

Death and the Grave

Fairview Missionary Church | Angola, IN

Scripture: Assorted

Speaker: Josh Duran, Joel Greenwood

March 26, 2023

- 00:00 Good morning, everybody. Good morning. All right, that was a lot better response than the first service, so good job. I don't know who's more nervous me or my wife knowing there's a mic attached to my face and whatever I say is going to go through the speakers. So pray for her through this next ten minutes or so. Before I get going, I do just want to take a moment to address some of the parents in here that I have students and our student ministry. And I just want to say thank you. END 00:27 END
- 00:28 Just thank you for being there for us in these kind of rough few months and just allowing us the student staff to just pour into your students and partner with us. It really does mean a lot to me. I don't take that lightly. So I just want to say thank you, and I know it's been on rougher waters, but I really do think that God has got us going in a really good direction. END 00:55 END
- 00:55 And I'm really excited to see where he takes us over the next few months. So I just wanted to start off by saying thank you. But we are in week two of our current series that we are calling king Jesus. And through this series, we're using lyrics from a song that we just sang this morning called this is our God. And we're using these lyrics to continue to prepare our hearts for this Easter season that's quickly coming up on us. END 01:25 END
- 01:26 So in week one, which was just last week, pastor Jake came up and he gave us the definitions of what guilt and shame is. And then right after that, pastor Joel came up and he finished the message. And he basically was telling us that we don't have to sit in our poopy diapers anymore. As he used pastor, that's near and dear to my heart. But if someone's looking around, they look a little confused. That's probably because they skipped last week. END 01:55 END
- 01:55 So, but if that is you, that's totally okay. But I do want to encourage you to go back and watch week one because these messages are going to be tied together as we go into Easter season. So this week we're going to kind of focus on the second line of the song and it goes something like this. It says, remember those giants, we call death and grave. END 02:20 END
- 02:21 They were like mountains that stood in our way, but he came and he died, and he rose, those giants are dead now. And so when I read those lyrics, the first thing that kind of popped up to me is just that word giant. Giants. And when we're in church, that's kind of a term we use a lot. We use pretty regularly. And when you use the word giant, you're probably going to think of one or two people, probably going to think of David and Goliath, which is totally okay because that's exactly what I would think of. END 02:55 END
- 02:56 But as I was preparing for this morning, I thought it was really weird that my brain kind of just went to this place of pondering these questions about giants. I've never really pondered these types of questions before. And some of the questions are this. What are giants? Who are giants? Where are giants? And why are they giants? Now, I'm not going to answer those questions. END 03:22 END

- 03:23 This morning, but I just thought it was kind of strange that my brain went to this place because I'm never pondered about giants before. Because we know what giants are. They're big. They're huge. And so we don't have to really ask what are giants, but my brain just kind of went to this place. And I started to realize that giants are literally everywhere. They're everywhere. And so I just want to break down a few of the Giants that I see pretty regularly pretty common. END 03:54 END
- 03:55 We have giant people. This is Robert Wadlow. He's the tallest man to ever walk the earth at 8 feet, 11 inches. This is André the Giant, and he stood as 7 foot, four inches. But what's crazy about André the Giant and the cool part about this is we had a youth sponsor that came up and brought this shirt up to youth group on Wednesday. And I didn't even tell him that I was talking about giants this morning. And I was like, how did you know I'm talking about André the Giant. END 04:25 END
- 04:25 But this is the shirt he brought. Just kind of blew my mind that this is actually André the Giant's hand print. On a shirt. And I'm like, there's no way. There's just no way. But nonetheless, that is his hand print and it just kind of blew my mind. So we have giant people. We have giant buildings. Now I'm not going to try to say this name though my son tried to talk me into it lots last night. Still not going to try it because I don't want to butcher it. END 04:55 END
- 04:55 But it stands in Dubai. And this is the tallest sanding structure in the world. Willis Tower in Chicago Illinois is one of the tallest standing structures in the United States. So we have giant people. We have giant buildings. We have giant food. Now you're on my level, okay? So giant pizza, right? This is one of the biggest pizzas ever been made in an oven. And then if you find me at Red Robin, you'll see me eating this giant tower of onion rings. END 05:25 END
- 05:26 And if my family's lucky, they'll get a few, okay? So we got giant food. We got giant animals. This is a giant squid. It's a pretty rare for us to actually see the giant squid. It doesn't come up to the surface very often. It's one of a lot of pictures, but this is a picture of one of them. And then I put tigers on there because when I think of a Tiger, I think of like a cute little cuddly cat. But they're not. END 05:55 END
- 05:55 They're pretty big when they're compared to us. They're pretty giant animals. And then we have giant sports teams. I was going to use the New York football giants, but I figured there's no way they could tackle spike. So I went with the little giants. And then we have the San Francisco Giants, which is a professional baseball team in San Francisco. So we have giant sports teams. And then we have giant brands. This is the giant food group. END 06:25 END
- 06:25 And then we have the jolly green giant that you'll see on the front of green bean cans. I only see them at the store. Never see them at my house, which is totally okay. But that's the jolly green giant. And then we have giant trees. This is on the redwood forest. So you can see them compared to a normal person. These are pretty giant trees that you can find. And then we have giant statues. END 06:55 END
- 06:55 This picture out here on your left is what's called touchdown Jesus. It is over in Ohio. And the reason why it's called touchdown Jesus because when in the game of football and someone scores a touchdown, the referee puts this signal up there while everyone else knows that they scored a touchdown or a field goal. And so they call it touchdown Jesus. And then we have a Jesus statue down in Brazil. END 07:19 END
- 07:19 But as I was going through, and it was finding these giant things, there was something that just kind of came over my screen, and I was like, what in the world is this? It's a giant paper clip. All

