

# He is not Here; He is Risen

*The Gospel According to Mark*

By Sean E. Harris

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Mark 16:1-8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-9,12-24

**Preached on:** Sunday, February 24, 2013

## **Berean Baptist Church**

517 Glensford Drive

Fayetteville, NC 28314

**Website:** [www.bereanbaptistchurch.org](http://www.bereanbaptistchurch.org)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/bereanbaptistch](http://www.sermonaudio.com/bereanbaptistch)

All right. Let's stand for the reading of God's Word and we are looking at Mark 16. We are going to look at eight verses, Mark 16. We are almost finished with Mark. We have a couple of more sermons to deal with in the text. We have got the difficulty of verses nine through 20 and what are we going to do with these. And we will look at them in depth in the weeks to come. So let's look at verse one.

And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.<sup>1</sup>

*Father, as we delve into your Scripture this morning I pray that you would help us to see all that the Word of God has to say and that our time together would be exceptionally productive, that you would give us eyes to see, ears to hear, that the unsaved man would be converted today, that the undisciplined follower would grow in his knowledge of Christ, that we as a body would embrace the truths that we are going to be confronted with this morning in Jesus' name. Amen.*

All right. So here is our sermon outline. We will back it up a little bit and get into Matthew for a moment, look at the guarded tomb, a plan to anoint a dead body, an empty

---

<sup>1</sup> Mark 16:1-8.

tomb, shock and bewilderment. What are these issues in the gospel between Mark and John and some of the struggles and we see with Mary Magdalene? An essential component of the gospel, post resurrection appearances of Christ. We will delve into that a little bit. We will get into more in the weeks to come. And then what about the consequences of no resurrection? So that is what we want to unpack this morning. The mode that we will use for our guests and visitors is if it has a green heading we know we are looking at Matthew; a light blue, Mark; burgundy, Luke; John 20 is dark blue. Once we have looked at the four gospels and we have seen what we can see from there, I want us as a church to launch to first Corinthians and we will preach the second half of the message from 1 Corinthians chapter 15. I want us to see the truth in the text as it undergirds and supports the significance of the resurrection.

...the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.<sup>2</sup>

They saw that the probability of disciples coming and stealing the body away was significantly reduced because the tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers who had the authority of Pontius Pilate to interfere with any one attempting to steal the body away.

There is a picture of where we are at, center of Jerusalem. There is the temple, a walled city. Here is the royal location of the Pontius Pilate and his whole entourage and then this {?} wall or second wall come out the city like this, around like this. This is the place where Christ was crucified, Golgotha. And then down here and into a little garden and there is a small tomb is where we believe that Christ was buried for three days. This is a kind of a picture to show you what you should be thinking about in your mind.

The sabbath is past means that sunset has occurred. It is now Saturday night. Businesses open back up and there is an opportunity for Mary Magdalene and others to go and purchase some kind of spices that they might come and anoint the body of Jesus first thing Sunday morning.

Early in the morning they awake and they are now en route to where they know Christ was buried. They are going to go in there and they are going to put spices and ointment and that which they believe will show even more respect, even more dignity to the burial of Christ. Mark explains why these ladies were en route. Part of their custom was to anoint the burial body with spices. I think I told you last week that after about one year, once the body became soft, they would go back in there. They would unwrap it. They would put all the bones inside a box and then that box would be preserved and the tomb could be used over and over and over again.

---

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 27:62-66.

They said to themselves, “Hey, who is going to roll away the stone when we get there? There is a problem. None of us are strong enough to roll this stone away. How are we going to get in there?”

When they looked they saw that the stone was rolled away and it was very great, is the detail that Mark adds. Matthew tells us how this stone was rolled away. Matthew says that a great earthquake occurred, an angel came down from heaven, descended and came and rolled back the stone and the angel sat upon the stone. So now you have got an angle sitting on the stone is what is being described by Matthew and then he adds the additional detail that the Roman soldiers did shake in fear and went into some state of an unconsciousness. So we have got Roman soldiers laying on the ground in a state of unconsciousness, an angel sitting on a stone. That is what you have so far.

Mark 16:5 says:

“And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.”<sup>3</sup>

All right. Now this is what you have got. A stone rolled away. They have no idea. Dead bodies are, so they thought, laying on the ground and then someone goes into the sepulcher and there is another man sitting there. Got a man sitting on a stone, another one sitting there. Now you wonder why they are frightened? What is going on? That is a reasonable question. What happened? How did this happen?

