



Message **Transcript**

Arise | Easter 2024

Jeff Schwarzentraub

Pastor Jeff:

Our Father in heaven, we give you all the praise, glory, and honor for who you are because you and you alone deserve our praise. We thank you for the gift of your son, Jesus Christ, who came to this world, who fulfilled the law, who died on a cross and was buried, who got up out of the grave and is just alive now as He has ever been. We thank you for the Holy Spirit who indwells all of us who believe and who convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. And we invite you, as the Trinity God, to have your way here today. Lord, we thank you for your living and active Word, because we believe as a people that every time it is faithfully and accurately proclaimed that you are speaking.

And so our prayer this morning, Lord, is, speak Lord, for we are ready to hear what you have to say. And so now for all those who have gathered who desire to hear the Lord Jesus Christ speak directly to you, who will believe what He tells you and who will by faith put into practice what He shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word amen?

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Jeff:

Amen. One of the most important questions that you will ever ask in your life is what happens when I die? Another way to ask the same question is, am I going to go to heaven when I die? Another way to ask the question is, is there really an afterlife

when I die? It's important for you to ask and answer that question because the Bible says that God has placed eternity in your heart, and the Bible says it's appointed unto man to die once and after that face judgment. And wouldn't it be good to know, since all of us are going to die, what it's going to be like the moment that we do die so that we're prepared for what happens?

And here's why that's so important, because whether it's news reports that I've seen or people being interviewed or one-on-one conversations I've had, about 90% of the people when asked those questions get it wrong. Now you might think, well, that's them out there, not me in here. But you might want to pay careful attention because this is not a question that you want to get wrong. You want to know for sure, and the Bible goes to great lengths to make sure that for sure, how it is that you can truly be in a relationship with God and how it is for sure that you can know at the very moment you breathe your last breath that you will be welcomed into the kingdom of God. And if you're looking to know for sure, like I know that I know that I know, I believe God has a word for you today.

I invite you to turn your Bible to 1 Peter 3:18. 1 Peter 3:18 if you have a Bible with you. If you don't, I'll read it. It's one verse. I'll read it twice and then we'll unpack it together. And here's what the Word of God says. It says, "For Christ also died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh but being made alive in the Spirit. For Christ also died for sins, once for all, the just for the unjust, or the righteous for the unrighteous, so that he might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh but being made alive in the

Spirit." And as you hear the Word of the Lord this morning we're going to unpack three truths about that scripture and what it means for us to truly live the life that God wants us to live.

Because the reality is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is paramount and essential and foundational to everything in the Christian faith. As a matter of fact, the Apostle Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit writes in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, "For I delivered to you as of first importance." In other words, it's primary important, it's the most important thing you can read about in your Bible. "What I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that He was buried and that He was raised according to the scriptures." Now, if you're visiting with us, we're so glad that you're here. Sometimes people that visit, visit on Easter and Christmas, and if you visit on Easter regularly you'll probably wonder why do they always talk about the resurrection? Why do they always talk about the death of Jesus?

Because the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is essential to everything that we as believers in Christ believe. And I know how difficult it is to get here. I was looking out my window at some of you in the parking lot struggling to get in, and thank you so much for coming today. It's hard to get here no matter who you are, no matter who you are. It reminds me of the story of the mom that went to wake up her son and said, "Son, it's time to get up for church." And the son said, "Mom, I'm not going to church." She said, "Oh, yes you are." He's like, "Oh no I'm not and I'll give you two reasons why, because I don't like anybody there and nobody there likes me." The mom said to the son, "Well, I'm going to give you two reasons why you will go to church.

Number one, you're 47 years old. And number two, you're the pastor."

I mean, it is hard no matter who you are to make it in to a place to hear the Word of God, because it's opposed, because God loves you so much He truly wants you to know who He is. And I want to give you three truths about what it looks like to truly live your life to the full now and be prepared for the life to come, and what it means to rise up and what it means to arise and be all the God wants you to be. And I'll give you three truths. The first is this, to arise you must believe that Christ's death was completely sufficient to forgive all your sins. To truly live life to the full, to truly be the fullness of all God wants you to be, you must believe that Christ's death was sufficient to forgive all sins. Hear the Word of the Lord, for Christ also died for sins once for all.

