The Lie that Proves the Resurrection
Scripture: Matthew 28:11-15
Code: 80-68

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As we consider the reality of the resurrection, this morning, I want to draw you back to the text which I read earlier in the morning, Matthew chapter 28. After 28 chapters of presentation of Jesus Christ as King, 28 chapters of convincing argument that He is the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the reigning sovereign and glorious King, you would think that the gospel of Matthew would end on some high note, but the last narrative portion of this great treatise on the majesty of Jesus Christ would extol His virtue, would affirm His glory, would underscore His majesty, would attest to the reality of His triumphant resurrection. But such is not the case. Though Matthew closes out this gospel with the words of Jesus Himself in what we know is the Great Commission, the last piece of narrative records for us the final form of Israel's apostasy in a fabricated lie to discredit Jesus Christ and disprove the resurrection.

One might ask the question, why would Matthew do that? Why would he come to that kind of crescendo? It's almost as if a great symphony ends in discord, without resolution. Why would he and his final narrative give place to a lie about the resurrection?

Well the wonderful irony of it is, it is the lie that proves the resurrection. Matthew knew and the Holy Spirit knew that the resurrection would be attacked, that all through human history the deceiver, Satan, the father of lies, would have to fabricate lies about the resurrection because it is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. It is the essential historical reality for our eternal hope. It is that act of God by which He confirms the saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross. It is that great reality that means that Jesus Christ is alive who at the right hand of the Father is indeed our faithful and merciful High Priest. It is the crux of Christianity and thus from its very occurrence to this hour and to the end of history, the resurrection will be attacked and the Holy Spirit with the genius of the mind of the infinite God has given to us a lie that more than any other attestation proves the validity of the resurrection. I want you to see that this morning.

There are people, of course, in every culture, in every era of history and in our own society today who would deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In our western culture which is fast being drowned in a sea of eastern mysticism, various forms of Hinduism under the term "New Age," there is a rising preoccupation with reincarnation which is an all out and flat denial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the ultimate end of a belief in evolution. The resurrection then by those who feel they must deal

with it is continually being attacked. Throughout history, the various theories to explain away the resurrection of Jesus Christ have been catalogued under just really a very few sort of general concepts. There is the swoon theory, or the semi-coma theory that says Christ never really died. On the cross He was sufficiently traumatized to have gone into shock and therefore into a semi-comatose state. They assumed He was dead. They put Him in the grave but the spices with which His body was wrapped and the coolness of the tomb revived Him and when He came out of the tomb the disciples merely assumed that He had risen from the dead. That theory in whatever form it comes in doesn't work well. First of all, it took sixteen hundred years to think it up, a man named Venturini(?) first postulated it.

Furthermore, all the early records are emphatic about His being dead and everybody knows that the Romans were very proficient at execution and they had no question that He was dead. Thus they did not break His legs. It furthermore would mean that Jesus successfully survived severe lacerations to His body, crucifixion, a sphere thrust into His side, entombment with about 75 pounds of spices wrapped into His body, three days with no food and water, woke up then without any medical assistance having lost most of His blood, walked over, pushed the stone away, overpowered the Roman guard and announced Himself as alive from the dead. And then just to make the point, He walked seven miles to Emmaus on feet that only a matter of hours before had been pierced through with great large nails. Ridiculous.

Then there is the no-burial theory. There's some through history who have said Christ was never put in the tomb so you shouldn't be surprised they didn't find Him there. He was thrown into a pit for executed criminals, He never was in the tomb. He wasn't there on Sunday because they didn't put Him there on Friday. That theory doesn't work either. You have to answer the question, why did the leaders seal a tomb with nobody in it? And why did they put a guard over the tomb with nobody in it? And then why would they invent the lie that the body was stolen if they had thrown it on a heap of bodies?

And then there is the hallucination theory that says all the appearances of Jesus were not real, they were only hallucinations. The disciples wanted to see Him so badly that they thought they saw Him. That theory doesn't work either. Would they have died as martyrs for that hallucination? How could the church be built on hallucinations and last? And did 500 people who all saw Him at the same moment in time all have the same hallucination? Five hundred hallucinating the same thing at one moment?