right? And I know we had giant paper clips. But we have giant paper clips, but so those were kind of the funny things that I realized, but as a really started to think about it, and I began to dig just a little bit deeper into my own life. END 07:48 END

07:49 There's all sorts of giants that we face. That if we would just dig deep down in our own hearts, they're pretty easy to find. And so I began to dig deep in my own life. And there's some times where we just have this in humus enormous debt in our life. And we're like, there's no way I'm going to ever be able to pay this off. And so it just creates this giant of worry in our life. END 08:16 END

08:17 Or maybe you go to work and you're mistreated by some people at work or they're questioning you about your job and how you do your job. And all of a sudden, it creates this giant insecurity in your own life. Or maybe you have loved ones that people just mistreat. That they're acting very rudely towards them. And there's nothing really you can do, and so it just creates this giant resentment in your own life, or maybe they turn their focus from your loved one to you. END 08:49 END

08:49 And they start to mistreat you, and now you have this giant, unforgiveness in your own life. And then based on how you react to those situations, it can create giant doubt in your own life. Now, if you don't know me, if you don't know my story, this is what could define me in the year 2019. This is exactly what my life looked like. END 09:14 END

09:15 As I was coming through a job change in my life, I realized I'm in the toughest challenge, the toughest test, the toughest season of my life. There is some good days, but most of them I was looking in the mirror going God, how are you ever going to be able to use me again? And so I was just filled with this anger. I was filled with bitterness. I was even filled with hatred towards some people in my life. END 09:45 END

09:46 And it really did just feel like there was this giant or this giant mountain that stood between me and the purpose that God had put on my life. And I had no idea how I was going to remove those. But what I did realize, and I don't know what you're facing today, but we have a giant slayer who came to this earth so that we can stand up and face these giants in our own lives, and his name. END 10:17 END

10:18 Is king Jesus. Let me pray. Dear father God, I thank you for this morning. Got to thank you for who you are. All right, I thank you for sending your son to come to this earth God so that we don't have to fight these giants on our own. God, I pray for pastor Joel this morning as he comes to give the message that you would just speak through him and let it penetrate our hearts this morning. END 10:45 END

10:45 Let it not fall on deaf ears, but let us hear your words and how they can apply to our lives this morning. And ask this in Jesus name, amen. Thanks, Josh. As he mentioned, we all have giants in our lives. We all have things that we face, whether they're people that hinder us from accomplishing our goals, their health issues that never seem to change. As Josh mentioned, the struggle of making enough money so that you can survive and provide for your family. END 11:13 END

11:14 Maybe it's raising children or grandchildren that will know and love Jesus, but also be a contributing member of our society. Maybe it's being able to finish well in the retirement years where you're done with your career and you're wondering, okay, God, what do you have in store for me next? All of these things can be giants that feel like an unscalable mountain. Something that's in front of us that causes us to get discouraged and lose hope. END 11:41 END

