



Message Transcript

Easter Sunday: Not Guilty

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Some of you may never been in church before. I get that. I'm so glad that you're here. What I do when I preach from the weekend is I preach from God's word because God's word is authoritative. God's word tells us everything that he is. Today what I'm going to do is I'm going to read three different verses. I'll read a verse, we'll unpack it, read another verse, unpack it. Read another verse, unpack it. And then we will respond together.

But here's what I want to tell you. What I'm going to tell you about today from God's word impacts your entire eternity. So I'm just going to ask that you would pay entire attention, because the Bible says that every time God's word is preached faithfully, he speaks. And that means you're not here by accident. You may have been dragged by a friend or a family member. You may just showed up out of the blue. For whatever reason you're here, here's what God wants you to do. He wants to tell you about who he is from his word. And if you'll open your heart to what God wants to say, you will hear him speak directly to you.

Bible B-I-B-L-E. It stands for basic instructions before leaving earth. Everything you need to know about living life here and what's coming on the other side is right packaged in this word. And that's why we're going to faithfully preach it. So let's pray. And as I pray aloud, would you pray with me in your own heart?

Lord Jesus, just thank you for today. Lord, we give you all the glory, honor, and praise for who you are. And Lord, we ask that during the few minutes that we're going to share from your word Lord that you would have your way with each and every one

of us. Lord, that you would do a work in each and every one of our hearts. Lord, that you would speak and be so direct to each and every of us. There'd be no doubt that we heard your voice. And Lord for what you're going to do in advance, we give you all glory, we give you all honor, and we give you all praise in Jesus name. In all God's people who are ready to hear him said amen. Amen.

There's a couple different verses in the Bible that if you could sum up the entire Bible, maybe a verse that you would pick. I think this verse would be a contender. From John chapter three in verse 16, some people call it the gospel in a nutshell. And today we're going to take a look at John chapter three verses 16, 17, and 18. And John chapter 3:16 says this. It says, "For God so loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him would not perish, but have eternal life." Let me say that again.

"For God so loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him would not perish, but would have eternal life." And their package is everything that you need to know on this side of heaven. The challenge is when we hear that verse for many of us, just by show of hands, how many of you have heard that verse or at least seen that verse somewhere before? I mean, if you've been to a sporting event, you've probably seen somebody behind the goal post holding up John 3:16 and you might say, "What's the big deal?" I think for many of us, when we hear the Bible being taught, it sounds like the Charlie Brown teacher in the Peanuts cartoon like [inaudible 00:02:44]. Yeah, I know it, but I have no idea or the significance to what it has to do with our life.

And what God is trying to tell us this morning is about his character and who he is. That God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. And many of us, we don't think about it like this. We miss out because when it comes to hearing God, usually we want to hear what someone else has to say about God, rather than hearing from God himself. And God wants you to hear directly from him.

It's kind of like the difference between knowing somebody and dating in junior high. You know what dating in junior high looks like? I remember when I was in sixth grade, there was this buzz going around like all the guys were going to go out with the girls. So you wanted to be going with someone. So I was like, "I want to be part of this." So there was a girl in my class named Kim, and I was like, "Man, I want to go with her." I didn't even know what going meant. And I didn't know where we were going, but I wanted to do that. So I made a note. "Kim, will you go with me? Yes, no, maybe." But I was too chicken to hand it to her. So I was going to hand it to her friend. And I was hoping for a yes or a maybe, right.

So I remember getting the courage to talk to her friend and she took the note. She gave it to Kim. Later that afternoon, I got the note back, opened it up. Yes. Man I was in love. We were going. Now like I said, I didn't know where we were going. We were going out. But here's the problem. She had two sisters, and it was back in the day before cell phones. So if I was going to call her on the phone, I was likely going to get one of her parents or one of her sisters on the phone and have to explain why I'm calling her sister. Was too embarrassed to do that. So I never called. Was too embarrassed now that we were going together to actually talk to her at school. So a

week passed, and I didn't even say hi to her. And then I got a note from the girl I had handed the note to give to Kim. She handed me a note. It was a fresh note. I opened it up excitedly and it said, "Kim wants to break up."

I was devastated. Right? But the reality is we never had a relationship. The reality is we never even talked. The reality is we didn't do anything. Reality is I was just going through a go between so that I could feel good about myself. And a lot of people approach religion that way. What their pastor, what their priest, what their leader says. This is what it said. You can go directly to God through the person of Jesus Christ and hear what he has directly to say. He's the authority. I'm not the authority on God. God's word is the authority on God.

