

Death Defeated

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Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] John chapter 19, verse 31, would you please stand with me as we honor the reading of God's word together.

! For that Sabbath was a high day. The Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness. His testimony is true. And he knows that he is telling the truth, that you also may believe.

For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Not one of his bones will be broken. And again, another Scripture says, they will look on him whom they have pierced.

[1 : 14] After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission.

So he came and took away the body. Nicodemus also, earlier, had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 70 pounds in weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had been laid. So because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, they have taken away the body of our Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.

So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.

[2 : 35] Then Simon Peter came following him and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, face cloth which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded up in a place by itself.

Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed. For as yet, they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.

Then the disciples went back to their homes. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? You know, we live in a culture that has a difficult time dealing with death and dying.

One of the things I realized early on in pastoral ministry is that you spend a lot of time visiting people in hospitals and overseeing funeral services.

And so you come in contact with a lot of people who are terminally ill, people who are grieving the loss of someone that they loved who recently passed away.

[3 : 48] And in those situations, one thing that you observe is how for many people, they don't know what to do and they don't know what to say during those times.

And you know, it's no wonder because we live in a culture that is so focused on living, don't we? And so to them, death is an enemy.

And those situations that I just described confront them with a reality that they spend most of their lives denying. Death reveals that their efforts to stay young are ultimately futile.

And the material possessions and pursuits that they've spent much of their lives acquiring will one day pass into the hands of another.

People tend to push such thoughts out of their minds because death fills them with a sense of dread.

[5 : 03] But death is an indisputable certainty of life. You know, we joke, don't we, that nothing in life is certain but death and taxes.

And that's what we do, isn't it? When it comes to uncomfortable things, things that we'd rather not think about, we tend to use humor to help us cope with it.

But it doesn't change the fact that death awaits us all. If you've read the Bible, you know that the Bible says a lot about death.

The first mention of death is in Genesis chapter 2 verse 17 when God warned Adam that the penalty for disobeying him would result in his death.

He said, you will surely die. And then when Adam and Eve disobeyed, they did experience an immediate spiritual death. That's the first death. But because God is merciful, Adam and Eve did not die physically at that time, though they did die much later.

[6 : 12] However, we know from their disobedience that sin came into this world. That this world came under sin's curse. And that now death and suffering would be undeniable, indisputable realities of life in this world.

As God told Adam and Eve in Genesis 3, beginning in verse 16, This world that we now live in as a result of the curse will mean suffering.

To the woman, he said, I will surely multiply your pain and childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.

And to Adam, he said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it. Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the day of your life.

Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the plants of the field. You cannot rationally deny what you see and what you know and what you've experienced to be true.

[7 : 27] This world is cursed. Suffering and death in this life are inescapable realities.

Few people were as acquainted with suffering as Job was. In Job, in chapter 14, 1 through 2, he says, Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble.

He comes out like a flower and withers. He flees like a shadow and continues not. Job realized that life is short.

Everyone's a sinner. And sin brings suffering. Life is limited. And then comes death. And while he doesn't deny these realities, he does reflect on how it shouldn't be this way throughout the book that bears his name.

And don't you do the same when you suffer? When you suffer isn't the thought that you have, it shouldn't be this way.

[8 : 40] This is not the way things should be, but it is this way. But it shouldn't be this way. And when you have that thought, either you suppress it because it's too uncomfortable for you to think about, or you explore it.

And I'm challenging you this morning to explore it with me, to explore it today through God's Word. Fourteen years ago, I was a youth pastor.

And I remember my first Sunday with our teens. We had a student there whose father had recently passed away about three months before I came.

And this was her first Sunday back in youth group with us. And my message that morning to them was regarding all the things that I've just talked to you about.

Death and suffering and how those are realities. And I remember as I shared that message that she was crying throughout it all.

[9 : 47] And then afterwards, her friend who had been sitting next to her came right to me. And man, she was angry. And she said, how could you do that?

You made her cry. That was insensitive and offensive. What she needed to hear was an uplifting message.