- 11:42 And it gets extremely difficult when these giants begin to unite, and we have multiple battles that we're facing at the same time. As I was growing up, there was this TV show I never really got involved with it, never really watched it, but it was pretty popular. There are some of you may remember it called the Power Rangers. All right? And in the show, there were times where they would be fighting these bad guys, and they'd all be in their vehicles fighting. And then something would happen where these bad guys almost like a transformer would reunite into one giant bad guy. END 12:11 END
- 12:12 And they had to fight this bad guy that was all together. And sometimes our life looks that way. All of our problems and struggles, these giants are relational giants, our financial giants, health giants, kid giants. They all seem to attack us at the same time. We all face different giants in our lives, but there are some that we have in common. One particular giant that we have in common, and that giant is the giant of death and the grave. END 12:41 END
- 12:42 For centuries, for millennia, really, people have been searching for this thing called the fountain of youth. Some people have literally been looking for a fountain of youth somewhere where they could travel that has special water that they could drink it and it would allow them to live forever. But in more recent years, they're trying to find this fountain of you through technology and medical advancements. And they're trying to conquer this giant of the death and the grave because they feel that it still needs to be defeated. END 13:12 END
- 13:13 But I believe this giant has already been conquered for us. It's what we celebrate on Easter Sunday that Jesus has conquered death and the grave for everyone. I would even say he has the bumper sticker. Been there, done that. Jesus has died. He has come back to life, and we now know somebody who has gone there, experienced death, come back from it, and now helps us to prepare for it and to know how to prepare for it. END 13:44 END
- 13:46 Some of you have been raised in the church, many people that are probably watching or listening online or on the radio. Many of you that are here have been raised in a church and so when you hear these words in a song or we talk about it in a message, Jesus conquered death. It's not alarming to you. You have heard it since you were a child, but I want you for a moment to imagine that you have never heard that statement before, that Jesus conquered death. What would you think? END 14:13 END
- 14:15 How would you feel? Would it be strange? In reality, it is this statement that sets Christianity apart from every other religion and every other religious leader that has ever been. The belief that Jesus conquered death. In Matthew, chapter 16:21, Matthew tells us that from that time on, Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed, and on the third day be raised to life. END 14:53 END
- 14:54 Jesus predicted that this was going to happen, how he was going to be killed, and that he was going to conquer death. And then he based his entire teachings on this promise. So if this didn't happen, then everything else he said was not true. This was the first time in history. That someone had come back to life never to die again. Conquering death. END 15:21 END
- 15:21 That's why Peter says in acts chapter two 24, but God raised Jesus from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death. Why? Because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. Jesus said in revelation one 18, I am the living one. I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and Hades. END 15:46 END

- 15:48 Our entire faith, our entire belief, everything that I believe to be true is based on this one thing that Jesus was raised from the dead, without the resurrection, there is no gospel without the resurrection, there is no good news. Scripture teaches us that death came because of sin, and that sin entered the world because of the disobedience of man. We know the story of Adam and Eve. END 16:16 END
- 16:16 So sin entered the world because Adam and Eve were disobedient to God. And so because of that, we would now experience death. But think about this logically from the perspective of Jesus, Jesus death was the first death in mankind that was voluntary. Jesus had no sin, therefore sin wasn't going to cause death, but Jesus did it willingly. So his resurrection makes sense. He didn't have to die. END 16:46 END
- 16:47 He chose to die, so he was able to pick his life back up again. Look at what he says in John chapter ten 17. The reason my father loves me is that I lay down my life only to take it back up again. Jesus knew the plan. He knew what he was going to do. He knew that he had conquered death because he had conquered sin. END 17:11 END
- 17:12 And the great news comes for us in knowing that when Jesus and because Jesus conquered death, that you and I also can have victory over death. Paul tells us in Romans chapter 8 37. No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. We have conquered death because of Jesus. END 17:34 END
- 17:35 John, chapter 14, Jesus says to us before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me because I live Jesus says to us, you also will live. You see death, and the grave are a scary reality that every single one of us must face. They are coming for all of us because all of us have sinned and so because of that, the enemy has used this fear of death to terrify humans since the beginning of time. END 18:09 END
- 18:10 But at the cross, scripture tells us that Jesus defeated death. He defeated Satan, and he destroyed the most powerful weapon that the enemy had in our lives, and that's the fear of death. It's because of that, that Paul can say to the Corinthian church and to us, where O death is your victory, where O death is your sting. You and I shouldn't walk around as defeated people. END 18:37 END
- 18:37 We are conquerors through Jesus Christ. We know the end of our story because Jesus has gone there before us. It is true that our flesh will experience a physical death because of our sin. We have consequences because of the decisions that we have made. But our souls will be redeemed, and we will be given new bodies the Bible tells us now if you're here this morning or watching online or listening on the radio and you're hearing this for the first time, if this is all kind of new to you, I imagine right now you're thinking, do you realize how crazy you sound? END 19:16 END
- 19:18 If this is all new, I fully understand that this sounds crazy. It seems unbelievable. It's absurd. So much so that even as I was preparing for this message in my office, I remember sitting there and looking out the window and imagining to myself, could this really be true? What if this were all just made up? What if we are just here by chance? It's just random circumstances that human beings are here. END 19:47 END
- 19:48 What if someone was just trying to find meaning in life? And so they made up this whole crazy story about a man named Jesus who was crucified and came back to life. What if it was just giving us false hope? So I sat there for a moment in that feeling, and I went back to all of the

