

The Gospel in the Graveyard

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Date: 27 June 2021

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[0 : 00] Amen. John chapter 11 verse 38 through verse 44 will be the text for this morning's sermon.

Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb.

It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days. Jesus said to her, did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God? So they took away the stone, and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me. When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out.

[1 : 15] The man who had died came out, his hands and his feet bound with linen strips and his face wrapped with a cloth. And Jesus said to them, unbind him and let him go.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? With three words and the wave of a magic wand, Bibbidi, Bobbidi, Boo, the fairy godmother of Cinderella transformed her from a grubby maid to a dazzling beauty, from rags to riches in a moment.

A miracle that resulted from the incantation of nonsensical words. But those words did not have the power to sustain their creation, their transformation, because we all know the story.

At the stroke of midnight, all that the fairy godmother did comes undone, except for Cinderella's glass slippers, which I don't understand.

And I guess there's a reason for that. But whatever the case, we know in movies and our stories that we see these kind of magnificent transformations take place, but they require a magic wand of some sort or a magic book or some ridiculous-sounding spell.

[2 : 49] But those stories are quite different from the miraculous transformations that take place in the Bible, aren't they? Much different.

In the Bible, miracles take place for the sake of words, not words for the sake of miracles.

We know that's John's point in being inspired by the Holy Spirit to write this gospel, to show the miracles of Jesus as evidence, as proof of the words that he spoke and who he is.

In John 20, verse 30 through 31, he tells us why he wrote this gospel. Now, Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book, but these are written, these signs are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing, you may have life in his name.

Now, the Bible also reveals that God's words have power. We see that in the very beginning, Genesis 1, 1 through 3.

[4 : 00] In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

And God said, let there be light, and there was light. The creation narrative continues in Genesis with God speaking and creation bursting forth from his words spoken in an effortless way by him. God who self-exists, who has life in himself spoke, and life and existence came into being. And his creation, along with his word recorded in Scripture, revealed to us who he is, what he has done, and what he can do, and what he one day will do in the future.

In John's gospel, he gives us clearer insight about this divine, life-giving word in John chapter 1, 1 through 5.

There, echoing Genesis 1, he says, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and

without him was not anything made that has been made.

[5 : 26] In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it. So, here we see, before the universe began, the eternal second person of the Trinity was the agent by which God the Father created everything.

Jesus, humanly speaking, had a genealogy which Matthew and Luke record in their gospels, tracing his roots back to Adam and Abraham.

But in terms of his deity, Jesus, the Son of God, has no genealogy. He is, and was, and forever will be.

In communicating this reality, Jesus performed works. He performed miracles that served to verify the words that he spoke about himself.

His mighty deeds cast divine light on his speech. We see that in many places in Scripture. For example, Jesus seats the crowd, and he feeds them by multiplying the loaves and the fish to verify the words that he has spoken, that he is the bread of life.

[6 : 43] He commands the paralytic to rise and to take up his pallet and to walk to prove his claim that he has the authority to forgive sins.

He opens the eyes of the blind to attest to the words that he spoke, that he is the light of the world, the one who eliminates those who walk in spiritual darkness.

At his word, water becomes wine. At his word, the storm stills. At his word, demons beg him for pardon.

And the dead come to life. So the miracle of Lazarus here, where he's been dead for four days and comes back to life, you must understand, serves as the exclamation point to a statement that Jesus has already declared.

His words when he says, I am the resurrection and the life. As the work of the original creation came through the spoken word of God the Father, so the work of new creation in salvation comes through the living word of God the Son.

[8 : 00] The gospel is good news. They are words empowered by the Holy Spirit that give life, revealing who Jesus is and what Jesus has done to save sinners, to transform them from spiritual death to spiritual life.

And you have to understand, too, if you have undergone this transformation, that the Lord has entrusted this word to you, who have been given ears to hear by him and eyes to see by him and now mouths to share the good news of who Jesus is.

And so with the Apostle Paul, we ought to declare, for I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

The gospel is powerful. It communicates the truth, which is the main idea of this morning's sermon, that Jesus has the power to bring the dead to life.

Jesus has the power to bring the dead to life. So let's review quickly where we've been as we've been going through John chapter 11 the past couple of weeks.

