

## **Rick Miller - Resurrection, Too Good To Be True? - April 09, 2023**

Let's take our seats and open up our Bibles to Mark Chapter 16.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your word. We pray that we would have ears to hear what the Spirit says. And Lord we thank you for this day to meditate on your death and resurrection. And of course that should be every day, Lord, but just something special coming together on this day and the worldwide church worshipping you for what you have done. We thank you. And we pray, Lord, that this resurrection day will be a turning point for many where they begin to walk in newness of life that's available through Christ, through faith in Christ.

Lord, we don't want to just be satisfied where we are. We want to move ahead. We want to press on to the deep things of God, having more victory over sin, walking in your will, discovering your paths, Lord. So we thank you for the beautiful future and hope that we have, not only in heaven, but even in this life to see your will accomplished even though we stumble often as we read earlier.

Young men stumble badly, but they that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength. There's hope for all of us, Lord, no matter where we are spiritually. You always give us hope to rise to new places that we never thought possible, if we will focus on the author and finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. Fix your eyes on him.

We thank you for the beauty and the simplicity of your salvation that any of us can do it, Lord. It's not just for the diligent and the disciplined. It's for us, those of us who are weak. If we will humble our hearts and cling to you Jesus, you will pour your life into us, and we thank you for that. In Jesus name. Amen.

So the title of my sermon today is Resurrection, Too Good to Be True? I want to start out in Mark chapter 16 and go through a few verses and then we'll jump back to Mark 14, look at the crucifixion and events that transpired there, and then get into the resurrection and hopefully, if not this week, next week, get into Romans 6 that talks about the real spiritual aspects of the resurrection for us as Christians on a daily basis.

But I wanted to start off today in Mark 16:9.

*9Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. 10She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. 11And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.*

So that's the phrase I want you to kind of focus on. Notice that they did not believe when they were given this report by Mary Magdalene.

*12After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. 13And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either.*

So here we see it twice. They're just not believing the reports. Verse 14:

*14Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. 15And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. 17And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."*

*19So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.*

So the thing I really wanted to point out here was this issue of them not believing. Verse 11 says they did not believe. Verse 13 says they did not believe them either. And then when Jesus appears to them, he rebukes their unbelief and hardness of heart because they did not believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

Then of course, there's the classic story of Doubting Thomas, right? The Lord had appeared to the disciples. Thomas wasn't there, and so Thomas said, look, I'm not even going to believe the report of all the disciples that have already seen him. He says I won't believe until I see him and I can put my hand in his scars and in his side where he had been pierced.

Then remember when Jesus finally did appear to Thomas, he said, you believe because you see, blessed are those who believe and they don't see. And that's really us, right, that we have to believe the reports of others? That's what the word of God is. It's a testimony from others. But notice what Jesus said.

He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart. See, it wasn't just a matter of them needing to see proof of the resurrected Christ. It was a matter of a hardness of heart. It was a spiritual condition that they were not hearing from God. But really, that's the condition of mankind, as it were, that without the Holy Spirit in us, our hearts are hard, our hearts are full of unbelief.

It's not so much that we would have done better if we were there and these guys are so unique. What's wrong with them? Why? Why don't they believe? Why don't they believe the reports of Mary Magdalene? Why don't they believe those who are on the road to Emmaus and talked with Jesus?

No, without them having the Holy Spirit, without them being born again spiritually, the scripture is showing us that even those who walked with Jesus, saw him do miracles, saw him walk on water, saw him raise people from the dead, were with him for three years, still had a hardness of heart to where they just were not in touch with what God was doing.

If we look back then on previous chapters that led up to this point, I think it tells us even more about the condition of the human heart that is not born again, that's not filled with the Holy Spirit. Let's go back to Mark 14:22.

*22And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."*

*23Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24And He said to them, "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. 25Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."*

*26And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.*

So going out to the Mount of Olives would be, of course, where Jesus would begin to really take on the sin of the world where the Bible says he was praying,

he was agonizing before the Father “If it be your will, let this cup pass from me.”