research that I have done in the past and all of the studying and all of the reading. And I came to the conclusion. END 20:15 END

20:16 There's just too much evidence for the resurrection for me to ignore. There's too much evidence, and so today I thought I would share with you some of the evidence that I've shared before that this isn't just a made up story. Jesus was not some Disney character in a fairytale that we're reading about. This is history. So let me just share with you some of the proofs that I have, some of the evidence for me that makes us a solid foundation for me to stand on. The first one is this. END 20:45 END

20:46 Jesus predicted his death in resurrection while he was still alive. Now, these all go in tandem. They work together, but think about this. Some people want to claim that this was a story that was made up by the apostles by his disciples, his followers later, that they made this whole thing up, but it's recorded not just in scripture, but in extra biblical books that Jesus predicted his death while he was still alive, and if you read scripture, you find that it was not possible that the apostles are disciples made this up because even as Jesus was predicting this while he was still alive, they had no clue what he was talking about. END 21:24 END

21:26 They didn't believe it themselves. This is not a story they made up. They didn't even make sense of it until after it happened. And then they went back and said, oh yeah, Jesus did tell us that was going to happen, but it didn't make sense. So then you go to number two. Historical records outside of the Bible agree that there was a man named Jesus that he was crucified by the Romans and his body was never seen again after being placed in the tomb. END 21:54 END

21:55 Now, some people are going to say, well, you read the Bible. We think that's all made up. That's fine. Let's throw out the Bible if you want to do that in our conversation and let's just look at historical fact and documentation. There was a man named Jesus. Again, he was not made up. He was crucified by the Romans, and he was placed into a tomb and after that, no one ever saw his body again. This isn't some made up person in history, yes, I understand the story seems crazy, but it's recorded outside of even a religious book that we call the Bible. END 22:28 END

22:29 Number three, all of the apostles, and I've shared this with you before. All of the apostles except John were killed for teaching that Jesus was raised from the dead. Ten men lost their lives and not just a normal fashion. They were tortured, they were ridiculed to what would for many of us be the breaking point where we would, if we had made something up, we certainly would have told the truth to get out of the torture and the physical pain that we were feeling, but all of these men, if they did make this up, took that secret to the grave with them. END 23:03 END

23:05 Even after being tortured, just seems highly unlikely to me. Number four, there were over 500 eyewitness accounts of the resurrected Jesus. Over 5 hundred. In the court of law, an eyewitness testimony is one of the strongest testimonies. And scripture says there were over 500. Eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus and this happened over a lengthy period of time. END 23:35 END

23:35 It happened in different locations to many different people, so it couldn't have been hallucinations or wanting to believe that to be true. And as this news of the resurrection was spreading, as these people are spreading this news, no one was able to refute it with verifiable evidence and I can tell you they wanted to. The Romans, the Jewish leaders, it is why they murdered Jesus in the first place because their power, their authority, their control was being taken from them. END 24:05 END