She needed to hear some kind of word of encouragement, something that she could more easily handle as she was going through so much grief. And as this girl was talking to me, the girl whose father had recently passed away came up to us and she grabbed the girl by the arm and she said

no.

And then she looked at me and in between sobs, she said, thank you. Because I shared a message about suffering and death, but I also shared some good news.

And good news that that young girl who was experiencing a level of grief that few that age ever have to endure, she heard that good news and she was thankful.

[10:56] And that's the good news that I'm going to share with you this morning. And that news is this. And that's the main idea. Jesus Christ has conquered death.

Jesus Christ has conquered death. That's what this text says. And so John demonstrates how Jesus conquered death.

And there's three demonstrations that he gives us to show us how that is a reality. The first is this. Jesus conquered death by dying. Jesus conquered death by dying.

You remember being in elementary school? Some of you are in elementary school right now. Or middle school. Or high school. And there was always that kid. That kid that was small, but acted like they were big.

You know what I'm talking about? And that kid would talk a lot of trash. That kid would pick on others. He was a bully. And he thought he was tough. And talked about how tough he was. And then every once in a while, someone would stick up to him.

[12:04] And they'd challenge him to a fight. And you know what that boisterous kid would do in those situations? All of a sudden, he's not feeling well. He needs to go to the nurse.

He's trying to avoid having to back up what he said. Or he enters into the fight and he gets his clock clinked, right? Jesus had spoken a lot about how he was going to defeat death.

He said, I'm here. I'm going to die. I'm going to conquer death. And in order for Jesus to defeat death, he had to step into the ring with death, so to speak.

Which meant that he had to die. And remember, Jesus said this over and over again. For example, in John 10, 17 through 18, he said, for this reason, the Father loves me because I lay down my life and I take it up again.

Again, speaking about his death, speaking about his resurrection. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own accord. I have authority to lay it down. I have the authority to take it up again.

[13:20] This charge I received from my Father. So if we are to believe that Jesus conquered death, then he had to die to demonstrate that he had power over death.

And if you remember last week when we were in verse 30 of chapter 9, when Jesus voluntarily gave up his life as he said that he would and having accomplished on the cross the redemption that he came to atone for the sins of his people, he cried out, it is finished.

And then he gave up his spirit. He was in control. So now look at verse 31 again. Since it was the day of preparation and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for the Sabbath was a high day, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken and they might be taken away.

Romans usually left the bodies of crucified victims on the cross for days. Often it took days for the person crucified to die. And after they died, they would still leave the bodies up there for a warning to everybody else.

Again, the crime doesn't pay. And often what would happen is scavenging birds and animals would come and pick those carcasses apart. But now it's close to sundown on Friday and the Sabbath day was coming and this was Passover week.

[14:48] So this was to the Jews, a holy week and the Sabbath was the holy day of the holy week and they couldn't stand the thought of having this image in the background of these men dead or dying on the cross while they were trying to have their celebration.

And so there we see the extreme hypocrisy of these people. They were zealous to keep their land undefiled while at the same time unwilling to bear any kind of guilt or any kind of shame for the fact that they had orchestrated the death of God's Son.

So they asked for them to break the legs of those on the cross and that was done to hasten their deaths. Dying on a cross was excruciatingly painful.

And we know that Jesus was nailed to the cross. We know that He was beaten severely before that happened. But most people died on the cross from suffocation.

Imagine as you're trying to support yourself and breathe and your body's sagging and you've been in that position for a long time and you're beaten and you have no strength left, little strength left

and so you have to push up on your feet to be able to fill your lungs with air.

[16:04] And so they asked for the legs of the crucified victims to be broken to make that even more difficult for them to be able to breathe so that they would suffocate and die very quickly.

And so in verse 32 through 34 it says, Death had tried unsuccessfully to take Jesus' life on many occasions, if you recall.

people tried to push Him off a cliff, they wanted to stone Him, but Jesus would not die until the precise moment that God had predetermined.

