

He Is Not Here, He Is Risen

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[0:00] We're going to go from Matthew chapter 27, verse 62, to chapter 28, verse 15. As you're turning there, if you haven't signed up for the retreat, please do sign up.

Jared Torrance is a friend of mine who's going to be preaching. He's a force of nature. His forearm is the size of my thighs. He lifts weight like crazy.

His water bottle is like the size of a propane tank. He preaches like that too, which is what you're really interested in. So you're going to not want to miss that. It's going to be a great time, so please come to the retreat.

As you find a way there, let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's Word. Heavenly Father, we stand in the line of this veritable heritage you've given us of those who have borne witness to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Thank you that you have counted us among their number. You have called us and saved us.

[1:27] And as we read this account again, as you address us and speak to us from your Word in Matthew again, embolden us as your witnesses.

And if there are those here who have not yet professed faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord, give them this morning eyes to see, ears to hear.

In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen. If you are able, please stand. Let us honor God by standing as we read from His Word.

Matthew chapter 27, starting verse 62, and I will read it out loud for us. The next day, that is, after the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, Sir, we remember how that imposter said, while he was still alive, After three days I will rise.

Therefore, order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples go and steal Him away and tell the people, He has risen from the dead.

[2:48] And the last fraud will be worse than the first. Pilate said to them, You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.

So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard. Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.

And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow.

And for fear of him, the guards trembled and became like dead men. But the angel said to the woman, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.

He is not here, for He has risen, as He said. Come, see the place where He lay. Then go quickly and tell the disciples that He has risen from the dead.

[3:54] And behold, He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him. See, I have told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell His disciples.

And behold, Jesus met them and said, Greetings. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshipped Him. Then Jesus said to them, Do not be afraid.

Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me. While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place.

And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, Tell people, His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.

And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble. So they took the money and did as they were directed.

[4:59] And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day. This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. By God's grace, I've been walking with the Lord, following Jesus for several decades now.

And now that I'm a Christian, the world, the surrounding world, and the course of human history, they all make sense to me. I don't feel any longer like a loose leaf wandering and tossed to and fro by the wind.

Now I feel like a rooted tree, grounded in reality. Now that I'm a Christian, when the heavy burden, the weight of my own sins come crashing down on me and crushes me down to the depths of despair, I can shake off my guilt, my shame, and stand upon the rock of Christ, my Savior who paid for all my sins.

Now that I'm a Christian, when the worries caused by the dangers and the uncertainties of life tighten around me like a vice grip, I can fly in prayer to my sovereign Lord who is in control over every detail of my life and who assures me that all things, he works out all things together for me.

Now that I'm a Christian, when I feel my own weakness and neediness keenly, I can rest in the power and provision of my Heavenly Father who is higher than I and who is mightier than I.

[6:38] Now that I'm a Christian, the friendship and companionship of the Lord Jesus is ever with me. And I'm never alone. And the very Spirit of God comforts me and guides me.

Now that I'm a Christian, I can't imagine life apart from Christ. The very thought of life apart from Christ is gutting and devastating.

But what's incredible is that that devastating scenario very well could have been. If my parents hadn't shared the gospel with me, if they hadn't brought me to church, if their pastor in a rural town in Korea hadn't shared the gospel with them, if that pastor hadn't become a Christian because that foreign missionary who went through that town had never shared the gospel with him, where would I be today?

Where would you be today if no one invited you to church, if no one shared the good news of Jesus Christ with you? The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ, his death and resurrection for the salvation of sinners.

And this news must be published. It must be proclaimed or it does no good for anyone. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved, but how can they call upon him unless they believed him?

[8:25] How can they believe him unless someone has preached to them? They've heard the gospel, someone's preached to them, and how can they preach unless someone sends them? It's Romans 10, paraphrase.

Our passage this morning in the Holy Scriptures is here for that purpose, to recruit heralds for the king, to raise up witnesses for Jesus. And will you today answer the king's call?

Will you go and tell people that Christ has risen, that Christ the king has risen from the dead? And that's the main point of my sermon.

Go and tell Christ has risen. And there are two diametrically opposed ways that we can respond to this call. The first one we see is the cover-up and the hush money of the Jewish leaders, the chief priests and the Pharisees.

And secondly, we see the worship and witness of the two women, Mary and Mary. After Jesus' crucifixion and burial, the chief priests and the Pharisees gather before Pilate again.