Jesus Christ did not have to die more than once. He didn't have to keep paying because He himself was the perfect sacrifice for sins. When He died once that was satisfactory, that was complete. There was nothing else that needed to happen in order for sins to be forgiven. Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone is the only one that can forgive sins. For Christ also died for our sins once for all. One time He died for all sins. One time He died for all people who would be willing to turn from their sin and turn to Christ. Now, what's the big deal? What we need to understand is the reason that's such a big deal is that we're sinners.

The Bible makes clear in Romans 3:23 that all have and fallen short of the glory of God. Romans 6:23 starts out by saying, "And the wages of sin is death." What you're going to earn for your sin is death, and we intuitively know that. I mean in the

history of the world, the death rate continues to be one per person. You don't know when you're going to die. You don't know how you're going to die, but you know that you are going to die. And we don't like to think about that day because we like to think about life, which is how we should, but we should be prepared for the fact that we're aging and getting older. And the reason this is, it goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. When God made the world He created the world in six literal days and He made it perfect.

And on day six He created male and female in His image and He gave them the world to have dominion over. And He said, "Eat from any tree you want and enjoy the world that I created and take dominion over it and be fruitful and multiply. I'm putting you in charge of my world. But I'm just telling you one thing, don't do this, don't eat off the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The day you eat off that tree surely you will die." And it doesn't take long until Eve is talking to the serpent and Adam's standing right there with her, and they both eat off the tree that God forbid and they both begin to die. Death started that very day and we know that death had its way because none of us has ever met Adam and Eve, and the reason you haven't met them is that they're dead.

And here's the problem, when sin entered into the human race, it's not just that sin is some things that you do that are bad, sin is part of your heredity because when Adam and Eve conceived after sin and they produced sinlings, right, and that's what happened to you. And that's why even when you have children, from the time they're young, you don't have to train kids how to sin. You don't have to pull a kid aside and

say, "I want you to be selfish." You don't have to pull somebody aside and say, "If you're going to get caught, lie." It comes so natural in our DNA. We have to teach people how to tell the truth. We have to teach people how to share. We have to teach people how to be generous. Why? Because it goes against the grain of our DNA. And here's what the Bible says, "There is no one good. No, not one." That's me and you. We don't like that truth.

But the Bible says in 1 John 1 if you say you have no sin you deceive yourself and the truth is not in you. If you say I'm not really one of those sinners, then you're deceived, you're lying to yourself. You're believing something false because the truth is you caught the virus and from the time you came out of your mother's womb you've demonstrated in all sorts of ways that that's been part of your DNA. The Bible says this in James 4:17, "Anyone who knows the good he ought to do and does not do it, sins." The Bible says he who is guilty of breaking one law is guilty of breaking it all. God demands perfection. And even Isaiah says in Isaiah 64:6 that your best works are like filthy rags, on your best day you could ever have where you wake up joyous and you're philanthropic and you serve other people and it's all about everybody else, even on that day compared to the holy God of the universe, you come up short.

There's no one who does it right every time. There's no one good, no, not one, if we're comparing ourselves to a perfect Holy God. And that's why God came for us. God came for us because the Bible asks and answers a different question than we like to ask and answer. Here's a question we like to answer as human beings. How is it that a loving God could ever send anybody to hell? And then we answer that, I don't

think He would because I wouldn't send anybody to hell. And if I didn't that would make me more loving than God. Do you know the Bible never asks that question? Here's the question the Bible's asking, how is it that a perfect holy God that made human beings in His image that have completely sinned and rebelled against Him, who can't welcome any sin into His presence, how is it that a God like that could ever welcome one person into His presence?

And the Bible goes to great lengths to answer that, and it's through the Lord Jesus Christ who died on a cross and shed His blood and gave His life for all your sin. And that's the only payment. That's the only payment. And we need to understand that the Christ has redeemed us. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." Romans 5:8 says, "While we were still sinners Christ died for us." Jesus Christ became our substitution. He stood in the gap for the wrath that we were going to take because we are all by nature children of wrath when we're born, because we're born in sin and because we sin the wrath of God is hanging over us.

And if you want to know how serious God takes sin, take a look at how He allowed His son to be treated. He was beaten, He suffered and He hung on a cross, for what purpose? He had the most cruel death in the history of the world. Why? Because sin had to be atoned for and only God himself could atone for sin. That's why when Jesus says, "I'm not just one way, I'm not just one of many, I am the way and the truth and the life and no one comes to the Father except through me." You can search the whole world over, you can study all sorts of different religions and you can come to

the same conclusion. Only through Jesus Christ can you ever have a relationship with God the Father. There is no other way. It doesn't matter your nationality, your background, where you were raised or who your parents were, you must come to Christ in the same way.

