

# The Week Before

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Luke 18:31-34

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Good afternoon.

Good afternoon. (Audience)

Well, my job this morning is to get you ready for Easter. And what I mean by that is this is Palm's Sunday. This is the first day of the week before Easter. And you know when we come to Easter, people view it differently. We're going to have a lot of guests next week. A lot of those folks are holding Christianity a little bit out of a distance. A lot of that is our fault. They think Christians are hypocrites. When people say you know the church is full of hypocrites, I say, "Hey, come to my church. It's always room for a few more." You know. We're all hypocrites at some respects. And sometimes there's those Christians that are kind of like, they like being right all the time. Have I noticed in Christians in my 52 years of ministry that there are Christians who are driven by the fact they're forgiven.

In God's grace and mercy, they're so grateful. Their whole life is driven by gratefulness. Then there's those others who slap the name Christian on themselves. Say they just like being right all the time. And so in their self-righteousness, when they discover Jesus is right, they decided whether I want to be on that side. And they tend to be we tend to be a little odious to people. And I was talking to some guy was really mad at Christians and Christianity and the crusades and how horrible it was. And I said, "I tend to agree with you, all I can tell you is that I follow Christ and I love his word, but let me ask you this question, what is it that Jesus ever said or ever did that ticks you off so much?"

And the conversation just all of a sudden turns civil. It's like I'm having a hard time finding people who really have a beef with Jesus. And what's remarkable about Palm Sunday and Easter, it's not about the church, it's not about Christianity, it's not about us. It's about Jesus. And this is Palm Sunday that begins this week. You know, the fact is when everything is said and done, it was Jesus who stood against hypocrisy, religious hypocrisy. It was Jesus who stood against religious emotionalism. It was Jesus who stood against religious dogma that robbed people from their lives. But the real question comes up is next week when we gather together, is it a Memorial service because Jesus is a was?

Or is it the fact that Jesus is an is and it's a celebration of his life. And the fact he's very much alive and very much a part and with us. Is he an is, or was he a was? And that's really what we come down to when we talk about this Palm Sunday. See, there's some real questions that come up because two realities that we can't do much about. The one is we die and the other one we live. Hopefully we get in the middle of the way around. We live and we die. Now, now anybody want to debate those two issues? No, I don't think so. So we live. And so we learn, we study philosophy and people's counsel and watch other people's lives examples, and we navigate life. So we're doing the best we can do with that. It's the dying part that we don't seem to be getting much help.

I mean, we live, we die, they put us in a hole, the flower grows, the cow eats the flower, we eat the cow. We live, we die, they put us in a hole, the flower grows, the cow eats the flower, we eat the cow. We live, we die, they put us in a hole. You wonder, isn't there something more to it than

fancy manure? I mean, is there something on the other side, because anybody help us with this issue of, I live, yeah, I got lot of help with that. But what about this, I die? Is there something there that somebody can help answer my questions? Buddha died in 483 BC. Confucius died five years later. Muhammad died in AD 632, Socrates, Plato, Gandhi, Marks, Lenon, and Lennon, I'm talking Vladimir and John. They're all dead. And so they're not really helping me a whole lot with some questions about mortality and immortality because they're gone and they really had nothing to say about it.

So where do we go from here? Next week we celebrate the fact that Jesus is not a was, it's not the fact he was a great man, great teacher, lover of humanity. Got to remember men like that. Yeah. If he was a was, then we just remember him. But there's something else going on and he's not a was, he's an is. Because what did he say about this death thing? He said, I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me shall live even if he dies. Do you know the context in which he said that? His best friend Lazarus had died. Lazarus has two sisters. Jesus is up north and Lazarus's sister, they're down on Bethany four days trip and Jesus hears that he's sick, but he doesn't do anything. I mean, what kind of friend is that?

Until he hears that his friend Lazarus is dead. Now he goes down four days to get there for the Memorial service. Now the two sisters of Lazarus, Mary, the younger sister was kind of quiet. And so she'd followed the Hebrew customs of receiving people into the home who are mourners. But Martha, Martha, what do you think about Martha? What about? 6'8", 240 pounds. I mean, Martha was quite a lady and she's ticked. And she's ticked at Jesus so much so that the account in John 11, she's out at the fringe of the town waiting for Jesus to show up to bite his head right off. And so he shows up and she's mad. Where were you when your friend, my brother, was sick? You healed everybody else. And that's when Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, I am the resurrection and the life, he who believes in me shall live even if he dies."