[9:29] And it says in verses 63 to 64, Sir, we remember how that imposter said while he was still alive, after three days I will rise. Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people he has risen from the dead and the last fraud will be worse than the first.

These chief priests have already framed Jesus and have killed him, have gotten him killed, crucified, but they are still afraid of him. They have somehow caught wind of Jesus' repeated predictions to his disciples throughout the Gospel of Matthew that he will be killed and then be raised on the third day.

And now they want to make certain that that never happens. Jesus' resurrection would vindicate Jesus and it would incriminate them.

It would prove once and for all that Jesus is the real deal and that they are the imposters. So they're not taking any chances and they don't want even a hint of a rumor of Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

And so they ask Pilate, they go to the Roman governor Pilate to secure the tomb, lest Jesus' disciples steal his body and then claim that he has risen from the dead. Pilate consents to their request in verse 65, you have a guard of soldiers, go make it as secure as you can.

[10:54] It seems that the chief priests already had access to some sort of guard of soldiers that they can deploy, perhaps the same band of soldiers and officers that John 18, three mentions that came at Jesus' arrest.

And so with the official permission of the Roman governor, the chief priests and the Pharisees go and secure to seal the tomb. It says that they seal the stone and set a guard.

Joseph of Arimathea in the preceding passage had already rolled a great big stone at the entrance of the tomb. But now, in addition to that, they seal the tomb.

What does that mean to seal the tomb? In that day and age, it would involve taking ropes and tightly wrapping it around the stone and then sealing the ends of the rope with an official seal, perhaps of the Roman governor, or the imprimatur that says basically this is off limits.

No one can reverse this. Don't dare enter, otherwise you'd be punished. Trespassers would be punished. The seal would serve as an additional physical barrier, but also it would serve to scare people.

[12:04] It would be a deterrent, a political and legal deterrent. The sealing is also reminiscent of another famous ceiling, a stone ceiling of a cave from the Old Testament.

when King Darius threw Daniel, the prophet, into a den of lions because he had proclaimed that people should pray only to him as the king, but Daniel continued to pray not to him but to the Lord God, and because of that, Darius threw Daniel into the den of lions, and then they sealed the entrance of that cave with the stone, and then they sealed that with the king's seal so that nothing can be reversed.

The king sealed it with his own signet that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. In essence, Daniel's execution, his grave, had been sealed by the highest authority so that no one can reverse it, so that his fate is sealed, and that's exactly what the pilot, what pilot and the chief priests are doing.

Nothing can reverse this. Jesus' fate is sealed. No one may enter or exit from this tomb. But just as the lions then could not hold Daniel down, death cannot hold Jesus down.

And what pilot and the chief priests thought was the end of Jesus is instead a new beginning, and Jesus is raised from the dead. We'll get back to that amazing scene shortly, but for now, please skip ahead with me to chapter 28, verse 11.

[13:34] After Jesus' resurrection, he says, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. The soldiers report back to the chief priests that they saw an angel of the Lord come down from heaven, roll back the great stone with ease that was blocking Jesus' tomb, that they saw the empty tomb, and that they saw the angel say to the woman, Jesus is not here for he has risen, as he said.

So these chief priests and the Pharisees did everything they could to suppress the resurrection of Jesus. They know Jesus has said, after three days, I will rise.

So they did everything in their power to make that not happen, and yet Jesus did just as he had said he would. He was raised from the dead. And imagine, for a moment, imagine yourself in the shoes of these chief priests.

you thought that Jesus was an imposter and a fraud, so you got him crucified as a heretic. But this Jesus came back from the dead just as he had said.

What do you do? Well, now is the hour of repentance. Now is when you eat some humble pie and you eat your own words and then you say, well, I was gravely wrong about Jesus.

[15:05] He is the prophesied Messiah. He is the Son of God. I must follow him. We all must follow him. But no.

They double down and resort to cover up and hush money. It's ironic. They had accused Jesus of being an imposter and a fraud, but it turns out that they are the real imposters and frauds.