Furthermore, since the disciples didn't expect the resurrection and were sad and unbelieving, how could they be pathologically prepared to hallucinate one? And by the way, where was the corpse? If it was a hallucination, the body should have still been in the grave.

Then there is the telepathy theory that there was no physical resurrection, but God sent back mental messages to the disciples so they would think that Jesus had risen from the dead. This theory doesn't work, it makes God a liar and a deceiver. It founds Christianity on deceit, makes liars out of the disciples for claiming to have touched and held Jesus. And it must have been not just a telepathic still picture, but it must have been a telepathic movie because it lasted for seven miles to Emmaus and then that telepathic movie held a conversation all the way along with the disciples and ate. And furthermore, where was the body? If it was just telepathy, the body should have still been there. And by the way, at first the disciples didn't recognize Jesus, does that mean God wasn't very good at making pictures that they could really understand?

And then there is the seance theory that says a medium conjured up the spirit of the dead Jesus by occult power. That doesn't work either. How was the tomb empty and where was the corpse and how could they touch Him?

And then there was the mistaken identity theory, another effort to explain away the resurrection. Somebody impersonated Jesus. Well that somebody was a very, very dedicated guy because he must have pounded nails through his feet and his hands, put a sphere in his side because that's exactly what Thomas saw. That's a pretty high price for a false impersonation. And how do you explain Him walking through a closed door? How do you explain Him creating breakfast by the Sea of Galilee? How do you explain Him appearing and vanishing and how do you explain Him ascending...ascending into heaven in a cloud with everybody watching? Furthermore, the disciples knew Jesus well enough not to be fooled, and where was the body?

Renan, the French atheist, tried to destroy the resurrection since it was based, he said, on the testimony of one eccentric, delirious frightened immoral woman named Mary Magdalene who had seven demons and was hysterical to the point of insanity. Personally I think she was a lovely person. That's a rather unfair description. Did he forget there were 500-plus other witnesses in ten separate appearances? And by the way, if Mary was so delirious, where was the body? And G.D. Yarnold(?) in his book called Risen Indeedsuggests that the body of Jesus evaporated into gases in three days.

There's one more that is really the best of the bad, we'll call it the theft theory. It's been the most popular one through the centuries and that is that the body of Jesus was stolen. That's the only one that explains where the body went, except for Yarnold saying it went into gas in three days which I haven't found anybody but him to believe. But the only one that answers the body being gone is the theft theory.

Now you have to ask the question then, who stole the body? Somebody might say the Jews stole the body. No, the Jews would never do that. The Jews were not about to fabricate a resurrection of Jesus Christ, for sure. They were the ones who had the tomb sealed and the Roman guard set there. You say, "Well then it must have been the Romans who stole the body?" No, the Romans had nothing to

gain by stealing the body. In fact, the Roman soldiers were afraid for their life when the body was gone because they knew the penalty for a Roman soldier loosing someone he is responsible to guard.

Well that leaves only the disciples, and that's the popular view, that the disciples stole the body. The first question you have to ask is, would they steal the body? They didn't really believe Jesus was going to rise, they were disoriented, doubting, struggling, fearful, confused. They had been scattered when Jesus was captured. Even their leader was a denier of Jesus vociferously. And when the women heard of the resurrection, according to Luke 24:11, it sounded to them, it says, like a fairy tale. They didn't really expect it, so why would they feel they needed to pull it off? Furthermore, would they then steal the body, go out and die as martyrs for a deceit? I mean, give them a little credit. They may have been from Galilee, but they were a little bit intelligent. You don't steal a body, fabricate a resurrection, and then die as a martyr for it.

Now even if they would have stolen the body, how could they have stolen the body? Are they going to be able to overpower the Roman soldiers? Are they going to be able to defeat them or deceive them? And then are they going to be able to roll the stone away and then are they going to unravel Jesus from all of His cloth, haul Him out of there and then put that cloth back exactly where it was as if it was still wrapped on His body and His body just ascended out of it? Are they going to take the pain-staking effort to do that while the Roman soldiers are outside and they're engaged in some kind of conflict?