He would not die until the right time, the exact time that God had foreordained. For many people, death comes suddenly and death comes unexpectedly, leaving words unsaid, plans unfulfilled, but not Jesus.

He gave up His life, He was in control, He was not a victim, but a volunteer, and a glorious and victorious one at that.

[17:30] But here the Romans have received an order to make sure that these men died quickly. And they, in their jobs, they were experts when it came to death.

It was their job. And so when they came to the middle cross and they saw Jesus, they were surprised that He had died so soon. And so was Pilate. Mark records Pilate's shock when he had heard that Jesus had already died when Joseph of Arimathea came and requested the body for burial.

And so Pilate called for a Roman centurion to confirm that Jesus was in fact dead. And that fact was confirmed by that soldier who gave the report that he had plunged that spear into Jesus' side.

But little did that man know that his action was predetermined by God in fulfillment of His word. as John testifies next in verses 35 through 37.

He who saw it has borne witness. His testimony is true and He knows that He's telling the truth that you also may believe. For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

[18:47] Not one of His bones will be broken. And again, another Scripture says they will look on Him in whom they have pierced. The Scriptures He's referring to are a couple of them. Exodus 12, 46, Numbers 9, 12, where there God gives the command that the Passover lamb was not to have any of its bones broken.

And Jesus, we know, is the perfect fulfillment of the Passover lamb. He is the lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world. And as such, none of His bones could be broken either.

And again, Jesus gave up His spirit and died at the right time, which then prompted this soldier to pierce His side. And that was in fulfillment of Zechariah 12, 10.

There it says, And I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and please for mercy so that when they look on Me, on Him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly over Him as one weeps over a firstborn.

And so John here is making it clear. He's saying, Look, none of this can be a coincidence. It's not a coincidence.

[20:09] See how all of these prophecies about the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus on the cross. And why? It's because He is the Christ.

I'm telling you the truth. I've seen it with my own eyes. He died just as the Scriptures declared centuries ago. I saw it.

He gave up His spirit. I saw the spear go into His side and come out. I saw the blood and the water. I saw that Jesus was truly dead.

And when I read those words from John, it reminds me of a little kid. You know, a little kid wants you to believe something and they get really excited, don't they? I'm telling the truth.

I'm telling the truth. You have to believe me. This is a da-da-da-da, right? And they do that and they express that urgency because they think maybe there's a chance that you're not going to believe me.

[21:06] You have to believe me about that. And that's what John is doing here. Listen, you have to believe this. I've seen it. This is what happened. So now the question is, well, why did blood and water come out of Jesus' side?

And that question has been addressed by many scholars. Some say that Jesus' heart literally burst inside his chest because of the tremendous mental agony and sorrow associated with bearing sin and the forsakenness of his father.

There's a lot of articles out there about just the physiological aspect of what the spear pierced and how that resulted with blood and water flowing from his side.

But here's what I think. This is the most important thing, I think. Those other things are interesting. This is the most important thing and the main thing that we need to come away with from this account of the spear piercing Jesus' side.

This is John's point. Jesus was dead. Jesus was totally dead. He was dead. They put the spear in his side.

[22 : 13] There was no reaction. He was totally dead. You know, there's a scene in The Princess Bride. You guys all know The Princess Bride.

If you haven't seen The Princess Bride, go see The Princess Bride. There's a scene when Wesley, who's, you know, the main character, right, he's the good guy and he's been tortured by the bad guy and his friends come and rescue him and they take him to a man named Miracle Max and they're afraid that Wesley is dead and they lay him on the table and they ask Miracle Max, you know, is he dead?

And Miracle Max says there's a big difference between mostly dead and all dead. Wesley was mostly dead. Jesus was all dead.

And that's important for at least a couple of reasons. First, he couldn't conquer death unless he died. He had to come back to life to conquer death and so he had to die.

If he didn't die, then there was no resurrection. But some people believe that Jesus was mostly dead but didn't truly die and this is called the swoon theory.

