses in three different accounts is deductive reasoning. When he says, if Christ is not raised, then that's deductive logic. And three times he uses it specifically in order to make an appeal, an appeal to three different parts of who we are as people. Notice what he says, if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain.

What that means is this is an appeal to our mind. And then verse 17, if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. This is an appeal to our conscience. And then finally he says in verse 32, if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. This is the appeal to our heart.

Paul was the last person in the whole world that wanted to believe in Jesus. But the resurrection of Jesus argued him out of his belief. And I believe that if we see the evidence this morning, then perhaps that evidence will also argue us out of our belief. So let's work through each of these appeals. First is the resurrection of Jesus arrests the mind.

The mind. He begins in verse three and four with what he calls the gospel, the words that are of most importance in the whole Bible. Verse three and four says that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures. He was buried and then he rose from the dead in accordance with the scriptures. In accordance with the scriptures means that the old testament that pointed to this would be fulfilled in the Christ.

You see, 500 years before the Persians invented crucifixion as a form of execution, which was actually several hundred years before the Romans perfected it. King David actually predicted, prophesied that the Christ, when he came in psalm 22, that he would be pierced through his hands and feet, that he would be crucified. Isaiah 53 promises the same thing. And David, who also wrote psalm 16, actually predicts that the Christ, when he comes, that he will not see decay in the grave because he's going to rise from the dead. And this is what Paul was saying.

Jesus did these things in accordance with the scriptures. And then what he does from that point, from verse four all the way to verse nine, is he lays out three pieces of interlocking evidence for the resurrection. He tries to make a case for us. Three pieces. The first is there's an empty tomb.

In verse four, it says that Jesus was buried in a grave after he died. And then he rose, he was in the grave, and then he wasn't in the grave. All the gospels actually attest to the fact that there were some of his own disciples and several women who observed the exact tomb and the exact time when they laid Jesus body into the

tomb. So they were not confused as to which tomb it was, and Jesus was then not there anymore. His body was gone.

And so there's two possibilities, right? There's only two ways that his body gets out of that tomb. One is he rises from the dead and walks that body out of the tomb. And the other is someone takes his body that is still dead out of the tomb. Those are your options.

And so let's just say somebody took his body out of the tomb. The tomb stole it. It's one popular critique of the resurrection of Christ. If that's the case, there's only two possibilities. It either had to be somebody who was against him or somebody who was for him, who took the body out of the grave.

So if it was some of his enemies who stole the body out of the grave, who hated the early church and who hated the message of the gospel, which included the resurrection of Christ, when they heard the disciples begin to proclaim the resurrection of Christ, the only thing they had to do was reveal the body, and they could immediately snuff out the early church. Christianity would never have existed if the body was stolen and revealed when the resurrection was proclaimed. The other option is his friends stole the body, but his friends went and all died a martyr's death. And surely one of them would have cracked under the known lie that they were all perpetuating, if indeed they had stolen the body, that they went the rest of their life, not only them, but all of these 500 eyewitnesses. They went the rest of their life living literally with a bounty on their head, believing in Jesus Christ and refusing to recant.

You simply don't do that if you know it's a lie. The second piece of this evidence is the eyewitnesses. In verse six, he says that he appeared in more than 500 brothers at one time, and they're still alive. Now. One corinthians was written just 16 to 18 years after the death of Jesus, and he's saying that he appeared to a group of 500 people.

They all saw him. All of these people were orthodox jewish people who grew up with a worldview that God could not take on flesh and die for humanity, that we had to earn our way. And every single one of them, in one afternoon changed their mind about everything that they knew. And these eyewitnesses, he's saying, look to any early skeptics of the early church, he says a lot of them are still alive. Most of them are.

So go ask them. And that leads to the third piece of evidence, and that's to change lives. That Paul could not have pointed them to the eyewitnesses of Jesus if those eyewitnesses were not continuing in their faith. We're not still worshiping Jesus. We're not still proclaiming that Jesus rose from the dead, even at tremendous cost and peril, risk of their own life.