Night before he's crucified, that's when he says, because I live, you should live also. If you're curious about you when you die, watch what happens to me when I die. Because I live, you're going to live also. He's going to be crucified. He's in the upper room with the boys. He's going to be arrested in about four hours. Five hours, they're going to basically torture him, beat him. Six hours they're going to crucify him on a cross. There's no time to be blowing smoke kind of a serious moment. And at that point, basically Jesus says, "If you believe in God, believe also in me, in my father's house are many dwelling places." I know the King James used to be many mansions, but then we all fight over who's got the biggest mansion. So let's go back to the Greek. In my father's house are many dwelling places. "If it were not, so I would've told you. I go to prepare a place for you so that where I am, you will be with me, therefore I will come and take you to be with me."

Now, someone's talking at least about this dying thing. And the only guy I can find throughout history and all the teachers, philosophers is Jesus says something about it. But it seems to have a lot to do with, you want to know what's going to happen to you, look at what happens to me when I die. So what happened that week before that made it a holy week and changed the course of history? You can open most, any ancient history textbook in any university, any college. You're going to find a somewhat sympathetic version of the life of Jesus. And they usually end with some sympathetic variation of the statement, "He was crucified by Pontius Pilate and died as a result." What's interesting is what follows in these different texts. Some will simply ignore the whole thing, but others will say something like this, "It was supposed by some of his followers that Jesus rose from the dead."

That's quite a suppose, don't you think? I would suppose you like strawberry ice cream, I would suppose you were late for your appointment, I would suppose you rose from the dead? I think that's more than a suppose at least to be examined. What actually happened? Any student of history was going to have to admit that there was some religious explosion flamed into existence in Jerusalem shortly after that supposed resurrection of Jesus Christ. Tacitus, he's an ancient Roman writer, detested Christianity. And all the way in Rome, they're all Christians, they're all getting excited about this resurrected Christ that he's an is not a was. So much so that Tacitus is ticked about it. And he writes this, "A great number of his, Jesus's followers, and the distant imperial capital believed so strongly in his resurrection that they gave up their lives in Nero's great persecution of AD 64." What happened? What transformed 11 frightened men to be bold proclaimers of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, noted each of them sealing their own testimony with their own blood?

One thing about saying, well, I believe this, I believe that, I'm willing to die for it. Good for you. But these men made up to joke, made up the hoax. Would you die for something you knew was not true? But these, every single man sealed his testimony with his own blood. And what happened that caused over 3,000 Jews in Jerusalem who held the Sabbaths Saturday to be the most holy of the seven days, to all of a sudden begin to gather in addition to the Sabbath on Saturday, they regather on Sunday and he called it the Lord's day, the first day of the week. Open your Bibles with me to Luke 18, because I've got some questions we need to answer. And our custom here at Redeemer Bible is in reverence to the scriptures.

If you can, would you stand for the reading of the text. Luke 18, Luke, a medical doctor, historian, careful details, and here's what Luke records, verse 31, "And taking the 12, the 12 apostles, he said to them, see, we are going up to Jerusalem and everything that is written about the Son of man by the prophets will be accomplished for he will be delivered over to the Gentiles and will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging him, they will kill him. And on the third day he will rise. But the apostles, they understood none of these things. The saying was hidden from them and they did not grasp what he was talking about." You may be seated. These original apostles are as confused as we are. And they're there and we're 2,000 years later and they don't have a clue to what Jesus is talking about.

So what happened the week before? Sunday, staying in Bethany with his friends, Jesus enters in Jerusalem, riding the colt of a donkey, Palm Sunday. Today. And what had happened is that people had heard that he had raised Lazarus from the dead just a few days before. And so now they're thinking, if this guy can raise someone from the dead, they probably can beat up the Romans and set up a kingdom and we can have a Jewish kingdom once again. So they all gather with their branches and they're all singing about the Son of David. Finally, one's going to sit on the throne of David and rule a Jewish kingdom. And they're singing out what? Hosana, Hosana, Hosana, oh that's so spiritual. Wait, wait, wait. All it means is, "save now," "save now," "save now." They're basically making a demand. The only trouble is that towards the end of the week, they realize this Jesus isn't going to rid them over own.