[23 : 29] If you've ever heard of the swoon theory, what they say is that Jesus, Jesus was in like a coma and these Roman soldiers who were experts in determining when someone died, well, they were just fooled and Jesus was put in the tomb and somehow they didn't detect that he was still breathing even if slightly and they sealed the tomb and on the third day, Jesus, after he had been beaten twice, after he had been nailed to the cross, after all the blood that he lost, after all the opened wounds that he would have had, after the spear that was plunged into his side, he just snapped out of it, got up, rolled away a mastiff tomb and came out and everybody saw all these wounds and all this blood and he said, look at me, I've risen from the dead.

It's preposterous, isn't it? There's no way but that's what people will do to deny the deity of Christ and then there are others who will deny his humanity, docetism, if you've ever heard of that, it's an ancient heresy rooted in Gnosticism and Gnostics believe that, well, the flesh, what is material is sinful but what is spiritual is good and so they couldn't see Jesus being in a physical form because that's evil to them and so what they'd say is, well, you know, he was just an aberration.

He was like a hologram or a phantom. He only appeared to be physically in the flesh but he was really just a spirit which, again, contradicts so much of God's word especially here in John where John testifies at the beginning, the word became flesh and dwelt amongst us and we have seen him and we have touched him and so Jesus suffered a real death on the cross.

The blood he shed was real blood and it was paid for a real price, that price for our sins to grant us forgiveness.

Jesus truly died but death did not conquer him. It did not take him by surprise. He died in fulfillment of Scripture as he knew that he would.

[25 : 50] He had died to atone for your sins. He died to conquer death. Now the second demonstration. Jesus conquered death by being buried.

He conquered death by dying and now he conquered death by being buried. And so you might be asking, well how can someone conquer death by being buried? We've seen how Jesus demonstrated his divine power by controlling the details of his death.

Again, giving up his spirit after he knew that he had sufficiently atoned for sins and that's all pretty amazing in itself. But as amazingly here, John writes about Jesus' ability to conquer death through his sovereign control over the details of his burial after he died.

When a Jew was executed, his family had the right to request the body. But an unclaimed body was thrown unceremoniously on the garbage dump outside of Jerusalem which was named Gehenna.

You know in Jesus, when he would preach about hell, Gehenna was often the metaphor that he used to describe how horrible of a place that is. When Romans executed someone for sedition, which was the charge that they brought against Jesus, again, they would leave that body on the cross as a warning to everyone else, don't mess with Rome.

[27 : 17] But Jesus' body wasn't treated that way at all because God moved in the heart of a man named Joseph of Arimathea.

Verse 38, After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that they might take away the body of Jesus and Pilate gave him permission.

So he came and took away his body. At some point prior to his crucifixion, Joseph came to faith in Jesus but he hid that faith in him.

Remember a few weeks ago we looked at how Pilate tried to maintain a neutral position between God and the world. He knew Jesus was innocent but he knew that if he let Jesus go the people would be after him.

And we saw that you can't maintain that neutral ground. It's an impossibility. Pilate eventually sided with the world because he feared, again, what they might do to him if he released Jesus. Well, Joseph had that same struggle in his life.

[28 : 24] He had those same fears as did Nicodemus. Verse 39, Nicodemus also who earlier had come to Jesus by night came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes about 75 pounds in weight so they took the body of Jesus bound in linen cloths and spices as is the burial custom of the Jews.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus feared the personal cost that they would pay if it was exposed to the Sanhedrin that they were belonging to that they followed Christ.

They feared that if it came out that they believed in Jesus and his claims to be the Son of God that they would lose their power, that they would lose their prestige, that they would lose their wealth, their possessions, their prosperity.

But now they had seen the evil perpetrated against Jesus whom they knew to be innocent and they couldn't stand it anymore and they took a stand with the Lord with truth.

And they spared no expense to prepare Jesus' body for burial. The amount of spices that John records them using to cover the body of Jesus, that was what would be used for a king.