It said he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood. He was beginning to take on the sin of the world. This is right before he leaves to go to the cross and notice, that he says “Take, eat; this is my body” in verse 22. Then he gave the cup to drink from it. This is my blood, this is my body. This is the new covenant.

So the new covenant, that's obviously a very significant term. We're talking about the new covenant as compared to the old covenant. The Old Testament, the law that said, here's the law. If you keep it, God will bless you. If you break it, God will curse you and judge you and the purpose of the law, we know from studying Paul's writings, is to humble us and drive us to Christ.

We would look at the law and say, oh no, I cannot keep God's righteous standards. I'm in trouble. I need a sacrifice. I need a savior. That's the way God intended for the law to work. Now, unfortunately, it didn't do that and everybody that was the religious leadership, the Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees, they took the law and twisted it and made it into something that they felt they could keep. Their hearts really were hardened before God.

It did not have that humbling effect that God intended for it to have. And they were self-righteous. We all have self-righteousness in us, but some people are really bound by self-righteousness and it's not really fun to be around self-righteous people, right?

They kind of look down on you. They think they're better and this is never a good characteristic. God wants us to be humble. He wants us to realize our condition of need. If you don't have that understanding, then you really can't walk with God.

If you think you're fine the way you are, ‘I'm good enough, nobody's perfect, I'm only human’ and you're not allowing the law to really humble you to say, ‘yes, the law is God's standard, it's God's holiness, he does call me to live a holy life, but Lord, I can't do it without you. I need not only your forgiveness, but I need the power of your Holy Spirit.’

That's what the new covenant is really all about. This is such a critical turning point where Jesus is saying, okay, the new covenant is about to be established and it's all around my blood and my body. It just seems odd for someone to say, “take, eat my body; drink my blood.”

And of course, that reminds us of the teaching Jesus gave in John 6, when he multiplied the loaves. Remember the 5,000? He took a few loaves and fish and fed 5,000. And in that teaching, and in that time, when he multiplied the loaves, he said, I am the bread of life. Just as I fed you physically, I can feed you spiritually, so you need to eat my flesh, drink my blood.

Well, the people didn't understand what he was saying. And long story short, it said many of the disciples left him at that time. They thought he was crazy. Then at the end of that time when his disciples came to him, he said, no, the words I speak to you are spirit and they're life. I'm not saying literally eat my physical body, it's spiritual.

He's saying I'm going to go to the cross, die for your sins, rise again. I'm going to do this work of salvation. And you need to personalize it. You need to eat it, drink it, as it were. Just as we receive life from food and water and drink physically, spiritually, it's the same principle, that we receive spiritual life through trusting in Christ, through focusing on the cross.

This is why we take communion. It's just a reminder of what should be happening to us spiritually, that we're focused on the cross, that we're understanding this is how we communicate with God. It's through the cross and faith in what Jesus has done. Really everything in the Old Testament is leading up to this point of the cross.

Everything written after in the New Testament is looking back to the cross. So the cross is the focal point of the Bible. It's really the focal point of all eternity. Think of it, God coming from heaven, Christ, the second person of the Trinity, going to the cross to take upon himself our sins.

What could be more significant? This is God's work of salvation and those who see that, understand the importance of it, and literally live your life around that work of the cross, you're a wise person. A fool, on the other hand, says, 'I prayed the prayer one day and I guess I'm okay.' But no, just as you eat food daily and it sustains you, we're to partake of the cross daily for our spiritual sustenance.

So this is the process that we go through to where we become born again, where our sins are washed away. Then God comes and lives within us, and then he changes our hearts. So we won't be unbelieving, we won't have that hardness of heart. And that is what we saw happen with the disciples. We read through this account of how Jesus went to the cross, but how did the disciples react?

You see the contrast? You can't miss it. Jesus is holy, perfect, doing the will of the Father, facing whatever suffering needed to be faced, and the disciples are denying and running and fearful and missing God's plan. They're falling asleep when Jesus needed them. But you see this contrast and yet it shows again the condition of mankind, who we are versus who Jesus is.

