

He Is Risen
Mark 16:1-8
Pastor John Miller

In Mark 16:1-8, Mark says, “Now when the Sabbath was past....” The Sabbath started on Friday at sundown until Sunday morning when the sun comes up. “Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, ‘Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?’” They were concerned about how they would get this stone rolled away. They wanted to finish off the anointing of Christ’s body.

Verse 4, “But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.” This was an angel. “But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.’” These were the greatest words ever spoken in the human language. “‘But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.’ So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”

The darkest day in history had passed; Jesus Christ had been crucified on Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on the Cross. There the sinless, Son of God became sin for us as our sins were placed upon Christ, and He took our place on the Cross. Then Jesus’ lifeless body was taken off the Cross and laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. And gloom, doom and sadness filled the hearts of His disciples. As you read this story, you’ll see no expectation on their part that Jesus would rise from the dead, even though Jesus had told them He would be crucified and would rise on the third day. They weren’t really looking for the Resurrection, but it would take place and transform their lives.

So the darkest day in history has passed, and it’s now Sunday, and the brightest day in human history is beginning to dawn. It was a day that would bring an end to all darkness and bring eternal life and light. It was the day when Jesus Christ rose from the grave, conquering sin and Satan and death. It was the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The first three verses of Mark 16 give us the background. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ had already been crucified; He hanged on the Cross for our sins. The Sabbath had now passed. And early in the morning the women came to the tomb. Mary Magdalene was probably leading the group. In John 20:1, it tells us that Mary was the first one to get there of the women.

The men were all freaked out, scared, crying, whining and hiding behind locked doors. But these brave, godly, wonderful women—thank God for them—charged down to the grave. Why did they go to the grave? Because Jesus had died on Friday afternoon about 3:00 p.m., and

the Sabbath would start on Friday at sundown. So they didn't have time to complete the preparation of His body for burial.

The Jews did not embalm, but they wrapped the body in grave clothes and put spices and ointment on the body. But the women could not complete the procedure. So Jesus' body had been put in a borrowed tomb. Jesus had borrowed a donkey to ride on when He rode into Jerusalem, on Palm Sunday He borrowed an upper room where He had the last supper with His disciples and He borrowed a tomb to be buried in. But someone said, "No big deal; He only needed it for the weekend."

So the women wanted to finish what they could not finish on Friday. They wanted to prepare Jesus' body with the spices and ointment in their love for the Lord. And as they journeyed to the sepulcher, there was the issue of the stone, the seal and the soldiers. It could be they didn't know there were soldiers there guarding the tomb, and they may not have known the Romans had sealed the stone. So they were just on their way there and said, "Who's going to roll away the stone?"

I like their simple faith and love. They didn't say, "Now wait a minute. That stone's pretty big. It weighs a lot. We're just a group of women. There's no way! Let's just go back home." If they were men, they would be sitting there doing drawings about how they could get it done. They would take all day trying to figure it out, and then they would say, "It can't be done. Let's go watch football!" But the women said, "Well, let's just go. I don't know how, but it'll work out."

It reminds me of my wife. Every time I say, "It can't be done," she says, "Let's just try." We do and it works out. She's always right. I'm Mr. Negative. She calls me that. So we try, it works out and it makes me even madder.

So the women just charged down to the tomb, and verses 4-6 tell us that they encountered three surprises. They saw the stone rolled away, verse 4; they saw an angel inside the tomb, verse 5; and the angel gave them a message, verse 6. I want to look at the angel's message.

First, the stone had been rolled away. Why? First I want to tell you how the stone was rolled away. The Bible tells us that the angel of the Lord showed up, and Matthew and Luke tell us the stone was picked up and thrown to the side. When the Roman soldiers saw the angels, they freaked out and ran for their lives. This stone is estimated to have weighed a ton and a half to two tons. It just took the power of this angel to lift it up and throw it to the side.

But the stone was rolled away not so Jesus could get out, but so Mary Magdalene, Mary, Salome and the disciples could get in to see that the body of Jesus was gone. Jesus could have just passed right through the stone wall of the sepulcher. Later on in Jesus' post-Resurrection appearances, Jesus would appear to His disciples in a locked room; He would just pass through the wall in His new, Resurrection body.

And when the disciples got inside the tomb, verse 5 says that there was "a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed." There were two angels in

the tomb. Mark only mentions one angel, but the other Gospels say there were two angels. Critics of the Resurrection ask, "Well, which is it? One or two?" There were two. The only reason Mark mentions just one is because only one angel spoke. Mark focused on the one who spoke. So Matthew, Mark, Luke and John give us different aspects of the same story. They're not contradictory; they're complementary.