[9 : 26] If you remember, there's two key statements recorded here, spoken by Jesus, that the raising of Lazarus verify.

He said in John 11, 4, when he received word, he told his disciples, this illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.

And we know by that time, Lazarus had either died when Jesus first receives word of it, or he is about to die imminently. And so Jesus waits two days before going to Lazarus, and when he arrives, he makes the second statement that is important for us not to forget, when he says to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life.

Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. And then he asks her, do you believe this?

So in verses 38 through 44, where we are today, Jesus verifies the truthfulness of these words that he has spoken in a visible way, revealing that no resurrection or eternal life exists outside of him.

[10 : 45] In bringing Lazarus to life, he is glorified as being who he is, the resurrection and the life. And so today, my prayer is that you will be encouraged by this truth, and that you will see how God desires you to apply this truth right now in your life.

So first, let's look at the reality that we need to be encouraged by. The reality that we need to be encouraged by comes in verse 43 and the beginning of verse 44, that Jesus brings the dead to life.

Jesus brings the dead to life. And so we're going to start towards the end, and then move back to the middle, then the beginning, and then all the way back to the end, all right?

So for those of you type A people who like things orderly and all of that stuff, just bear with me, okay? You'll see why in a moment. Let's look there again at verse 43 through 44a.

When he said these things, referring to the prayer that Jesus had made, he cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, Lazarus, come out. The man who had died came out, his hands and his feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth.

[12:06] Now, I know as a parent and as someone who used to be a kid, that a lot of times what we'll hear an expression that people will use when kids are being loud is that you're being so loud that you could wake the dead, wake the dead.

Now, that obviously isn't what was happening, but here Jesus speaks so loudly he wakes the dead. Literally in the Greek it says, loud he called out.

Or we could say Jesus loudly spoke loudly when he called out to Lazarus. At times Jesus healed privately and in more hushed tones than here in John 11.

Even at times warning those who were healed and those who witnessed that healing not to say anything to anyone. But here the veil of secrecy is lifted.

His hour is approaching. And in demonstration of his control over that coming hour, he draws everyone's attention to himself and this great demonstration of his power to impart life to the dead.

[13:15] Some will believe in him, but others will tattle on him. They'll go back to the Jewish religious leaders. They'll tell them what Jesus has done.

And then from that point, they will devise a plot in earnest to put Jesus to death. Jesus knows that and he knows what he is doing. He came to save sinners by giving his life as an atonement for theirs to save them.

And so this miracle also sets into motion his coming crucifixion. And with just three words, he does that. Lazarus, come out.

Again, literally in the Greek, he says, Lazarus, here, come. And isn't this miracle, and aren't all of Jesus' miracles in stark contrast to modern-day faith healers that you've seen?

They jump around. They dance around. They hype up the crowd. Sometimes they take off their jackets and hit people with it or fling it around. Sometimes they push people down or, again, push them around.

[14:30] And often they will do so and they'll speak words of gibberish like bibbidi-bobbidi-boo. Jesus doesn't do that. None of that happens when Jesus heals.

His words are discernible. His words are specific and few. He calls out to Lazarus and he tells him what to do in Lazarus' response.

In fact, many commentators have made the observation that had Jesus, he's so powerful, had he not mentioned Lazarus by name, that everyone in the graveyard would have come forward out of the tomb.

But one day, in the future, that's precisely what is going to happen. John 5, 25-29 records that.

Jesus says, Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.

For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of man.

[15:39] Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out. Those who have done good to the resurrection of life, those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Jesus has power over life and death. The divine words of the incarnate God here in John 11 echoed to the depths of Lazarus' tomb.

They penetrated his grave clothes into his cold, dead heart and his rotting, putrefying flesh.

In an instant, they came back to life. Whatever disease or whatever it was that killed Lazarus was completely gone from him.

And I believe the moment Jesus said Lazarus, in that moment, Lazarus came back to life when he heard Jesus call his name.

[16:40] And with that new life, he heard the command of our Lord, get up and come out of here. And that's exactly what he did in obedience to our Lord's authoritative command to come to him.

His raising of Lazarus serves as a picture of our salvation, of what happens when we are saved, when a person goes from spiritual death to spiritual life.

