

Topical Message
This Resurrection Sunday Might Be The Most Important One Of My Life
Pastor JD

KAPONO: Would you join me as we pray this morning? Lord, we thank You for this time of worship where we proclaim Your name. Lord Jesus, we thank You for this time that we can get together and really dig into Your word, Lord.

So would You speak to us and guide us and lead us this morning? There's a reason why we are here. Even maybe for some of us we came kicking and screaming, Lord. But we are here. And we thank You, Lord. So would You speak to us and do what You will? In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

PASTOR JD: Amen and amen. And good morning and welcome. So glad you're here. You can be seated. Those of you online, we're so glad that you're joining with us. Okay. Here we go. Wait for it. He is risen.

[Cheering] [Applause]

Thank you, Kapono. But just sit down and we'll — we're going to try that again.

[Laughter]

And there's a reason for it because the word “indeed” is going to come up today. Okay? So here's how it's going to go down. I say, “He is risen,” and you respond with “He is risen indeed.” Okay. Ready? He is risen.

[Congregation says, “He is risen indeed!”]

Okay. I can start now. Good job. Hey, how about the children's ministry? Man, if you were blessed even half as much as I was, you were blessed, like over the top. That was — I love it. Praise the Lord for the kids, you know?

All right. Hey, before we jump in, I want to apprise you of a last-minute decision I made in my time with the Lord yesterday, early morning, concerning Tuesday night's prayer meeting to simply humble myself before you and make a plea to you for spiritual warfare prayer. And not just for me, but for all those that are going through intense demonic attack, the likes of which has never been experienced before, people I've been talking with.

And so it's going to come by way of *Ephesians 6, 10 through 20*; I know a passage familiar to most. But I asked the Lord to give me fresh eyes to just, you know, and bring light to it, because we all know about the armor of God.

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And boy, I tell you, that's a prayer God's quick answer when you pray, "God open Your word up to me in a new way. I've taught it. I've read it a jillion times. I know it. I've quoted it. I've memorized it. But I want to read it as if it's for the first time. And as I do, please, the Holy Spirit of God speaking and bringing light to the Holy word of God, to the Holy people of God."

And I would encourage you to do that as well. So I made the decision, a last-minute decision. That's okay. The staff works well under pressure. So they're getting used to it by now. So after I do this, I'm going to turn the prayer meeting over to our assistant pastors, at which time, if you'll be so gracious as to allow me to leave, I need to get home to my children. So this will be Tuesday night, 7:00 p.m. It will be livestreamed for those of you online. Now note the time. 7:00 p.m., not 7:30 like our midweek Bible studies, but 7:00 p.m. And that's Hawaii Standard Time.

All right, let's get to it. So looking forward to this. I chose to title today's Resurrection Sunday sermon 'This Resurrection Sunday Might Be The Most Important One Of My Life.' Is that dramatic enough for you? I know it might sound like it, but if you'll hear me out, I'll explain the reasons why.

And I'm going to do that by first going through selected passages in *1 Corinthians 15*. You can join me there at this time. Then after that, we're going to focus on specific verses that explain why this Resurrection Sunday may, in fact, be the most important one ever. So let's start where it all starts, with the Gospel.

1 Corinthians, Chapter 15, the first four verses. This is the Apostle Paul writing his first letter to the church in Corinth. And by the Holy Spirit he writes, *verse 1*, "**Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.**"

Don't get too stressed out or have anxiety about that just yet. Okay. We're going to explain it.

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[Verse 3] **“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”**

Now, *1 Corinthians 15*, beginning in *verse 12*. I love this. You're going to have to let me have this. This is the Apostle Paul at his best, inspired by the Holy Spirit. He's going to do something here that is fantastic, fabulous. Listen to what he does. **“But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? [Huh? That's not in the original.] [Oh, he's just getting started.] [Verse 13.] [Um.] If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And [Verse 14] if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.”** [Bye.]

You'll forgive the theatrics and the dramatic illustration. But you see what he's doing here, don't you? You see where he's going here, don't you? He's almost saying — well, he's not almost; he is. Let's just take your false teaching of no resurrection and let's walk it out, see what it looks like. So you say there is no such thing as the resurrection. Hmm. Hmm. Things that make you go, hmm.

Okay. Let's — I'll play. I'll play. So if there's no resurrection, then Jesus the Christ even hasn't been raised from the dead. And let's take it further. And if Christ hasn't been resurrected, then what? What are we doing here? What are you doing here? Why am I preaching? It's pointless. So is your faith. Have a nice Resurrection Sunday afternoon.

