Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Resurrection Cover-Up
Scripture: Matthew 28:11-15
Code: 80-214

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. Jesus arose from the dead as evidence that He had satisfied God with His sacrifice for sin. He had paid for sin in full. God was satisfied with His sacrifice and raised Him from the dead. In His death He provides the atonement for sin. In His resurrection He provides for us triumph over death and eternal life. The resurrection is the great reality of our faith.

Robert Gorham Davis, retired professor of English at Harvard University, spends his energies these days writing letters to the *New York Times*Editorial Section. He writes many letters and they are prompted by any favorable mention of Christian truth. Anytime the *New York Times*makes some mention of Christian truth, he protests with a letter. One such letter says this, "If there were such a God who really wished to reveal Himself to mankind, He could do so in a way that left no doubt," end quote.

Well, Mr. Davis, He did. He left no doubt of the revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ by raising Him from the dead. The facts are clear. The evidence is comprehensive. But still most people reject the resurrection and commit eternal suicide. Rejecting the resurrection of Jesus Christ, rejecting Him as Savior and risen Lord, is tantamount to forfeiting all hope of blessing in this life and eternity. The resurrection is the only hope. In fact, the only way to be saved from your sins, the only way to enter into God's heaven to dwell forever in joy and peace is to confess Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. If you don't believe that, you will die in your sins and spend eternity in punishment. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the door to immortality in heaven.

Is there doubt about it? Robert Gorham Davis would suggest there is. But he's wrong. In spite of the evidence, through the years sinners have endeavored to explain away the resurrection. It isn't that it is reasonable to explain it away, it is that they love their sin. And if Christ rose from the dead, then Christ is God and they are guilty before God of their sin. Man then, in an irrational effort to evade his guilt and accountability to God, concocts schemes to explain away the very evident resurrection. Oh there is the famous swoon theory and that is the idea that somehow put forward that Christ never really died, He just swooned, He went by virtue of the shock of His wounds into some semi-comatose state. He was assumed to be dead and therefore taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb. Revived by the spices and the coolness of the tomb, He awakened and came out of the tomb. Therefore the disciples assumed that He had risen from the dead and He was happy to perpetuate their illusion.

Well that theory doesn't work. It wasn't even invented until 1600 years after the resurrection by a man named Venturini(?). It took 1600 years to think it up. And all the early records are emphatic about Him being dead and everybody knows the Romans were proficient at death and execution and if they said He was dead, He was dead. Furthermore, if it were true it would mean that Jesus successfully survived severe beating, crucifixion, asphyxiation on the cross, a spear thrust into His side, entombment with about seventy-five pounds of spices wrapped around His body. And after three days with no food, and no water, woke up without medical help or any human help, having lost most of His blood, moved the stone, walked out, overpowered the Roman guard and then convinced people He was alive from the dead and perfectly well. And then He walked seven miles to Emmaus on feet torn apart by nails. Ridiculous, so much for the swoon theory.

Then there is the "no burial" theory that has been offered that Christ was actually never put in the tomb. The reason He wasn't there is He never was put there to start with. He was thrown in a pit for executed criminals, like all the other people who were crucified. They just dug a big hole and kept throwing in the bodies. And that's what happened to Him. He wasn't there on Sunday because He wasn't there on Friday.

That theory doesn't work. Why did the Jewish leaders demand that the tomb be sealed if He wasn't there? And why did they demand that the Romans guard the tomb? And why did they have to invent some kind of story to explain that the body wasn't there if they had thrown it into a hole? They could just go to the hole and get it and say, "Here it is and He's dead."

And then there is the hallucination theory that all the appearances of Jesus after His resurrection, to the women and to the disciples, and to the Twelve, and to the 500 who saw Him at the same time in Galilee, were all hallucinations. They thought they saw Jesus because they wanted to see Him so badly, because they believed so strongly in a resurrection they literally actualized the hallucinatory appearance of Jesus to fulfill their strong desire.

Well that theory doesn't work because how could the church be built on hallucinations and last? How can you explain that the disciples would go out and become martyrs for a hallucination? And how can 500 people who saw Him at once in Galilee have the same hallucination at the same time if it's only a matter of imagination? And since they didn't even expect a resurrection, why would they have pathologically been in a condition to hallucinate one? And by the way, where was the body if it was only a hallucination? Why wasn't the body in the grave?