That's why when Jesus Christ hung on the cross in John 19:30, some of His last words were, "It is finished." In other words I paid it in full. What you could never do I did for you. And as He stretched out His arms, He was showing that He was restoring glory to His Father by humbly taking on the sin of humanity. And He was also welcoming anyone anywhere at any time that would be willing to turn from their sin and turn to Him, that they could exchange all of their sin for all of His life. Now, the challenge to this in our culture and in every culture is we don't think we need that. We think there's other ways. I don't know if these are the top five, but these are five I hear all the time when it comes to people saying, "Well, I don't need Jesus."

Number one goes something like this, what's going to happen when you die, are you going to heaven? Of course I am. Tell me why? Because I'm a good person. Really? The Bible says there is no one good, no, not one. The reason you think that you're a good person is you've constructed what good is in your own mind. You've set the rules for what good is, and then you compare yourself to those that you don't think are good. But if you start comparing yourself to the perfect Almighty God, that's never known sin, that's eternal, that has always existed and will always exist, and there's no fault in Him, and you start comparing yourself to Him, you're going to come up awfully

short. And the problem is when you die, you're not going to stand with your friends and say, "God, I was better than them."

No, you're going to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ in all of His glory with your sin exposed, and you're going to hear these horrible words, "Depart from me, you worker of iniquity, I never knew you." I can only take that which is perfect, and you didn't accept my gift which would've perfected you for all time. You decided you would be good enough to get there. And by the way, the Bible says if righteousness could be gained through observation of the law, in other words paraphrased, if you could do something to be good enough to get to heaven on your own, then Christ Jesus died for nothing. His death on the cross was the stupidest thing. Why would He die? I'll die, but you could get there on your own, but I'll die too.

No, no, no. I'll die because you can't do anything to get there. You'll never be good enough. And even if from this moment on you live perfect, it doesn't wash away all your sin before. And if you're guilty of breaking one part, you're guilty of breaking it all. You're not a good person. Lie number two, well, I try to keep the 10 commandments. Really? That's only because you don't know the 10 commandments. I mean, the first commandment is you should love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. You shall have no other gods before me. It means from the time you exited your mother's womb your only thoughts, your only emotion, your only idea was to give God complete honor, glory, worship, do everything for Him, and you never let anything, anyone, or any time get in the way of that.

How are we doing so far? Or how about this one? This is one, honor your father

and mother. Have you done that perfectly? Has there ever been a time you back-talked your mom or dad? Ever been a time you didn't listen to them? And parents, I'm not asking you to look at your kids. Kids, I'm asking you to look at your mom and dad because they sin the same thing with their parents that you're sinning because they're the ones that gave you their sinful DNA. None of us does that perfect. Do not lie. Do not murder, you say, "Okay, finally I got to one that I passed the test on." Yeah, but Jesus said, "You've heard us say do not murder, but I tell you, if you think evil of your brother you've committed murder in your heart." So if you've ever driven on I-25 you've broken the law.

Or how about this one, don't commit adultery. Like, "Well, good, I didn't do that." Jesus said if you look lustfully upon another woman you've already committed adultery in your heart. So guys, every guy that's hit puberty you've sinned. I mean, you start stacking it up and you realize that the purpose of the law is to show you God's holy and you're not. And you better have someone that can pay for your sin. And it's to point you to Christ who is the holy one who came and fulfilled all the law, who never, ever sinned, who said, "I'll take the punishment that you deserve because I love you so much and I'm the only way you can get to the Father." And he offered the gift to anybody anywhere at any time that would say, "I'm done with my sin and I want all of Christ's life," and you come running and He'll never turn you away. That's how good our God is. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Jeff:

But there's something that gets in the way of it. There's something that gets in the way of it. It's called pride. It's called pride. And pride plays itself out in two different ways. First is this, I don't need it. I don't need that gospel junk. All religion is is a big crutch. Now, keep in mind, I'm not talking about religion, I'm talking about the Lord Jesus Christ that paid for your sin. Yeah, I don't need that. I don't need a crutch.

Pastor Jeff, you don't understand. My life's good. I got it going on. I married well, I've got a good spouse. I've got a good family. We have good resources, a good income. We travel well. I have influence in my job. People love me. Everything's going well.