And some have said,"Well they bribed the Roman soldiers." With what? With what? "The foxes had holes, the birds of the air had nests, the Son of Man had nowhere to lay His head," and He reminded His would-be followers that those were the conditions of following Him. This is the very lie, the disciples stealing the body, that Matthew deals with at the end of this gospel. Look with me at verses 11 to 15.

"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 sum of money to the soldiers and said, 'You are to say His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we are asleep. And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.' 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."

Here, I believe, is the greatest validation of the resurrection and it is a climax for Matthew. This narrative presents the rich, convincing apologetic that affirms the resurrection of Jesus Christ more than any other. Now keep in mind, the evil religious leaders of Israel had tried with desperation to eliminate Jesus. They used all kinds of vicious means. They started out using mass murder to try to kill Him as a child and massacred babies, thinking they would catch Him. Then they used curses and

accusations of demonic power to try to discredit Him. They used betrayal to capture Him. They used injustice to sentence Him. They used blackmail to get Him executed. They used force to keep His body in the tomb. And now they use bribery and lying to silence the truth of His resurrection. Mass murder, curses, accusations, betrayal, injustice, blackmail, force, lies, bribery, every imaginable wicked avenue to prevent Jesus Christ from accomplishing the purposes of God.

But it all was fruitless. The mass murder failed. The curses and accusations that He was demonic He turned on them. The betrayal cost the life of the betrayer. The injustice only brought Him to God's justice where He paid the penalty for your sins and mine. And so it went. He turned the table in every instance.

Now the plot unfolds a little earlier in the chapter. Go back to verse 2. "Behold, a severe earthquake had occurred for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning and his garment as white as snow and the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. And the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid for I know you're looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here for He has risen just as He said, come see the place where He was lying and go quickly and tell His disciples that He's risen from the dead and behold, He is going before you into Galilee. There you will see Him. Behold, I've told you.' And they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. They come up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid, go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee and there they shall see Me.'"

Now listen, at the moment of the resurrection there were two spectators. There was group one, the Roman soldiers. There was group two, the women. They saw this unbelievable thing. To what degree or another they perceived it, we can't know what was in their mind, but we know what happened. There was an earthquake and then the stone rolled away and then appeared a blazing glorious supernatural angel. And the guards shook for fear and fell over in a coma. They were knocked out, out of sheer fright. The angel then said to the women, "You go tell the disciples." The women left and on the way to find the disciples, and we don't know where they were located at this time, but on the way to finding the disciples, they met Jesus...or rather Jesus met them to confirm His resurrection. So that group, the women, were going to find the disciples to tell them He was alive.

That leaves the other group, the Romans. These soldiers finally wake up. And verse 11 pulls the narrative together. "While they," that is the women, "were on their way to the disciples, some of the guard came into the city." So you've got these two groups that have been eyewitnesses to resurrection phenomena, the women are headed for the disciples and the soldiers are headed for the chief priests. Both are going to report the reality of what they experienced. The women, of course, have the greater experience in having met Jesus on the way and touched Him. Some of the guard, not all of them, verse 11. The rest may have stayed at the grave, some of them may have just left,

fearing the whole thing. But some of them had to go to the chief priests and make a report. Why? Because it was the chief priests who wanted to be sure that Jesus stayed in that grave. The chief priests had prevailed upon Pilate to set a guard there. Verse 62 of Matthew 27, "On the next day, which is the one after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate and said, 'Sir, we remember when He was still alive, that deceiver said, "After three days I am to rise again." Therefore give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, lest the disciples come and steal Him away and say to the people He has risen from the dead and the last deception will be worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard. Go, make it as secure as you know.'" He says you have a guard, I'll give you one of my guards, you take them and make it as secure as you know how. They went and made the grave secure and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone. The Jews wanted that grave secure. They wanted it sealed so they would know whether the seal was broken and somebody had taken Him out of there.