So many times throughout Jesus' ministry, these Jewish leaders falsely accused Jesus of violating the Sabbath, of breaking the Sabbath. But look at their hypocrisy. Chapter 27, verse 62, notes that it was on the day after the day of preparation that the chief priests and the Pharisees, one, traveled to Pilate's court and had a conference with Pilate, a Gentile governor, which was considered ceremonially defiling for the Jews, and then, according to John 18, 28, and two, on that same day,

they also sealed Jesus' tomb, and three, they set a guard over Jesus' tomb on that very day. The day of preparation is the day of preparation for the Sabbath and not any ordinary Sabbath either. It's the Sabbath of, it's a high Sabbath. It's a holy Sabbath during the Passover feast. These Jewish leaders are quite busy at work all during the Sabbath. While Jesus is resting on the Sabbath day in his grave, these Jewish leaders are scheming and working.

[16:36] They are the Sabbath breakers. They are the frauds, and they are the imposters. They have shed innocent blood by killing Jesus. And 28, 12 says that that after hearing the soldiers' report, they assembled with the elders and took counsel.

They were deliberate. This wasn't an impulse reaction, a decision, a resolution was arrived after making careful deliberations with the council and the elders.

And yet, they don't even try to investigate what happened to Jesus to check, to confirm whether or not he was actually raised from the dead. doesn't that seem like a sensible thing to do in this situation?

Instead, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, tell people. His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.

I wonder what that sufficient sum of money entailed, what it took to hush all of those soldiers, probably a substantial sum, not only because these soldiers had witnessed something truly spectacular, it would be hard to shut them up, but also because it's incriminating for them.

[17:49] It doesn't reflect well on those soldiers who were the guards whose job it was to guard the tomb to tell people, oh, I was sleeping. And his disciples came and stole away the body.

So these chief priests, even though they tried to prevent and suppress the resurrection, now that Jesus has risen and now that the word of his resurrection has already gone out, resort to cover up and hush money.

And they assure these soldiers, don't worry about the repercussions of telling people that you fell asleep on the job. We'll make sure to keep you out of trouble with the governor. We'll make sure you keep your job. Since they couldn't stop it from happening, now they resort to suppressing the media and controlling the narrative so that no one will believe that Jesus was really raised from the dead.

Why does this always happen? Whether it's the Nixon administration with the Watergate scandal when they tried to cover up the fact that they infiltrated the Democratic Party's headquarters to try to get some kind of leverage for their upcoming re-election campaign, or whether it's Gorbachev and the Soviet Union who tried to cover up the explosion of a nuclear reactor in Chernobyl, which ended up killing 16,000 people in the long term with radiation and costing \$600 billion.

They tried to cover that up. Why do people in power resort to lies rather than admitting that they did wrong, tampering with evidence, bribing officials, and hushing witnesses?

[19:29] The answer is obvious. They want to preserve the status quo. They have too much to lose.

They don't want to lose their reputation, their position, their power. But let's not be too quick to point fingers and cast blame on others without examining our own hearts. Romans 1, 18-19 teaches us that God has revealed himself to us in diverse ways, but that the ungodly and the unrighteous suppress the truth by their unrighteousness.

This is true for all unbelievers and this was true at some point for all of us. If Jesus was really raised from the dead, you have to reform your worldviews.

You must rethink your priorities. You must repent of your sins. If Jesus really was raised from the dead, if Jesus really is who he said he is, then you must believe in him and follow him as your Lord and King and that means surrendering your will, submitting to his will.

Following Jesus requires a radical reorientation of our lives and what would your family and friends and coworkers say to that? what would happen to your reputation?

[21:00] The unrighteous don't want to give up their sinful ways. They want to be lords over their own lives. They want to do what they want to do in life. They don't want to submit to the lordship of another.

So they suppress the truth. What about you? Some of you are not yet followers of Jesus Christ and this morning you are confronted with the same reality, the same truth that the characters in this passage faced.

What will you do with the resurrection of Jesus Christ? How will you respond? If you are considering whether or not Jesus really rose from the dead, notice the fact of the empty tomb.

Even the Jewish leaders lie that Jesus' disciples stole the body confirm that the empty tomb was an unquestioned historical reality in that first century.

That Jesus really lived and died, he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, is a historical claim, it's a historical datum that no serious historian disputes.

[22:03] It is also indisputable that Jesus' followers for the last 2,000 years have been claiming that Jesus was raised physically from the dead.

If Jesus had not risen, if Jesus' tomb had not been empty, the Jewish leaders and the Roman rulers very easily could have quelled the Christian movement by simply opening up the tomb for a tour and showcasing and presenting the body of Jesus.

But they couldn't do that. They didn't do that because they couldn't. Instead, the alternative narrative that they circulated in its place was that Jesus' disciples stole the body.