Some of them show up at the end of the week and this time out of deep bitterness and disappointment in him, they cry out something different. Do you remember what it was? Crucify him. Same ones. Hosana, Hosana, save now. Now, crucify him, crucify him. Monday, Jesus gets up that morning and he goes into the temple and he sees it hasn't changed. For the second time, he cleanses the temple. He was mocked by others called the bizarre of Annus. It was a moneymaker at the temple. In other words, if you're going to come from wherever you come

from and you want to worship God with a sacrifice, well, you better make sure your goat is pure, your your your sheep is pure, the pigeon is pure, your bull is pure. But not to worry, we're in stock only 10% off. Whoa, you think you brought a perfect lamb? Not to worry because we'll find a flaw in it. Because that's all about making money in the temple.

Well, three years ago, Jesus saw this. And first time he had visited temple and he goes, stop making my Father's house, which is a house of prayer, a house of thieves. And he cleanses. And he was not in a good mood because he took the ropes, made a whip and he turned everything over in quite a riot. That was three years ago. Now, here, Monday, he shows up again and nothing's changed. He's not in a good mood. And he does the same thing. Well, of course, this does not go well with religious leaders. Tuesday, the next morning, he enters back into the temple after cleansing it the day before and that morning, Jesus has met with some very angry antagonistic Sanhedrin leaders questioning him on what authority did he have to basically cleanse the temple and upset business. But also the fact he's out there. He's teaching like a rabbi without a license.

See, you got to be licensed by one of our schools. He didn't go to any of their schools. And so he's out there. And what really ticked them off is this is when he shared those parables. If you studied them, they are about basically the hypocrisy of the Hebrew leadership. And that went over like a pregnant pole vaulter as far as they were concerned. So they're trying to ensnare him. They're asking him, trying to nail him with questions and they forget he's got a cosmic nail gun. I mean he just nails them right back. And so because of that, a plan to kill him is now put into the hopper. Now, Wednesday. Wednesday, he gives the Olivet discourse. For a lot of people, what's the Olivet discourse? Olivet, olives, mount of olives. Matthew gives the account, Matthew to 24. You see disciples realize, you know this is going south.

Jesus is antagonizing a lot of people. We're not getting the endorsements like we thought we would get. We get those really cool t-shirts and stuff. This wasn't happening. And so they basically come to Jesus specifically, Peter, James, and John. And in Matthew 24 it says, and as he sat on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sits on the Mount of olives, the disciples came to him privately saying, tell us, when will these things be and what will be the sign of your coming and in the end of the age? Well, chapter 24, 25, he tells him, but listen to what he and verse 29. Immediately after the tribulation, Jesus says of those days, the sun will be dark and the moon will not give its light. Stars will fall from heaven. Powers of heaven will be shaken, then will appear in heaven, the sign of the Son of man then all the tribes of the earth will mourn.

Mourn what? That he's not a was, but that He is is and there he is. And they shall see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven. First time it was Christmas. Meeky mild rosy cheek child, Jesus. But this time it's not Christmas. He comes with power and great glory. That's how the story's going to end. And even though these disciples think things are going south, because they don't have a clue especially the way he just said it. You notice, he says, and I'm going to be, they're going to kill me. Well, boy, their mind stop right there. And he just kind of, don't you love the understatement and he'll rise again on the third day. I like that. I would've given eight paragraphs on that part, but he just mentions it. He's going to rise again and they don't get it. I mean, would you get it? Some guy's going to rise from the dead.

Hello. That doesn't happen. So they're not too sure what's going on here. Well, after he talks about his second coming, we come to Thursday. Jesus attends the last Passover. This is the record in John 13, where he washes the feet of his disciples. And then he promises them something. He says, when I am put to death, when I die, I going to leave you as orphans, but

rather I'll ask the father and he's going to send you another comforter. I could've used the word *heteros*, another of a different kind, but use the word, alas, an exact kind of comfort that I have been. God's going to give part of himself and he's not only going to be with you, but the Holy Spirit will be in you. I've been with you these three years, but he and in His presence, I and my father will be not just with you, but in you.