Angels in the life of Jesus were amazing. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the angels filled the sky. The angels were in the Garden of Gethsemane to strengthen and encourage Jesus. When Jesus was being tempted by the devil in the wilderness, the angels came to minister to Him. So there were angels all around the life of Christ in the Gospels.

So it was no big deal that an angel would take on the appearance of a man in the tomb. The other Gospels say that there was an angel at the head and at the foot of where the body of Jesus would have laid.

The important part of this story is in verse 6: the message that the angel delivered. The first Easter message ever preached was not by a pastor in a pulpit but by an angel in the empty tomb. "But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.'"

In the Easter message the angel delivered, there were three parts: the command, an assurance and an invitation. I want to look at all three.

First, there was the command. The angel said, "Do not be alarmed." In the King James translation, it says, "Be not affrighted." That means "freaked out." Easter means the end of our fears. Because of Easter, we do not need to fear life, death, eternity or life beyond the grave. Jesus Christ dispels all our fears because of His death, burial and Resurrection. In life, we don't have to fear sickness, the destruction of our families, what might happen to us or death.

In Revelation 1:17-18, John the Apostle on the island of Patmos saw the risen Christ and said, "And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death.'" If there is one thing the Resurrection does for us is that it dispels the fear of death.

The statistics on death are quite impressive; 10 out of every 10 people living will die. And sadly it sometimes takes getting older to start realizing that we're going to die. We're not going to live forever. The Bible likens our bodies to tents. I often think my tent is flapping in the wind and about ready to blow away. The Bible says that life is like "a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away" (James 4:14). Life is like a flower: "In the morning it flourishes and grows up; in the evening it is cut down and withers" (Psalm 90:6).

Life is short and goes by fast. When you're young and in elementary school, it seems like you'll never get out of the sixth grade. When you get into middle school, it goes a bit faster. In high school, it goes a little faster still. But you get married and life is slow. In mid-life, it starts to

speed up. They say that when you get to 25, you peak; you're at the top of the slide, but then you start down the slide. Then you realize you're not going to be here much longer. You have more life behind you than you have ahead of you. So we don't have a lease on life. We have a shelf life, but we don't know what it is. That's why the Bible says, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12).

As a young person today, there's nothing more important than to realize the brevity of life and the certainty of death. You're not ready to live until you're ready to die; to know that you're right with God. Then there is no fear of eternity, of what happens after death.

What happens after you die? Psalm 23:1 says in the Kenneth Taylor paraphrase of the Living Bible, "Because the Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need!" Then the psalm continues in the New King James translation, "He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters." It describes your whole life. Then at the end of the psalm, in verse 6, David describes the end of his life: "And I will..." notice the certainty "...dwell in the house of the Lord forever." I like that.

How could David be so sure that when he died he would be in heaven forever? The answer is in verse 1 of Psalm 23: "Because the Lord is my shepherd." When the Lord is your shepherd, you have everything you need—in life, in death and in eternity.

Are you ready to die? Do you have the dispelling of your fears? One of the greatest fears that human beings have is death. What lies beyond the grave? Do I just cease to exist? Is there any conscious existence after death? The Bible says, "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). We will stand before God. But if you know the Lord as your shepherd, there is no need to fear.

Second, the angel not only gave a command not to be afraid, but there also was an assurance. The assurance has three parts, in verse 6. He says, "You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here." Notice the first assurance: Jesus was crucified.

The fact that the angels were in the tomb and the one angel said to the women, "You seek Jesus of Nazareth....He is not here" is one of many indications that they did not have the wrong tomb. That is one of the crazy theories, and there are no theories against the tomb being empty that hold water. One of the crazy ideas is that the women got the wrong tomb.

If you bury someone you love Friday afternoon and returned to the grave on Sunday morning, you don't think you'd know where you put your loved one? When we bury somebody we love—no matter how many years go by—we know exactly where their body was laid. By the way, they're awaiting "the great getting-up morning" because of Easter. So the women didn't have the wrong tomb; the angel acknowledged they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth. And he assured them that Jesus was crucified.

Who is Jesus and why was He crucified? Jesus is the Son of God. He is the Second Person of the Triune God, the Trinity. The Bible teaches that there is one God, in three Persons, in the

Godhead. Not three gods—not tritheism—but one God in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

You say, “I don’t understand that.” Neither do I, but that’s what the Bible teaches. God is transcendent, beyond us, we can’t fully comprehend Him or understand all about Him. He’s infinite and we’re finite.