And Matthew notes in 28, 15, that this story has been spread among the Jews to this day. So Matthew is writing this gospel and that verse, that passage in particular, to counter that alternative narrative that's been spreading among the Jews.

I know you've heard this, that Jesus' disciples stole the body, but I'm telling you the real story, that's not what actually happened. And that alternative explanation of the empty tomb being a result of Jesus' disciples stealing the body seems plausible at first glance, but when you think about it, even for a moment longer, it doesn't make much sense.

[23:24] If the soldiers were asleep while the disciples came to roll away the stone and steal the body away, how could they know that Jesus' disciples stole the body?

They were sleeping. At best, it's a guess, an inference, an allegation without any proof whatsoever. They couldn't even know that the body was stolen, let alone they were stolen by Jesus' disciples.

No, Jesus' tomb was empty because Jesus had risen from the dead.

How then should we respond to the resurrection of Jesus? For that, let's return to the scene of the resurrection in chapter 28, verse 1. It says, Now, after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and Mary went to see the tomb.

All four gospel accounts, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, note that Jesus was raised from the dead at dawn of the first day of the week.

[24:28] And both dawn and first day strike a note of new beginning and hope. Matthew 4, 13 to 16 described Jesus' birth as fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy that the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light.

And for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them the light has dawned. Jesus is the light of the world. And it is fitting that in chapter 27, verse 45, just before Jesus' death, there was darkness over all the land.

And now, in chapter 28, verse 1, as the light invades the darkness at dawn, Jesus is raised from the dead because he is the light of the world. And that reality is tied to the expression first day of the week.

The seven-day week comes from the seven days of creation in Genesis 1. It's not a natural, you know, astronomical kind of unit of time, seven days.

We only have the seven-day week because of the Bible, because of Genesis 1. And what does God create on the first day? Let there be light. He creates light on the first day.

[25:49] And there was light. This is the first day of the new creation. And once again, God says, let there be light.

And that light of the world is Jesus Christ raised from the dead. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

The old has passed. Behold, the new has come. Friends, all those who live apart from Christ dwell in darkness under the shadow of death.

How would you like to come out of that darkness and step into the light of Christ today? Do you feel the darkness of this world? All the hatred, suffering, evil?

Do you feel the darkness within? The desires of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, the pride of life that lurk within your own sinful heart?

[26:50] Do you feel the shadow of death encroaching? There is still hope because our God is the God who makes all things new. Those who are dead in their trespasses and sins can be made alive

together with Christ because Jesus died for our sins on the cross and because he was raised for our justification.

We are no longer in our sins, we who have put our faith in Jesus Christ. Because Jesus was raised, death no longer has the median over us and we are promised eternal spiritual life and resurrection life to come because Jesus was raised.

Because Jesus was raised, the same divine power that raised Jesus from the dead now courses through us is at work in us who believe in him. And verse 1 tells us that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection.

Imagine that, isn't that amazing? These were the same women who watched Jesus' crucifixion from a distance in chapter 27 verses 55-56.

The same woman who saw where Jesus was buried in chapter 27 verse 61. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph. They are the ones who according to Mark 16 were now looking for Jesus' corpse coming to his tomb so that they can anoint his dead body with spices so that his decomposing body doesn't smell bad as a last gesture of love and affection and honor toward Jesus Christ.

[28:37] And that these women are the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection is remarkable because Jewish law stipulated that woman's testimony cannot be accepted in the legal courts.

People back then didn't give much weight to the testimony of women. In fact Luke 24 11 records that even Jesus' own disciples who had repeatedly heard Jesus' prediction of his resurrection did not believe these women when they told him Jesus is risen Christ is risen they dismissed them and say ah idle tale of woman.

In fact this was a point of embarrassment even among even in the Greco-Roman world. Second century Greek philosopher Kelsus who was a fierce opponent of Christianity mocked Christians precisely on this point arguing that the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the son of God was based on the testimony of quote half frantic self deceived woman.

But God almighty the Lord of lords is not ashamed to make these devoted women the first witnesses of his resurrection.

And none of the gospel writers try to minimize that fact. All of them note that they're the first. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John because they're not making this up. They're reporting what really happened.

[30:06] And there's a dramatic reversal of fortunes here at Jesus' resurrection. These small in society insignificant, powerless women are twice told do not be afraid.