That's why Paul says in Romans 8:16, when he says don't you know the Holy Spirit bears witness with your spirit to remind you're a child of God? See, Jesus isn't a was. He's very much an is because he's very much alive within us, but not just within us. Well, then we come and this time after the promise of Holy Spirit, he moves to the garden of Gethsemane. Now some scholars believe that this actually happened the night before that Jesus was crucified on a Thursday, they do it for a couple reasons. One, it is true in the Jewish calendar from time to time, there'd be two Sabbaths back-to-back, and they feel this particular year, they called one was the Passover Sabbath. And so that meant that the Passover was celebrated by Jesus, not the Thursday night, but Wednesday night. And then he died, was crucified on Thursday.

Now, they like that because remember when Jesus said, Son of man will be in the earth for three days, three nights like Jonah was in the belly of a great fish. Well, there you go. Well that works out great. There's all day, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday we win. But you understand in Hebrew calendar, any part of a day is the full day. So they get His body in before six o'clock on Friday. That's a day. Saturday is a day, because after sunrise Sunday, that's a day. So it goes works either way. And traditionally history seems to bear out that he was crucified on a Friday. Now Friday, the arrest is early, early in the morning just after midnight and catch it. These trials, first by Annas, the high priest, then his father-in-law Caiaphas, used to be the high priest, and then to Sanhedrin, and then Pilate, then back to Herod Antipas then back to Pilate again.

These were all done at night. Hebrew law forbid any criminal trials to be done ever at night and here they are breaking their own rules because it's Jesus they're trying. Well, along with the scouring, this would all happen early in the morning. He would be condemned, crucified and buried, and His body would be buried before six o'clock that Friday evening. Why would they make sure? Jesus would be on the cross six hours. He'd finally be crucified, condemned and put on that cross about nine o'clock in the morning. And he would go all the way till three o'clock in the afternoon and then they would declare that he's dead and take His body down on. Now, they've got to move fast because no Jewish's leader wants to have a Jewish's body hanging on across on a Sabbath and the Sabbath begins at six o'clock Friday night.

And so they've got to get Joseph of Arimathea who wants to have the body put in His own tomb, but Pilate is got to release the body. They've got some paperwork to work on here. But then finally he is buried before 6:00, before the Sabbath. Now Saturday, boy, that would've been a day of a real sense of hopelessness. Remember disciples didn't have a clue understanding what this, I will rise on the third day meant. So that wasn't even on their, their, their radar. All they know is that we were with this guy for three years, we saw him do some remarkable things. The guy walked on water. He did the fish thing with Peter. He healed people who were blind, people who were crippled. He raised a little girl from the dead. He raised a Lazarus from the dead. Now, is that it? Is he indeed a was? And thus, we should remember what a remarkable man. Or he is an is? What happened on Sunday?

Where did Christianity begin? It's a global faith. Well, it began right down here in Gilbert. Have you seen the Memorial? That's where it all started about 2000 years. No! It began in Palestine, specifically Jerusalem, Jerusalem. And where was the tune that they laid the dead body of Jesus

in? Just outside the walls of the city of Jerusalem. This would be the last place that would give birth to Christianity if that tomb wasn't empty. At first Easter morning, if that tomb was not empty, then you could put a stake through Christianity, because all you had to do when Peter was up there, declaring the resurrection, just put the dead body of Jesus in a basket and roll it down the street and it would just put a stake in the inflamed heart of this new idea, this supposed resurrection, but it never happened.

Anyone producing a corpse would've driven this wooden stake through this heart of this supposed resurrection. Yeah, but but aren't all the accounts of that tomb being empty on that first Easter morning, limited to the Bible? And come on, the Bible would be a bit biased, wouldn't it? Of course, it would be. But not all the accounts of the empty tomb are in the Bible. In fact there's more of them outside the Bible. Did you know that none, I say none, not one of the Jewish sources outside the Bible deny that that tomb was empty on that Sunday morning? Not one of them. There are repeated attempts to give an explanation on how that tomb became empty on that first Sunday morning is the very declaration that it was what? Empty on that first Sunday morning. Flavius Josephus. Flavius, how'd you feel your mom named you Flavius? Unless you knew you were going to head up a rock band or something you know, maybe that would work then.