And then he says this in *verse 15*. **“More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified [Prophesied] about God that He raised Christ from the dead. But He did not raise Him if in fact the dead are not raised.”**

Boy, he just, I mean, he takes it and he turns it. I would have loved to have been a fly on a camel to watch the expression on their faces. You know, sometimes there's a sanctified sarcasm, God ordained, Spirit led when you're dealing with people like Paul was dealing with. No such thing as a resurrection. What are you talking about? Wait. What are you talking about? No, if what you're saying is true, then Christ didn't — wasn't raised from the dead. And if Christ wasn't raised from the dead, then what in the world am I doing

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preaching that Christ was raised from the dead? And what in the world are people thinking when they put faith in Christ who was resurrected from the dead?

And it's all pointless and useless, and worse, we're under a curse because we've borne false witness, testimony, testifying that God was raised, that God raised Christ from the dead.

And you know what the capital punishment was under the law of Moses for a false prophet who wasn't 100% accurate? Not 99.99999 ad infinitum. Death. That's called a deterrent.

Well, now I'm dead, and I ain't being resurrected from the dead if what you say is true.

Now, this is all going to click in in a second here. *Verse 16.* **“For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ [*Verse 17*] has not been raised, your faith is futile; [*And check it out.*] [*Right back on you, baby.*] you are still [*Dead*] in your sins.**

[And that's not all.] [Sorry if that sounded like an infomercial.] **Then those who also have died [*You know, loved ones.*] [*Mom, dad, grandpa, grandma.*] they died in Christ...”** *[Well, what you're saying is they're lost.] [There's no hope.] [Um]* **“If only [*Verse 19*] for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.”**

I mean, at this point, I'm seeing perspiration, you know, sweat stains. That's why a lot of you don't raise your hands during worship. He's got a point. He's not wrong. Stop it, Paul.

You're making too much sense. And this is why I emphasize the importance of the word “indeed,” which we'll talk about more.

“But [*Verse 20*] Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have died.”

I close my case. Case closed. Anything else you want to talk about? Because this one's done. This is a done deal here. Nice try, though. That was very clever, but stupid. By the way, stupid's in the Bible. *Proverbs 12:1.* So don't give me stink eye.

Let's go to my favorite part. *1 Corinthians 15*, beginning in *verse 50*. Now, keep in mind, this is a declaration, a presentation, a proclamation of the Gospel, the good news of salvation found in the person of Jesus Christ. It's longer than a usual chapter. Kind of like your pastor, which is why I love it so much.

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[Verse 50] **“I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, *[Verse 51]* I tell you a mystery: *[I'm going to reveal the mystery. Oh!]* We will not all sleep *[Die]*, but we will all be changed – *[Yeah!]* in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.”**

Don't get — don't “let.” Remember last week? “Let.” We let people deceive us, lead us astray with false doctrines. No, the last trumpet, that's post-Tribulation. I'm going to remain pastoral.

There's the trumpet of angels and the trumpet of God in Scripture. There's the first trumpet and the last trumpet in Scripture. Watch this. The first trumpet's for Israel. The last trumpet's for the church. Don't get them mixed up. The Trumpet of angels is for Israel. The trumpet call of God is for the church. Boom. Mic drop. Was there something else you wanted to talk about?

Well, so what happens when the trumpet sounds? This is sounding a lot like what you wrote to the Thessalonians in your first epistle. That's because it is, which we're going to get to as well in a moment. We got a lot to get to. So let's get to it.

At the last trumpet **“...the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, *[Some of your translations render it “incorruptible.”]* and we will be changed.”**

Metamorphosis in the English. I can't pronounce the Greek word for metamorphosis-s-s-s as an Arab, but it's where we get our English word for metamorphosis. It's a complete transformation. We shed the corruptible tents of our mortal flesh, and we put on sinless, glorified bodies that are incorruptible and eternal. And it's going to happen in a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a second. And here's why.

[Verse 53] **“For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true:”**

And thank you, Kapono, for that song. Because this is what I love about the Apostle Paul and can't wait to meet him and thank him because he's going to get down and real right now. He's going to taunt death.

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“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”

Where'd you go? And this is where, as we just sung — and this is a — talk about sanctified sarcasm. He's personifying death and now he's taunting it. Hey, death, come here.

“Where [Verse 55], O death, is your victory [Now, huh?]? [Emphasis added.] Where, O death, is your sting? [Ha!] The sting of death [Verse 56] is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Would you pray with me?