Once the work was done, Jesus died, rose again, and ascended to heaven. Then he sent the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. This is when everything changed. The disciples were no longer with hardness of heart, unbelieving. They went out. The scripture says in Acts they turned the world upside down.

They were empowered by the Holy Spirit. People looked at them and they said, wow, these are uneducated fishermen and common people. How is it? They are so learned. How is it? They're so powerful. It says they recognized they had been with Jesus and they were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit.

They're filled with faith in the Holy Spirit. They're filled with wisdom in the Holy Spirit. These are descriptions you see in the book of Acts. So you see this contrast between these bumbling, denying, hardhearted disciples in the Gospels completely different after they were born again and the Holy Spirit came.

So that's the hope we have. You look at your life and say, man I'm messing up all the time. I don't have power. As we'll get into, probably not this week, we'll make this a two-part series and look at it probably next week, as we get into Romans. The book of Romans talks in depth about the spiritual aspects of the cross.

This is giving us a physical account of what happened to Jesus, and we're getting some hints of the spiritual impact. But the real explanation comes in the epistles where Paul questions in Roman 6, 'do you not know that when you were baptized into Christ, you were baptized into his death and his resurrection, and now you can walk in newness of life?'

So you've heard me emphasize so often for a Christian, you've got to know the book of Romans. If you want to have victory in your life, you've got to understand what happened on the cross. It's interesting where Paul lays out what Christianity is all about in the book of Romans. It's all about the cross.

It's all about what Jesus did on the cross and how mysteriously we died with him. We rose with him and just through humble faith in what Jesus has done, we can have power, we can have victory. We can overcome sin that wants to destroy us, right? Have you found out yet that you're your own worst enemy?

I mean, that's true. We live in a culture where it's all about blaming other people, right? Or, I want you to affirm my sin. I want you to tell me my sins are okay. Rather than saying, oh, wow, I'm a sinner. I need help. And most of my problems are my own fault because of the foolish choices I've made.

That's when God can start to work with a person. When there's pride in blaming others and self-righteousness you have not allowed the work of the law, the work of the Holy Spirit to have its way in you, when you are proud and self-deceived and blaming others. So we see this beautiful communion, this last supper Jesus has with the disciples.

And then let's read on in Mark 14:27.

*27 Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:*

*'I will strike the Shepherd,  
And the sheep will be scattered.'*

So Jesus knew, of course, what was going to happen. He knew and it was prophesied hundreds of years before that Christ would be struck and the sheep would be scattered. Verse 28:

*28 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."*

He's reminding them again, which he has done many times in the past, I'm going to die. I'm going to rise again. This should not be a surprise, but again, it's because of their heart. And he even told them, after three days, I will rise again. So you would've thought that by the third day there would've been a big crowd around the tomb waiting for the resurrection. I could see myself, sitting in my lawn chair with my iced tea or my cup of coffee. It's early in the morning. All right guys, this is going to happen pretty soon. The Lord said three days, the sun's about to come up, or it's starting to dawn. Boom.

No, nobody was there. Now some of the women came but not because they thought he was going to resurrect. They thought they were going to come and put some spices on his body, as it were, flowers on the grave.

And see, that's the idea, like my sermon title, 'Resurrection, Too Good To Be True'. In the disciples' minds, the reality of life and death and suffering, they'd seen it so much. I mean, if you lived in Jerusalem at that time you would see people publicly executed all the time, crucified. The Romans crucified people in a place where everyone would see it.

Because the point is, you cross Rome, you'll end up on a cross. So it kept the people in check; they're not going to rebel. They're going to go along with what Rome is telling them to do. They're going to pay their taxes; they're going to be good citizens of Rome under the dominion of the cruel hand of the Roman Empire. That's how they put them in line.

So it was understandable that the disciples were fearful because they saw the reality of death. None of those people who were crucified (that happened all the time), ever rose again. They certainly didn't expect Jesus to rise again even though he told them he would rise again.

I think there's a truth there for us where we think about our walk with God and what's possible in our life, walking with God. We can have that same attitude. It's like it's too good to be true. I can't walk in resurrection life. Even though the Lord is telling us in Roman 6, don't you know that you died with him, you rose with him and you could walk in newness of life?