In Ephesians 2, 1 through 9, this is exactly what Paul talks about. When he's addressing Christians there, he says to them, And you were dead in your trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace, you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

[18 : 15] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Lazarus was dead, and the Bible tells us that each of us is born spiritually dead too.

Now listen, there are other words that the Bible could have used to describe our spiritual condition if it was anything other than dead. We could have been spiritually ill in need of a cure.

We could have been spiritually comatose, just needing to be woken up. But the word is dead. We are born spiritually dead.

Romans 3, 10 through 12, as it is written, none is righteous, no not one, no one understands, no one seeks for God, all have turned aside, together they have become worthless, no one does good, not even one.

[19 : 24] The Bible reveals our true condition. We aren't sinners because we sin, we sin because we are sinners. It's instinctive, it's natural to us, and it permeates every aspect of our being.

We're no different from Adam and Eve who after they sinned ran and hid from God's presence.

Remember, it wasn't Adam and Eve who searched for God, it was God who searched for them.

It wasn't Adam and Eve who called out to God, it was God who called out to them. And then it was God who clothed them and covered their shame. And again, what did Lazarus do to contribute to his resurrection here?

What did he do? Well, he provided a dead body, a corpse, for which Jesus to resurrect. Jesus called, Jesus gave life, Jesus raised him.

Lazarus gets no credit in this whatsoever. In fact, how crazy would it be if someone who was there heard Lazarus say later on, you know what, I know you're there that one day when Jesus and me brought me back to life.

[20 : 41] Nobody would have that. No, Lazarus, you were dead, brother. It was all Jesus. It was nothing of you. So it is with those who have been saved.

Jesus said in John 6, 63, it is the Spirit. It's the Spirit who gives life. The flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and life.

You see, salvation is God's doing and it's accomplished in His power according to His will. There again, John 1, 12 through 13, but to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

Speaking of man's responsibility, but then we know that here it's followed up by and backed and supported by God's sovereignty and salvation, who were born not of the blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but God.

God's done it. God gets the glory. Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He holds the power of life and death in His hand, in His Word.

[21 : 50] Those who He calls come. They are redeemed. They are regenerated. They are reborn. Jesus said, My sheep hear My voice and they know them and they follow Me.

And you and I who have been called and who have been saved should stand in awe of such power, of such love, of such mercy, and of such grace that have saved sinners like us.

Have you heard? Have you heard the Lord call to you? Have you believed in the good news? Have you experienced His power at work in you, transferring you from death to life?

God is holy and He is infinite. We are hopeless sinners and we are finite.

Sins committed against an infinitely holy God have infinite consequences. But Jesus came. Jesus died.

[23 : 01] Jesus rose again to atone for our sins by putting your faith in Him. You receive His righteousness. You are forgiven of your sins eternally.

this great salvation is enjoyed by faith in Christ. Believing in the gospel transforms you and as a believer the gospel is something that you should continually treasure.

So we've seen the reality Jesus has the power to bring the dead to life. Now let's look how this passage teaches us to apply it to our lives right now.

In verse 39 and 41 and 42 we see that Jesus wants you to believe that He can call the dead to life. If you've been called from death to life He wants you to continue to believe that.

That He can call the dead to life. In verse 39 it says there Martha the sister of the dead man said to him Lord by this time there will be an odor for he has been dead for four days.

[24 : 17] Jesus asked for the stone to be removed and immediately Martha protests. I think that Martha is concerned here maybe with or about protocol and tradition.

The time of viewing the body has come and gone. The grave has been sealed. The body is decomposing. It reeks of death and so I think in what she's trying to say to Jesus is just leave it alone.

Spare me the shame. Spare me the humiliation of having to see the sights and the smells of my dead brother. Lord it's too late now and it's too much now for anything to be done.

But as we saw last week Jesus is undeterred by such little faith and he reminds Martha that he wants her to believe in verse 40.

He says did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God? Now think about that for a second. We don't like the order of that do we?

[25 : 27] He says believe and you'll see. We prefer to have it the other way around don't we? I want to see and then I'll believe. That's what we say right?

Seeing is believing or we'll say I'll believe it when I see it. Why do we do that? Why is that so important to us?

Well I think part of it has to do with the fact that we know people are often untrustworthy aren't they? That's why when we have someone repair house or our car we will make sure that they've done the work first and that it's fixed before we cut them a check right?