On this Resurrection Sunday celebration, we find ourselves incapable of even beginning to express how profoundly grateful and thankful we are to You, Jesus, for defeating death in and through and by Your resurrection from the dead as the firstfruits, so that those of us who have experienced the death of loved ones can, along with the Apostle Paul on this Resurrection Sunday, thank You with the assurance that indeed You have risen.

Lord, we thank You, we love You, and we can't wait to meet You in the air and forever be with You. Would You bless this to our hearts, the application of it to our lives? We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

So by my estimation, I preached 22 Resurrection Sunday sermons, counting today, since Kellie and I stepped out in faith to start this, God's church. The last Resurrection Sunday sermon, last year in 2025, I couldn't and didn't know that it would be the last Resurrection Sunday I would have with my wife.

Please know I'm not in any way seeking pity. What I am seeking is the Lord and His choosing and using of me now that my wife is home with the Lord. In other words, last year's Resurrection Sunday was her last one. And this year it could be yours, or it could be all of ours. I think you'd agree that prophetically everything happening in today's world is changing so rapidly that one cannot conclude anything but it being precisely according to Bible prophecy.

So if that's true, and it is, then that means the pre-Tribulation rapture could truly happen before Resurrection Sunday next year, meaning today would be our last one, and as such, the most important one. Have you ever thought about it like that? Let's flip it around.

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Conversely, if the pre-Tribulation rapture doesn't happen before Resurrection Sunday next year — please Jesus (Crying sound) — some of you may not be here next year. Wow, Pastor, you're really in a morbid mood today, huh? Well, you know what? For those of you who knew Deborah Dulatre and Judy Suzuki on our worship team, both dear sisters in the Lord that have been with us, were with us from virtually day one, 21 years ago. Dear friends. Close friends.

Within the last couple of weeks, they both went home to be with the Lord. I just hope they're not having a closed-door meeting with Kellie up there because I don't think that would be good for me. It's a reunion.

Hey, Pastor, why are you... Well, listen, um, thankfully, like my bride, Kellie, they were born again and now in the presence of the Lord. But I don't think last year they knew that it would be their last Resurrection Sunday. Do you?

What's your point, Pastor? Actually better asked, do you even have a point, Pastor? Yes, I do. Don't rush me. The point is, the truth of the matter is this matter is the truth, such that tomorrow, not promised. Do you have a guarantee? Did you get it in writing? I actually got the opposite in writing right here. Tomorrow is not guaranteed. Tomorrow is not promised. What is promised, and I want you to hear me on this, what's promised is that all of us will reach our final and eternal destination one way or another, whether it's in heaven or it's in hell for all eternity.

Oh, wow, Pastor, you're fired up. Pun intended. Wait. Are you saying hell is for all eternity? No, that's what God's word is saying. If heaven is forever, then hell is forever. And there's no in between, by the way. There's no, "Well, we'll see. Jury's out. Verdict's not in. I don't know. Second chance. We'll see. Not sure." No. **"It is appointed unto men once to die, and then the judgment."** And you're going to go to one of two judgment seats. One of the judgment seats is the Great White Throne Judgment. Believe you me, you don't want to be at that judgment because that is where God's judgment comes down on a Christ-rejecting people. And the penalty is hell for all eternity, period.

What's the other one? What's behind door number 2? Sorry. That was a game show from a long time ago when I was five. But what's the other judgment seat? Oh, that's the Bema

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Seat judgment. What's that? Okay. Picture this. In fact, this was what Paul was referring to before they were known as they are known today as the Olympic Games.

They have a panel of judges who give you a wreath. In that day, it was like flowers. They die. In fact, Paul makes reference to that. So that's the judgment seat where you're given your rewards and your crowns. I want to be in that one. Well, if you're born again of the Spirit of God in Jesus Christ, then that's where you're going, not to be punished, but to be rewarded. It's either/or. It's one or the other.

This is one of the main reasons as to why this Resurrection Sunday might be the most important one of your life *one-eighty* in making the most important decision of your life for eternal life if you've not believed in Jesus Christ and His gift of eternal life that He paid for in full.

It cost Him everything and He offers it to you freely. Are you going to accept it and open it? Are you going to reject it? So we talk about this, seemingly weekly, in the Prophecy Updates during the ABCs of Salvation, trying to simplify it, which I've done a smashing job at complicating.

But the Gospel is childlike simple, and I'm so glad. It's simply believing, putting your trust in, changing your mind about Jesus. Believing in Jesus and receiving and opening the gift of eternal life, paid for in full by Jesus. That's how simple it is.