- 24:05 If they could have proved that Jesus was still in the tomb, they would have done so. If they could have presented a body, they would have because it would have stopped the movement. But these were first hand accounts of people saying, I saw the risen Jesus. Number 5, we need to understand that believing and proclaiming the resurrected Jesus during this time in the first century AD cost a person dearly. END 24:33 END
- 24:33 But still, this movement exploded with people believing it to be true. It doesn't make logical sense that if this were a lie that people would have continued sharing it and spreading it and saying they believed it because doing so cost them oftentimes their very lives. They were shunned if they were Jewish, they were cast out of their synagogue, which meant all of the people they knew and grew up with, the people that were close with, they were cast out in extreme cases, they were killed. END 25:03 END
- 25:04 I would understand if this were a lie that was being spread that it would explode if like you promised every person a new donkey if they would make this proclamation. But that's not what happened at all. There was nothing that benefited them worldly speaking, earthly speaking, by proclaiming that Jesus was resurrected, but they believed it so much that they sacrificed everything. END 25:27 END
- 25:28 And then one of the greatest testimonies, one of the greatest proofs that I think scripture shares for the truth of the resurrection is this, that soul, we've been going through the book of acts, saw the greatest persecutor of these believers becomes Paul, the greatest evangelist. Of these believers. A transformed life. As we read in the book of acts, three different times we hear the story that Saul is sharing about his experience with the risen Jesus. END 26:00 END
- 26:01 Something happened in Saul's life that transformed him into Paul. And changed his direction completely. And according to his own testimony, it was an encounter with the risen Lord Jesus Christ. There are more that I could share, but just so you know as I was sitting in my office, this was enough for me to come to the conclusion. There must be something here. There must be something here. END 26:24 END
- 26:25 And so for those that don't believe, I believe the question is asked of them, how do you reconcile all of this evidence if you don't believe in a resurrected Jesus? What do you believe is true? Where is your evidence? Because as we will discuss on Easter, no matter what we believe about how we are here, why we are here or where we are going, there is a level of faith that is necessary. END 26:52 END
- 26:53 Even those that don't believe in my faith, there's a level of faith that's necessary. But if the resurrection is true. Then this means that somebody, Jesus has conquered death and the grave, it means that he has given us you and I, a road map for how to defeat death, then how to prepare for death. And if it is true, then his resurrection requires something of me. END 27:22 END
- 27:23 It requires me to respond in a certain way. And so as you wrestle with this, this belief in a resurrection does it change the direction of your life if you believe it's true or not true? Does it change what is important in your life? If it's true or not true, does it require a change in how you live day to day? I can't answer the question for you, but I can only answer the question for me. END 27:51 END
- 27:51 I can only share my experience and tell you that when I came to the conclusion that Jesus had been raised from the dead, it radically changed my life. And I believe that it will radically change yours as well. If you're here today or watching or listening on the radio and you just have

questions about this whole thing, you've understood that Christianity believes that Jesus was raised from the dead, but you want to have a conversation. You still have more concerns or questions or doubts. That's okay. END 28:20 END

28:21 I want to have a conversation with you. There's other pastors here that would love to talk with you. If you're wrestling with this, you're welcome. You're welcome to come. If you're here today and you have already believed in the resurrection of Jesus, and you already proclaim it to be true, then hopefully today has solidified your belief a little more and reminded you of the fact that Jesus has conquered death in the grave and that you and I should no longer be living in fear. END 28:49 END

28:50 And so because he has conquered death in the grave, you and I can celebrate and praise with him today and for the future. You can thank him for conquering death for you and you can live in freedom and not fear. We can live in freedom. As we approach Easter Sunday, you know that there will be many people in the pews and maybe watching online or listening that don't normally attend a church on Easter or the rest of the year, but they attend on Easter and Christmas and other times. END 29:23 END

29:24 It's an opportunity for us to share the core belief of what we have. A resurrected savior. Who has come to save us? And so we want to share that with anybody that will listen. You guys know we've had the hands out in the foyer. I just encourage you. You'll see sticky notes up there. Write down on a sticky note, someone that you know that doesn't know Jesus as their savior, somebody you want to invite to Easter Sunday, leave it on the table. END 29:52 END

29:54 Then grab a different name of somebody that you're going to pray for, a name of somebody you don't even know, but you have their name, and you place their hands in the hands of their name in the hands of Jesus, and you say you will pray for them. Three steps. Somebody that you want to know to come to know Jesus, leave it on the table, grab another one, put it on the hands and pray for that name. So that we know we're not alone. And praying for our loved ones, our neighbors, those that we care about. That we want to come to know Jesus. Let me close in prayer. END 30:22 END

30:26 Heavenly Father we thank you for conquering death and the grave. That is a giant that we truly could not have conquered on our own. We were unable to, it's only by your power. So we thank you for conquering that giant. Thank you that we no longer have to live in fear, but we can live in faith, and we can live in freedom. In my prayer is that that message would continue to go out amongst us. END 30:53 END

30:54 That lives would be changed radically transformed. Just like Saul's did, because they've had an encounter with the living Christ. And so it's in his name, the name of Jesus we pray. Amen. END 31:10 END