So as you look into his word today in John chapter three in verse 16, "For God so loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." We get this idea from that statement that God is both eternal and intentional. That God is eternal and intentional. I mean, if God is going to grant eternal life, then God himself has to be eternal. You cannot give what you do not have. Make no mistake about it. The Godhead is made up of father, son, and spirit. The Trinity. All three persons coexisted from eternity, and will always exist into the future. That's who the Godhead is. Make no mistake about it. When Jesus Christ came to earth, that wasn't his first time that he'd been born or something. That was this, the pre-incarnate Christ who had always existed. The second person of the Trinity was born of the Virgin Mary, right? Suffered under Pontius Pilate. Was crucified,

dead, and buried. It means the eternal son of God became flesh and made his dwelling among us. You want to know what God is like? You study the person of Jesus and you will see exactly what he's like, because he is the exact representation of who God is. He's eternal.

And what's he offering to you? Eternal life. Well, how long is that? Have you ever thought about how long eternity is? I mean, just think about this for a moment. If there were a bird, a little bird that you saw in our parking lot today, and if it could pick up a grain of sand in its beak, and if it were possible, fly it all the way to the moon. Now I said in the first service 93 million miles. I was corrected. That's the sun. I was told the moon is 238,900 feet away. So I'm glad I was corrected. But imagine if that bird could fly that grain of sand to the moon, drop off that grain of sand, and then fly all the way back to the earth, find our parking lot in Cherry Hills Village, pick up that grain of sand, fly another one to the moon, and continue that task until every grain of sand around our building, then every grain of sand in the greater Denver area, then every grain of sand in Colorado, including all of the dunes. Then every grain of sand on the entire beaches and all around the world, one by one was flown to the moon and drew dropped off.

Then when that bird got done, one by one would go back and in the exact same order, pick up a grain of sand and fly it back to the earth, and set it in the exact spot that it found that sand. How long would that take? I'll tell you this much. When that bird got done doing that task, eternity would just be getting started. When we're talking about the gift that God is giving us, when we're talking about what he wants us to know, he's talking about eternity. And here's why you need to know that. Because you

have to realize that you have a soul, and your soul will go somewhere and spend eternity. When you die, you will not go into a grave and be done. When you die, you will awake either to eternal judgment or to eternal life with Jesus Christ. So to pay attention to what Christ is doing is really, really important. Because what I'm talking about here today has significance for your entire eternity.

As a matter of fact, if you blow off what's being said today, 30 billion years from now, you'll still remember the words that I was telling you. That God's word is true. That I should have listened to what God was saying. That's what he's saying. God is eternal. But what else is he? He's intentional. I mean, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. Why would you give your son? Why would you give your son away? Because God's intentional. And here's why he came.

He came for your sin. He came for your sin. Now nobody likes to talk about sin. And here's the reason we don't like to talk about sin. We don't like to talk about our own condition. We don't like to talk about how we are. But if you went to a doctor and every time you went to a doctor, your entire life they just said, "Looking good to me looking. I don't do any operations. I don't do anything. Just, I'll tell you that you're looking good." You would choose a different doctor. You want to go to a doctor that will examine you and check out if you really are healthy. And if you're not, come up with a proper therapy that's suitable for you so that you can get well. I'm telling you on the authority of God's word that my job as a pastor and a proclaimer of God's word is to preach his authority, that you have a sickness, that you have an illness. And it's called sin.

So let me tell you about this sin. Most people don't know what sin is. First of all, sin is hereditary. Sin is hereditary. It means you didn't become a sinner when you sinned. You sinned because you were already conceived in sin. Meaning this. When God created the entire universe and he put the world together, here's what he did. He put Adam and Eve in the garden. And he had told Adam prior to creating Eve, "Hey, you can eat of all the fruit that you want, but there is one thing you must not do. There is one tree in the center of the garden called the tree of the knowledge of good evil. And from that tree, you shall not eat. For the day you eat of that tree, you will surely die," right?

And everything was going well until what? It looked good. They doubted God's goodness. They thought God was holding out on them because they wouldn't let them have that. So they doubted God's justice. "No way God would kill us." And they ate of the fruit. And when they ate the fruit, what happened? They died.

Now they didn't die immediately that day, but death was set in motion. It's the reason why if you go looking around all of Colorado and around the world to find Adam and Eve, you'll never find them. And the reason you won't find them is because they're dead. God didn't intend for human beings to die. There was another tree in the garden called the tree of life that God intended them to eat off of and live forever. But once sin entered the world, God put a flaming sword in front of it to guard it so that in sin, people couldn't live forever. In sin, God was going to have a plan to redeem the world. And his plan was to sin his only begotten son Jesus Christ.