Don't you know this? And yet we can get stuck in that same kind of rut of unbelief to where we're not allowing the Holy Spirit to illuminate the word of God and to bring us into that newness of life, that place of power. And so we can fall into that same trap where we look at the realities of life.

We look at the power of sin in our life, and we say I'm just addicted to this thing. I'm just overpowered by my own sin. Rather than getting before the Lord, opening the Bible and saying, Lord, reveal to me the victory that I have. What does it mean, this newness of life? What does this mean that I seem depressed, defeated, anxious all the time, Lord, but yet I see the promise of peace and joy and power.

What am I missing here, God? There has to be that pursuit of the Lord, kind of like the woman who pressed through the crowd to touch the hem of his garment. You see that determination of people in the gospels who aren't going to let anybody stop them from touching Jesus.

I think we need that same determination. Lord, I know there's power there for me. I know I can be an overcomer. But if we're just kind of casual about it and



like, oh, well I'm only human, we're not looking to the Lord, we're looking to our therapist, or we're looking to man instead of the Lord for answers that he promised.

But again, the realities of depression, the realities of sin in our life, some people are addicted. Pornography, drugs, alcohol, God has answers. God has power over sin but if we're just focused on the power of the sin instead of the power of the Lord, we're not going to overcome. So resurrection life is promised for us.

In fact, I think we are going to jump over to Romans 6:1 right now just to get a little preview of that power that's available to us. First, I'll give a little background on chapter five. Paul's talking about the great work of Christ, going to the cross, like comparing him to Adam.

Adam brought the whole human race under the power of sin. Now Jesus is the second Adam. He has come and given us power over sin by his grace, and so he ends chapter five saying;

*20 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,*

The power of Adam's sin brought the whole world under the dominion of sin, which we have no power over, and it destroys lives. Now that the second Adam has come, his wave of grace is even greater than the wave of sin that Adam brought. Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.

So it's there for us if we learn how to access it. Verse 21:

*21 So that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

So rather than letting sin and death reign in our lives, we can have that grace of Christ to overcome sin. And now he goes into chapter six saying:

*1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*

So you could read chapter five and say, 'oh, grace is just abounding through Jesus Christ, over my sin. So hey, I can just go 'sin it up' and it doesn't matter because there's grace to cover it.'

Of course Paul says, certainly not. If you're a born again Christian, one of the great changes God makes to your heart is that you want to please God. I was so amazed when I became born again at 17 years of age and I just noticed this tremendous change in my heart, that I wanted to please God.

I wanted to be with Christians. I wanted to be in the word. So I wasn't like, how much sin can I get away with and still be a Christian? It was like, no, I don't want to continue in sin. Paul says, no, you can't just continue in sin that grace might abound.

Certainly not. How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? What do you mean, Paul, that we died to sin? Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? So there's a spiritual miracle that happens when you surrender to Christ and commit to following him.

There's a new nature God gives you. That old man who was only concerned about pleasing self, he gives you now this new spirit. Verse four:

*4Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

Now, I don't have time to go into the rest of the chapter, but you get the idea here, right? That as a believer, when you surrender to Jesus, there's a power and a change that should happen in your life. That old things pass away. Behold new things have come. Your old person is buried with him through baptism and the death and you're raised from the dead, that you might walk in newness of life. See, that's the resurrection life we're talking about spiritually, that each of us can have.

Okay, back to Mark 14:28.

*28 "But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."*

*29 Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to stumble, yet I will not be."*

*30 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, even this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."*

*31 But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!" And they all said likewise.*

So this is fascinating to me that you're looking at men who are completely sold out for Jesus. I mean, they have responded to the call. Jesus called them to follow him, and they're responding and their hearts are fully dedicated toward the Lord, willing to go to death.

Has that happened to you, that kind of zeal and desire to follow Jesus to death? Has that ever happened to you, where you've seen the value of who Jesus is? Because not everybody sees that, right? Not everybody saw that during the time of Jesus. He called the rich man to follow him, but he said 'Nope, I can't do it. I've got too much wealth. I'm not going to follow you, Jesus.' And many turned away from him and would not follow him.