But the fact is Flavius Josephus, who is this guy? He is Jewish, but he's a Roman General. And he detest Christianity and he's not part of that. He's not even a believer, really Hebrew believer, but he was a historian and well acknowledged historian by secular historians for that beginning of the first century. And what's fascinating about this guy is he wrote this thing called Antiquities of the Jews. And in his ancient historical, writing he's very, very clear, he's antagonistic towards Messiah wannabes. As a matter of fact, he exposes false messiahs everywhere in his writings.

Professor Shlomo Pines, of the Hebrew University announced some time ago, the finding of an ancient Arabic manuscript. Say who cares? We care because it was Josephus's account and his ancient manuscript. Remember Arabic was spoken language at the time. And in this manuscript, you find this account, his account, "He said his disciples reported that he, Jesus, had appeared to them three days after the crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah." Now here's this guy that will roast all the false messiahs. He has all the evidence. He knows where the tomb is. He knows all the buzz and the talk and the email that's going over all over the place. He knows all the evidence here and yet his conclusion is what? He is, was, perhaps, a Messiah.

Well, into the second century, authorities continued to admit an empty tomb saying that the body had been stolen. That was their explanation how it became empty. Ancient writing, they found, for example, in the dialogue with Trifio in AD 150. It records that Jewish authorities were sent to Rome because these Christian's talking about their supposed resurrection of Christ was just going all over the place. But these authorities that were supposed to counter the Christian claims of this resurrection, they were armed only with the theory of the stolen body. I mean, they could have taken an ear, a nose, how about an eyeball? Some part of the corpse because they didn't have a corpse. They just had a theory.

Tomb is empty, disciples must have stolen the body. As early compilation of Jewish traditions called Toledot Yeshu, fourth century, the Jewish historian, Josephun, claimed that the tomb was empty, but it was empty only because the disciples had stolen the body. In the Talmud. If you have Jewish friends, they all know about Talmud, it's one of their sacred writings. It mentions the empty tomb. Some are really haunted by it, honest Jewish thinkers and leadership. The famous

rabbi, Ben Ezra haunted, he wrote this prayer. It was around 9th, 10th century. "Thou, if thou wast he who at mid watch came by the Starlight, naming a dubious name and it too heavy with sleep and too rash with fear. Oh, thou if that Martyr's gash fell on thee coming to take thy own and we gave the cross and thou deserved a throne, be thou the judge." Some of the Jewish leaders were haunted by this empty tomb.

Well, what are these explanations for this empty tomb? Any of them hold water? You tell me because here they are. Some say the apostles invented whole story or they hallucinated the whole thing. They so much wanted the resurrected Christ that they just wished him into resurrection. Now, remember they had no clue what he meant that he was going to rise on the third day. They're not looking for it because who's going to believe someone's going to rise from the dead? And yet even if they did make it up and they all hallucinated it, it doesn't even address the evidence of what? The empty tomb. The empty tomb. All someone has to do is produce a body and the Christian faith is destroyed from its beginning. Others say possibly they were confused and went to the wrong tomb.

You know when Jesus says, love God with all your heart, your soul and all your mind, stop being so intimidated by "intellectual experts." Experts are simply little spurts from out of town. That's it. Now, if your mother died, your mother died and she was buried and you had the Memorial service on Friday and then suddenly comes along, you think let's go put some flowers on mom's grave. And then you look to your brother, your sister, and go, nowhere was that at? I don't think so. But the moment, if they did indeed get confused and went to the wrong tomb, the moment they went up there in downtown Jerusalem and proclaimed this resurrection guess who would show up and straighten out real fast?

How about the guards that were posted? How about the Pilate who posted the guards? How about all of Jewish leaders who basically had interacted with the guards? Someone would've straightened it out because all they had to do was produce a what? But all he could produce was an empty tomb. Others say, well, Jesus was in a weakened state. He fainted. Maybe he was drugged on a cross and he never really died but he revived. With all your heart, soul and mind. After tortured, crucified, sealed three days in a tomb without medical care, food or air, and then he kicks open a two-and-a-half-ton stone beats up the guard and declares, this is the resurrected body.