See when Adam and Eve discovered that they were naked could as prior to the fall, prior to them sin, they didn't know anything was wrong. All they knew was good. Then they started covering up their differences. They started hiding. It's the exact same thing that happens to you. Because of your heredity, because of your sin, you're already dead. It's why you're going to die. It's why the death rate never increases. It's always one per person. It's the number one killer of people. It's what everybody dies of. It's sin. You have it. You will die. Make no mistake about it.

But not only is it in your heredity, because some people hear that and say, "Well if I would've been Adam and Eve, I wouldn't eaten off that fruit." Let me prove to you that you would've. I mean if you walked into this building today or you're in Broomfield on that campus, you walked into of the building today. And you saw this big black tarp just covering the entire stage and in big, bold red letters it said, "Whatever you do, don't look in this hole." And there was a big red arrow pointed down to a hole right here this big. What would you do? I know many of you, you'd sprint towards the hole, right? Now you religious people that are in here, I know what you would do. You wouldn't look in the hole, but then you'd wait until your friend looked and you'd ask him, "What did you see?" And then you super spiritual people would say, "I'm not going to look in that hole, but who created that stupid rule anyway? Why can't I look? I should be able to do whatever I want whenever I want to do it. What a dumb church, what a dumb rule."

That's what the law does. The law shows us that God's law is perfect and holy and shows us that we can't. It's why when you tell somebody, "Don't do this, there's a

temptation to do it." Don't touch the hot stove. Why? Right? I mean, that's what we do. That's what the law does. It shows what's right. And it also shows our heart that we can't do it. So not only do we have a heredity of sin, we have the experience of sin. Every single one of you here has an incredible resume for how you have sinned from the time that you came out of your mother's womb. I mean, you're awesome at it. I mean, some of you are fantastic at your sin. We're all good. And we do it in different ways. Some of it's more public. Some if it's more private, but it's all sin.

Here's the problem with sin. Whether it's hereditary or by experience, we also have this sin of ignorance. Because of sin, the Bible says we're blinded to our sin. We don't even realize it's sin. We don't even realize. We grade ourselves on the curve and compared to most people, we're pretty good people, right? We're all right compared to everybody.

Here's the problem. Here's the number one problem with your sin. Your problem with your sin is not who you sinned against in this world. The problem with your sin is that your sin primarily is a sin against God. When you mistreat somebody in the world, God created that person that you mistreated. So you've sinned against Jesus and Jesus alone, right? When you're doing something prideful in your body or you misuse your body in a way that God didn't intend, guess what? God gave you your body. You're sinning against God.

So that's why David pins in Psalm 51, "Against you and only you of have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." Here's the consequence of sin too. The

consequence of sin is death. The Bible say, "For the wages of sin is death." What everybody here gets to earn for the sin patterns in your life is you will die. There's no doubt you'll die. But it says in Hebrews 9:27, "For it is appointed on demand to die once. And after that face judgment." So let me tell you what's going on throughout the world today with everybody who's dying and what will happen for you the very second you breathe your last. You will stand in front of the glory of Jesus Christ and all that he is to give an account for your life, for all the sin that you sinned against him. And the Bible makes clear that there is no one good, no not one. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

So when you stand before the Lord Jesus Christ in all of his glory with your sins exposed, here's the words that he will say. "Depart from me you workers of inequity, for I never knew you." That's what he says. I mean, Jesus was asking his disciples all the time. He said, why do you call me "Lord Lord and don't do what I say?" For god so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him. There's a lot today. So, "I believe in him. I believe in him. I believe in Jesus. I believe he lived. I believe he died. I believe. I believe." In the book of John, the word believe is used 97 times. All times as a verb. Belief is not something cognitive that you say, "Okay, that's good." Belief is because of what I believe, it's changing every part of who I am.

In other words, I used to be the Lord of my life. From the time that I was born, I'm living for me. And then there's a moment in time that comes where say, "I don't want to live for me anymore. I want to live for the Lord." There's a change of allegiance

that must take place to show that you believe. Why? Because the Bible makes clear in the book of James chapter two and verse 10 that even the demons believe in shutter. And he says this, "Even if you keep all the law and yet you stumble at just one point, you're guilty of breaking it all." And if we had time today, we could unpack all of the 10 commandments. Every single one of you's broken every single one. Love the Lord your God and serve him only. That means from the time that you're born, the entirety of your life, all you think about is worshiping and honoring God.