And then there is the telepathy theory, that there was no real physical resurrection but God wanting to have people think there was a resurrection sent back mental images by telepathy to the disciples so they would think Jesus was alive. That doesn't work because it makes God a deceiver. It makes God part of a fabrication. It founds Christianity on deceit. It makes liars out of the disciples for claiming to

have touched Him and felt Him, and you can't touch and feel a hallucination or a telepathic image. And it must have been not just a photograph, it must have been a video because the image went all the seven miles to Emmaus, held a conversation and even ate. And at first, I think it's interesting, that the disciples didn't even recognize that it was Jesus when He appeared to them. And you have to ask whether God was unable to make the picture convincing. And what about the body? That doesn't explain why the body wasn't there if it was just a hallucination, if it was just mental telepathy. The body should still be in the sealed grave.

Well then there is the seance theory that has been popular more recent years, that a medium, one who conjures up demons, conjured up the spirit of the dead Jesus by occult power. That doesn't work because that doesn't explain the empty tomb. And that doesn't explain how they could touch Him and eat with Him and talk with Him. And then there is the mistaken identity theory that someone was going around impersonating Jesus and saying that He was Jesus risen from the grave. If He did that, to pull off the impersonation, He must have had Himself crucified because he had to demonstrate that he had fresh wounds in his hands, fresh wounds in his feet, and a fresh wound in his side. He must have duplicated all the scars of Jesus which is a rather high price to pay for a false impersonation. And to make it convincing, it would be hard to survive it.

Now how do you explain the post-resurrection miracles? How do you explain that an imposter walks through the walls into the upper room where the disciples were meeting with the door shut? And how do you explain this imposter ascending into heaven in front of all of them? And how do you explain an imposter who can convince the disciples that He is Jesus? And furthermore, how does that explain the empty tomb? If this is an imposter, the body should be there.

Renan, the French atheist, tried to destroy the resurrection because he said it was based upon the testimony of one eccentric, delirious, frightened woman named Mary Magdalene who had seven demons and was hysterical to the point of insanity. Well, did he forget the eleven disciples? Did he forget the 500 eyewitnesses? And furthermore, where was the body? If this was a delirious, insane woman, where was the body? The Jews could simply produce the body and stop all apostolic preaching of the resurrection. If it was only a seance, if it was just an apparition, a hallucination, if it was just mental telepathy, if it was an imposter, you could take any of these and to stop all preaching about the resurrection, all the Jews have to do is produce the body. If it's in a hole in the ground, produce it. If it's still in the grave, produce it. And it stops the preaching.

One critic tried to solve that very difficult problem, G.D. Arnold, in his book called *Risen Indeed*. He says that the body of Jesus evaporated into gases in three days. And some desperate people believe that.

You really have only one alternative. If you're not going to believe the resurrection, there's only one possible theory that makes any sense because the compelling issue in the resurrection is, you have

to explain the body being gone. And if it isn't resurrection, you only have one other option, somebody took the body. That is the only reasonable explanation. So when all the critics and all the theories come down the pike, all you need to do is see if their theory explains the fact that the tomb is empty. Even the Jewish leaders knew that there was only one possible explanation apart from a resurrection, and that was somebody took the body. That's the only possible explanation.

And so we could say then that there are people who have put forth that theory. In fact, that was the original theory. Look at Matthew 28 verse 11. "Now while they were on their way, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, they gave a large some of money to the soldiers, and said, 'You are to say, (and here is the only theory that makes sense) His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.' And they took the money and did as they had been instructed and this story was widely spread among the Jews and is to this day."

Now I want to talk about this passage. This fascinates me. When Matthew comes to the end of his gospel and a great, great event of all events is the resurrection, he's laid it out at the end of his great gospel, 28 chapters, how is he going to prove that the resurrection really happened? He does it in the most unusual way. He lets the enemies of Jesus prove it rather than the friends of Jesus. Oh he could have given testimony from Mary Magdalene, he could have given testimony from the other women. He could have given testimony from Peter and John who arrived at the empty tomb. He could have given testimony from the eleven who were there when Jesus came. He could have given testimony from Thomas who touched Him and said, "I believe," and saw His wounds. He could have given testimony from the 500 eyewitnesses in Galilee. He could have given testimony from James. He could have given testimony from all of those or any of those. But he doesn't. Most amazingly he brings testimony from the enemies of Jesus.