Here's my question, then why are you so empty on the inside? And what does it profit you to gain the entire world and yet forfeit your soul? Let's say God would give you 150 years of perfect health and all of that, but when you meet Him face to face, you hear the awful words, "Depart from me, you worker of iniquity, I never knew you." What benefit is that? Why would you let your pride get in the way of the gift that God's giving you? Jesus Christ is not a crutch. Jesus Christ is our salvation and He's everything we need. Amen.

And that's one way that plays it out. You poor Christians, you weak Christians. No, we're completely dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ living in this now and taking us all the way to heaven. But the other way pride plays itself out is this, I don't deserve it. I don't deserve this gift. I've lived a horrible life. Pastor Jeff, there's no way

I could even mention the sins that I sinned. You don't even know how bad I am. I've got great news for you, there's no sin you've sinned and no distance you've gone and no distance that you've traveled too far where God can't redeem you to the full. It doesn't matter what the sin is. It doesn't matter what the world thinks of it. It doesn't matter how grievous it is because when Jesus said it is finished, you know what that means? I paid for that too.

Quit living in shame and just come to me, I'll forgive you completely. You don't need to forgive yourself. Forgiveness, cost of payment, you can't forgive yourself. You can receive from Christ everything you need for the forgiveness to wash away all your shame. Don't let pride get in the way, because here's the problem we have. The problem we have is we swim in sin so much we don't even know what sin is. Asking a human being what's it like to live in sin is like asking a fish what's it like to be wet? I don't know, it's just what I know. I mean, that's where we live. And we falsely believe that, well, everybody sins and God just forgives and everybody's going to go to heaven, is totally false.

Hear the Word of the Lord from 1 Corinthians 6:9, "Do you not know the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived." Unrighteous people do not have a relationship with God. Unrighteous people do not go to heaven. Those are not my words, those are God's words. That's God telling you if you're living unrighteously don't expect that when you die He's just going to embrace you and say, "Sorry, it was okay," because He's too holy and righteous and good to do that. Don't deceive yourself. Don't get mad. The message of the cross is foolishness to those who

are perishing. It's why you get angry in your heart saying, "I didn't want to come hear this stuff anyway." Yes you did because God loves you so much that's why He's meddling with you right now telling you that you need to hear this.

He says, "Do not be deceived." Listen to this list, "Neither fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexual, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." And this is not an exhaustive list. He's just listing a few. Nobody that lives like that has a relationship with God or is going to heaven. And notice what He says, "Such were some of you, but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." It means this, no matter what your sin is, through Jesus Christ's death on the cross and His shed blood, He's willing to forgive it all. And you don't have to be known by your sin anymore. You can be known as a child of God because you turned from your sin and received the full life of Christ and all of His forgiveness. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Pastor Jeff:

That's the good news. That's the gift. But we don't like that. We like our sins so much we like to change the rules of what sin is. Maybe 40, 50 years ago even if you weren't a believer you would say marriage is between a man and a woman, and marriage is for life and divorce is wrong and all this. And what do we say now? It

doesn't matter. Live any way you want. Even the President of the United States, Joseph Biden, yesterday made a proclamation about today, March 31st, 2024, to call today National Transgender Day of Visibility. That's what he called it. Now listen, here's what he said. He said we should recognize all who are transgender as special and love them.

Here's what I would say to them, "No matter who you are and no matter what sin you sin, I see you and God sees you and He loves you, because the Bible says that you are fearfully and wonderfully made. And because God created you He loves you with a love that's unbelievable. But I also love you enough to tell you the truth, that in the first chapter of the Bible God made two genders. He made a male and He made a female, and those are the only two genders that there are, and if you disagree with that you're not disagreeing with me, you're disagreeing with the God of the universe who will hold you accountable to that. And I love you enough to tell you you don't have to stay in that." And my Bible also tells me in 1 Timothy 2 to pray for the leaders and those in authority so we can pray like I've been praying for President Joe Biden because God's grace is good enough to save him from his sin as well and to rescue him. And that's how we should be praying for our president.

That's what it means that Jesus rose from the dead because God's for all people everywhere to repent and believe. John the Baptist's first message was repent, turn from your sin and turn to God. Jesus' first message, repent from your sin, turn to God. Peter's first message, repent and turn to God. Paul, in Acts 20, now I command all men everywhere to repent, turn from your sin and turn to God. And we've got to

believe this. We've got to believe that Christ's death was completely sufficient to forgive all your sins. You don't have to stay steeped in your sin anymore. Jesus Christ is willing to forgive all of it. Let me give you a second truth. If you want to arise, you want to rise up, you want to live life to the full, you must believe that Christ's purpose was to bring you into fellowship with God.