Luke adds a few additional details. He mentions in particular two angels. He says that they were standing by them in shining garments. And somebody says, one of the angels says, “Be not affrighted. Stop being afraid. Fear not.” Luke adds an additional statement. “Why seek you the living among the dead? What are you doing here? This is not where Christ is going to be. This is the third day. He is not supposed to be here. What are you doing here? You seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified. He is risen. He is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. Look. Go in there. Look for yourselves.”

What do they see? They see Jesus’ body is gone, but the linen clothes that Joseph of Arimathaea purchased are still there. So they have the correct tomb. Skeptics and scoffers will tell you that they got confused on the right tomb and the wrong tomb. That is not the case. There is linen cloths here clearly giving evidence that there was a body there. From John we learn that Simon Peter followed them and went into the sepulcher and he saw the linen cloths lying there. He saw the face cloth wrapped up separately. Can you imagine what that would have been like for Peter to go in there?

The angel continues to talk, “But go your way. Tell his disciples and Peter that he goes before you into Galilee. You want to see Jesus? Go to Galilee. He is not here in Jerusalem. Go to Galilee. There you shall see him as he said unto you.”

---

<sup>3</sup> Mark 16:5.

Church, what are we to make of this additional reference to and Peter? Why does Peter get an and Peter? Go tell the disciples and Peter. Why does Peter get this additional particular mention of his name? Because Peter had rejected the Lord. Any ideas what Peter's state of mind would have been at this point? Any ideas what Peter is thinking right now after having denied his Lord three times with cursing and now Jesus is dead? Any ideas? How depressed do you think Peter is? I mean you think you are depressed. Peter was more. Why? The final stand for Christ was one of denial three times. And there was no reconciliation. Christ died. He died. He didn't make it right. He did not make it right. He died and there was no reconciliation. Peter is utterly in a state of depression and the Lord knows it. And the Lord cares and the Lord cares about Peter in particular. The Lord cares about Peter in particular so much so that the Lord says, "Tell Peter," that just think about that. Just think about that for a moment. Allow yourself to get into the story for just a moment and put yourself in Peter's shoes right now and think about how depressed you would be and how overwhelmed you would be and how deep in dark depression you might be. And one of the ladies comes and mentions to you that Jesus said, "And Peter." Could there have been any more encouraging words that you would have heard that he said my name? That is exactly what would have been rushing through your mind. If you are not saying with me this morning it is because you don't want to be encouraged from the Word of God this morning, because when he heard and Peter... Jesus said that? Really? Tell me again. What did he exactly did he say?

You talk about encouraging words. That is the point. Christ cares about you. Christ loves you. Christ knows you by name. My name. And he does not want you in a state of depression. He wants you to know that your sins have been forgiven. He wants you to know that there is reconciliation. He wants you to know that you do have a future and there is a plan for your life. Then you can recover from this. Get up. And Peter.

You know why people are committing suicide? Because they believe there is no hope left. The words and Peter say there is hope. And Peter.

Luke 24:7 says they said the Son of Man must be delivered. The angel said the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men. Don't you remember what Jesus said? Jesus told you. Jesus laid it out for you. Jesus predicted his death, burial and resurrection. Why are you here? Why did you buy those spices? You wasted your money. He is not here. Don't you remember? He told you he would be scourged. He would be mocked. He would be crucified. They would bury him. But on the third day he would rise from the grave. Let me remind you what Jesus said. It is the third day. Look at your watch.

And they went out quickly and fled from the sepulcher for they trembled and were amazed, neither said they anything to any man for they were afraid.

What is going on here? These women, it is as though the angel has said nothing. It is as though they have heard nothing. They are not motivated. They are afraid. They are amazed. They are in shock. They are human beings like us. And Mark does not try to paint them into super heroes. Mark doesn't try to hide their sin or their fear or their

bewilderment or their shock. He just described it just the way it happened. Nothing is done to hide the reader from the fears, the disbelief, the utter confusion both the male and the females, the disciples of Christ experienced. Nothing is done. We see it all. We see the sin. We see the jealousy. We see the covetousness. We see it all. And that should give you great faith in the authenticity of the Word of God. This is not a story in which let me back up and paint a bunch of super hero creatures and we see nothing but raw? No. We see crying. We see fear. We see worry. We see anxiety. We see them struggling with all that they have been taught. And nothing is done to hide us from their confusion and their bewilderment. We just see it all.