Now the Jews were very, very clear that there was only one explanation that would fly and that was that somebody stole the body. They didn't do it. They wouldn't steal the body and fabricate a resurrection, that would be the opposite of what they wanted to accomplish. They were the ones who demanded the tomb being sealed with the Roman seal that couldn't be broken without a serious repercussion to the Roman law, they were the ones who demanded a Roman guard be placed there, at least twelve men. They were the ones who wanted that thing sealed so that body could never be removed from that place. They wouldn't have taken it. And the Romans wouldn't have taken it. They couldn't have gained anything by taking it. Jesus was nothing to them. So the only possibility left was that the disciples stole the body, that was the only tale they could tell to explain away an empty tomb. That's exactly what they concocted. And it is the only alternative.

In their effort to cover-up the resurrection, they prove it to be true. And I'll show you that. Let's look at the plot, verse 11. We'll pick it up a little ways into verse 11, "Some of the guard came into the city."

Now who are these? These are some of the guard. There were, as I said, probably twelve of them, they had been set to guard the tomb. Back in verse 2 it was the dawn of the first day of the week, a severe earthquake had occurred, severe earthquake. An angel of the Lord descended from heaven, came and rolled the stone away and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, his garment as white as snow and the guard shook for fear of him and became like dead men.

Now these are the guards. The earth begins to shake, as we heard in the song earlier. An angel comes bright and glorious and frightening and terrifying and rolls the stone away. And they're literally traumatized into such terror that they fall over like dead men in a faint. And when they came to, you can be sure that they checked to find that the tomb was empty. Supernatural earthquake, supernatural moving of the stone, a supernatural glorious angel, the likes of which they had never seen, and an empty tomb. You see, the soldiers were aware of a supernatural event, a resurrection. And so, in verse 11 they came into the city, some of them. You can be sure that after they came to they explored this incredibly supernatural phenomena and they also found the grave clothes lying just as they were when they wrapped His body and the napkin lying in another place because it was wrapped around the head, indicating that no one hurriedly unraveled all of that and threw it in a corner, He just came out of the way it was. They examined the whole scene. They came to talk to the chief priests and they reported all that had happened.

Now the evil men who were the religious leaders in Israel had tried with desperation to eliminate Jesus. They used mass murder to try to execute Him when He was born. You remember it was Herod who put out a decree to kill all the little male children in and around the area in hopes of massacring the new King that had been born. And during the life and ministry of Jesus, they pronounced curses on Him, they damned Him, they called Him demon-possessed. They accused Him of using demonic power. They did everything they could to discredit Him. They used betrayal and collusion with a betraying disciple named Judas to try to capture Him. They used injustice and inequity in violation of all normal jurisprudence to sentence Him to death, they used blackmail against Pilate to get Pilate to sign His death warrant, they used force to keep His body in the tomb. And now they are going to have to do something to lie about what has just happened because they've just been told by the soldiers that He has risen. The soldiers tell them all that happened, everything.

There was an earthquake, a stone was gone. And there was an angel from heaven and the body is gone. And the grave clothes are there. And no doubt those soldiers had been told by the Jews, "Be especially careful on the third day because that's when He said He would rise." And they must have been very watchful as that third day dawned. And then it happened.

So the chief priests now receive the word, the first news of the resurrection of Jesus. The disciples don't even know yet. The women, indicated in verse 11, were still on their way to the disciples. The disciples didn't even know this yet. But now the leaders know.

Well what was their reaction? Well go back to chapter 27 verse 42, for a minute. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, their priests, chief priests, the same people, along with the scribes and elders were mocking Him. These are the religious leaders of Israel, they are so glad to see Him on the cross, they despise Him with such rancor that they're literally mocking Him while He's dying. And they said, "He saved others, He cannot save Himself. He is the king of Israel," they mock, "let Him now come down from the cross and we shall believe in Him."

That's what they said. If He'll come down, we'll believe. Well let me tell you something, folks, He did something better than come down, He died there and came out of the grave and they still didn't believe. They weren't about to believe. Their hearts were about as hard as the stone that had been rolled away. They were confirmed in apostasy. And so when they hear that there was a resurrection, a supernatural resurrection, and all of the evidence is clear that it was a supernatural resurrection and that what they feared had indeed come true, and they knew His power to raise other dead people because they had seen it, they knew His power to heal diseases, they knew His power over the kingdom of darkness, they knew His ability to multiply food, to do miraculous wonders, to walk on water, etc. They knew all of that. Their greatest fear, therefore, simply is another in a long line of miracles they were very much aware of, but instead of those miracles bringing faith, they just hardened their resolute and sin-loving hearts. And so the shock of a resurrection catapulted them into a plot to cover it up.