And as they were on guard, there was a tremendous earthquake. The stone rolled away in front of their eyes. A blazing angel appeared. They were literally frightened to death and they collapsed as dead men. When they came to, they had to report to the chief priests. The chief priests had taken them and instructed them and furthermore they were about to report to Pilate because they had failed as Roman soldiers to guard effectively.

Now follow this. When they went to the Jews and told them, according to verse 11, all that had happened, the Jewish leaders were then aware of the phenomena. They knew there was an earthquake. They knew there was the rolling of the stone. There was a blazing angel. There was a fearful situation. The body was gone. You can be sure that when those soldiers came to, ever so carefully and ever so tenuously, they peeked back into that tomb to see if the body was still there, only to find that it had gone and the cloth was lying where the body was and the head piece where the head was and they must have come and told those leaders the whole story of what had happened. And they knew that this was exactly what they feared, that on the third day He would be gone. And it had come to pass exactly as they had been warned. Listen to this, the chief priests then are the first ones to hear the message of the resurrection from an eyewitness. They got the word apparently before the disciples were reached by the women. And their story was truthful. They showed the chief priests everything that had happened...the earthquake, the stone moved, the angel, their unconsciousness, the body gone, the grave clothes.

You'd think that would be enough to convince them this was the Messiah, right? Listen to their own words as they looked up at Jesus on the cross in Matthew 27:42. They said this, "He saved others, He cannot save Himself. He is the king of Israel? Let Him now come down from the cross and we shall believe in Him." Oh? He did come down from the cross and He came through the open grave. Did they believe in Him? No...no. They had just heard an eyewitness report of the resurrection, you would have thought they would have said, "Wait, wait, wait, we want to know more about this. Could you go over those facts again? Gentlemen, we need to go to that tomb. We better examine this. We

better think this through. This might indeed be the Messiah."

Tragically they were apostate. The god of this world had blinded their minds lest the glorious light of the gospel of Jesus Christ should shine unto them. They were stone dead black blind. The news brought shock. The news brought fear. The news did not bring repentance or faith. But they certainly are without excuse. They didn't even question. They didn't even investigate. They simply fabricated a plot. Look at verse 12. "And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together," stop at that point.

This is technical language. This means they had a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin was the ruling body. Whoever the chief priests were who received this information, collected together the 70 leaders of Israel who were like the Congress, responsible for adjudication among the Jews. They had a meeting of the Sanhedrin. The formal nature of that meeting is indicated by the phrase in verse 12, "And counseled together." That is a technical phrase used at least four other times in Matthew's gospel, chapter 12 verse 14, 22:15, 27:1 and 7. And in each case it has to do with a formal resolution passed by a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin.

So the ruling body met. And the chief priests said, "We've got something to tell you. That Jesus is not in the grave and there was an earthquake and the stone moved without any human being, and there was a blazing brilliant angel that frightened the soldiers to the point where they fell over as dead men. And when they came to, He was gone and the grave clothes were there where they were when His body was lying in that place." And they discussed it.

And their conclusion...verse 12..."They gave a large sum of money to the soldiers and said, 'You are to say 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.'" Unbelievable. This is the apex of Israel's apostasy. They rejected the Messiah at His birth. They rejected the Messiah during His life. They rejected His miracles and His words. They nailed Him on a cross and now to cap it off they lie about the evidence of His resurrection. They're beyond hope. This is the ultimate apostasy. Don't miss it, Matthew's gospel is not only about the majesty of the King, it is about the rejection of the King.

So, that ruling body of Israel by formal vote established a resolution. The resolution had three parts. Part one, bribe the soldiers to lie. They gave them much *arguria*, much silver money. They had bought Judas for thirty pieces of silver. They were in to bribing people. They were in to buying people. They had bought Judas for thirty pieces. This must have been much more because it's very likely there were at least a dozen soldiers. And this was a very important issue to them, they could not have the rumor running around that Jesus was raised from the dead and they couldn't allow these soldiers to propagate that. So they had to pay them a high enough sum to get their desired results. This was likely a costly operation. But remember, the coffers of Israel at that point were full to overflowing

because they were in the business of religious extortion in the temple. They had plenty to deal with and were glad to pay a high price for this kind of lie.