We go over to John 20 if we are reading this and we are comparing them like I was this week and we are trying to figure out what happens here, because when I read John 20 verses one and two, it says the first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early when it was dark unto the sepulcher. Sees the stone taken away from the sepulcher, then she runs and comes to Peter and to the other disciples whom Jesus loved and says, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher. We know not where they laid him."

Wait a minute. I am not confused. I am not exactly sure what happened with Mary. I read Mark's detail and I get the impression that she went into the sepulcher. I read John's details and it doesn't even look like she even heard what the angel said, because she is responding with the body has been stolen. Wait a minute. Where were you, Mary? What happened here?

One idea, as I reconciled this was that it is much more than just Mary Magdalene. Luke is going to tell us there were a bunch of ladies that were going there. So we can imagine for a moment way over here on this said of the church I am over here and the tomb is over there at a distance and there is an entourage of ladies carrying spices and such and some are along the way. Mary Magdalene, perhaps, sees the tomb is open, the stone has been rolled away and she stops. She doesn't even proceed forward. Luke doesn't seem to indicate that. Mark doesn't seem to indicate that, but John provides this detail that when she saw the sepulcher she runs away. Well, which is it, preacher? Did she go in the tomb or not? I am not sure.

Wait a minute. Do you have a conflict in the Word of God? Is there a problem in the Word of God? Well, no, there is not a problem. We just don't know who the they is that went into the sepulcher. We don't know whether Mary is included in the they or not. But, once again, the authenticity of the Word of God is seen in that the details are not trying to be deconflicted. They didn't lay out authors number Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. All right. Let's huddle. Get your gospel out. Get your gospel out. Let's try to figure this out to make sure that when the reader reads all four of our gospels they won't have any problems. No. That is not what happens. Each writes it from their perspective and the Lord leads all four of them and then we go, oh, there is a conflict. It wasn't written to try to eliminate conflicts. It was written to tell a story. And does the skeptic have an opportunity scoff? Sure. But wait a minute. The just shall live by faith. You are going to have to believe by faith. There are things that we are just not sure about. There are things that we just can't figure out. It isn't perfectly laid out with every detail as though some

mastermind said, "Let me make sure that there is not a single thing in here that will cause anybody any problems." That wasn't the goal. Why not? Because you need to believe. It wasn't written to make sure that there isn't anything that causes any problems so that nobody has to believe by faith. It is just the opposite. But I believe that it is inspired and that it is true and that this little detail right here does not throw me. It shows me that they were concerned about making sure that a master plan is sitting and nobody can cause any questions.

Evidently, the women do not believe that Jesus is risen, because they are still talking about where is he laid? From John's perspective, the author of the fourth gospel, it is as though Mary Magdalene had not heard anything the angel said concerning Christ. She is bewildered and dumbfounded. She speaks like she didn't hear anything the angel said. The issue of reconcile Mary Magdalene's actions at the tomb of Christ only serves to validate the authenticity of all four gospels.

Luke 24. They returned from the sepulcher and told all these things unto the 11 and to all the rest and it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, the Mary the mother of James and other women that were with them. See that? So if you read only Mark how many women do you think are going? Two. You read this as though you realize there is an entourage of women right there. So the they that went into the tomb is not named. It is they, a group, plural pronoun. A group of women went here. A group of women heard this. And their words seemed as idle tales and they believed them not. Then arose Peter and ran unto the sepulcher. Stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves.

Imagine what that would have been like. Can you imagine? Peter gets that word and he is racing to the tomb, racing, folks. He is not stopping. As much as his legs will carry him he has got to know. He has got to know. And so he is racing past all that he sees and he stumbles down into the tomb and there they are. Just imagine. Let yourself go here with me for just a moment. And he stumbles down. You can just imagine him kneeling down here and here is the distance between the floor and about where Christ laid him. Can you see Peter grabbing the garments? He is grabbing them. Can you see him pulling them up into his face? They don't stink in the sense of nasty beyond measure. Can you hear him crying? I can. I can just see this. What is going on here? Where is Christ? Where is the body of Christ? What an emotional moment this would have been. I can imagine for a moment his mind racing with all that Christ had taught him, the third day. Everything. Have you ever been there? Have you ever just thought and your mind is just racing through detail upon detail? Have you been there before or am I the only one? And he is just zooming through. Where is Jesus? He is not here and so he throws down the garments and he pops up and now he has got to find Christ. You can just imagine a need to see my Lord. Is he alive?