How about honor your father and mother? There's never been a time where you have not been honoring to your mother and father. Do not commit adultery. You're like, "Finally I got to one I passed." Really? Jesus said, you've heard it said. Do not commit adultery. But I tell you he who looks lustfully upon another woman's committed adultery in his heart. It means if you have friends on Facebook that you just emotionally have this idea about or inspiration about, you've committed adultery in your heart. They don't belong to you. It's lust.

What about do not kill? Well, I haven't killed anybody. Yeah, but Jesus said if you call your brother an idiot, you're a murderer in your heart. We've broken every single one. We've bore false witness on our neighbor. We've gone our own way. So what did God do? God knew that there was no human being that could ever get to him. So God the father sent his son as the most generous, intentional, eternal gift so that he would lay down his life for us. That's what he did. That's why Jesus came. Because he's eternal, and he's intentional.

And without Jesus, can I just tell you there's no hope in this world? I mean, the

world's been trying to figure out itself for a long, long time it's not doing it. People think, "Well the wars will stop someday. And the famine crisis will stop someday, and there'll be no more poverty someday. And if we just elect the right political leaders someday." Good luck, because the only way that you can change the human condition is to change the sin condition of the human heart from the inside out. And Jesus Christ is the one and only person that can do that.

And without Christ, let me tell you what you have. You have no hope in this world or in the life to come, because you will stand and face the judgment of the Lord. It's why there's so many people that are hopeless. There's people all over this city that are hopeless.

Do you realize the teenage suicide rate in our city, in our culture is one of the largest among the entire nation? Why? Because people are hopeless. They see the world and they say, "What hope is there for me? It'd be better to not even keep living." Some people diet and exercise all the time wishing they looked like people on a magazine that have been airbrushed because they have no hope. People scramble their whole life to earn a living so they can have enough money so they can find security. And they have no hope. This world is dying and has no hope.

It reminds me of a story I heard about a guy that recently took a flight. And on the plane while he was flying on the plane, he was a passenger. And he heard this loud bang. And one of the engines went out and the pilot came on and said, "Don't worry, we have three other engines. We're going to be just fine. We're looking for a place to

land." Shortly after the announcement, two other engines went out. Boom, boom. So he's thinking, "If he said there were four and three are gone now, what are we going to do?"

As he was thinking that, the pilot emerged from the cabin with a parachute on. Took the PA and said, "Hey, want everybody to remain calm. Be hopeful. I'm going for help." Right? That's how we think about this world. Every time we think we have something put together, it becomes more difficult. It becomes more rough. It becomes more rocky. How come it's not working? How come it's not working? Because Jesus Christ isn't at the center. When Jesus Christ is at the center, it doesn't mean trials and tribulations go away. It doesn't mean you get to live a perfect life. But you have the internal peace at any moment, in any time that come what may. Disease, death, famine, insecure, fear, whatever. I can rest assure that Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life. Amen. That's why he came. That's why God loved the world so much. He knew you couldn't get to him. He came for you. He came on a rescue mission for you.

I heard a story one time about a pastor that was taking his sons fishing. And when he was taking them fishing, he had a 10 year old and a four year old. And as they were going fishing, they were getting ready to get on the boat. And the 10 year old was in the boat. He started looking around for the four year old. He could not find the four year old. When he heard the 10 year old yell, "Dad." And he realized his four year old had fallen the water and couldn't swim.

The water was kind of murky. So they couldn't see where everything was. So the dad went and started jumping in, looking for his son. Went down, he could not find him.

And his heart is racing so fast. He just couldn't find him. Finally he said, "I don't care if I'd never take another breath. I'm going to go down there till I find my son." And finally, as he went down and he was doing all this stuff, he felt to his son who was clinging to the dock underneath the water. And he grabbed his son, and they both came him up, and they got on the dock, and they were breathing really hard. And the dad just had all this emotion like what in the world just happened. And finally, as he knew his son was okay and they were both breathing he said to his son, he was like, "What in the world were you doing down there holding onto that pole?" And he said, "I was just waiting for you, dad. Just waiting for you."

See there's a lot of us that think that God doesn't love us, but God demonstrated his own love for us. And that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son. He came for you. He knew you couldn't get to him. If Jesus Christ had not come, there would be no way to God. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me." It means anybody may come, but it's an exclusive pathway. It's through the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we will worship for all eternity. Make no mistake about it. God is eternal, and God is intentional in his love for you.

Let me tell you a second thing he is. God is also gracious and merciful. Notice verse 17. "For God did not send the son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him." God did not send his son into the world to judge the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Why did guy come? He came to save you. He came to seek and save that which was lost.