I don't know if I want to be resurrected. It makes no sense. Now, the oldest theory is that someone stole the body and the first to be accused would be the disciples. The disciples. These are fisherman, except for Matthew, he's a tax collector. So here's their plan. Guys, guys, come around. We're going to steal the body. What was that Bartholomew? Yeah, I know there's two Roman guards posted. Yeah. What was that John? Yeah, I know the Roman guards know if they fail at their post, they'll be executed by their superiors. So they're really motivated. I know, I know, but we could do this. How can we do this? We could attack early in the morning with our fishing nets, we can slap them with a macro, and we can overcome the whole thing, move the stone and we'll hide the body. And then we'll all go out, die a martyr's death for what we know we made up as a hoax. Is anybody thinking with me here?

And if that's a problem with the method, how about the motive? Why would they proceed themselves to be tortured? Sacrificed? I could see one or two, but all of them? And they would sacrifice their lives to perpetrate what they knew to be a hoax? However incredible it may appear, the story of the supposed resurrection is authenticated by the willingness of its eyewitnesses, rather to die than to repudiate the truth of their testimony. They saw his

resurrection. A Russian lecturer, member of the then communist party, was addressing a peck audience on the subject of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He spoke at considerable length, attempting to discredit the whole thing. When he had finished an Orthodox priest rose and asked if he might respond. He was warned he could not have more than five minutes. He said, five seconds is all I'll need. He turned to the people and he gave the common Easter greeting, characteristic of the Greek and Eastern Orthodox Church, Christos Anesti, Christos, Christ, Anesti, is risen.

Back came this deafening roar from everybody in the auditorium, Althos Anesti. And what do you think that means? Truly he has risen. I want to teach you a little Greek before we close. Christos, that's Christ. Christos Anesti. Anesti, he has risen. Christos Anesti, Christ is risen. Say with me, Christos Anesti, Christos Anesti.

So how's your life going? You got some challenges that are so souring your joy that you spend more time miserable, tears, frustrated, because people say the world's out of control. Maybe it's not falling apart. Maybe it's just falling in place. So what do you do when you get into those moments? I got an idea. How about hear yourself say, say it with me, Christos Anesti, Christ is risen. Are you feeling some anxiety, some fear these days? You find you're motivated more out of the things you're afraid of? Afraid of what's going to happen? When you start feeling those fears out loud, scare the brother people in line at the grocery store and just say, Christos Anesti. Say it with me, Christos Anesti. You want to celebrate with us next week Easter that Jesus is not a was. So not a Memorial service. He's an is and he abides with us.

Jesus is not a was. He's alive today. So what are we going to do about it? If he's alive, then we may stand before him. What are you going to say? After all that he went through, the torture, the death. And then like even Paul says in Romans 1:4, God proved that Jesus was His Son by the power of His resurrection and proved that God, the father accepted His sacrifice because why would God raise him from the dead if he did not accept the sacrifice when he laid His life down for the forgiveness of our sin? How innocent are you? I mean really, just for a moment, how innocent do you think you are? When you stand before Christ, how are you going to explain that you did not need His forgiveness, you did not need a pardon for your sin. See, there's a loving God who created you, gave you a life, breath, created you in His own image so you can actually manifest the beauty of your creator, provides a plan for your life. And what, every single one of us turn our back on him.

No one's a greater sinner than I am. For years, I just lived my life for myself, for my goals, my dreams, and I only was concerned about anybody else on how they benefit me. I was indifferent to God and I learned that indifference is basically the purest form of hate. I came to a point realizing I needed forgiveness. I needed a pardon. Would God give it? And here he has provided already the gospel. He placed His Son on the cross to receive His wrath for my sin, our sin. And then he raised him on the third day. So all would be able to see in history, this is God's Son who died on the cross for us and the father accepted that sacrifice by raising him from the dead. I needed forgiveness and I received it. I needed a pardon and I received it. That's why my new life began and I am not driven by fear. And that's all joy is, the absence of fear. That'll be my prayer at this Easter.

Can you remember a time of asking God for forgiveness? Can you remember a time of asking God for a pardon and expressing you want to follow Christ? I hope it happens this week. Are you ready for Easter?

Yes.



Then my job's done here. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for these dear folks. Lord, I pray you open their hearts, open their minds. This world wants to intimidate us, wants to mock the truth, but we want to be children who walk in the truth and only your spirit can break through and let the truth shine in the mind and hearts of these dear ones. Father, those who follow your Son, may they be deeply encouraged in their faith, that Jesus is not a was, Jesus is an is. And he is our savior and Lord. And we pray this in His name and God's people said...

Amen.

Amen. (Audience)