He departs wondering in himself at that which has come to pass. Now he is completely dumbfounded and he needs to see the Lord.

So let's ask ourselves this morning. How big a deal is the resurrection? How bit a deal is this? Is this something that we as a church should make a big deal of? Is this something

that should really be a capstone of what we believe? Is this something that I as a father in a home really need to understand well? Is this something that if I am a Sunday school teacher I have got to be able to unpack this super well? Is this a truth that I really need to embrace and understand with great clarity? The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth was the full and complete supernatural validation that he was every bit of who he said he was, every bit of it.

Hey, folks, there were other people that did amazing things. Elijah called fire down from heaven. This is not the first time that somebody raised somebody from the grave. When Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth," prophets had done that before. This wasn't a big deal. Others had fed. Others had done miracles. He was not the first miracle worker. Many prophets in the Old Testament had done amazing things, supernatural things. God had used men to display his power before. This is not the first human being on the scene that has done something spectacular. So we want to know. Was he just a prophet, another great prophet, a man sent from God? Or is there anything more?

Well, as we compare the miracles, as we compare the teaching, we can find that in the Old Testament. But what we cannot find in the Old Testament is a man who predicted how he would die and the day he would be resurrected. We can't find that. We can't find somebody who said, "Let me tell you how I am going to die. Let me tell you that they are going to scoff at me, mock at me, crucify me and on the third day I am going to rise from the grave." We don't find any of our Old Testament prophets doing that. So now if that did not happen, then how are we going to classify Jesus?

So this is a big deal. This has to happen on the third day. This cannot happen on the second day. This cannot happen on the fourth day. This cannot happen weeks later. This cannot be he is coming again years from now. This must happen on the third day. If not, Jesus is a—tell me, church—he is a liar. And if he is a liar, then he can't be God. The angels reminded the disciples. "The Son of Man told you how he would die." Jesus said, "This is the only sign you are getting, the sign of Jonah, three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the earth." Jesus told them, Mark eight, "After three days I am going to rise again." Mark nine, "Three days, on the third day." Mark 10, "The third day I am going to rise again." Mark eight, Mark nine, Mark 10. Going to do it, third day, third day.

And so the fact is if Jesus did not rise from the grave he was a liar or a lunatic. David, C. S. Lewis says, "A lunatic on the level of a person who calls himself a poached egg." That level of a lunatic. Not an average lunatic. Let me tell you what kind of a lunatic he had to be, a person who says, "I am not a human. I am a poached egg." People don't write like that anymore. You just don't get people to write like that anymore. You really get a picture of what kind of a lunatic we are talking about when he describes himself as a poached egg.

So how big of a deal is this? Well, I don't want to tell you. I want to show you from the Word of God. So take your Bibles and turn to 1 Corinthians 15. I would much rather you remember 1 Corinthians 15 than what I said. So I am going to show you from the Word

of God. And I believe that this is one of the most important chapters in the entire New Testament and so I will preach from it every chance I get. I don't believe that you can preach from 1 Corinthians too much. So if you have your Bibles, take the time to turn there. If you don't have your Bibles, get a pew Bible right in front of you, because I want you to see it in your own words in front of you. And I would like to begin with verse number one.

I have 13 minutes to do 24 verses so that is 30 seconds a verse. That is not a lot of time to comment.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand.”<sup>4</sup>

So underline the word gospel right there and recognize if you need to know where the gospel is, what the gospel is, what it is all about, this is one of the best chapters in the world to go to. You think 1 Corinthians 15, think gospel. Write that down in your Bible. Write the word gospel down on the margin at the top of the page somewhere so that when you are in doubt about what the gospel is and you have to explain the gospel, you go: Where do I go in my Bible to explain the gospel? Go to 1 Corinthians 15. So Paul says:

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved.”<sup>5</sup>

The gospel saves us from the wrath of God. The gospel saves us from ourselves. The gospel saves us from sin. The gospel saves us from hell. We are going to hell without the gospel. The gospel delivers us from the wrath of God. That is what we are saved from.