Second part of their resolution...first, bribe the soldiers to lie...secondly, get the soldiers to lie. In other words, make them propagate the lie. Verse 13, "You are to say, spread this around, His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep." They had to say something because the grave was empty. This was the lie that made most sense. All the other theories, the swoon theory, the no-burial theory, the hallucination, telepathy, seance theory, all those...theory of an imposter...they don't really make sense. This one might for a moment sound believable. It does account for the missing body. So, the soldiers became preachers of the anti-resurrection.

So as soon as the disciples got the message, they started preaching the resurrection. As soon as the soldiers got the money, they started preaching that the disciples stole His body. This was the conflict that resulted in the persecution of the church. This is why the Sanhedrin in the book of Acts said to the preachers of the resurrection, "Stop preaching. You have filled all Jerusalem with this doctrine, we won't tolerate it." And they whipped them and lacerated them because they had hired men to preach the opposite.

The third element was to protect the soldiers. If they were going to have these guys lie, they were going to have to back them up a little bit because if Pilate and their superiors found out that they had lost the body they were supposed to be guarding, it would cost them their life. So in verse 14 it says that if this should come to the governor's ears, we'll win him over and keep you out of trouble. They knew they had Pilate under their thumb. They had blackmailed him so many times. There had been a number of incidents where the Jewish leadership had put Pilate in a very difficult position. In fact, they had done it so often, blackmailing him so often to do what they wanted that when it came to crucifying Jesus, all they had to say to him was, "If you don't do this we'll tell Caesar," and he had to do it. They had total control of Pilate. And so they decided in their little group, "Don't you soldiers worry, we'll take care of Pilate if he finds out you failed to do your duty. We'll persuade him. We'll secure you, or we'll make you anxiety free," the literal term. We'll plead your case if it looks like a court martial that could lead to your death.

So they bribed the soldiers with money and protection in return for the propagation of the lie. Crass, self-indulgent, self-protective soldiers that they were, they had no interest in Jesus anyway, verse 15 says, "And they took the money and did as they had been instructed, as they had been taught," *didasko.*The plot is established, they're going to lie about the resurrection.

Now mark this, the soldiers knew it was a lie, the chief priests knew it was a lie and the Sanhedrin knew it was a lie. The Romans were indifferent pagans, in it for their own money and self-protection. The chief priests were religious charlatans, frauds and phonies who had built up a religious system which controlled the people and thought they were losing it to Jesus and His sect. And the Sanhedrin

was the formal counsel of an apostate nation that had fully and fully, totally rejected their Messiah. What it points out is that facts are not all that is necessary for faith.

Back to verse 15. "And this story was widely spread among the Jews and is to this day." It worked. There were a lot of Jews who bought it, who believed it. Apparently they never checked out the facts. They knew the truth, did those soldiers, but they lied for money and protection. They had been there, they had experienced to some degree the phenomena of the resurrection. They told it like it was yet they were not believers. It's almost as if God wouldn't put the blessed truth of the resurrection in the mouth of an unbeliever, but He would let them proclaim a lie. And for His own purposes it became the common story that everybody believed. You know when Matthew wrote his gospel...look at the end of verse 15..."It still is to this day," he says. This is 25 years later, this is 60 A.D., 25 years later this is still the story, the disciples stole His body.

A century later lived a man by the name of Justin Martyr, this is what he wrote: "You, the Jews, selected men and sent them into all the world proclaiming that a certain atheistic and lawless sect had arisen from one Jesus, a Galilean deceiver whom we crucified but His disciples stole Him by night from the tomb and deceived men by saying He had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven," end quote. One century later that is still the prevailing lie. Twenty centuries later it is still the prevailing lie, that His body was stolen. This is the last Jewish insult against the Messiah. The King is finally, fully, totally, completely rejected. The nation is apostate. A matter of days later God called the church to become His people and Israel is set aside in judgment until her purging is complete.