I think that it's the same thing with like McDonald's for example they're not going to give you your food before they get your money are they? Why not? Well because people are untrustworthy imagine if they gave you the food at window one and told you to pay we know that they would hopefully you wouldn't do that you'd be trustworthy right?

But we know that they would because people have proven time and time again not all people but to be untrustworthy And so we are untrusting of people!

[26 : 51] And so we need to see it before we'll believe it! But listen God is not like that! God is not like that! God is completely and totally trustworthy!

There is no deceit in God whatsoever! What God says what He promises He keeps! What He says that He will do He does!

God can be trusted! He can be trusted with a blank check! He's totally completely utterly trustworthy in everything and He wants you to believe that!

And that's the theme of Jesus' prayer to Him! He praises His Father but He prays because He wants to inspire belief in those who are around Him in verse 41 and 42.

It says and Jesus lifted His eyes and He said Father I thank You that You have heard me. I knew that You always have heard me. But I said this on account of the people standing around that they may believe that You have sent me.

[28 : 07] And so once again Jesus' miracle serves to authenticate His words. This was a private conversation between the first and second person of the Trinity but it was conducted in a public environment.

and like Jesus we too need to be public with our faith. Expressing your belief in Christ and who He is and what He has done for you publicly.

And you can do this in many different ways. You can do this today after you go after church and you go out to eat when you pray collectively at your table publicly for your food and for whoever you are eating with and hey maybe you even ask your waiter if there is something that you can pray for

them about.

You do this at work whenever you know one of your co-workers is struggling or going through something difficult. Go to them and say can I pray for you or I will be praying for you but I would encourage you to go to the next step too.

Don't say I will be praying for you. Pray for them right then and there. I'll tell you people are way more receptive to that than the devil would want you to think. Be public you know what especially here especially here when we gather together as a church in this building our faith must be public and proclaimed by every one of us.

[29 : 39] Matthew 5 14 through 16 Jesus says you are the light of the world a city set on a hill cannot be hidden nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a stand and it gives light to all in the house a godly life a life that has been reborn in the spirit's power gives testimony to a dying world of the saving power of God it's a life that brings him glory and God desires to be glorified in your life and he desires to be glorified in his church he wants you and he wants me to continually believe in him believe not just in what he has done believe not in just what he will one day do but believe right now today in what he can do this moment and so as

I mentioned last week I believe that this summer God is going to do great things in our church through our church to save people we have an opportunity to have VBS here once again which we weren't able to do physically last year God is going to bring kids from our community to our church that have never heard the gospel before and we have an opportunity to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to them take our teens to falls creek and we will be able to be a part of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with them some of them are saved not all of them are not all of them who go there are God is going to do great things as we share the good news of Jesus Christ and as a church as we continue to reach out and calling them to faith in Jesus Christ, His Son.

As a matter of fact, why are we doing any of these things if that's not what we believe and want to happen? Why are we going to have VBS? Why are we going to take our kids to Falls Creek?

Why are we going to do anything that is of an outreach type ministry to our community if we don't expect or we don't believe that God has the ability to save people right now?

It would be a waste of time. These are our opportunities, and God is giving them to you and I to share the gospel right here and right now, and we need to believe right here and right now what God can and will do.

[32 : 29] Believe in Him. He wants you to believe in Him. The second way that we need to apply this truth to our life, which is the third point of this sermon, Jesus wants to use you as He calls the dead to life.

Jesus wants to use you as He calls the dead to life. So now we go to the beginning, and then we go to the end.

Verse 38 and 39. Then Jesus, deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, take away the stone.

Then look down at verse 44. The man who has died came out, his hands and his feet bound with linen strips and face wrapped with a cloth.

And Jesus said to them, unbind him and let him go. So here's what we need to understand.

Secondly, Jesus could have rolled the stone away Himself.

[33 : 33] If He has the power, which He's demonstrated that He does, to bring dead people back to life, certainly if He wanted to remove a stone, no matter how large it was, He could have done that Himself.

Likewise, Jesus could have gone to Lazarus after He called him out of the grave. He could have walked to him, ran to him, jogged to him, and taken those grave clothes off of him by Himself.