So in verse 12, "When they had assembled with the elders and counseled together," that is a meeting, a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin took place. The Sanhedrin is 70 men, 70 of the elders of Israel who constitute the body of adjudication, the legal body that had the ability to make resolutions, to make laws with regard to the whole nation. And so they convened. The language here in the Greek is formal language and the term "they had assembled" is a reference to the formal meeting of the Sanhedrin and the word "counseled together" indicates an official resolution. They had taken counsel together, or counseled together, that is a formal phrase indicating a formal passing of a resolution.

So the ruling body, the Sanhedrin, came together. The facts were told to them that Jesus had risen from the dead. That an earthquake came. That an angel was there, blazing glory causing all of the Roman guard to literally fall over in a dead faint and that all of that was told to them first hand by those guards. And now they've got to do something about it so they assemble together and they come to a resolution.

The resolution is three-fold. Number one, we bribe the soldiers to lie. And it says, "They gave...at the end of verse 12...a large sum of money to the soldiers." We have to bribe them to lie. We can't have them going around saying there was an earthquake and the tomb was opened and there was a holy angel and the grave clothes were lying there and the napkin was in its place, and obviously Jesus rose from the dead. We can't allow that. So they gave them a large sum of *argurios*, silver money.

Judas, you know, they had bought for 30 pieces of silver. Now they had to pay probably twelve times that amount, but there was no price too high to lie about this. This they could not tolerate. Isn't that amazing how resolute was their unbelief? That to preserve their wicked sinful position and their wicked hearts they would literally fabricate a deception to cover up that act by which redemption had been purchased? The grave was empty. This is the only lie that works. Swoon theories don't work. Mental telepathy theories don't work. Seances don't work. Imposters don't work. Nothing works but this because you have to explain an empty tomb. The Romans knew it was empty. The Jews knew it was empty. Everybody knew it was empty. Everybody in history now knows it was empty. It's always been empty. They had no choice.

So they paid them a large sum of money, verse 13, and they told them, "You are to say, you can't tell the truth, you are to say His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep. That's what you're to say." And so the soldiers are bribed to become preachers of the anti-gospel.

Now there are some implications for this. If you happened to be a Roman soldier and you're given a position to guard something and you go to sleep on the job, this is pretty serious. You could lose your commission, worse...you could lose your...what?...your life. What are they doing sleeping in violation of Roman military law? The death penalty would be prescribed for such an activity. So the first thing they do is they bribe the soldiers. The second thing they do is tell the soldiers to preach the lie. And the third thing they do is protect the soldiers.

These are the leaders of Israel. They say, "You are to say the disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.'" Is that true? It's not true and they know it's not true. You see, that is the only possible theory. That's the only theory that makes any sense because you have to explain the absent body. And you know the Jews didn't take the body, they wanted it left in there and that's why they sealed it. The Romans didn't take it, they had no reason to take it. They know there's only one possible theory and that is the disciples took it and they know that's not what happened. So that there's only one possibility left, Jesus rose from the dead.

This is brilliant. And the implications for the soldiers, they're going to go around saying, "Well, we were all asleep and...the disciples came and stole His body." The question I have is, "Oh really. If you were asleep how do you know who stole His body?" You can't have both. You can't be asleep and also know who took Him. I mean, the whole thing is absurd. The implications to the Romans are so serious that in verse 14 they say, "And if it comes to the governor's ears, that's Pilate who is the chief military officer in Palestine, if Pilate hears about this we will win him over." Boy, were they good at doing that. They literally had Pilate in their hands like putty because Pilate had done so many stupid things while he was trying to represent the Roman presence in Palestine to irritate and agitate the Jews that the Jews had gone to Rome time after time complaining about Pilate and eventually, of course, when Pilate was resistant in crucifying Jesus, the Jews said to him, "If you don't crucify Jesus, we will tell Caesar." And Pilate was so afraid of another complaint by the Jews to Caesar that

he caved in under that blackmail and they knew they had him right in the palm of their hands. He wasn't about to survive any other uprising of the Jews against him and so they knew they could go to Pilate if Pilate was going to exercise some action against them, some court martial or some execution, and they had Pilate in the palm of their hand and they could keep the soldiers out of trouble.