And so you have three pieces of evidence. It's a remarkable thing that then he then says to us in verse 14, so if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. But you can flip deductive

logic on its head, and you can then say it this way, but if Christ has been raised, then our faith in preaching is not futile. In other words, our preaching about the resurrection of Christ is not about personal longing. It's not about philosophy.

It's about history. It's about evidence. It's about facts that demand a verdict.

Admittedly, Paul had a little advantage, didn't he? Jesus appeared to him in his resurrected state on a road that hasn't happened to me. Some of us will say, I'll tell you what, if Jesus knocks on my door tonight and he says, hey, it's Jesus. I rose from the dead, then I will believe. So what would he say to people who don't get that experience?

Would he say, I'll tell you what, just wait until you have a little experience and then believe. Is that what he would say? And I would say, no, it's not. He would say, because when given the opportunity, that's not what he said. See, there was a time that Paul, because of his insistence to continue to preach Jesus, even though it put him in prison, and eventually it would take his life as a martyr, is that Paul went to prison.

He was in prison in Caesarea. And there, there were two leaders, rulers, who wanted to hear. One was Festus, the roman governor. One was Agrippa, the roman king. And they wanted to hear Paul talk about why he was in prison and about this Jesus person.

So they pull him out of prison, and he begins sharing the life of Jesus. And when he gets to the resurrection of Jesus Christ, festus, he interrupts him and he says, you are so smart, I'll give it to you. You're a man of great learning. He goes, but you've learned so much, you've lost your head.

And he says, I am speaking to you words that are true and rational. In other words, I'm not talking about personal longing. I'm talking about evidence. I'm not talking about philosophy of can someone rise from the dead? I'm talking about historical evidence that someone did rise from the dead.

And so he turns to the king, and he looks straight at Agrippa. The king. And notice what he says. He says, the king knows about these things, for this has not been done in a corner. In other words, he looks at Agrippa, one of the most powerful men in the whole known world at the time.

And you know what he says. You know the facts. You know about the empty tomb and the eyewitnesses and the changed lives. And you know about your own roman soldiers that came and testified that that body was not stolen.

Agrippa, account for the facts. And after you're done accounting, then either create a viable alternate explanation or bend your knee and believe, and I would encourage you on this Easter to do the same. So the first

application is this. Let's account for the evidence. Think about the evidence.

You see, people often say in our culture today, if this fulfills you, then believe it's true.

You hear this all the time. Your truth. It's your truth if it fulfills you. But don't expect it to be my truth if it doesn't fulfill me. Just believe if it fulfills you.

And Paul would say, I did not believe in Jesus because he fulfilled me. He was the most unfulfilling person in the entire globe at the moment that I was persecuting him. I didn't want anything to do with him. He wrecked my whole life. He wrecked my standing.

I had all of these accolades religiously that I was planning to bring up to God Almighty and say, this is why you should let me into heaven. And this Christ and his gospel was going to remove all, all of that from me.

He wrecked my worldview. He was not fulfilling in any way. But here's the thing. If that man rose from the dead, then he is God. And if he is God, then it doesn't matter.

If he fulfills me, I have to yield to him.

Sort of like sunscreen.

You know, I don't always apply sunscreen because the sun is fulfilling.

I apply it because it's there, because the evidence demands a verdict. You see, a God that we choose only if he fulfills us out of a lineup of possibilities is not God, but only a product of our desire, a concoction of our own imagination, made in our own image. And this kind of God, he cannot save us, transform us, change us, or correct us because he's been chosen out of a lineup to endorse us. So I urge you this morning to account for the evidence and either believe in Jesus Christ or provide a viable alternate explanation, if nobody else, for you. And if indeed you conclude that he rose from the dead, like many have, and you rise to an intellectual descent, close the gap between what that means intellectually and what that means practically.