But when you realize the value of who Jesus is, he's the son of God. He's my creator. He has my destiny in his hand. He loves me. He has a plan for me. Yes, as Peter said, Lord, who else has the words of eternal life? We have nowhere else to go. You are the son of God. You are the son of the living God. We are going to follow you.

And I say, if that hasn't happened to you, there's something wrong with you spiritually, if you don't have a zeal for the Lord. Now this is the interesting thing. You have to come to that point of understanding the value of Jesus, that you're willing to leave everything for him. You're willing to lay down your life.

But then what you're going to discover when you come to that point of zeal and dedication to the Lord is that you don't have the power to do that in yourself, but that's the whole process of becoming a disciple.

You have to come to that place of humility and surrender, and of understanding the value of who Jesus Christ is, and you're willing to follow him.

Your heart is full of love and zeal for him but yet you still find you're overcome by sin, you still find you're struggling with the worldly desires and you still find that you fail the Lord. That's what we're seeing right here with the disciples.

‘No, Lord, we'll never deny you’. And they all said it. A lot of times we just focus on Peter, but no, all of the 11 said it. And that's a good place to be. That's a good heart to have. The Lord's not rebuking them for having that heart. He's just telling them, well, no, you're not going to be able to go to the end for me. You will deny me.

Because Jesus knew how weak they were. He knows how weak we are. But again, what makes the difference in the transformation in these disciples after the day of Pentecost? They weren't denying him anymore. They were filled with the Holy Spirit. In other words, the life of Jesus now came and lived in them.

So it was his resurrection power that enabled them to live for God, not deny him anymore, and to have power over sin and then see God's plan and destiny for their life come true. In fact, all of them ended up being martyred and none of them ran from it. There was such a transformation in these men when they were beat up and whipped for preaching Christ, they walked away from that rejoicing that they were worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ.

Isn't that crazy? So the transformation of the Holy Spirit is everything. But you have to come to that point where you're fully dedicated to the Lord, then you realize, oh, but I'm finding I cannot overcome sin in my own power. I need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. I need to be filled with his resurrection life.

Then you start to see God's plan fulfilled in your life. And so that's the process we're seeing here in the disciples. They had to recognize for themselves how weak they were, even though they were followers of Jesus. They had to realize when push came to shove, they would fail the Lord in their own strength.

And then Mark 14:32:

*32Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” 33And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed.*

So he's starting to take on the sin of the world. And Peter, James and John were kind of in his inner circle. He had the 12, but then these three he would bring in even closer. And he says, hey, Peter, James, and John, you're my closest disciples. Come and pray with me and help me through this difficult time.

*34Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.”*

*35He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will."*

*37Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? 38Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

And see there, there's a key verse. Again, your spirit is willing. Lord, I see the value of following you. Lord, I want to live for you, Jesus. But the Lord realizes your flesh is weak. And so this is what the epistles teach us, how to overcome the flesh, how not to walk in the flesh, how to walk in the spirit. Verse 39:

*39Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. 40And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.*

*41Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."*

If anybody else had been there in Peter, James and John's position, we would've all failed in the same way. You had these powers of darkness working there. They had no power to overcome. And yes, Jesus is rebuking them, but he's trying to get them to see how weak they are. There was some self-righteousness there; 'We'll never deny you.' We see later the humility that the Lord worked in the disciples where they realized, no, it's just Christ in me that gives me power to overcome sin.

Have you ever prayed and found yourself falling asleep or you're trying to read the Bible and your mind is drifting? You're just not into it. I've learned more and more just to say, Lord, please fill me with the desire. Please fill me with the power. Just always put it back on the Lord. Say, Lord, I need to be more diligent in your word. I need to be more diligent in prayer, and I know that's going to come from you to empower me. There used to be a time in my life I would make God promises, like Lord, I promise I'm going to pray longer and better Lord.