Here's the hardest part of the equation. We don't see ourself as lost. We don't see ourself as needy. We are so prideful, that we think our life is absolutely fine. And nothing that I'm talking about even matters to you. But I got news for you. Everything I'm talking about is what you will hear for eternity. Either knowing Jesus and spending eternity in relationship with him, in an eternal kingdom filled with his love and grace, or being separated from all eternity in a place called hell. Now let me just talk about hell.

Many people think of hell as a Habitat for Humanity work project, with just a lot of heat, right? I mean, "See you in hell." Do you realize you won't see anybody in hell? Hell is a place of outer darkness. It's not a place of rulership. It's not that Satan is the Lord of hell. Satan will be cast into the outer darkness, into the lake of fire as well. Hell is a place of complete aloneness, complete physical, mental, and emotional anguish and torment forever, and ever, and ever. And you say, "How could God be good and do that?" Here's why. Because God's an eternal God who sent his eternal son to forgive all of your sin, and you rejected the offer of the gift. That's why. So God in his grace, that's what he does.

But what's he like? I mean if you were to meet God, what would God say to you? I mean, that's why I love reading through the New Testament because what we see in the New Testament is God in flesh. And I wish I had three hours today to just unpack all the different stories of all the different people that had an opportunity to meet Jesus. And we don't even get the whole compilation. We get parts of these stories in God's word. But what about Zacchaeus? Remember that guy? White collar

criminal, lived for himself, stole from the people, pocketed more than he needed, was hated by everybody. And when Jesus was coming to Jericho, he wanted to see Jesus. And he was a short shrimpy dude. So he had to climb up into a tree. So as Jesus was passing by thinking he could just get a gaze at him. And Jesus comes walking by, looks up in the tree and points at him and says, "Zacchaeus, come down for I must go to your house today."

You can imagine what the people thought. "Why would you want to hang out with a guy like that? He's ripped the whole town off. He's a horrible person. He deserves judgment." What did Jesus give him? Mercy? Do you know what mercy is? Mercy is not giving you what you do deserve. What does Zacchaeus deserve? Judgment. What did Jesus give him? Mercy. And then he gave him grace too. Grace is when you give unmerited favor that you don't deserve. He lavished, "I want to go to your house. Let's hang out." It's why the religious leaders had a pejorative term for Jesus. You know what they call him? The friend of sinners.

We've already talked today. Everybody's a sinner. I mean, he didn't have any other choice of people to hang out with when he was on planet earth but sinners. It was religious people that called him friends of sinners because what they were saying is, "We're not like them," when they indeed were. And Jesus was friends to the religious leaders too that were really prideful. But what he showed? Grace and mercy.

Or how about that woman that was caught in adultery? Remember her? She was dragged before Jesus half naked, set before him. They didn't bring the man. It takes two to tango. They didn't bring him. They just brought the woman. And here's what

they told Jesus. "The law says that we should stone one like this. What do you say that we should do?" They thought they had Jesus trapped because the Bible says in the Old Testament that if someone was caught in adultery, they could be stoned for that. So they knew that if Jesus said, "Go ahead and stone her," he was saying, "Good, I'm good with killing somebody." And if Jesus said don't, then he was saying the word of God's not true. So what Jesus did was he just got down and started drawing on the ground. Who knew what he was drawing? Nobody knows. Maybe he was drawing the names of all the other sinners and the sins that they committed in the dirt. I don't know. Nobody knows. But here's what I do know. He stood up and he said this. "He who is without sin go ahead and cast the first stone." And had you been there, here's what you would've heard. Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, thump, with the older men dropping their stones first and walking away because they had a greater history of sin.

Then he looked at the woman. He said, "Hey, woman. Where your accusers?" He says, "Then I don't accuse you either. Go and sin no more." Why did Jesus come? Because he gave mercy. She deserved to die. And yet he said, "No, I'm going to give you life." And then he give her grace and said, "Go live a life without sin." That's what Jesus did everywhere he went.

And then the stories are myriad of about him healing the sick and recovering sight to the blind, and even bringing life from death. That's what Jesus spent his entire ministry doing. What were the purpose of all his miracles? To authenticate this, that he was God's one and only son. And there is no other way to come to God than through

the Lordship of Jesus Christ. He is the way. He is the truth. He is the life. And you study everybody he met. The only people that had a hard time with him were prideful, religious people that said, "I don't need anything that you're doing."