But before and after the miracle of raising Lazarus, Jesus chose to include others in what He was doing.

They got to be a part of what He was doing. They got to be a part of the miracle.

Imagine you were one of those people that day who got to lend a hand in removing the stone.

Imagine you were one of those people that day who got to lend a hand in taking off Lazarus' grave clothes.

[34 : 41] Maybe you got to do the both. Maybe one of them got to do both things. What an amazing testimony. Wouldn't you have to share? And people talk about this and be like, yeah, I was there.

Not only did I witness it, but I was one of the ones who removed the stone. I was there. I was one of the ones who got to remove those grave clothes.

And man, they reeked. They stunk really bad. I had to wash my hand for like two weeks. But I'll tell you, He was definitely dead. And we saw Him come back to life. What an amazing and exciting testimony that you would have to share.

Now, while we do not have or possess the power to bring the dead to life, only God can do that. We can bring the Word of Christ to them.

We can do the preparatory work. We can remove the gravestones of hopelessness, ignorance, unbelief, and despair.

[35 : 43] And then by praying and sharing the gospel with the spiritually dead, and then after we hope the Lord saves them, we can help that new believer, that new Christian, by unraveling the grave clothes of doubt, of fear, of discouragement, and worry, by washing them with the Word of God.

And isn't this what Jesus commanded us to do? Isn't this what Jesus commissioned us to do? Matthew 28, 19 through 20. Go therefore, do the preparatory work, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

And then after that, do the work of removing those grave clothes, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. And don't forget, behold, I am with you always to the end of the age as you do these things.

The miracle belongs to Christ, but He wants to use you in the work. And the question is, are you willing?

Are you willing? Are you willing? Those who proclaim the gospel, preach in a graveyard. After Christ's resurrection and ascension, He used Ananias to reach Paul.

[37 : 06] He used Peter to reach Cornelius. Philip to reach the Ethiopian eunuch. And so on and so forth, and so on and so forth. To this day, you who have been saved, heard the gospel from someone else who the Lord sent to you.

And you can trace it all the way back to Jesus Christ, who uses others to share the good news, to preach words of life in the graveyard as His Spirit transforms the spiritually dead and gives them life.

God is in the business of saving sinners and bringing the dead back to life right now. Do you doubt, though?

Do you doubt that He would use you right now to make disciples by sharing the gospel, by removing gravestones? Do you doubt that He would use you right now to disciple a new Christian? We need a change in perspective if that's the case. We need to see that these aren't chores. This is a privilege. It's a great privilege.

[38 : 25] A.W. Pink said it well. There is no higher privilege this side of heaven than for us to be used of the Lord in rolling away gravestones and removing grave clothes.

And so I ask you, is that what we as a church are actively trying to do right now? Are we being the church?

Or are we playing church? Are we going through the motions? Doing what we've always done because that's traditionally what we have always done?

Or are we actively seeking to save the lost? Are we hoping and praying that the Lord will bring kids to VBS so that they can hear the gospel?

Or are we afraid that they're going to be a little too rowdy and rambunctious that week that they're here? It's going to be a hard week. Lord, send us the good kids.

[39 : 29] Really? Are we excited to see new people visit our church? When you see a new person inside of our sanctuary, do you think, I wonder if they're an unbeliever who the Lord has led to our congregation?

Or do you look at them and say, someone's sitting in my pew? And you're upset. Next time, next time I'm going to come here earlier so I beat them to my spot.

Do we see each other as enemies trying to preserve our own kingdom inside of God's church? Or do we see each other as fellow disciples, co-laborers who do the work together to advance the kingdom of God together?

Do we stink of the old grave clothes of the sin nature? Or are we speaking the truth in love to one another as we actively seek to be used of the Lord to remove those filthy grave clothes off of each

other?

In the church, are we erecting barriers based on age church or race or social status or time of service as a church member?

[41 : 07] Are we erecting these barriers that the gospel has torn down? Are we gracious to one another? Realizing how gracious God has been to us?

When people come into our church, do they see a different kind of community? A supernatural kind of community?

A community that is unlike any other community in this world? If we aren't, if we're not, we won't be busy about removing gravestones.

but we'll expend our energy on matters that don't matter and we'll waste our time. And if we aren't seeking to be used of God to remove the grave clothes from one another, though we've been saved, we will still reek of death.