That Christ's purpose was to bring you into fellowship with God. It says for Christ also died once for all, the just for the unjust, or the righteous for the unrighteous. It was Christ for you. You're not righteous enough to die. Christ had to die. He's the only righteous one and He died in your place. But notice what it says, so that He might bring us to God. You can't get to God on your own, but God can bring you to himself. There's no way for you to get to heaven on your own but Jesus Christ came so that you could experience the fullness of God. And Jesus wants you to have a relationship with Him, but He wants more than that. He wants you to have fellowship with Him. All of us have relationships. We have different levels of relationships. Some of us have relationships, we see people at a reunion once every few years.

Some people have a relationship, they have a texting relationship. Some people talk on the phone relationship. Some are face-to-face relationship. Some are weekly relationship. Some it's every single day relationship for hours on end. There's different levels of relationship. And yes, the Lord Jesus Christ wants to have a personal relationship with you, but He wants more than that. He wants fellowship with you. He wants intimacy with you. He knows everything about you, He wants you to get to know Him. And here's what He wants. Fellowship really boils down to four parts. It's really

about the worship of God. It's when you ask who is worthy of my best and you answer, Jesus. Now, I'm not talking about worship. I'm not talking about song singing. I'm talking about allegiance.

All of us worship, from the time we come out of the womb we worship. We worship people, we worship teams. We worship ideas. We give our allegiance. You go to a rock concert, people are worshipping. I mean, you go to a Broncos game, people are worshipping. You go to a Rockies... I mean not really a Rockies game... but you go to different places and people are giving their allegiance to something, they're giving their heart to something. But when you're transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's beloved Son, your worship becomes Him and you realize He is the only one that can fulfill our hearts with the fullness that we're looking for. And worship is a desire to give Him our full allegiance. Second, it involves not only the worship of God but the will of God.

We start asking the question, what does God want? What does God want in this world? What does His Word tell us He wants? I want to align my life with what He wants. And then the ways of God, not only what He wants, but how does He want me to fulfill those things? What's the way in which He wants to get there? And then finally is the work of God. Where's God at work and how can I join Him? I want to do things God's way. I want to worship Him. I want to follow Him. I want to do it His way and I want to work with and for Him. God's desire is to bring you into a relationship like that, a fellowship, an intimacy, a depth. Because the truth is a holy God cannot welcome sinners in their sin. And we understand this. I mean, it's not right for lawbreakers to be

rewarded, is it? I mean, if somebody vandalized your house and they went to trial and they were set free, but not only set free the judge asked you to pay them for their pain, it would make you mad.

If somebody murdered somebody in your family and you went to trial and they were set free and then you had to pay them for the act of murder that they did, it wouldn't be right. And yet, that's exactly what the grace of God is through Christ. It's so scandalous. We, you and me, are the ones that rebelled against Jesus and Jesus is the one that said, "I'll come take the penalty for it. I'll die in your place for what you did wrong. I'll rise from the dead showing that I'm God. You don't have to do anything but believe that I'm that good." It's scandalous and it's free and it's a gift and you can have it, but so few people take it. And God brought you here today and God has you listening online and on campus because He wants you to take the gift.

When Jesus was here, here's what his ministry was. He was saying let me get your attention. You are dead and the wrath of God is upon you and you have no hope, but here I am as fully God and fully man to take all the punishment for you. I'll show you the way. I'll show you the truth. I'll give you my life. I'll die for you and rise from the dead. And friend, it's not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. Jesus did not come to call righteous people, but He came to call the unrighteous to repentance. And the way that you're made righteous is not by being good. The way that you're made righteous is by trusting in the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. And by doing that, God robes you in his righteousness.

I mean, all throughout the Bible we see that God wants fellowship with you. In Luke 19:10 Jesus said, "I came to seek and save that which was lost." In Luke 15 Jesus tells three different stories. He tells a story about a lost sheep. He says suppose there's a shepherd, he has 100 sheep and he loses one. Will he not leave the 99 on the hillside and go after the one? And when he finds the one will he not put it on his shoulders and bring it home saying, "I found my sheep"? In the same way with a widow that loses a coin that only has 10 coins, will she not sweep the whole house and when she finds the coin will she not call all of her friends and say, "I found what was lost"?