And God the Son existed from all eternity. God is eternal; never was there a time when He did not exist. Jesus wasn’t created; He always existed.

But we know that God the Father in eternity past drew up the plan of salvation; that God the Son would come to earth and enter into this world through the womb of the Virgin Mary. Jesus was miraculously conceived by the Third Person of the Godhead, God the Holy Spirit.

Some people think this is all a fairy tale, all fictitious. I believe it’s true.

So Jesus was unique; He was the God-man in one person. He was fully God and fully man in one person, Jesus Christ. He lived a sinless life, kept every commandment in the Law, then went to the Cross voluntarily to die a substitutionary death for us. Being perfect, He was the One who could be accepted back into heaven after taking our place. He died for me, who is imperfect. My sins were placed on Jesus Christ at the Cross. His death paid the price for my sins. The Bible says, “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). So that by faith in Christ, His righteousness can be placed on me, and I can be righteous before God and accepted into heaven. It’s that simple. “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

You can’t get to heaven by working or by your own efforts, by good deeds or by being religious. You get to heaven by believing in Christ and His righteousness being imputed or given to you by faith.

So Jesus died on the Cross. And why did He die? For our sins. 1 Corinthians 15:3 says, “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.”

The second assurance is that Jesus is risen, Mark 16:6. Jesus was crucified, but now “He is risen!” All four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—record the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Whenever all four Gospels record an event, you know it’s important. So all four Gospels give us the historical fact that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead.

But what kind of Resurrection was it? First let me tell you what kind it was not. When Jesus rose from the dead, it wasn’t a spiritual or a metaphysical Resurrection; it was a literal, physical, bodily Resurrection. He didn’t “arise in our hearts.”

When Jesus was here on earth, He rose people from the dead, because He is God. They came back from the dead in a mortal body and had to die again, which is a bummer. When I die, don’t bring me back, don’t pray me back. Say, “He’s in heaven, we’re still in Menifee; it’s us

who should be bummed out and not him.” Never in history did a human being who died come back from the dead in a body that is now eternal and immortal and never to die again. But that's what happened to Jesus Christ. He was the only one.

So Jesus came back from the dead. He died and He arose from the dead in a glorified, eternal, immortal body. He is unique. When Jesus arose, He was still in the same body as when He was crucified; it still bore the scars. Then 40 days later, after appearing to His disciples, He ascended back into heaven bodily and visibly and is seated at the right hand, the place of authority, in heaven. Jesus was resurrected, and His body now is glorified and immortal in heaven.

And Jesus will come back. We not only look back at Easter and remember His Incarnation, His Crucifixion, His Resurrection, His Ascension and His glorification, but we look forward to Him returning. It would be cool if He came back while we are still alive. It could happen. But should we die, Paul says, “The dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them...” those who have already died “...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). And we'll be transformed into our new bodies “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52). So we're not looking for the undertaker; we're looking for the uppertaker. So either alive or dead, it's a win-win situation; I'll be face to face with Jesus Christ.

Jesus predicted His death, burial and Resurrection. He also predicted His Second Coming. Jesus had cleansed the Temple, and the Jewish authorities asked Him, “What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?” Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.’...But He was speaking of the temple of His body,” not about Herod's Temple in Jerusalem (John 2:18-19, 21). So the Bible teaches that Christ rose Himself from the dead. And the Bible teaches that God the Father and God the Holy Spirit also rose Christ from the dead. All three Persons of the Trinity were working together in harmony to raise Christ from the dead.

Notice that the angel at the tomb also said, verse 6, “He is not here.” “Are you looking for Jesus? He was crucified, He was buried, He's dead, but He is risen. He's not here.” One of the greatest evidences of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the simple fact that the tomb was empty.

All of our hopes of forgiveness, of eternal life, of a future with God in heaven forever are based on an empty tomb. All other great leaders, gurus, ascended masters and religious leaders have died, and their bones still lie in their graves. But Jesus Christ's grave is empty.

The post-Resurrection appearances are also evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. For forty days after His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to many at different times and in different ways. In Mark 16:9-11, it says, “Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.” These are the men. The men are

mourning and weeping, but Mary is experiencing Easter. "And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe."

By the way, if this was a false account of the Resurrection, the authors would never have had the women be the first to see the risen Christ and to testify of it, because at that time and in that culture, a woman's testimony was not even valid in a courtroom. So when the men heard Mary Magdalene's testimony they said, "You're crazy!" They didn't believe her.