[29 : 45] So you see, they spared no expense in burying Jesus' body. And so armed with these details as we approach verses 41 through 42, we now see how Jesus conquered death in his burial.

Because 700 years, over 700 years before this event, Isaiah was given this prophecy by God. And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth.

That's a hard prophecy to make come true, isn't it? If you were just trying to read it and be like, okay, how can we, how can we, how can we unpuzzle, unravel this thing? Well, we see, Jesus was crucified with the wicked, with those who were guilty.

But it was with a rich man whom he was associated with in his burial who gave him a place to be laid. The Jews intended for Jesus to have a disgraceful burial, but instead he was buried in a rich man's tomb as verse 41 and 42 say.

Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden and in the garden a new tomb in which no man had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

[31 : 08] And Matthew's gospel reveals that that tomb belonged to Joseph of Arimathea and Joseph and Nicodemus were motivated now to bury Jesus before the Sabbath which would begin at sundown.

But there was a more significant reason than that as to why Jesus needed to be buried on that Friday. because he said that he would be raised in three days.

He was buried on Friday, was in the tomb all day Saturday, and then Sunday at the beginning hours of the morning he arose from the grave just as he said. And so Joseph and Nicodemus as well as the other disciples of Jesus, they weren't expecting at this time that Jesus would rise from the dead, but just as it was the case with his death, Jesus demonstrated his ability to conquer death in his burial having fulfilled the scriptures and now setting the stage for what would happen next.

The third demonstration, Jesus Christ conquered death through his resurrection. He conquered death through his resurrection. Look at verses 1 and 3 again in chapter 20.

Now on the first day of the week which was Sunday, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early. It was still dark and saw the stone that had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and she went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, that's John, and said to them, they have taken the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him.

[32 : 35] The other gospels record Mary going to the tomb with a group of women. Evidently, Mary got there ahead of them, but look at verse 2. She says we, so the gospels match in their testimony of what happened that day when our Lord was resurrected.

So Mary gets there a little bit early. She sees the stone that has been moved away and she's thinking here, right?

But her first thought isn't that Jesus has risen. Her first thought is that something terrible has happened. Why?

Well, because then and probably still today, many people would rob graves. People would be buried with expensive things, expensive items, and so it was a profitable thing that people who steal stuff do.

Plus the spices were expensive, and so if they could gather some of those spices that were used to cover the odor of decaying flesh, they could resell them.

[33 : 48] Jesus also had a lot of enemies, and so she may have presumed that they had taken the body to further degrade Jesus in some kind of gross and humiliating way. Verse 3 and 5, so she goes and tells Peter and John, so Peter went out with the other disciple, again who's John, and they were going toward the tomb.

Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first, and stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloth lying there, but he did not go in.

And there's a couple things for us to note here. All of the Gospels report that it was women who were the first to discover the empty tomb.

And now you've got to think not as a 21st century American, but as someone who lived back during these times. And back during these times, the testimony of a woman was seen as incredible.

Women weren't asked to bear witness in court because they saw women as property, really. And so they wouldn't believe the witness of a woman.

[34 : 58] And so if you were wanting to make this story up, it would have been men who saw it first, not women. So why does John and the other Gospels record that it was women who saw the tomb empty first?

Because that's what happened! Because they were the ones who saw it happen first. Second, I love how John is honest in how he describes these events, right?

John must have been up on his cardio. Maybe he was a little bit younger. And he got to the tomb first, and he gives himself credit for that, but then I love how he's honest. I stooped in and looked, but I didn't go in.

And listen, if you were in a cemetery and it was dawn and you saw a grave that was open, would you go over and look in that grave?

Some of you think that you would, but you know what? I've been with you in this building when the lights are off, and you're a bunch of fraidy cats. But Peter, Peter is always portrayed as the most courageous of the disciples, and so he enters in.

[36 : 15] But before we get there, in the Greek, you see in these verses, you'll see saw repeated three times. In the English, that's saw, but in the Greek, there are three different words. And so John looks in.