Once by the angel and once by Jesus himself. These women who are so weak and frail have no power in society yet they have nothing to fear in the presence of almighty God.

But the chief priest soldiers, the ones carrying the swords, guarding the tomb, it says in verse 4, trembled and became like dead men for fear of the angel.

They, unlike the woman, have something to fear and they're never told to do not be afraid. Oh, you better be afraid. And the word trembled is a different form of the same word that means earthquake. The word tremble, it's ironically, these soldiers are trembling like the earth that's trembling as Jesus is raised from the dead and Jesus, who was formerly dead, is now alive and these soldiers become like dead men.

[31:13] These word plays reveal the hidden spiritual reality. Those who follow Christ, no matter how small and weak they might seem, have nothing to fear.

But those who persecute them, no matter how big and powerful they might be, should be shaking in their boots. Those who follow Christ, though their outward body might be wasting away, they are inwardly, spiritually being renewed, day by day.

They are more alive than ever before. But those who do not follow Christ, though they might be strong and robust, physically healthy and strong, they are spiritually dead and destined for the lake of fire, which is the second eternal death.

The angel of the Lord instructs the woman in verse 7, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead and behold, he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him. See, I have told you.

Imagine the excitement. You are about to meet the risen Lord, go to Galilee. I don't know how long that journey is, but I can assure you that would be the fastest mile I ever run to Galilee to see Jesus, the risen Jesus.

[32:29] And the two Marys don't lose any time. It says in verse 8 that they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to tell the disciples they're running, but as they're running toward Galilee, behold, it says in verse 9, Jesus met them and said, greetings.

I love this scene. This wasn't the plan. What did the angel tell them? Go to Galilee.

Galilee. He's gone before you there. He will meet you there. That was the plan. But Jesus doesn't meet them in Galilee. It's as if Jesus can't wait until Galilee.

Here are the women who are devoted to him, who have come to anoint his body. On his way, he can't wait. He stops them. He interrupts them. He intercepts them as they run into Galilee and says greetings.

Here I am. I wanted to see you. It's as if he wanted to surprise them. Why do we like throwing surprise parties? I mean, isn't there a special delight in surprise?

[33:44] Receiving something that you weren't expecting. How gracious and kind of Jesus. It's so funny too, right?

I could imagine, what should be the first thing I say? It's greetings. you see our Savior's love? Can you see a glimpse into his heart? It's what God promises in the new heavens and the new earth in Isaiah 65, 24. Before they call, I will answer.

While they are yet speaking, I will hear. Before they even make their way down to Galilee, he is there to see them, to meet them because he loves them and because he cherishes them.

And isn't that God's heart toward you? His precious saints, his beloved children? You are not an annoyance to him. You're not a nuisance to him.

[34:43] You're not a burden to him. You are his delight. You are his treasured possession. God says to his people, Isaiah 43, verse 4, you are precious in my eyes and honored and I love you.

And the response of the two Marys is a model for all of us. It says in verse 9, and they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. That's the right way to approach Jesus, our Lord.

To honor him, it's worship. Taking hold of Jesus' feet, in worship. Feet are dirty things.

Why else would we consider it rude when you're at someone's house and they put their foot up on the table? It's beggars that take hold of people's feet because people who still have any dignity left wouldn't deign to do such a thing.

in Mark 5, 22-23, when Jairus is imploring Jesus earnestly to come and heal his daughter who is at the point of death, he says he fell at Jesus' feet.

[36:06] Beggars who recognize that they are completely at the mercy of another, they fall at people's feet. Friends, we cannot approach Jesus as if he's our equal, shoulder to shoulder and extending our arm for a handshake.

No, the only right posture with which we approach the risen Son of God is that of humble, prostrate worship at his feet. We are sinners in need of a savior.

We are debtors in need of mercy. We have no merit or righteousness or qualification of our own to bring to Jesus, so we must fall on our knees and take hold of his feet.

So come, ye sinners, poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore. Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, love, and power.

It's beggars who take hold of people's feet. And it's worshipers who take hold of Jesus' feet. Mary of Bethany in John 12, verse 3, anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair.

[37:23] It's an expression of extreme devotion and submission to someone. Adoration, worship. It's shocking that Matthew uses the word worship here.

Remember when Jesus was tempted in Matthew 4? I know that was a long time ago, but it's famous enough that you guys all remember. What did he tempt Jesus to do? Fall down before me and worship me and I'll give you all these things.