A second post-Resurrection appearance by Jesus was recorded in Mark 16:12-13. "After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either." This story is also recorded in Luke 24. It's called "the walk to Emmaus." There were two disciples who left Jerusalem in the afternoon and walked seven miles to Emmaus. As they walked, they were bummed out. "Jesus is dead! There is no hope of resurrection. We thought He was the Messiah, but our hopes were dashed! We staked everything on following Him. It's over. It's done!" Then Jesus showed up on their walk, but their eyes were blinded so they didn't know Him. Jesus appears incognito walking with them.

Jesus spoke to them and asked, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" They said, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" And He said to them, 'What things?'" (Luke 24:17-19).

Jesus was talking to them about Jesus. They didn't know they were with Jesus. I think Jesus just had a good time messin' with them. So the men said, "We thought He was the Son of God. He healed people and did all these miracles. All this great stuff happened and then He got crucified and was buried. Women showed up at the tomb and said they saw Him, but we don't believe it. All hope is gone." Then Jesus said, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:25-26).

Then Jesus began to take the Scriptures and give a Bible study about Himself to them. I wish it was recorded in the Bible. He went from all the Old Testament Scriptures that talked about how the Messiah must suffer, die, be buried and then rise from the dead. They listened to His words, then arriving at the place they were to stay, they said it was late so they invited Jesus to stay with them. The three of them went in to eat and got around the table, and asked Jesus to pray the blessing. When Jesus picked up the bread, blessed it and broke it, then their eyes were opened, and they knew it was Jesus. They saw the scars in His hands. Then immediately "He vanished from their sight" (Luke 24:31).

One of them said, "Oh, no! The stupid things I said! I didn't know it was Jesus!" And they said, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32). Now their hearts and eyes were opened. So even though it was nighttime, they ran back the seven miles to Jerusalem to tell the disciples they had seen

the risen Lord.

There is a third story of Jesus' post-Resurrection appearance in Mark 16:14. "Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen." In verse 10, it says these same men "mourned and wept"; in verse 11, "They did not believe"; in verse 13, "They did not believe them either"; and in verse 14, "their unbelief and hardness of heart." The first unbelievers of the Resurrection were the believers. So something happened after the Crucifixion that transformed them from fear to faith. The only thing possible that would do that was the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

So Jesus' post-Resurrection appearances indicate that Christ had risen from the dead. In 1 Corinthians 15:6, it says that after Jesus' Resurrection, "He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once." Some say that all these people were hallucinating. How do you get 500 people to hallucinate at the same time and see the same thing? It's not going to happen. Maybe one or two people might, but not 500. In a courtroom, if you have one person testify to what they saw under oath, a person can be sent to prison for life. So if 500 say they saw the same thing, it's got to be true. In Acts 1:3, it says that Jesus "presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days."

There also were changed lives from fear to faith by His appearances. The Bible says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Have you ever had a life transformation through faith in Jesus Christ? Have you ever been born again? Are your sins forgiven? When you die, will you go to heaven? If you don't know if your sins are forgiven, if you don't know if you have eternal life, your life can be changed. Jesus Christ is not dead; He's alive. If He were dead, He could save no one. If He were dead, our preaching is in vain. If He were dead, our faith is in vain. If He were dead, we'd still be in our sins. The Bible says that if He was only alive on the earth at that time and is now dead, "We are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15:19). There would be no hope beyond the grave. You might as well "live like a hog and die like a dog."

I can't tell you how many times over the years of my ministry that I stood over open caskets and open graves, how many funerals I've officiated. The only hope that anyone could ever have at that time of grief and pain and losing someone you love is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. He's our only hope. Neither science, philosophy nor religion offer us hope. Our only hope is in Jesus Christ, who said, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

So if you haven't trusted Jesus Christ, today is the day that you need to surrender your heart and life to Him.

There is a third and last point of the angel's message, in verse 6. The King James translation

says, "Behold the place where they laid Him." The word "behold" means "to look intently with the idea of understanding." It doesn't mean just a quick glance; it means to think about it.

We read about the fact of the Resurrection. But the big question is, "So what?" You might say, "Yes, I believe that Jesus rose from the dead. So what? Big deal." Let me give you the "so what" of the Resurrection. What does the Resurrection of Christ mean?

Number one is His Person. Everything Jesus said about Himself, and everything He said about every other subject is true. He is the Son of God. If Jesus said, "I will be crucified, buried, and rise from the dead," and it happened, everything He said is true. Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life." He is "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). He is "the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved" (John 10:9). "The bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:33). Everything Christ said about heaven and hell is true. He said in John 3:7 to Nicodemus that "You must be born again."