“...if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”<sup>6</sup>

Look at this little caveat that Paul brings in here, “unless you have believed in vain.” He is anticipating. He is recognizing that there are some who have, in fact, believed in vain. This is so concerning to me. There are some who have an empty belief. This is difficult of me to imagine. I struggle in understanding this, because Paul is writing to the church at Corinth. He is not writing to an unbelieving world. He is writing to the church at Corinth, Bill, and he says, “Unless there are some at the church of Corinth who have an empty belief.” Now just think about this with your mind with me for just a moment. Go with me just like we did into the tomb. Go with me for just a moment. Here it is. Let's all fast forward and the tribulation is over and the second coming is over and the millennial kingdom is over and there is a new heaven and a new earth and we are now enjoying ourselves, Bill, and we start looking for somebody that we remembered going to church with. But, Dick, we can't find him. And they sang in the choir. And they taught a Sunday school class and we are thinking surely they are here. And you can just imagine if it wasn't for whatever God brings to wipe away our tears, Joey, we start calling for

---

<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:1.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:1-2.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:2.

him. Have you seen them? Have you seen them? No. I haven't seen them. And suddenly we realize, it comes to us like a rushing overwhelming thought. They are not here.

Now is that a ridiculous scenario? I hope that God does not allow us to run through that, because that would be miserable. But the reality is, John, there are going to be people that are here on Sunday morning and they have believed in vain. Their faith is an empty faith. It is an intellectual assent unto known facts. They have prayed a prayer and been dunked in a tank and that is the end of their relationship with God. There is nothing more. When we tell them to examine themselves to see if they are actually in the faith they don't examine themselves. And when we say, "Test yourself and make sure you are there," they don't do that. They check their watch and endure the sermon. Can't wait till they are released from this bondage. And then wait a minute, wait a minute. I am not done. Wait a minute. They are in hell. They are in hell. And all they can think about is this day when in particular talked about those who have an empty faith and they don't embrace the gospel for themselves. And so their hell, Don, is thinking about this day over and over and over and they are never released from thinking about I should have, could have, I would have, I wish I could do it again. But they can't.

Verse three.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.<sup>7</sup>

Note positively that faith in the resurrection of Christ is an essential component to the gospel. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Or notice on the contrary that those who do not believe that Jesus rose from the grave go to hell. There is no in between. There isn't a middle ground. You don't get to pick. I don't really believe that. I don't believe that. I choose to be in the middle. You don't get to be in the middle in this situation. There is not a middle ground. And it is as though Paul the apostle anticipated those that were denying the question of the resurrection because he rushes without even a legitimate break in thought there is a conjunction in verse number five. And that he was seen of Peter and then he was seen of the 12. He was seen of above 500. Many of which are still alive. Some have fallen asleep. And then he was seen of James, that is the scoffer, the half brother of Jesus. Then of all the apostles and last of all he was seen of me as one born out of time. For I, Paul, am the least of the apostles.

He anticipates this. He says, "I know that there are some of you out there that don't believe that a man could rise from the grave. There are some of you out there that deny the power of the resurrection. So let me remind you that this story is not a make believe fairy tale of a myth."

Paul, as he is writing this can go to particular people and he can snatch that person up and say this man saw the resurrected Lord. They saw the resurrected Lord. She saw the

---

<sup>7</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

resurrected Lord. He saw the resurrected Lord. And as though that is not enough, me, too. Me. And why is the me a big deal? Because Paul the persecutor of the Church was radically changed by the power of the gospel. What is it that would change somebody who was all about Al Qaeda and destroying which is what he was. He was in an Al Qaeda organization. He was a terrorist. He arrested and persecuted Christians. He hated Christians with a passion. He had orders en route to Damascus that he was to go into that city and anyone he could find who was of this way was to be arrested, was to be persecuted, was to be tarred, feathered and imprisoned. So how, Paul, did you go from being the chief persecutor of the Church to a mad follower of Jesus? How did this happen? How does a person go from this to that?

Well, let me tell you. I was en route to the road to Damascus and the resurrected Lord dropped down from heaven and confronted me face to face with my need to repent. That is how. All right? And when the resurrected Lord confronts you with your need to repent you repent. And that was me. That is what he says. And that is what accounted for my change. Paul would not have understood this ask Jesus into your heart conversion idea today.

Now if Christ be preached, in verse number 12, how is it that some of you are saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? I don't understand this. How is this doctrine infiltrating the church at Corinth? How in the world after embracing the doctrine that Christ rose from the grave, how is there now some in the body of Christ that are saying there is no legitimate resurrection of the dead? That this the question that he answers in verse number 12. And it is the question that we will answer of the last couple of minutes of this sermon.