I promise I'm going to read 10 chapters a day. And it would be more about me making promises and then failing and then feeling discouraged. It's kind of like a cycle of defeat where now I've just learned, Lord, all my righteousness comes from you. Would you empower me to pray? Would you empower me to be consistent in my prayer life in times in the word, consistent in fellowship?

Then you see the Lord empower you to do these things, to have these disciplines in your life. And then you're not proud about it because you're like, well, I know I was a failure. It was God's grace that empowered me to be a good disciple. Let's continue to read verse in 14:43.

*43And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead Him away safely."*

*45As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.*

*46Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. 47And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.*

We know who that was. It was Peter.

*48Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? 49I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled."*

*50Then they all forsook Him and fled.*

All his disciples forsook him and fled.

*51 Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, 52 and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.*

*53 And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were assembled all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. 54 But Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.*

*55 Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. 56 For many bore false witness against Him, but their testimonies did not agree.*

*57 Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58 "We heard Him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.' "* 59 But not even then did their testimony agree.

*60 And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?" 61 But He kept silent and answered nothing.*

*Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"*

*62 Jesus said, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."*

*63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64 You have heard the blasphemy! What do you think?"*

*And they all condemned Him to be deserving of death.*

*65 Then some began to spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophecy!" And the officers struck Him with the palms of their hands.*

66Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. 67And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth."

68But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.

69And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is one of them." 70But he denied it again.

And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are one of them; for you are a Galilean, and your speech shows it."

71Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"

72A second time the rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

1Immediately, in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate. 2Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

He answered and said to him, "It is as you say."

3And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. 4Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!" 5But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.

6Now at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested. 7And there was one named Barabbas, who was chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion. 8Then the multitude, crying aloud, began to ask him to do just as he had always done for them. 9But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you



*want me to release to you the King of the Jews?” 10For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.*

*11But the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. 12Pilate answered and said to them again, “What then do you want me to do with Him whom you call the King of the Jews?”*

*13So they cried out again, “Crucify Him!”*

*14Then Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has He done?”*

*But they cried out all the more, “Crucify Him!”*

*15So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified.*

Well, I think we're going to end there today. I want to give us an opportunity for some of you to share. Let's pray.

Lord, we pray that as we have this time of sharing, that the Holy Spirit would encourage the body of Christ. And Lord, as we read this account, it humbles our hearts. Lord, the great work of salvation that you did, Lord, all eternity was leading up to this point. We will look back to this point and we will cry in heaven, behold the lamb who was slain, salvation belongs to our God.

We will worship you Lord for this great work of salvation you did. And Lord, as we contrast the obedience of Jesus to face death, even the death of the cross, with our human nature that is weak and failing and displeasing to you Lord, without redemption Lord, without the power of the cross, without the power of the Holy Spirit; Lord, we have no hope of pleasing you, of overcoming sin.

But I pray Lord for each one here, that we can examine our hearts on this Easter morning. Are we zealous after the things of God? Have we allowed the law to do its work where we've been humbled and realize our desperate state before God, in need of faith in the work that you've done, Lord, that transforming work, that mysterious work, where we died with you, we rose with you.

Lord, those who've maybe come to that point of surrendering to you and they're born again, but they're struggling with sin and they're defeated and they're depressed. Lord to see that, yes, that is our condition without the power of the

Spirit, Lord, without reckoning ourselves dead to sin and alive to God and walking in newness of life through simple faith in a great savior, Lord.

I pray for those, that the Holy Spirit illuminate that truth for them, that they can begin to walk in newness of life, forgetting those things that are behind Lord, they can press onto that higher calling, that purpose you have, to just say Lord, what do you have for me next?

And to be free of the power of sin because grace abounds. Lord, your grace through the cross, there's no limit to it. There's an ocean of it we can drink from daily Lord. So teach us to walk in this grace, Lord. Doesn't mean we're perfect, we all stumble daily, but when we're filled with your spirit we rise up after we stumble, we learn our lessons and we move on to the next thing you have for us Lord.

And so, Lord, we yield our minds to the Spirit, to teach us, to illuminate these truths as we go this week. Speak through your people now Lord, in Jesus name. Amen.