Anytime a grievous sin met Jesus, they walked away filled with hope and freedom in a way they never had before. And the truth about it is this. No matter what you bring in here and no matter how no good you feel, Jesus Christ is able to redeem you from the inside out.

I mean, just think about it. If you lived 130 years in a perfect life, which you will not, I promise you. And yet, you died without knowing Christ. What would that profit you? I mean, knowing that God loved you so much that before you were even created, he came and died for you on the cross. That's who Jesus is. He's filled with grace and mercy.

See, everything culminates on what Jesus Christ did on the cross because of the sin he had to atone for. If you studied the life of Jesus, every time he was praying, he would say father or abba. Abba father. That's how he prayed to his God, his dad all the time. Except for one time, when he was on the cross.

When all the sin of humanity was being poured out upon him and he was taking the wrath from his father for the punishment that he deserved, here's what he cried out. "My God, my God. Why have you forsaken me?" Because he felt the weight of our sin. Make no mistake about it. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for your sin.

That's why when he was on the cross in John chapter 19 verse 30, he said these

words. "It is finished." It means it's paid in full. Because while the wages of sin is death, the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Very rarely will someone die for a good man. No perhaps for a good man, someone might possibly dare to die, but God demonstrates his own love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. It means Jesus doesn't say, "Change yourself, clean yourself up. Make all your wrongs right. Then come to me and we'll have a chat." Here's what he says. "You can't fix yourself. You can't change your behavior. You can't change your heart. Come to me, and I will set you free and make you a new creation."

And most people say, "No, no, no. I'll work on that. I've just got a needing disorder. No, no, no. I'll work on that. I'm just going through a depression right now. No, no, no. I'll work on that. I'm really, really sick. And I got to focus on how I'm going to get well. No, no, no. I'll work on that. My marriage is bad so I just got to work on that. No, no, no." Satan will distract you from everything except when I'm telling you about, which is the cross of Jesus Christ.

Just the other day I was in Park Meadows Mall. I happened to be on Friday and I met these guys. They were all dressed the same. And I asked the like, "You look like a boy band." I'm like, "Are you guys a boy band or something?" "No, we all work at the same store." I don't go shopping. I didn't know what store it was.

But we're talking to them and the one guy said, "Yeah, plus we're Jewish. We're celebrating the Passover." And I gave them kind of a thumbs up because we were walking by, cool. Later we kind of passed by the store and ended up talking to them,

and they were Jewish guys. One was from Jerusalem, one was from Beersheba. I told them, "I've been to Israel four times, looking forward to taking another trip." I love that. He goes, "Are you Jewish too?" I told him, "No, but my grandfather was." And we started talking about the Passover. And as we left, my daughter said to me, she's like, "Dad, how come the Jews celebrate the Passover? But not Jesus." I said, "Well, think about the Bible."

In the Old Testament, Israel was delivered from the Egyptians. And on the night they were delivered, they were told to take a spotless lamb and to slay it. Take the blood from that lamb, and paint it on a wooden beam so that when the angel of death passed over, it would not take the life of the first born in the family. And every one of Israel that killed the spotless lamb and painted it on the doorpost was set free.

Do you realize that the Passover would take place on a Friday? And when the Passover took place, the lambs were killed all at three in the afternoon. And you would hear the bleeding of lambs going throughout all of Israel every single year at the Passover. Isn't it interesting that on Good Friday at three in the afternoon, our savior who had been hanging on a cross for six hours bled out and cried out his last? As all of the lambs were bleeding all over Jerusalem, you could hear the savior crying that once for all, the spotless lamb of Jesus Christ had taken away the sin of the world forever and ever. Which is why we don't sacrifice animals anymore. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. But the Bible says in 1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ died once for all the righteous for the unrighteous." For what purpose? To bring you to God. Jesus came to bring you to his father. Jesus came so you'd worship him. He

came, he offered you a gift. Here's the question. Will you take it?

Now some of you are here and saying, "Yeah, I believe that. I mean, I grew up Methodist. I grew up Lutheran. I grew up Baptist. I went to a charismatic church. I was at a camp one time and I felt warm and fuzzy. I remember I walked down an aisle. I remember I got Baptist in a tank." Yeah. All that stuff's good. I'm not asking you what you've done. I'm asking you when your heart changed on the inside out from saying I'm living for me to I'm living for Christ.

Because here's the thing. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" And they kept responding to him, "Well, some say that you're Elijah, and some say you're John the Baptist. Still others say you're a good prophet." And Jesus said, "Yeah, but who do you say I am?" And Peter was the one that piped out. He said, "You're the Christ, the son of the living God." He said, "Man, flesh and blood didn't reveal that to you but my father in heaven and praise God for that."