In other words, let's acknowledge Jesus' authority, if indeed he did rise. You see, if Jesus is the son of God who rose from the dead, he has authority to instruct us. He has the authority to hold us accountable. He has the authority to place a flag in our life, and he says it's his. It's all his.

He has the authority to limit us. He has the authority to correct us, to change us. That's what happens. You create life. You save people's lives by dying for them.

You rise to life. You're the point of life.

And the Bible attests to this in a really remarkable way in acts 17. And this is what he says there. He says, God commands all people everywhere to repent, to turn from their sin. Then he says, why? He goes, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by man.

Now, we should want to know who this man is. This man is going to judge us. This is the one who's going to hold us accountable. Don't you want to know who he is? Wouldn't it be good to know who he is so we know his standard, so that that judgment is actually going to be helpful?

How do we know who he is? Well, he tells us whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead. In other words, if Jesus Christ rose from the dead, he is the son of God. And if he is the son of God, then his teaching is not only interesting, it's essential. And the reason it's essential is because his judgment is incontestable.

Account for his authority in your life.

That's an argument to the mind. Does this resurrection of Jesus arrest the conscience? Some of you are just like me. You've done things you wish you didn't. Do you feel shameful or regret and guilty?

And here's a good question. On Easter, how do you get past your past?

How do you erase that shame? And interestingly, Paul talks about his shame. You notice in verse nine, he says, I'm unworthy to be called an apostle because I persecuted the church of God. So here's a man that was literally imprisoning and hunting believers down. And after he was changed.

He's now sitting in church with some of their relatives. How do you process that?

What he did was he let the resurrection of Christ argue with his conscience. Verse 17. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. And so let's flip it on its head. If Christ has raised, then you are not still stuck in your sins.

You see, we all know that a prisoner's debt is completely paid when the doors open and the prisoner walks free. So how do we know Jesus blood was able to pay for our sins? That the cup is actually empty towards us of God's wrath? And the answer is, the door opened and Jesus walked out. You see, the resurrection is God's receipt, that our debt is paid in full.

His blood is what paid it. His resurrection is God's authority from heaven that proclaims to the world it's ac-

ceptable. His sacrifice is acceptable to everyone who places their faith in him. You see, once the resurrection convinced Paul intellectually, suddenly the cross, that at one time it didn't melt him, suddenly it just absolutely melted him. Because for the first time in his life, he, just, like some of us, need to know what he found out.

And that is that he is so sinful that it took the death of Jesus Christ to die for him. And he is so loved that Jesus was glad to do so.

We are so sinful that it takes the death of the perfect son of God to atone for our sin. And yet he is so in love with you that he's glad to do it, and he did it. Romans three says it this way. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. Lots of concepts.

And so let me just go slow. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. All would include me and you. Jesus said, the standard. As the judge, he can set the standard, and he says, what's the standard?

You therefore must be perfect to get to heaven, because your heavenly father is perfect. You're like, I'm out. Even the Bible agrees, all have sinned. And what that does is it creates this debt that requires a redemption price that we don't have the moral capital to pay on our own.

So what did God do in that moment? He put forward his son, as it says, as a propitiation. That means substitutionary sacrifice. It means someone else drank the cup in your place. Someone else died the death that we deserved.

He paid this redemption price to set us free. And to everyone who places their faith in him, meaning stops thinking that they can merit their access to God almighty. To stop thinking that I'm my savior. To stop thinking, I don't need a savior, but to confess and say, I need a savior, and I can't be him, but I believe in Jesus, and I confess him as lord of all. What happens to the person who does that?

Not only are we forgiven, but he says that we are justified by his grace as a gift. A gift? A free gift. Justified. What does that mean?

It means that he gives us his righteousness so he takes away our sin. That's forgiveness. And then he justifies us. He gives us his righteousness so that we stand before him one day in judgment, perfect. In the righteousness of Christ.