Wait. Don't I have to repent? If you weren't here for the Prophecy Update, it was only an hour and a half this time. I'm working on setting new records. I just want you to know, you know, there's the Lamb's Book of Life and the Guinness Book of World Records. I'm trying to create my own book of long-sermon records.

Anyway, I would really encourage you, if you weren't here or didn't watch that Update, we cleared that up once and for all. This whole notion that I have to do something first; it's akin to the absurdity of saying, hey, before I take a shower, I better take a bath. Got to clean up my act before I go to church.

Well, it wouldn't hurt to shower. But no, He'll clean you from the inside out by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. He makes you holy. He makes you clean. He purifies you.

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He cleanses you. He imputes within you His perfect righteousness and removes and replaces your filthy self-righteousness. So what's the point of that? No. You come to Christ, and He'll take care of the rest.

You put your belief in Jesus; you trust in Him for the forgiveness of sin, and repentance happens by default. What do you mean? Repentance means in the Greek, "metanoia," change of mind, change of direction. Watch this. We saw this and we'll see it in the Gospel of Mark and all the Gospels, the Synoptic Gospels, especially.

Jesus would call them and say to them, "The Kingdom of God is near. Believe and repent. Follow Me, and I'll make you fishers of men." And they did. They turned around; did a one-eighty. That's repentance. And they wouldn't have turned around and followed Him if they didn't believe in Him.

Example: You're on your way to town, and you didn't take your phone, so you don't have Google maps. No GPS. And I call you, and you say to me, "I'm lost." Well, you need to get saved then. So I say to you, "You're going in the wrong direction. You need to repent. Do a one-eighty. Turn around. I know you're on the Pali or the Likelike. Whatever. Turn around. Don't get caught if it's illegal. I didn't just say that. I take that back. Change your direction. Do a one-eighty and follow me."

Now, how will I know if you believe me? If you follow me. See, repentance is not a prerequisite for salvation. It's the result and evidence, if you prefer, of salvation.

So, okay, Pastor, you're preaching to the choir. I get that a lot. You're preaching to the choir. Well, I didn't know you were a choir, first thing, but I understand. I get it. Hey, you've already. You're — you're already born again. You're already saved.

So are you going to stick with your story about this being the most important Resurrection Sunday in my entire life? Yeah. In fact, I'm going to double down and say it might even be more important to you than ever before. Oh, I'd like to see how you get out of this one. Well, watch me now, because I'm going to be like Paul. Here's how I get there.

Though time is ever so short, at least you and I still have time to get Jesus, to people and get people to Jesus. That's what it truly means in the parable of the minas: To occupy until He

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comes, which is so taken out of context. It's the only parable unique from all the other parables where all the servants are given one mina and none of the servants are cast out into eternal darkness where there's gnashing of teeth.

So the question has to be asked: What's the mina? The Gospel. We've all been given the Gospel. What are you going to do with it? Are you going to share it, or are you going to hide it under a bushel, or let your light so shine before people? You've got the answer, the cure for sin cancer, and you're ashamed of it?

Pastor, you sound kind of harsh. No, I think this is a hard teaching, and it's hard for me to teach this hard teaching, but it's a needed teaching. Well, I'm afraid they're going to like, not, you know, like me anymore and unfriend me and unfollow me and unsubscribe from me and talk stink about me and reject me and...

Well, join the club. Jesus said they're going to hate you because they hated Me. So what a badge of honor that is. Oh, and by the way, is that what you're so afraid of and so shame? Is that the worst possible thing? I mean, you know how we kind of think through worst possible, worst-case scenarios. They say no. Shake the sand off your slippers, Brah. Move on to somebody else. Because the seed — the soil upon which the seeds falls, as we broadcast the seed of God's word, the good news of salvation, the onus is not on us. All we're commanded to do is to reach the lost. I, as a pastor, preach the Gospel, equip the saints for the work of ministry. And our sole goal should be nothing else but getting Jesus to people and people to Jesus.

And here, we have this gift of eternal life, and we don't want to share it? You too can have it. How much did it cost? No, it's a gift, not a purchase. He purchased me/us/we are not our own but purchased with a price. So that's the first thing. We still have time.

Here's another thing. We still have time to get our spiritual affairs in order for eternal life, as one would get their financial affairs in order at the end of life. I know a thing or two about that. You know, when you go to the doctor and the diagnosis is not good, and they'll say something to you. In fact, I think this is where the phrase came from. You better get your affairs in order. You got six months. And of course, the patient is devastated.

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Wait a minute. What if the Great Physician were to tell you, get your spiritual affairs in order because you need to be ready for eternal life? Would you be dismissive?