Or how about like a father that had two sons and the youngest son took his inheritance and went off into a distant land and squandered everything, ended up feeding pigs, but when he came to his senses he said, "I'll go back to my dad and I know what I'll tell him, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I'm no longer worthy to become your son. Just make me a slave." And what we see about the love of the father, he sees his son off in the distance and when his son starts walking back, the father in an undignified way, sprints to his son. And we think the father's going to chastise the son, beat the son, yell at the son. But when he gets there all he can do is hug the son and embrace the son and say, "Quick, bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Kill the fatted calf, let's celebrate. This son of mine was dead, he's alive, he was lost then found. Let's have a party because my son is home."

See, we know that truth sometimes, but we don't believe that God feels that way about us. I want to tell you He feels that way about you. I saw a picture of this in my

family about six weeks ago. We have a little dog, it's about eight and a half pounds. We let the dog out to go to the restroom and stuff on our back porch, and one morning about six weeks ago my youngest came running into me saying, "Dad, Wrigley's gone. He got off the porch." We live on five acres. There's coyotes, there's hawks, there's everything. And I began to think I'd better get my contacts in quickly and go find this dog. I've already done two hamster funerals. I don't want to do a dog funeral. And I'm trying to figure out what's going to go on. My daughter's going ballistic. What was two minutes felt like 20.

And so I went out on the front porch and sure enough my dog had made his way around my house and was just kind of sitting on my front porch and I grabbed him and I walked inside. I said, "Here's Wrigley. He's okay." And my daughter grabbed him and she just hugged him and couldn't stop kissing him. Now, we had to get to school, 20 minutes later she was still hugging him and kissing him. And I said, "Hey, the dog's fine. He's home. We've got to get to school." She said, "Dad, you don't know how much I love him. I don't ever want to let him go." That's the picture that God has of you. You wander away, you do your own thing, and when you come home God wraps his arms around you and no one, but no one, can snatch you out of God's hand. That's how much God loves you. Amen. That's the picture.

And we can receive all that just by admitting I'm a sinner. My sin is going to kill me. My sin is going to separate me from God. My sin is going to take me to hell, and Lord, I don't want that and I realize you love me enough to not leave me there. So you

must believe that Christ's death was sufficient to forgive all your sins. You must believe that Christ's purpose was to bring you into fellowship with Him. And I'll give you a final one, you must believe that Christ's resurrection makes your transformation possible. It's only through the resurrection of Jesus Christ this is even possible. There's a lot of people that die that make claims. There's no one that's made the claim that He's God, that's gotten up out of the dead, that's still alive to this day.

Jesus Christ is as alive as He's ever been and He's coming back soon. That's what the Bible teaches. That's why when the disciples went to the tomb to find Jesus on that first day of the week, there was a verbal epitaph given by angels that said this, "He is not here. He is risen." He's risen. Now, we don't think of that as a glorious truth, but who do you know who's risen from the dead who's still alive? Nobody. Because apart from Jesus that doesn't happen. 1 Corinthians 15:17 says, "And if Christ has not been raised your faith is worthless and you are still in your sins." If Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead, no matter how faithful you think you are, and no matter what you place your faith in, regardless of denomination or religious preference, it is absolutely worthless.

You can be a devout Muslim. You can be a devout Hindu. You can be a devout Presbyterian. You can be a devout Catholic. You can be a devout Baptist. You can be a devout BRAVE, you can be devout whatever, but if your faith and trust is not in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it's worthless and you're still in your sin and you're still going to face judgment according to the Bible. It's only because Jesus Christ got up out of the grave that vindicates that His death on the cross was sufficient. But Romans

8:11 says this, "But if the spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His spirit who dwells in you." If you believe He was raised from the dead and you'll turn from your sin and turn to Christ, His spirit will come live inside you. And what's dead spiritually will come alive right now.

But not only right now, 2 Corinthians 4:14 says, "Knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus Christ will raise us also with Jesus and will present us with you." Here's the good news. Here's the really good news. Not only is God willing to come and dwell you on the inside now and give you the life that you've been wanting, but it's a promise that the very second you breathe your last, you'll be more alive than ever as Jesus Christ presents you faultless before the Father with exceedingly great joy. That's why Jesus made the claim, "I'm the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." He told Nicodemus, the highest religious ruler of the day in John 3:7, "Do not be amazed that I say to you, you must be born again." In the same way that you were born physically you must be born again in Christ.