If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then our preaching is empty. It is useless and your faith, this faith that we call Christianity is utterly devoid of any power. It is in vain. It is empty. It is useless. Don't give me this garbage that Jesus was a good moral teacher. That is what he is saying here. There is no value in Christianity at all. It is an utter waste of time if, in fact, Jesus did not rise from the grave. And he doesn't stop. And it is as though he is the lawyer and he is pressing his case. And if Christ be not risen, then our preaching is in vain. Your faith is in vain and, yet, we are, in fact, false witnesses, because we have testified of God that he be raised up whom he raised up not if so be that dead rise not. And if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raise? And if Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain and there is a problem and the problem is you are still in your sins.

Now I am not going to jump over this point for the sake of time. I want to drill this home for 60 seconds. Paul does not eliminate the existence of God just because Christ be not raised. There is still a creator God who is holy and righteous and there is still something called sin and the only difference is you are still in your sins. He doesn't go down the road of, all right, if Christ be not raised, then we are products of evolution. We will live 70 years and then we will go and die in a pine box. Don't worry about it all is fine. That is not to where he goes. Paul knows nothing of this nonsense of evolution. There is still a creator being. There is still a Jehovah and you instead of having your sins forgiven, they

are back on your lap. Now deal with them. And that ain't a very pleasant situation, because my sins separate me from a holy and righteous God. And, therefore, I need a deliverer. And if Christ be not raised, then they are back in my lap and I don't need them to be in my lap. Get them off me. That is what he is saying there. Don't miss it.

Sometimes the King James language gets a little bit in the way. So I need to provide a little bit of oomph to get it across to you. Because it is a problem. He did not say if Christ be not raised then there isn't a God so don't worry about sin anymore. There is still a God. And that God is still righteous and he is still holy and he still does not like sin. Nothing has changed. And so you thought that eliminating the resurrection of Jesus Christ would solve your problems and Paul says, in fact, it has made it worse and that is not a good thing. And as though verse number 17 is not enough, he continues

And then they which are also are fallen asleep are perished. You will never see them again. You have no hope of seeing grandma or grandpa or your uncle or your son or your daughter or your child who committed suicide at an early age and your child who died at child bearing and you consoled yourself in the reality that there is an after life and that you will see them. That is no longer the case. You are still in your sins. You will never see your lost loved ones and in this life only we are have no hope. We are of all men, notice the text, most what? Most miserable. Why? Why are we of all men most miserable? Because we are smack dab still in our sins. That is why. We are still in our sins. And our sins separate us from a holy and righteous God and God does judge.

We have bought into this nonsense that is being propaganda-ed by CNN and the entire entourage that God doesn't judge, but he does judge. And if there is no redemption of sins, if there is no eternal life, then we, of all men are most miserable. But—underline that little word but right there, B U T, but it doesn't stop there. That is not the end of the story. We are not left in that state. There is hope, but, strong contrast, let me keep talking, because but is a conjunction. It means the story is not over. But now is Christ risen from the dead and he is the first fruits of them that sleep and since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For in Adam all die, but in Christ all shall be made alive. Every man in his own order Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end when he, Christ, shall have delivered up the kingdom to God even the father. Then he shall have put down all rule, all authority, that he must reign till he put all his enemies and the last enemy, notice in verse 26. What is the last enemy? The last enemy that he will destroy is the enemy of death.

Praise the Lord that the enemy of death is, in fact, destroyed. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord that Matt Clark can take comfort in the fact that because his roommate gave testimony of faith in Jesus Christ that in spite of the fact that he took his life there is still hope. Suicide is not the sin unto death. There is still hope. And Matt can console himself in the truth that he will see his roommate and brethren in Christ again. And you who have lost a grandbaby can console yourself with that faith. If he or she was in Christ and you have lost a brother or sister can console yourself in that faith if he is, in fact, in Christ and a mother and father, if they are in Christ and so the final question I ask you this morning. Are you in Christ? Are you in Christ? I am not asking you some nonsense

about have you asked Jesus into your heart? I am not asking you some ridiculous nonsense of have you been baptized? I want you to tell me. Are you in Christ? That is the issue. Let's pray.

*Father in heaven, if there is anyone here this morning that is not in Christ, I pray, God, that you would convict them in the deepest part of their soul that I am not in Christ. I wasn't born in Christ. Being a Christian ... a religious person doesn't make me in Christ. That Christ in me and me in Christ occurs only because of repentant faith in the gospel. God, do a work that only you can do in this little time of invitation. Call sinners to yourself and if you have brought anyone into this room that you are drawing to yourself, fill them with faith, dear God, that they can believe the truth this morning.*