He saw. That's Greek. That's blepo, which is the basic word used to describe the ability to see. He saw that the grave clothes no longer contained the body of Jesus.

But again, Peter being courageous, goes down into the tomb. Verses 6 and 7 say, then Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb.

And again, he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded up in a place by itself. And there, saw, in the Greek, is the word theoreo, from which we get our word theorize, or theory.

And so this is what's happening. Peter enters. He sees the grave clothes. He looks, and he sees the face cloth, and it's neatly folded up in an orderly way.

[37 : 28] And he's theorizing. If grave robbers had come in and taken the body of Jesus away, this place would be in chaos, wouldn't it?

If you've ever had somebody steal something out of your car, or break into your house, you've seen it happen to other people, they ransack the place, don't they?

They pull out all the drawers, they flip over all the mattresses, they push things over, they break stuff. They're trying to get all of the things that are of value and get out of there as soon as they can.

You know, they don't stop and think, you know, man, I've made a mess of this place. Let's see, when are they supposed to come home? I think I got a little bit of time to straighten up. And so Peter is theorizing, he's rationalizing, he's using his mind here. That couldn't be what happened here, because look at how neat and orderly everything is. He's mentally analyzing the images that his eyes are seeing.

[38 : 28] He's using his mind. He's theorizing, he's thinking, he's sorting it out. And so when it comes to our Christian faith, when it comes to God's word, we don't turn off our mind whenever we enter into worship or whenever we read the word.

God's given you the ability to think, to rationalize. He expects you to use those things when it comes to your faith, when it comes to him, when you read his word, when you listen to a sermon, when you sing songs about him.

Use your mind. God wants you to do that. He wants you to seek. He wants you to search. He wants you to sort it out and he will help you. And that's what Peter is doing here.

How could these things be? Verse 8. Then the other disciple, right, John?

Okay, you went in. You're okay. He reached the tomb first, but then he went in and he saw and he believed. So again, John sees Peter go in.

[39 : 43] He gets courage. He follows him. And there's Saul. In the Greek, it's a different word. It's Iden, which is to perceive.

It's like the light bulb. You know, in the cartoons, whenever somebody finally figures it out and the light bulb goes off, that's this word. The light bulb went on in his mind.

Eureka! Eureka! John saw the undisturbed grave clothes. He saw the neatly folded up face cloth. And that, in this moment, was enough for him.

Verse 9 says, for as yet they did not understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead. But here, John knows something is going on and I believe that something great has just happened.

That verse that, that scripture that was fulfilled is Psalm 16, 9 through 10. Therefore, my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices. My flesh also dwells secure for you will not abandon my soul to Sheol and let your Holy One see corruption.

[40 : 52] Jesus did not undergo decay. And so, John is seeing all these things and he's believing all these things and he's beginning to well up with joy.

Something wonderful has happened. Something is going on. But the disciples weren't quite totally sure just yet. They'd know soon but in verse 10 it says they went back to their homes.

Could it be, I think they wondered, could it be, could our Lord have come back to life? We were ready to close the story of his life on the cross in his burial but could it be that there's another chapter yet to be written?

The stage has been set. The disciples would soon know that Jesus had in fact risen again. And there's much more to say about the resurrection and we'll do so next week but for today I hope that God has revealed to you that Jesus has conquered death and by faith in him the Bible says that just as he rose again to newness of life in a resurrected body so will you one day if you're in Christ.