Boy, you're snarky again today, Pastor. What's up with you? No, hey, you know what? I'm preaching to the choir. Me. The preacher is preaching to the preacher. You want to know why? Because this might be my last Resurrection Sunday sermon I ever preach. Hope it is. No, I'm talking about the rapture. Not, you know. Don't take that personally. That came out so wrong.

In fact, you know, and the Lord knows my heart on this. It's not to excuse the length and even strength of the Updates and sermons, but it is to explain it. I preach my heart out every Sunday like it's my last Sunday because it could be. I don't want to leave. I don't want to stand before the Lord where I long to hear the words, **"Well done, good and faithful."** Not fruitful, popular. No. Faithful. You had a lot of followers, enter in. No, faithful servant. Not a rock star pastor. Servant. **"Enter into the joy prepared for you."**

I think we talked about this last week, but if I'm repeating myself, just let me have it, please. I think it's worthy of repeating. Oh, Thursday in Malachi, the Israelites were bringing roadkill to, you know, offer of sacrifices to God. And why would you do that? And they were keeping the prime, you know, choice livestock for themselves and giving the Lord the leftovers, you know, the old sofa. We'll donate it to the church. We'll give it to God because we're going to keep the new one.

No, I got a better idea? Why don't you give the new one to God and you keep the old one? Because like David said, I won't do anything for the Lord or give anything to the Lord that doesn't cost me something.

Hey, when I'm going to give to the Lord, it's going to be the best or nothing. Forget it. Why bother? He is worthy of the best that I have. All that I have. That's why I'm yelling at you. And that's why nobody sits on the front row because they get spit on. I'm preaching my heart out like it's the last time I'm ever going to preach. And I want to give God my best or nothing at all. I'm going to give him leftovers?

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It reminds me of a — back on the mainland, my pastor was asked, “Hey Pastor, what do you do the rest of the week?” And he was sharing this at one of our board meetings. And I was like, “Well, so how did you answer?” Because I know how hard he works still to this day. And I hope this doesn’t come off wrong, but the Lord knows how hard I work. I mean, I — I put in joyfully, not, grudgingly. Cheerfully. It’s a privilege. It’s a get-to not a got-to. Profound privilege to.

So he said, “Yeah, you know, I was taken aback by that question.” And he's more gracious than I am, like way more. And, you know, I would have just said, “Hey, what do you think I do? Like organize paperclips in my office all week and just preach a sermon when the time comes? Really?” (Slapping motion) In Jesus’ name.

See, the audio; you didn't see that because it's audio. You get my point, right? No such thing as part-time ministry, full-time ministry. No, it's lifetime ministry. Love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, strength, body. Not half. Hey, Lord, I give You a third. You know, is that okay? Don't bother. I don't need it. I don't need you to give it. You need you to give it.

Did you get that? Oh, you're really passionate about this. You better believe it. You better believe it. And to my dying day with my last breath, I will give the Lord my best. Or I will give the Lord nothing at all. Because He is worthy. He is worthy of it.

Okay. Let me get my blood pressure down and catch my breath and then we'll move on with the sermon already in progress. Listen, life in this world as we know it, it's at the end. We talked about this First Service. This whole thing of, you know, the next generation. We want to leave a better world for the next generation. I think we're the final generation.

You know, I've got a 20-year, 30-year, 40-year plan. Cool. Nothing wrong with having plans. Don't let those plans have you. And you better be holding on loosely do them too. No, we're at the end. And this is the most important time as the end of time while there's still time.

And this is why I want to draw your attention to only three verses in *1 Corinthians 15*. I'm not doing too bad. Don't look at your watches. First, *Verse 2*; second, *Verse 20*; and third, pardon me, *verse 52*. All three, really the entirety of the text within the context, because it's

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all about the Gospel, have one thing in common. And that one thing in common is the paramount importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Because you see, the resurrection of Jesus Christ means next is the return of Jesus Christ in the pre-Tribulation rapture of the church of Jesus Christ. (Looking up) I'm really — I got to be careful. I'm getting older now. I'm going to hurt my neck doing that.

So let's go through them quickly. Oh, I'm not supposed to use that word. I'm sorry. Briefly? No, I can't use that one either. How about this? We'll go through them as quickly as we can without rushing through them because we don't want to miss anything. Is that better? That was way more sanctified.