So the narrative of the lie about the resurrection is complete. But what's the point? I mean, why do this? Isn't this a negative way to end a glorious gospel? Doesn't this leave us with a bad taste in our mouth instead of the glory of the triumph of the resurrection? Couldn't Matthew have presented proof of the resurrection rather than a lie about it? Couldn't he have listed all the reasons why we believe it?

He could have, but it wouldn't have been as effective. It would have been strong. It's all in the gospels. You can check Mark, Luke and John, it's all there. They write about the empty tomb. They write about the grave clothes lying perfectly. They write about the earthquake, the stone removed, the angel. They write about Jesus appearing and people touching Him and feeling Him and eating with Him and walking with Him and talking with Him. They write about the fact that over 500 people saw Him, says the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. They write about at least ten appearances...Mary Magdalene, the women, Peter, two on the road to Emmaus, twelve on a Sunday evening and the twelve again a week later, seven in Galilee by the sea, 500 in Galilee saw Him, James saw Him, eleven on the Mount of Olives saw Him ascend. All of those ten appearances are there and I suppose Matthew could have said, "Now to prove the resurrection, I want to give the microphone to Mary Magdalene. I want to give the pen to the women. I want Peter to write down a little bit. I want the two that were on the road to Emmaus to give their testimony. And then I want you to hear a few brief words from the Twelve and then I'd like the seven to describe what happened in Galilee. And I have

some select folks from the 500, James has a word and we'll all tell you about the Ascension."

And the critics would have said, "Sure...sure, you line up all the people who wanted to believe in Him, all the people who were His followers, of course they're going to say that." Matthew knows that. So he says, "Let's...let's put the proof in the mouth of His lying enemies." That's exactly what he does...exactly what he does. It's an amazing approach, quite amazing. As convincing as the argument of His followers might have been, this is more convincing. Follow this thought now, and this pulls it together.

It was impossible for them to deny that Christ had by some supernatural means left the grave. It was impossible to deny that. They didn't try to deny it. They reported that. So, it was impossible then to give any other explanation than the one they invented. They either had to say it was a supernatural event and He was gone. Or they had to say somebody stole Him. Only two options. And so naturally the leaders opted out for option number two, somebody stole Him. We'll fabricate that even though they knew it wasn't the case.

So ask yourself, is that believable? Any fool reading that knows it isn't believable. If you just read that you're going to say, "That is ridiculous." And that's Matthew's reason for putting it here. How could the cowardly disciples, confused...if you've been reading through Matthew to this point you know what a mess they are. Peter's denying Christ to one little tiny servant girl. The rest of the disciples have scattered all over the place in confusion and doubt. The boldest of all of them was a denier of Christ. They were all in fear in the garden and fled. How in the world are they ever going to get together, overpower the Romans, push the stone, steal Christ? They don't have any money to bribe the solders. They don't have any force to overpower them. Furthermore, the soldiers said they did it while they were...what?...asleep. And if they did it while they were asleep, how in the world did they know they did it? I mean, if you went into a court of law and said, "Judge, I have an eyewitness. They did it while I was asleep." What????? And did they go in and take off all the grave clothes and put them back in their proper place? And did they remove the stone without waking the soldiers? Furthermore, they didn't even believe in the resurrection. Read Mark 9:10 and 32; Mark 16, Matthew 17:23; Luke 9:45; Luke 24:17 to 20, they didn't believe in the resurrection. Furthermore, it's impossible to believe that all the Roman soldiers went to sleep. There were four watches in one night, an eight-hour period, four two-hour watches. Are we to believe that they fell asleep on that short a watch, just two hours? And that they all fell asleep together, and knowing that the penalty was death? It is impossible.