This is God's church. The church is God's church and we are God's people. We've been saved by His grace. The dead we were who now live because He's called us.

[42 : 35] God wants to use you. He wants to use you. He wants to use His church.

If you've been saved by His power and sealed by His Spirit, don't waste your life smelling like a dead person.

And let's not waste our time as a church looking like not newborn, regenerated believers, but the walking dead.

There's a bunch of zombies who look alive, but look like they're still dead. And so I believe that what we need to do, what will best enable us to make disciples, and disciples' disciples, are to ask questions and think about everything that we're doing and ask the question, is this helping us remove gravestones? Is this helping us remove grave clothes?

Is this helping us make disciples and disciple disciples? In my previous church, the building was not very big, so you used every inch of it that you could.

[44 : 04] And things were constantly changing to make room for the different growing ministries. And one growing ministry was our Awana group. And we had a fellowship hall that functioned as like a room for everything, a Sunday school classroom for eating.

And it was our place where the kids did their recreation on Wednesday night. And I'll never forget, we had in the back corner of one of those walls, an old piano that was just in the way.

And I remember first coming there and, you know, the kids would kick their balls and they would get up underneath it and have to go grab them. And we just could use that extra space. And so I did some asking, you know, whose piano is this?

What do we use it for? Why is it here? Can we move it? And the answers I got, well, you know, that such and such gave that piano to us and we used to pull it out and sometimes we would do worship down there and it was a great time.

It's like, well, that's great. Are we still doing that? No? No? Is that person who gave the piano still here? No? So why do we have the piano? Well, because, you know, yada, yada, yada, just kind of going around and around.

[45 : 28] But it was taking up space for a ministry that needed it more. And as a matter of fact, what would also perplex me is that the kids would be running around where they were supposed to because that's the area during Awana.

And whenever they would touch that piano or hit that piano, they would get yelled at, don't touch the piano. To which I wanted to say, at least somebody is touching it. Nobody else is touching it.

At least the kids are. But all this to say to us, to remind us, we can get into this point where we treat traditions like gospel and they're not.

And we need to start thinking about what is helping us make disciples and disciple disciples. And we've got to trust and believe that God wants to use you and He wants to use us right now.

Right now. So now our questions of application that we'll talk about tonight. And I encourage you to be here at 630 for that. Number one, the Lord came to your tomb and called out to you, giving you new life.

[46 : 41] How should that reality affect the way you live, worship, and serve Him now? Knowing that you were dead and He has saved you by His grace, how should that reality affect the way you live for Him, worship Him, and serve Him right now?

Second, what kinds of gravestones do you observe as being stumbling blocks that unbelievers have towards the gospel? What are some effective and ineffective ways to be used by the Lord to remove them?

What examples can you draw from Scripture? And then third, how can you and our church better help remove the grave clothes from those who have been born again?

And again, what are some effective and ineffective ways to be used by the Lord to remove them?

What examples can you draw from Scripture? And I encourage you once more, we have opportunities this summer to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

You have opportunities every day. Seize the moment. Let God use you in the work of what He's doing to save sinners.

[47 : 57] And if you're here this morning and you realize that you are that dead person and you've heard through God's Word preached to you that God, the Lord, is calling out to you, I encourage you to find me sometime today.

I would love to talk to you. We want to know we have a job to continue to disciple you and to celebrate that new life as well. For right now, let's pray.

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for its instruction. Father, forgive us that so often we lose sight of the purpose for which You have called us, to give You glory, to worship You, to be used by You in the privilege that we have to share the good news of Jesus Christ and see You do the miraculous.

Lord, forgive us that so often we get caught up in ourselves, we get so caught up in this world, we lose sight of our Great Commission purpose as Your followers and as Your church.

Lord, we pray that today You would refocus that attention to where it needs to be. God, our prayer would be that You use us as Your church right now to declare the good news of Jesus Christ in a public way that You would bring sinners to salvation.

[49 : 13] We pray for our VBS. We pray for Falls Creek. We pray for Children's Camp. We pray for the other opportunities that we have this summer and beyond to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

And Lord, we believe that You are going to do good things. And we're thankful for the privilege You've given us to go and make disciples. We ask these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.