Now this is becoming a pretty elaborate scheme. You've got to tell the soldiers to lie. In order to get them to lie, you have to bribe them. You remember that John the Baptist when he was preaching by the Jordan River called soldiers to repentance and he said if your repentance is real, you won't take any more bribes, indicating that's what soldiers did. They could be bought. They could be bribed.. And so they were bribed and now they've got to also cover their backside from the standpoint of Pilate, so they might have to exercise a little of their intimidation and blackmail against Pilate to protect these men. So this is becoming a very elaborate scheme to cover up the simple reality of what the soldiers told them happened.

Well, the soldiers, verse 15, took the money. They didn't care about Jesus. They didn't care about any of this messianic talk. It was of no interest to them. They just took the money and did what they had been taught, is the actual word, *didasko*, it's the classic Greek word for taught. I'm sure they were literally brought in...and, you know, let's say you've got twelve soldiers there, you've got twelve people who are going to be telling the same story and they all know it's a lie, you've got to go over the details, right? Because if people start comparing stories, "Well soldier so-and-so told me it happened this way," "Well soldier so-and-so told me it happened this way," they must have concocted this thing down to the fine details and there was a time of pedagogy going on where they sat these soldiers down and instructed them all in the details so everybody would get it right in case somebody started comparing notes.

And you have the plot. And the propagation follows, verse 15, "They took the money and they did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews." They weren't...they weren't told to keep this thing to themselves, they were told to spread it because they knew that the resurrection was going to be preached. They knew that because it had happened and they were sure that the disciples would know. And the women had already known and were on the way to the disciples. They knew this thing was going to spread so they had to spread the lie, so they literally went out propagating it and it was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day. Matthew is writing some 30 years later and he's saying it is still the dominant story.

So the soldiers who knew better lied. The chief priests who knew better lied. And they spread the lie. You know, this is...if you study the gospels, if you study the gospel of Matthew, study the life of Christ, from the beginning of the gospel to the end of it, it's just a long litany of insults against the Son of God. There's just no end to this long line of insults till you get to this. This is the last great effrontery. This is the last great insult. This is the final note of rejection. Create a lie to cover up what you know is

true. This is the final apostasy and is the reason why a few years later Jerusalem is destroyed under the judgment of God.

Maybe you're wondering in your mind what...why would Matthew end like this? Why would he come to the end of his gospel like this? Isn't it a rather negative approach? I mean, we have such a glorious gospel, isn't this kind of going in the back door on it?

Well admittedly at first it certainly appears to be negative but the fact is, it's not. It is divine genius to approach it like this. Matthew's not just filling in space here, this is very calculated. He's certainly not trying to discredit Christ by telling the story of this lie. He's not joining the mockery by any means.

I'll tell you what he's doing. What he could have done, as I said earlier, was he could have proved the resurrection by the positive side. He could have talked about the empty tomb. He could have talked about the grave clothes lying there. He could have talked about the earthquake. He could have talked about the stone being moved. He could have talked about the angel and left it at that. Or he could have talked about Mary Magdalene and given personal testimony from her. Could have given personal testimony from Peter or John. Could have given personal testimony like Luke did from the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. He could have gotten testimony from the Twelve when they were gathered in the upper room on the Sunday night when Jesus appeared. He could have talked about the Twelve when they were gathered together eight days later and Jesus appeared again. He could have had Thomas give his testimony that he saw His hands and he saw His feet and he saw the hole in His side and he said, "My Lord and my God." He could have given the testimony of the seven who saw Him in Galilee recorded in the last chapter of John's gospel. He could have given testimony from the 500 eyewitnesses. He could have given testimony from James. He could have given testimony from the eleven on the Mount of Olives who saw Jesus and saw Him ascend into heaven.