Furthermore, what fool is going to believe that you have to bribe soldiers to report the truth? You don't bribe people to tell the truth. The bribe exposes it as a lie. It's absolutely ludicrous to assume that the guards were asleep and could still report exactly what happened. Ludicrous to believe that the disciples had somehow pulled this off. The whole thing is so stupid, it's self-condemned. And that is Matthew's point. When men have given their best shot to disproving the resurrection, they look like fools. It offends reason. It offends logic. It offends faith. And thus does Matthew prove the resurrection

from the lips of his lying enemies. It is the most convincing evidence I know of.

Simon Greenleaf, former Harvard professor of Law, wrote, quote: "All that Christianity asks of men is that they would be consistent with themselves, that they would treat its evidences as they treat the evidence of other things and that they would try to judge its actors and witnesses as they deal with their fellow men when testifying to human affairs and actions in human tribunals. The result would be an undoubting conviction of their integrity, ability and truth," end quote. Just apply to the resurrection of Jesus Christ the same reasonable, consistent patterns of logic and understanding and you will come up with the fact that He rose from the dead. The facts demand it, beloved, and human destiny demands it. If Jesus is dead and never rose, we are damned...we are damned. A man who rejects these explicit facts is a fool for such wicked logic. The man who rejects the resurrection is a fool also because he sentences his own soul to eternal damnation.

If the dead are not raised, Christ is not raised, we are not raised, we are of all men most miserable. But the Bible says Jesus is not here, He's risen. In John 19:14 He said this, "Because I live, you too shall live also." In Romans 10 Paul says, "If you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead and confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, you shall be saved." Saved from what? Sin and eternal damnation. You will receive the forgiveness of sin and eternal life.

The song writer said, "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 for His foes. He arose a victor o'er the dark domain and He lives forever with His saints to reign." That is our hope, that in this brief life which is a vapor that appears for a little time and vanishes away, we will put our faith in Jesus Christ and through death enter in to an eternity which God has prepared for those that love Him. All of that is founded on the resurrection. Only a fool would deny the facts, they fly in the face of logic. Only a fool would deny the reality of the resurrection, it flies in the face of everything the human heart could hope for in eternal life. Let's bow together in prayer

While your heads are bowed for just a moment, R.A. Torrey years ago told a story. He wrote, "I was standing before the window of an art store where a picture of the crucified Christ was on exhibition. As I stood on the sidewalk and gazed, I was conscious of the approach of another, and turning beheld a little lad gazing intently at the picture. I noticed that he was a little street child. I thought I would speak to him so I asked, pointing to the picture, 'Do you know who He is?' 'Yes, that's our Savior,' he said with a mingled look of pity and surprise that I should not know what the picture represented. With an evident desire to enlighten me further, he continued after a pause, 'Them, the soldiers, the Roman soldiers,' and with a long drawn sigh, he said, 'that woman crying is His mother.' He waited apparently for me to question him further, then thrust his little hands in his pockets and with a reverent and subdued voice and a little tear in his eye, said, 'They killed Him, mister, yes sir, they killed Him.' I looked at the little ragged fella and said, 'Where did you learn this?' He replied, 'At the Mission Sunday School.' Full of thoughts regarding the benefits of Mission Sunday Schools, I turned

and resumed my walk, leaving the lad looking still at the picture. I hadn't walked a block when I heard a childish voice say, 'Mister, mister.' I turned, he was running toward me, then he paused, up when his little hand and with a triumphant sound in his voice and a radiant face, he said, 'I forgot to tell you, He rose again.' His message delivered, he smiled, waved his hand, turned and went his way."

Not enough to have Him on the cross, you can't forget to say, "He rose again...Because He lives, we live in Him."

Lord Jesus, even this hour, give life to those who are spiritually dead. Quicken those in the grave of their sin. Father, I pray that for those who are in this service in the hearing of this message who have never given their life to Jesus Christ, that this might be the moment of their birth into newness of life that their hearts might be flooded with Your forgiveness and the hope of eternal life. May they see the One who died and rose for them, the incarnate God, the Redeemer who atoning for their sins so perfectly satisfied Your justice that You raised Him from the dead and with Him all those who believe. O, God, may You do a saving work in many hearts even now, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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