Perfect. So my question is, have you. Have you put your faith in Christ? And would you today, would you now put your faith in Jesus and be forgiven?

You do that simply by stop listening to me and start talking to him. And there's no special words. It's simply to say, I admit, I believe, and I confess you as Lord. He'll forgive you. What's interesting is that for those of us who have done this, to the degree to which you hold the receipt of the resurrection deep within your heart, and imagine and know that his righteousness is your own to the extent that you can do that, will be the extent of peace and freedom, that you get to live the rest of your life in spite of your past, because you will then know that your past is not the truest thing about you.

The death and resurrection of Christ, which absorbs that guilt in every single way. It takes it up. It swallows it up. It is the truest thing about you. And so this resurrection of Jesus, it arrests the mind, the conscience, and third, it arrests our heart.

Every one of us has a heart. Proverbs says that the heart of man is the wellspring of life. You all know what a spring is. It's not a puddle. It's not a bucket.

It's not a reservoir that you have to add water to. No one brought water up to the spring on the mountain. It just bubbles. Spring. Things come from a spring, and things come from our heart.

Our words, all of them, they come from our heart. Our actions, our motivations, our incentives, everything around us, everything that we do this week, we did because we wanted to.

It all comes from in here. And so Paul gives us this really interesting verse in verse 30. And 32. He says, why are we in danger every hour? What do I gain?

If, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts and Ephesus, if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Now, the beasts in Ephesus were people who were persecuting him for his faith in Jesus Christ. Now, why does he say this? What he's saying is this, if the dead are not raised, what he's saying is then this. What we're doing right now is all there is.

And if this is all there is, then it's just best to go ahead and eat some good food and drink some good drink, because you're going to die. In other words, if there's no resurrection of Christ, this is the way to live, okay? Born, you go to school so you can get a job, so you can have a family, so that they can leave your house, so that you can have a nice, comfortable retirement, and then you can die without pain.

Could God have a deeper, more satisfying plan than survive and be comfortable until you lay in a grave? Is there anything else? And you see, when he talks about the fact that he's facing danger, that he's facing these beasts of Ephesus, these people who don't like him, how in the world could he find peace in danger? The answer is, the resurrection of Jesus argued with Paul's heart, and it argued him out of a safe and selfish life. You see, when he saw the resurrected Christ, he knew that there was a new life mission, and that new life mission

would come as sacrifices that he was welcome and glad to make.

You see, friends, if you aren't afraid to die, then you won't be afraid to live.

Many of us were terrified of dying. And as a result of that, our entire life plan is accumulate and be safe.

But what if there was more? What if a man rose from the dead who has authority over everyone, and the ultimate life purpose is actually making much of him and extending his glory to the ends of the earth? And that would require great sacrifice. What if that was the plan?

What it would do is it would lead each one of us to do to others what looks like a risk, in order to glorify him, to know him, and to make him known to the ends of the earth. So what does your heart tell you is the most important thing? And does the resurrection of Christ bear witness in the desires of your heart? I urge you today, let's speak of Christ without shame for all eternity. We're going to see him as wounds, and we're going to say, worthy is the lamb who was slain.

There's just no reason whatsoever to not begin now. So let's pray. Father in heaven, we acknowledge you and we praise you and we adore you. Thank you for sending Jesus. And Jesus, thank you for coming.

Thank you for giving your life. Thank you for promising what was going to happen beforehand, to welcome us, to look and observe. Would you help each one of us to be humble enough to account for the evidence of the resurrection? Would you help each one of us to respond to what we find?

And I pray, Father, for those who are considering trusting Christ right now. Would you please lead them to longing to talk to you, draw them to yourself, lead them to believe, lead them to call upon you, save them.

Would you help us as a church family, those who have trusted you, Lord, to wed our belief of the resurrection with the practice of our life, that there would be continuity. When people would look at our life, they would say, you are clearly motivated by something more than simply staying alive.

We thank you that you love us, and thank you that we get to sing to you now. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen.



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