Reason number 1: I can still be saved by believing in Jesus. Verse 2, Paul says you're saved by the Gospel, but then he puts an **"if"** in there. And a lot of people get weirded out by it, like it's conditional, preconditional. There's prerequisites or conditions and you can lose your salvation. And **"once saved, always saved"** is a false teaching. It's not. Once you're born again, you can't be unborn again. Just like when your children are born, they can't be unborn, even though there are probably nights where you wanted them to be unborn. So we're going to clarify this and hopefully clear up this misnomer because he says you're saved by the Gospel if you've acted on it in accordance to it by believing in it, lest your belief be empty with no real substance because of it.

You know, *James 2:19* says, **"The demons even believe and tremble."** You know that there are no demons that are atheists? I'll give you a minute on that one. I know that's deep. Oh, no. We saw that in Mark, right? The demon that was — this demon-possessed man in the synagogue while Jesus is teaching. And the demon **manifests. And then the demon speaks directly with Jesus and says, "I know who you are, Jesus of Nazareth!"**

Wow. We kind of had a similar experience here. I shared that a while back. And then the demon asks Jesus of Nazareth, who he knows apparently, **"Have you come to destroy us?"** Meaning we know you can destroy us. We believe and know who You really are. Oh, yeah, they believe, but they've not repented, acted on it, changing, metanoia.

So we've got another matter here that's come up, and it's the often-asked question of, **"How does one know it's genuine salvation or if it's merely someone professing salvation?"**

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The simple answer. I was going to say short answer, but I don't think I should have the word “short” in my vocabulary. I didn't get a witness, so maybe that's a good thing. So the simple answer is, if I'm a true believer in Jesus, I'll change my mind about Jesus, turn to Jesus, and it will be evidenced by my being a follower of Jesus.

Example: When our children were born, we didn't question whether or not they were just professing to be born. Let me try that again. Give me a do-over. Some of you got that. And if you did, I love you, man. There was no question. I mean, my goodness, I was there for all four of our babies when they were born. There, of course, as a godly husband beside my wife, the love of my life.

And I just want know, it was really painful for me (Chuckle) I mean, the miracle of birth. You know, people come to Christ, a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ by way of a baby, their baby being born. It led to them being born again because you can't witness that miracle of life being born and birthed that was fearfully and wonderfully made in its mother's womb before they were even conceived. So, too is this true when you're born again.

Hey, when our children, when our babies were born, they would fuss and cry and not sleep for months because they always wanted to be nursed and held and cuddled and nurtured and loved. They craved mother's milk. So that's why I was always going, “Here, Honey! I need to get some sleep. I don't have that; you do. God made you with that, so use it.”

That was — that was maybe too much. I'm sorry. Well, so too with someone who's born again. They're craving the milk of God's word. There's no question. Their desiring the things of God, the word of God. There's a craving for the word of God.

And then they start teething. Ooh, that's a rough — oh, if you're young and have young children that are in the teething stage, we'll pray for you. I mean, my wife and I, we had all these books. I've got books in one hand and baby in the other hand. I'm going, “Oh, oh, this is that part. No!!” Because this is — they're screaming. And then you're screaming at them to stop screaming like I'm screaming at you now. Oh, no, the teeth are coming in.

It's painful, but you need those teeth in order to chew the meat. Where's the beef? So you go from the milk of God's word, as you grow, to the meat of God's word. And so you have a

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born-again barbecue. Okay. That was too much. No, I don't think it — by their fruits you shall know them.

If someone maybe doesn't bear any fruit, they can be born again, but, you know, I've been asked many times as a pastor, “Do I have to go to church to go to heaven? No. But if you're going to heaven, you'll want to go to church. Am I right? I mean, “Hey, Pastor, if I can't stop smoking, does that mean I can't go to heaven?” No, actually, the opposite is true. You keep smoking, you'll get to heaven sooner. I stole that from Pastor Chuck. Just full disclosure.

Are you getting my point here? Hey, we're talking about the most important decision in our life for eternal life. And there's still time. Not much, so get busy. And I know you're busy, but you're busy about the wrong things, caught up in the cares in the affairs of this life.

No, get busy about the things of God because we don't have much time left. Satan knows he has but a short time. We're going to talk more about this Tuesday night. What do you do when you know that you are running out of time? Don't you hurry up, speed it up, rev it up? That's what Satan is doing right now. Would to God that more Christians knew we had but a short time.

Reason number 2: I can trust in the resurrection of Jesus. I can still be saved by Jesus, and I can trust in the resurrection of Jesus. Now I selected this verse, *verse 20*, because the Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, I mean just in the power of the Holy Spirit, dismantles this false teaching of there being no such thing as a resurrection of the dead, specific to Jesus Christ's resurrection.