And then Jesus rebuked the devil saying, Be gone, Satan, for it is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve. We should worship God alone.

And if anyone tries to worship man rather than the one true God, we must stop them, we must warn them. So when Cornelius, the Gentile centurion, falls at Peter's feet, the apostle Peter's feet, and worships him in Acts 10, 24 to 26, Peter doesn't just stand there and bask in his glory.

No, he stops Cornelius immediately and says, Stand up, I'm only a man. When John falls and worships at the feet of a glorious angel in Revelation 22, 8 to 9, even the angel stops John immediately saying, You must not do that.

[38:37] I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers, the prophets, and with those who keep the words of his book. Worship God. And look at the magnificent angel of the Lord in our passage.

In chapter 28, verse 3, his appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow, yet he does not demand the adoration and worship of these women. He does not demand their allegiance. His focus is entirely on Jesus. I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here for he has risen. I know I'm not the one you want.

I know who you're seeking, Jesus. Go to Galilee and meet him there. Who is this Jesus who is as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs?

It's because he's the only begotten son of God. Jesus says in Revelation 1, 17-18, fear not. I am the first and the last and the living one.

[39:41] I died and behold I am alive forevermore. That's why he is worthy of our worship. I'm a naturally sinful, prideful man.

Even though God graciously is chipping away at my pride year after year, still to this day, the very idea of groveling before someone's feet is distasteful to me.

But not before Jesus' feet. I will fall upon his feet. I will kiss his feet. I'd rather sit at the feet of my Lord Jesus than on the right hand of the kings of earth.

I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the feet, at the feet of the Lord Jesus is greater honor.

It's a place of greater honor than all the palaces and the thrones of earth. Who else died to serve a wretched sinner like me?

[41:06] Who else defeated death and was raised on the third day? Who else is the exalted son of the living God but my Lord Jesus?

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary understand this so very naturally and immediately they fall upon Jesus' feet and worship him. And see how gracious Jesus is in verse 10.

He says do not be afraid go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee and there they will see me. How does this glorious death defying son of God call this bumbling bunch of his disciples my brothers? Jesus taught earlier in Matthew chapter 12 verse 50 whoever does the will of my father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother despite the fact that his disciples deserted him in his moment of greatest weakness and need even Peter who denied him even Thomas who will later doubt him Jesus graciously calls my brothers there's so much grace and affection wrapped around that one term our God justifies the ungodly he sanctifies us and sets us apart for himself in Christ and for that reason it says in Hebrews 2:11 Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers that's the amazing grace of the gospel the creator calls the creatures the king calls his servants brothers sisters friends it's only possible because of what

Jesus has done for us on the cross and there's one more thing that we must do besides worship and that is to bear witness words that refer to telling or relaying the message is repeated multiple times throughout this passage and there are two contrasting messages here competing messages on the one hand the women are told by the heavenly messenger and by Jesus himself go and tell Jesus disciples that he has risen on the other hand the soldiers are told by the chief priests and the elders go tell people that Jesus disciples stole his body this contrast of witnesses one true the other false is highlighted by verse 15 so the soldiers took the money and did as they were directed and this story has been spread among the Jews to this day the Greek word translated directed is literally taught and the word story is literally word so what are these chief priests doing they are teaching the word which is exactly what

[44:14] Jesus is doing all throughout the gospels! Jesus teaches! the word of gospel of the kingdom but these chief priests they pronounce they proclaim a false gospel they teach a false word there are two contrasting words and contrasting witnesses!

Which camp do you fall in? The woman and the soldiers are both witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and yet they spread very different stories will you faithfully proclaim the word of Christ like these women or will you be cowed into silence like these soldiers do you have something to gain by your silence are you concerned about your reputation do you fear being rejected and reviled by men we believe 2000 years later we here in Trinity Cambridge Church believe today in the resurrection of Jesus Christ that Christ is risen because these women and because Jesus disciples proclaimed Christ is risen so join the faithful relay of heralds men and women who have proclaimed generation after generation that

Christ is risen the baton is now in your hands therefore since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us looking to Jesus looking to Jesus let's pray oh Lord we do look to you Lord Jesus we worship you we fall upon your feet we surrender our all to you you are worthy of it all help us to see you rightly to believe you to cherish you rightly so that we with great boldness and enthusiasm and unflagging zeal and perseverance proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth empower us for that task Lord in Jesus name we pray amen