That is to say he could have used the testimony of his friends. And that was good testimony. I mean, the disciples really did believe. They believed that Jesus was alive. They saw Him. They talked with Him. They touched Him. They ate with Him. Over a period of 40 days they interacted with Jesus. This wasn't some momentary thing. They were convinced without a single shadow of doubt. After Thomas was brought in, they were absolutely convinced. They were so convinced they spent the rest of their lives declaring that Jesus was alive and they gave their lives, most of them, as martyrs for that reality. And they didn't believe that there would be a resurrection. Even the two on the road to Emmaus were moaning and wearying themselves with their sadness over the fact that Jesus was dead. And even Thomas wouldn't believe if he hadn't seen Him. But they became powerful preachers of the resurrection, so powerful that thousands upon thousands upon thousands of people responded immediately to their preaching. What power transformed them? What...what changed these cowardly, simple, poor, illiterate preachers into men who could change the entire face of the earth? They weren't eloquent, they weren't educated, they weren't the particularly brilliant. They weren't strong

orators. They weren't masters of argument and logic and persuasion and charm. And they weren't about to die for a lie or an illusion. But they preached it, not only preached it but preached it with passion.

Furthermore, they had every opportunity to satisfy themselves with the evidence. They saw Jesus. They touched Jesus. They talked with Him. They ate with Him. That's why Acts 1:3 says that He proved Himself a live by many infallible proofs.

Now that's all very convincing. I mean, I could make an argument for the resurrection from his friends who really saw Him and it changed their lives and it changed the world. But you know something? The world is always going to be full of critics who wouldn't believe his friends. Oh they would say it's an illusion. They've said it. Oh they say it's a hallucination. Oh it was some mental telepathy. Oh they were literally deceived by an imposter. Or of course they're going to lie about Him, they were His friends and they want to carry on the ruse because they loved Him and He was nice to them. So there would be people who would dismiss the testimony of His friends. I'll tell you this, it's pretty hard to dismiss the testimony of His enemies. The last thing the Jewish leaders wanted was a resurrection and they got one and the whole cover-up is the strongest proof that it really happened. You see, just follow the thought, it was impossible for them to deny that Christ had by some supernatural means arisen. It was impossible to deny it. They couldn't deny it. So they only had one option. If you are going to deny what is impossible to deny, you have to come up with some explanation for the empty tomb. So they did. But it's absolutely absurd and it is impossible to believe their explanation. How could or would cowardly disciples, the boldest of whom had denied Jesus three times, namely Peter, and all the rest had scattered when He was taken prisoner, how could all of them all of a sudden come together with great power, great resolution, great force, go in and overpower the Roman guard and steal the body of Jesus, and then live a life to carry out that deception that led them to martyrdom? That is absolutely idiotic. And they wouldn't bribe the Roman soldiers. They didn't have anything with which to bribe them and they didn't have any ability to protect them from Pilate. And if they did steal the body, why did they have all the grave clothes lying in there? Why didn't they just get in there, grab it like it was and leave? And how did they move the stone? And how did they overpower the guards and they didn't even believe in resurrection?

And then there is that disturbing verse13, "The soldiers were supposed to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.'" What is that? How do you know that if you're asleep? There were four watches in the night for Roman soldiers, they lasted two to three hours each. Are we to believe that the whole guard fell asleep when they were routinely used to being awake for their watch? And then if they were asleep, they had nothing to report. But they reported all the details. They weren't asleep. They were awake, they saw it all and the Jews covered it up. That's the greatest proof of the resurrection, the proof that comes from His enemies.

Every way you look at it, Jesus rose from the dead. And He said, "Because I live...what?...you shall live also." If you confess Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart God has raised Him from the dead, you'll be saved. You must believe in the resurrection. It's a historical fact. You must believe it. Believe He died on a cross is a perfect atonement for sin, paid the price in full to provide forgiveness for penitent sinners and was raised from the dead conquering death, granting to all those who believe in Him eternal life in the glories of heaven. That's the message I would like to give the world. That's the message we've always wanted to give the world. What the song said that we heard earlier, we sung, "Death cannot keep its prey, Jesus, my Savior, He tore the bars away. Jesus, my Lord, up from the grave He arose, with a mighty triumph o'er His foes. He rose a victor o'er the dark domain, and He lives forever with His saints to reign. He arose, He arose, He arise, hallelujah Christ arose." We believe that and we believe it because it's true.

Our Father, we praise You for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We thank You for the fact that He lives, that He ever lives, having conquered sin and death and Satan and hell. Having paid in full the price for sin He grants eternal life to all who believe. O Father, You were satisfied with His sacrifice, satisfied with His death for sin, satisfied that He paid the penalty in full and thus You raised Him from the dead and lifted Him to glory. And He is our Lord and our risen Christ in whom we believe. His friends give testimony to His resurrection, but His enemies even stronger testimony in the amazing plot to cover it up. We thank You that Jesus lives and that we live in Him now and forever. Amen.

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