Now, where do you think that came from? And Paul, again, just inspired by the Holy Spirit, perfectly and brilliantly says, okay. I'll play. Let's go. Let's go down that road. Let's see where we — where it leads. And again, you can see them starting to squirm a little bit. I was squirming for them as I was reading the text.

So interesting to note that after Paul walks them through this series of sanctified taunting hypotheticals, he basically — closing argument. Case closed. One word: **“Indeed.”** Wow, that's a powerful word. You better believe it. In the original language, it has the idea of now, meaning that indeed, we now know; indeed, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is risen indeed. Period. Get out of my face.

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Don't add that to the, you know, because, you know, you've got to discern. This is spiritual discernment. You got to discern between people who are looking for an argument or an answer. If they're genuinely seeking an answer, you be patient, respectful, gentle; unlike me. If they're looking for an argument, get out, run. Don't argue with the fool. Don't argue with the fool, lest you become like that fool. They're not looking for an answer. They're looking for an argument.

Reason number 3 — we're done and thank you for your patience. And listen; I saved the — the best wine for last.

Now, keep in mind, there were no — in the original manuscripts, there were no chapter and verse breaks, for which I'm grateful for as a teacher of God's word. But it was one contiguous scroll. Now, why do I mention that? Because think about it. You're not, okay, well, Chapter 15; well, okay, Chapter 16. Okay....

You know, these are not like books, you know, secular books or even Christian books, for that matter. The chapter breaks, it's a whole new topic. This chapter is titled blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Sorry, I didn't mean to add to the last part. It just came out. I can't help myself.

Not God's word. No. There's a flow. The context within which this is written is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. What if I told you that the very first epistle the Apostle Paul wrote was to the Thessalonians in *1 Thessalonians*? And in the very — this is going to make me sound like I'm smarter than I am. This is what we call the principle of first mention. See, didn't that make me sound smart? I didn't say look smart. I said, sound smart.

What's the principle of first mention? Well, it's like hermeneutics; Scripture interpreting Scripture. Well, so too with the principle of first mention. Where in Scripture is that first mentioned? Because it's like in case law, you cite cases, you know, so-and-so versus so-and-so, you know, case in 19-whatever. It sets a precedent. It's the principle, it's the gauge, the principle of first mention that you refer to.

The first mention is in the first letter to the church in Thessalonica, and it's the first time that the Apostle Paul talks about the Gospel. And wouldn't you know it, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news, which is what the word "gospel" means. Good news. Your debt has

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been paid by another. You're free to go. Good news, Brah. That's what the word "gospel" means. Good news. Here's the good news, all of it.

Why do I say that? Because we say the Gospel and the go-to has always been, heretofore, *1 Corinthians 15*, the first four verses. Death, burial, resurrection of Jesus Christ. Stop. Why do you stop there? Well, because of *1 Corinthians 15, 1 through 4*. Well, I know, but what about *1 Thessalonians, Chapter 4*, by the way? First mention of the Gospel. And by the way, Paul, though he takes the scenic route, does include in his letter to the Corinthians that we just read in his first epistle, he does get to the rapture, but not as quickly as he does in *1 Thessalonians, Chapter 4*.

What's your point again, Pastor? Do you have one? I absolutely do. And it's a big one. Wait for it. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not just that He was crucified, buried, and resurrected, but that He's coming back to take us out of this evil, sick, scary, very scary world to the place that He promised He was preparing for us in His Father's house, where there are many dwelling places or mansions. And if it were not so, He would not have told us. And He says, I go, and you want Me to go, by the way, because where I am there you will be also.

This is not the Second Coming. This is the glorious appearing in the air. We meet the Lord in the air. *1 Corinthians 15*: We just got done reading it. It's in a flash. I mean, not a blink of an eye because a blink of an eye could be, (Slowly winking) especially if you got one lazy eye. This is the sparkle, the twinkle of an eye, fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a fraction. It's (Clap) boom!

And this old body with all the miles — this thing got a lot of miles on it. And I look at some of you. I won't to look at you. But you got some miles on you too. And I can't wait. That alone. You know, this is what — this is my excuse, anyway, for why I don't go to the gym. What's the point? I'm getting a new one. Does that work? Because that's my story and I'm sticking with it.

I mean no disrespect. I have, you know, dear friends that are bodybuilders. But I'm just waiting for my new one. It's going to be really cool and eternal. And I'll get shoulders this time and hopefully a chin. And I'm praying for hair. But anyway, so I'm — that was too much.

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Okay. I'll bring it in. I'll bring it in. So I'm putting it off. It's just going to metamorphosis into my immortal, incorruptible, imperishable, eternal body. Huh. Can't wait. And it's going to happen in a fraction of a fraction of a fraction of a second? Yeah. Let's do it. When? Soon. Sooner than you think. Could you imagine?