Number two has to do with His pardon: we can be forgiven. Since Christ has risen from the dead, our sins can be forgiven. Not only is Jesus God, everything He said is true—He's alive, but He also can forgive our sins.

All have sinned. All have missed the standard. "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). If you say, "Well, Pastor, I've never sinned," you're sinning when you say that. The Bible says that "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8).

But those sins, no matter how great, can be forgiven. Those sins separate you from God and will keep you from heaven. And the only way to be forgiven is through Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions..." or "sins" "...from us."

Number three, we have His power in this life now. Because of the Resurrection, we have God's power. In Philippians 3:10, Paul said, "That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection." Not only can I be pardoned from sin, I can be free from the power of sin.

Do you have some sin that is gripping you and holding your life? Jesus Christ can set you free from it. "If the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). It could be drugs, alcohol, pornography, sexual immorality, pride, lust, greed, anger, unforgiveness, thievery or whatever—I don't know but God does. "All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:13). God actually sees your heart and knows your sin. But your sin can be pardoned, you can experience God's power and you can live free from the grip and chains of sin.

Number four is His presence. This is the thing that excites me every Easter. Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5). Have you ever felt alone? Have you ever felt that no one cares? That no one loves you? God loves you and will never leave you. When you

become a Christian, you're never alone. Again, in Psalm 23:4, David says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me."

If you get on an airplane, He is with you—even if the door blows out, the wheels fall off or the pilot's drunk. I don't need to be afraid. Even if I get on the freeway and go to Los Angeles. I once was kidnapped at gunpoint in L.A., held hostage for three hours with a gun to my head. But I had such peace; I knew that if I died, I would see Jesus face to face. You don't need to be afraid as a Christian, even in Los Angeles. Though I'm walking "through the valley of deepest darkness..." Los Angeles "...I will fear no evil" (Psalm 23:4). "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me?" (Psalm 118:6).

So you're not ready to live until you're ready to die, which has nothing to do with your age. A couple of years ago, my niece was killed in an automobile accident. She was ready to die, so she went to heaven. She loved Jesus. Praise God for that!

Are you ready to die?

Number five is His purpose. Life without God is empty. 1 Corinthians 15:19 says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable." What is the purpose of life? To get rich? To be famous? To have fun? To travel around the world? Solomon said, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes 1:2). He was the richest man who ever lived. He had everything he ever wanted. But it was all vanity, apart from knowing God. It was like a bubble that just pops.

You were created to know God and fellowship with God. Apart from Christ, there is no purpose or real meaning in life. There is no fixed point to anchor to.

Number six, the Resurrection means His promise. In John 14:1-3, Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house..." which is heaven "...are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also."

You can actually know that you're going to heaven because of the Resurrection. Jesus is the prototype; He's the forerunner who has gone before us.

Number seven, we have His pattern. Our bodies shall be resurrected like Christ.

Number eight, we will have His punishment. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ means that every human being will be resurrected and stand before God. 2 Timothy 4:1 says, "The Lord Jesus Christ...will judge the living and the dead." "Every knee should bow...and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11). If you bow your knee now, it's your salvation; if you bow your knee then, it's your condemnation.

Jesus came in a rescue mission. He came to save us from sin, to bring us back and reconcile

us to God.

Don't live your life without faith in Christ. Don't live your life without knowing forgiveness of your sins and the promise of eternal life. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

God wants to give you salvation as a gift right now. If you'll just realize you're a sinner, repent, change your mind and turn from your sin and receive Jesus Christ today, He will come into your heart, live in you, He will pardon your sin, give you power to live the Christian life and give you the promise of eternal life in heaven. And you can see your loved ones again because of the Resurrection. Without that, there is no hope.

So if you don't know your sins are forgiven, that when you died you'd go to heaven, I want to give you an opportunity to receive Jesus Christ. What better day could there be than Easter Sunday to trust Jesus Christ?

Maybe you have believed, but you haven't trusted Him. Maybe you just have an intellectual knowledge of Him, but you haven't really given Jesus your life, your heart. Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door [of your heart] and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him..." or "have fellowship with him" "...and he with Me" (Revelation 3:20).

So it's not just going to church. It's not just going on Easter or Christmas. It's trusting Jesus Christ. Until then, you're lost without hope. So I want to give you an opportunity to ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart, to forgive your sins, to make you His child, to give you eternal life, to give you His peace and His joy and the hope of heaven.