There has to be a moment in time that you've turned from your sin and turned to Christ, and that's called new birth. That's not the end, that's just the beginning. I'm not asking you have you ever been baptized? I'm not asking have you ever prayed a prayer? I'm not asking have you ever gone to church? I'm not asking do you want to get religious? I'm asking you this, from from the time you took your first breath when was the time that you told the Lord I know I'm a sinner, I know I'm on my way to hell, but I believe that you died in my place and I want you. You can take all my sin and I

want all your life. Come into my life Lord Jesus and be my God and I will follow you. When did that happen? Because if that didn't happen you can call yourself whatever you want to call yourself, but according to the Bible you're still going to face judgment if you don't have Christ paying for all your sin on this side of eternity.

So here's the question. We prayed that you would hear the voice of the Lord today. We prayed over every single seat in this auditorium and in every auditorium we have, we prayed for our online campus. We're trusting God to do what He wants to do in you. And if you hear the Lord's voice, do not harden your heart. God brought you here today so that either A, you would remember who you are in Christ and be very excited about all that he's done for you as you've repented and trusted Him, or He brought you here today because today is the day of salvation. Today is the day that He wants you to fully know Him. We've had hundreds of stories in our church of people who thought they were saved or people who knew they were lost come to faith in Jesus Christ.

And it's not about getting religion, it's about getting a relationship and a fellowship with the God of the universe. What I want to do now is just show you a short video from one of our pastors on the Westminster campus that's going to tell you his story in just a few short minutes about what Christ did when he went from one of those guys that said I love God to realize I don't love God, I need to repent on my sins and believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord. And you can hear his story. So I want you to watch the screens and just check this out.

video:

Now, growing up I went to church and most of all my family were involved with serving the church. And up until about 18 years old, if you looked at my life a lot of people would've looked at me and been like, yeah, he's a pretty standup Christian. He's a standup guy. When I was about 18 years old I started getting involved in a lot of sexually immoral relationships with women. I had really fallen from my upbringing and from what I knew to be, at least for the most part, true, with being raised in Christianity. It really happened when I got into this relationship with a girl and I ended up getting her pregnant. We went as far as hearing the ultrasound, the heartbeat in the ultrasound, and it was only a few weeks after that in September that she had finally decided I'm going to get an abortion.

And I remember I ran downstairs immediately and I grabbed a little pistol that I owned and I stuck it in my mouth and I was about to pull the trigger. And something, now I know what that something was, but in that moment God stayed my hand. And for the next couple years after that moment, I still kept living a totally depraved lifestyle. And at the time I had everything I thought I wanted in my life. I thought, "I have a nice house. I have a good job. I've got a beautiful girlfriend. I've got two cars. I'm living the dream." And yet, every single day I came home I was more depressed and empty and broken and contemplating suicide more than I ever had in my life. My family was aware of the story of me sticking a gun in my mouth, and so they were really concerned about me and they ended up reaching out to a pastor at BRAVE Church.

And so I went in. I was like, "This is it. It's either I kill myself and if I'm going to do that, I might as well just go see somebody. Screw it. I haven't seen a pastor in ages." He asked me, he's like, "Hey, man, what do you want most in life?" And I told him, I was like, "Man, I just want to be a good guy. I want to be a good dad. I want to be a good husband. I want to be a good father. I just want to be a good dude." He looked me straight in the face and he said, "Man, you came in here professing to be a Christian, but I've got to tell you the truth, you don't love Jesus." And I remember in that moment when he said that to me it hit me like a brick wall. And so I was extremely frustrated with him. I was angry and I left that conversation feeling like that was completely worthless.

I got to my house still furious and going to walk straight through the door and pull out the guns that I had hid from myself and end my life. That was my plan. And I get to the door of my house and I open up the door and that's when it all hit me. I took one look into the house and I collapsed on the floor. And I remember in that moment I'm staring up at the ceiling and the cross was more real than the wall that I was looking at. I just remember I was just weeping bitterly on that ground, on that floor. I don't know how long I was down there. It was a long time. And everything, not only was the story of Jesus dying, true, He rose again. He was king. He had all authority. He was Lord, He was my savior. And He did all that and He redeemed me. He redeemed me. And that truth was more real than anything that my eyes could see in that moment.

And with all sincerity, I knew in that moment I truly loved Him for the first time.