I'm going to kind of do a Paul thing here, real quick. Oh, I can't. (Frustrated sound) Pray for me on those two words. So I'll be very fast. No? So I'm going to do a Paul in closing. That's even worse because it may not be my final closing. I'm going to take you on a hypothetical. Hey, let's just — I'll play. I'll play. Let's just say that that's the Gospel, that Jesus was crucified, buried, resurrected. Bye! Wish you the best. Hope it works out. I did My job. Let's see how you do. I'll check in with you every once in a while. No. Well, how is that even — in what reality is that even remotely reality?

No. You left off the best part. No. Jesus — the Gospel is — and it's *1 Corinthians 15*. Granted longer like your sermon, your pastor's sermons. But *1 Thessalonians 4* is, boom, right there, principle of first mention. First time: Death, burial, resurrection, rapture. That's the Gospel. That's the blessed hope. Not like, Oh, I sure hope so. No. It's your only hope and you're assured of it. You have an eternal life assurance policy paid for in full. It's done. That's good news. Because it's not really — it's kind of okay news. "Thank you." "Bye. You're on your own, kid." "Okay. Oh, boy."

No. I'm going to go. But I'm going to — and I can't — I can't give you the Holy Spirit until I go. But I'm going to go prepare a place for you and come back for you so that where I am there you may be also. And by the way, while you've had Me, God, with you for about three years, now you're going to have God in you.

See, when I go, I'm going to send you the Holy Spirit, and He's going to live in you. I've been living with you. God the Holy Spirit going to be living in you.

Wow, You've got everything. You thought of everything. You think? And the Holy Spirit isn't just going to indwell you and like, hang out. No. He's going to start the process of regenerating you and making you holy. Holy Spirit = holy life. I know that's why you come here for these deep, profound insights.

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But He's also going to seal you for your redemption that draws nigh. Oh man, go, get out of here, so we can get the Holy Spirit in here. Let's get this show on the road.

And here's the other thing. The Holy Spirit is who, not what, who empowers you to resist the Devil so he will flee. The spirit is willing the flesh is weak. But He will give you strength to overcome the lust of the flesh, the pride of life. He does it with that still, small voice of conviction, not condemnation, conviction. And the difference is conviction draws you nearer to Jesus. Condemnation drives you further away from Jesus.

Are you still with me? So if you hear nothing else that I've said in the — don't look at your watches — time that I've had today, please hear this. The good news is He's coming back for us. He died for us. He was buried instead of us. He rose again from the dead, defeating death for us. (Deep sigh of relief) And He's coming back for us soon and very soon. That is good news. Bottom line.

And we're done. Does that give you hope? No. You're saying I would have had hope 15 minutes ago when your sermon was over. I just want to leave you with this. This year might be the most important resurrection Sunday of our life, given how close we are to the end of this life. You know we're at the end, right?

I truly believe, and the Lord knows my heart, that it's more of a surprise, not that Jesus hasn't yet raptured us — I mean that Jesus is going to rapture us, but Jesus hasn't yet raptured us. That's more astonishing to me because as I understand Bible prophecy of which one third of God's word is Bible prophecy, and I'm looking at what's happening and it's exactly, precisely, 100% what we were told would happen right up to the moment of the pre-Tribulation rapture. And it's happening. I'm still not buying green bananas. Just saying. That's how close we are.

It changes the perspective on how you view your life here in this temporal world when you know the good news that this is not your final destination. He's coming back. Good news. Couldn't come at a better time for this pastor. I wish He would have come back three months ago. Don't take it personally. I ain't going anywhere. But where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

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Are you too tethered to this world? The things of this world? Or is your treasure in the next? Tethering your heart to heaven. I'm done. That's it. That was the best I got. So hopefully that'll suffice. Kapono, come on up. Stand up; we'll pray. Not too bad. Bad, but not too bad. I didn't set any records if that's what you're wondering.

O Lord, oh, the joy that fills our hearts when we think on You. Our eyes are on You, watching for You, knowing that You, at any time, are going to come back and take us to that place that You prepared for us. Lord, we so long to meet You in the air and forever be with You.

But how about all the loved ones that are already there in Your presence? Them too. That's not just good news. That's the best news one could ever hope to hear and have and know.

So Lord, I just want to pray, if there's anybody here today or even watching online that has never made that most important decision of their life for eternal life, that today they would make that decision with no delay because today is the day of salvation. In Jesus' name.

Amen.