And then he began to explain to them. "Now I'm going to tell you, I'm going to go to the cross. I'm going to Jerusalem. They're going to spit on me. They're going to beat me up. They're going to nail me to a tree, and I'm going to die." And Peter who had just announced that he's the Lord, that Jesus is Christ says this. "No, no, no. May never be. I'll never let that happen." And Jesus looked Peter in the eye and said, "You get the behind me saint for you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Jesus knew that if I don't go to the cross and die, you have no hope. If I don't pay for your sins, you have no hope. You can't pay for your sins. You're not perfect. I'm perfect. I didn't just keep the law. I'm the fulfillment of the law. I've always kept it all

the time. And I'm the one that you read about in the Old Testament who's coming now and putting on display what it looks like to fulfill it perfectly. I am dying in your place, right?

So even the disciples don't get it. So Jesus tells them in Mark chapter eight, Mark chapter eight in verse 34. He's summoned the crowd with his disciples. He said to them this. "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his for my sake and the gospel will save it. For what is it? Profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul."

What's he saying? You want to be a follower of Jesus. It's not just sitting in your seat and say, "Okay, I'll believe that." Because even the demons believe that and shudder. It's denying yourself. It's taking up his cross and following him. What's that mean?

Denying yourself means this. It's saying internally my life is no longer going to be about. And everybody in the first century knew it taking up your own cross meant. It meant this. When you rebelled against the authority that had asked you to do something, you were now going public with a cross under the authority for which you had rebelled against. Taking up the cross means this. You've lived for yourself. Taking up your cross means I'm in repent of living for myself. And I'm not ashamed to wear the banner of Jesus Christ. The one who I had gone against and unknowingly went against. I realize I've gone against, and now I want Jesus to be the Lord of my life.

And what? It's obedience, follow me.

There's no such thing as easy believism. Like, "Hey, I'll just raise my hand. I'll just do this. That's cool. And I'll move on my way." No. Do you really want to be saved? Do you really want the eternal life of God? Will you turn your life for his? Will you exchange your life for what he's offering? That's how you get the gift. You exchange your life for Christ's life. You come under the lordship of Christ and you serve him for all eternity. That's what it's all about.

And God is gracious and merciful, which means this. No matter what you've done or no matter what you do, he still loves you. And for some of you, you're down and outers. Some of you think you've sinned so grievously, God could never love you. And others are here today saying, "Yeah, I'm not like them. I've lived a really good life. And here's my question. What would it prophet you to gain the whole world and forfeit your soul?"

What would it prophet you for the most successful business in a great house or houses, and you just live the life of luxury? And at the end of your days, you stand before the glory of Jesus Christ. And here's what you hear. "Depart from me. I never knew you." That's what we're talking about here. That's why this is so important. Jesus is gracious and merciful. The first time he came as humble servant. The next time he comes, he's coming as conquering king.

And that's why John goes on to say in John chapter three in verse 18 that God is holy and righteous. He's holy and righteous. Because some people ask, "Well, why

wouldn't God just take me? Why do I have to repent? Why do I have to believe?" He answers that question? He says, "He who believes in him is not judged." When you've repented and trusted in Christ, there is no judgment for you. You're condemnation free. He who does not believe has been judged already because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God. Which means this.

For those of you that were here today and say, "I don't want to believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ." You've already made your decision. It's not like you're going to be judged some day. God's judgment and wrath is already on you. You are already by nature objects of wrath. I'm proclaiming the word of God to you to tell you there's a way out. And the way out is Jesus.

It's like this. If you had a terminal illness and you knew you were going to die in five days, and I was holding the cure. And I'm saying, "Hey, you take this pill or you take this injection, immediate healing guaranteed." What would you do? Prideful people would be like, "Man, I think you're a quack. I'm not going to try that." But people that are desperate, you know what they'd do? "I don't care if it's good, bad, or whatever. I've only got five days to live. I'll take whatever you're offering."

Here's what I know. You don't know how long you're going to live. You get a one day contract with life. That's all you get. Are you ready at this moment, 100% sure that if you died, you would spend eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ? If you stood before him in all of his glory and he said, "Why should I let you in my kingdom? You don't want to say, "Well, my mom said," or, "I went to church," or, "I did this," or, "My pastor prayed with me." Silly. I want to know how you knew me. And you'll be standing there

by yourself to give an account for your life. Because Jesus is holy and he's righteous. Holy means he's different than us. It means he's set apart. Righteous means he has complete justice.