The first words out of my mouth were, "Jesus, I've never loved you. Can you help me do that?" And the second words out of my mouth were, "Lord, take my life and do as you will. Take my life and do as you will." And that's just the beginning, because after that, everything, my whole life totally flipped. The men at BRAVE took me in and they began to equip me with everything that they had. I mean, they literally took me from zero to hero.

Now I'm teaching theology for interns and I'm a pastor on staff, and all of this happened in the time span of just three years. I can say this with all sincerity that first off, I love Jesus. I love Him. More than anything else I love Christ. And second, there is no other place I'd rather be in the world than here at BRAVE Church serving the Lord Jesus Christ to advance the gospel here and to take Colorado and the rest of the United States of America and submit to His authority and His lordship.

Pastor Jeff:

Every story is a story like that. Different details. Some people younger, some people older, some of them living a pretty good life and realize I need Christ, others living a horrible life and realize I need Christ. But you heard the truth of the gospel today, and what a tragedy it would be for you to hear all the truths about how God sent His son Jesus Christ, the God-man, to die on the cross for all your sins and be raised from the dead and leave that gift on the table. Take the gift today. If you hear the Lord's voice, don't harden your heart. That's why in a minute I'm going to ask you, if you've responded to the gospel, if you want Jesus Christ to save you I'm going to ask you to stand. And here's why I'm going to ask you to stand, because every single

person that Jesus called, He always called publicly.

And the reality is, if you're afraid to stand for Jesus in here, you'll never stand for Him out there. Jesus Christ left heaven and came all the way to this earth so that you could have life in His name so you could be completely forgiven, so you could be indwelt by his Spirit. And I know what's going on in some of your heads, yeah, but my parents already think I'm saved. Yeah, but Pastor Jeff I was at another church and I already did something like this but I know today's the day. But Pastor Jeff, my spouse already thinks I'm saved. If you hear the Lord's voice don't harden your heart because the Bible says there's more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents than over 99 that don't need to. And I promise you here, because we've been in two services, this is our third one today, with several people that have stood and responded to the gospel.

We'll cheer for you. We'll cheer for God's work in your life, but don't leave it on the table. So if today's the day of salvation... Thank you, brother, would you just stand to your feet so we can see the work of God done in your life? Amen. Amen. We praise God for you. Praise God. Stay standing if you would. We have a gift for you. We just want to give you a gift. Stay standing. Praise the Lord. Several people up in the balcony. We see you. We see you. More importantly, God sees you. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. You may be seated. I want to tell you this, if you didn't stand and you said, "I should have stood, I should have stood," that's cool. We already went through this today. You don't get saved by standing. You're just responding to what Christ was already doing in your

heart.

You may have stayed seated and said, "That was me," and if that's you, you could pick up one of these yes packets on your way out the door. Just grab it. It's our gift to you. You're always welcome here because God is always willing to welcome you home. Amen. That's who our God is. That's who our God is. Would you stand with me as we pray together? And as we pray today what I'd like to do is, I'd like all of you out loud to repeat after me as I pray, then you pray out loud with me, whether you stood for the first time to respond to Christ or whether this is something that's going on in your heart, would you pray with me? Repeat after me.

Dear Jesus.

Congregation:

Dear Jesus.

Pastor Jeff:

I thank you for the good news.

Congregation:

I thank you for the good news.

Pastor Jeff:

That Jesus Christ died for all my sin.

Congregation:

That Jesus Christ died for all my sin.

Pastor Jeff:

That He rose from the dead.

Congregation:

That He rose from the dead.

Pastor Jeff:

Right now I repent of my sin.

Congregation:

Right now I repent of my sin.

Pastor Jeff:

And I place my faith and trust in Jesus.

Congregation:

And I place my faith and trust in Jesus.

Pastor Jeff:

He alone is my God.

Congregation:

He alone is my God.

Pastor Jeff:

Let me pray for you. Father in heaven, for everyone today who turned from their sin and gave it to you and received your life, Lord, begin something anew, indwell them with your Holy Spirit. And Lord, help them just take baby steps and help them continue to grow out the faith because today is just the first step. It's just the beginning of a life where you want to get to know them and continue to grow them in your grace. Father, we praise you for your work. We know there's angels celebrating in heaven today for all the salvations and all the people that you've drawn to yourself, we give you all the glory. And Lord, we declare that we want to see more of this. We want more of your life in our life, and we want to see more of your life invested in the life of others, and we sing to you and we praise your name and we give you all the glory. In Jesus name, amen and amen. Can you praise God as we sing this last song?