Look at Hebrews chapter 2 with me verses 14 through 15 since therefore the children share in flesh and blood he himself likewise partook of the same things he's speaking of Jesus that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death that is the devil and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

[42 : 52] This scripture means that for the unbeliever they will always be under that slavery of sin and that fear of death knowing that they cannot escape it knowing that it shouldn't be this way but refusing to explore the reality that they know to be true and they'll ignore their conscience they'll continue to choose to waste their short lives in accumulating possessions gratifying their flesh and trusting in their being good enough to enter heaven if they think there is such a place and that is a life lived in bondage because it will end and none of those things will be taken with you but for the believer we know that death has been swallowed up in victory because Jesus

Christ has conquered death so the main point of application Jesus' resurrection guarantees the resurrection of those who believe in him Jesus' resurrection guarantees the resurrection of those who believe in him do you believe in him are you ready to die are you ready to stand before him in that moment are you ready to answer are you ready to answer the question if it's asked why should I let you into my kingdom I don't think it will be but you know what I'm saying are you certain that you know that when you die you are going to heaven and you're certain because you know it's not

about me and what I've done it's about who Jesus is and it is finished I this is many years ago but there was a member in our church and I've shared the story of Melvin this is a different man named Alvin or Alan excuse me Alan and Alan would come to church on Christmas and Easter he was a creaster right and but his wife would come all the time his wife was a faithful church member some people in our church knew Alan but not very well and I got a phone call from her one day during the week that Alan had been out mowing the grass and he had a stroke and he had to be rushed to the hospital and they were afraid he was going to die and so after a while of being in the hospital he was conscious again they were still worried about what caused the stroke and trying to figure all those things out his wife asked if I would come and visit him there and so I came and went into the hospital room and you know I've seen a lot of people in the hospital I don't think I've ever seen anyone hooked up to so many cords as Alan was hooked up to and we knew each other and I sat down and we had a good visit and he was joking you know how we do again just despite all that was going on that's how we cope and he was joking about you know how bad his nurses were and all those things and so we kind of chuckled and then I prayed for him and I got up to leave and he just changed right before my eyes and he reached out and he grabbed my wrist tight

I mean squeezing it and he looked at me and he started crying and he said I'm terrified terrified I'm terrified and so I sat down and his wife was over in the corner ran over and I shared the gospel with him Alan do you believe this I know you've come to church do you believe this and he said I believe it now and it was genuine I mean I left that hospital room he was a completely different man there was joy there was not so much fear anymore and still the test was to be okay after you get out of here are we going to see you in church are you going to follow Christ and I'll tell you he did he was there most every Sunday 74 years old or so he was baptized and in the fear of death had been conquered for Alan because he knew

Jesus Christ and he knew there was nothing to fear and if you know Christ you should know the same and if you don't know Christ you should fear death and you should fear what comes after it because it's worse than death and my hope for you is that today you would see in Jesus that he is the way he is the truth he is the life he is the one you need and if you come to him by faith he'll be your Lord and Savior and he'll give you life and it'll be a great life it'll be abundant life suffering death is a part of this world but we've got a home that we're waiting to go to right and man as we were singing today about our Lord's return and I was looking at the temperature this week and the 108 degrees was like Lord just let's go now right man but if you have that hope in Christ you know that he has you forever and there's always hope no matter what suffering you endure two questions of application number one how does the death burial and resurrection of Christ remove the fear of death and I encourage you to read 1 Corinthians 15 53 through 57 that talks about how our Lord has removed the sting of death and then the second question how should you live knowing that [49 : 16] Jesus has conquered death think about that how should you live knowing that it is finished for you that he has saved you that he has a place prepared for you that you will spend your eternity with him forever and ever and ever how should you live the little life that you have right now knowing that Jesus has conquered death and knowing that that reality awaits you let's pray Lord God we thank you that you have conquered death Lord we thank you for the hope that we have in Jesus Christ we thank you for this testimony that is true this testimony that your spirit has revealed to us that we know that in Christ our greatest enemies have been vanquished that death is not something that we need to fear because Christ has conquered it and Lord may we live our lives with that certain hope God that we would give you the glory that we would follow you that we would tell people of how great you are

Lord that we would explore with them the realities that they want to deny in the hopes that you would reveal the truth to them and they would be saved God we give you the glory you deserve it none of us can conquer death none of us can finquish the foes that you have and so God be glorified in our lives and may we strive in all our ways to declare the victory that is had in Christ and in Christ alone in his name we pray amen you