And we crave justice. Don't think it's just, why would God be like that? We want it in our own life. I mean, just think about this today. Think about the person that you're closest to in this life, the person you love the most. And just for the sake of example, let's say later this afternoon, that person that you're thinking about in your mind, that I personally tortured, brutally beat, and then killed. And by 6:00 tonight, they're done. I'm arrested. I'm locked up.

Three months from now, we go to trial and I'm standing before the judge. And everybody's accusing me, and everything they're saying is 100% accurate and true. And then what happens? I walk up and the judge says, "Do you have anything to say for yourself?" I said, "Yes I do. I'm sorry. I was having a bad day. I was really upset. I probably shouldn't done it. I promise you. I'll never do that again. Please have mercy on me."

How would you feel if the judge said, "Okay, not guilty. You can go." You'd be outraged. You'd be outraged. You say, "No justice is sought. We appeal this. He deserves to die for what he did, or at least go to prison for the rest of his life. You can't turn somebody like that loose." Then why would you think any different when you're responsible for the shedding of Christ, God's one and only son that's blood on the cross? What would God do any different? Well he loves you? He can't have you in

his presence because he's holy. And he's already given you a gift of the blood of his son, but it's only through the blood that you can be forgiven.

So the Bible says when God casts people out, they'll be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And it's not a picture we like to have. Weeping and gnashing. Gnashing of teeth means anger. I'm frustrated that I'm not with you. But what's weeping? Weeping is sadness.

I remember praying about this some years ago and asking God, "God, if you love people so much, then why would you weep? Why would people cry? Why would you send people out to all this? How could you have a picture of people weeping and gnashing their teeth?" And I felt like God spoke to my heart and said, "Jeff, I'm going to weep too." In the scriptures in Ezekiel 18 it says, "God takes no delight in the death of the wicked." Make no mistake about it. When the most wicked person dies, God does not stand up and cheer and be like, "Oh yeah, they're going to hell." He sent his only begotten son who died in their place. And he loves the world. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all your sin, but you have to appropriate it.

In the same way that the Israelites took the blood and painted it on the doorframe. Guess what Christ did? Christ was the blood who got painted on, plastered on the cross and shed his blood so that all who repent and believe in him, that death will pass over? And for those of you who believe in Christ, the moment that you close your eyes and breathe your last, you'll be in the presence of God in all of his glory giving him worship, glory, and honor. And instead of hearing depart from me you evil doer for I never knew you, here's what you'll hear. "Well done good and faithful

servant. You trusted in me in this world. I gave you a gift and you received it."

So here's the question. Do you know the Lord? I'm not asking you has God been present in your life? I'm not asking does God love you. Of course he's been present in your life, and of course he loves you. He's been on a rescue mission for your life from the moment that you were conceived. He wants you to know who he is. But many of us live in fear. And I know we all live in fear of death. I mean, just yesterday was the 20th anniversary of the Columbine Shooting. I did not live in Colorado when that happened, but it still marked me. It was devastating. I didn't know what a school shooting was until that. Now we have a name for that evil, right? And 20 years have passed, and there's still pain, and there's hurt. And there's anguish because of the evil that took place that day at that school, right?

Just this week, you may have read in the news that an 18 year old girl from Florida was flying in with some sort of threat that she was going to reenact that somewhere. And do you know what happened? Schools shut down all over the front range. Thousands of teachers and students wouldn't even go into school, because of what? Because they were fearing for their life, which is probably a good wisdom right there. Right? All because what? Because of an 18 year old girl that flew in from Florida that might do something.

Let me tell you on the authority of God's word. Jesus Christ is coming back in all justice to judge both the living and the dead for everything that you are. And here's what the Bible says. Do not fear the one who can kill the body. But fear the one who

can not only kill the body, but destroy both in hell. Body and soul, right? Jesus is coming. Some of us are just fearful to die. You shouldn't just be fearful to die. You should be fearful about what's going to happen when you die. Because how you handle the question of who Jesus is and why he died on the cross for you will make all the difference in the world. Amen?

And here's the point. When Jesus was dying on the cross, and he was breathing his last, and he was saying it is finished, here's what he is saying. "I declare you not guilty. You're not guilty. You believe in me, you follow me, you are not guilty." There's no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

But now's the acceptable time to come to him. Because for most people, they hear a message like this and they start thinking, "Yeah, that's a good point. I'll start considering some of that stuff." God's not asking you to consider it. God had his own son's blood spillt for you now is the acceptable time. Today is the day of salvation. If you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. The Bible makes clear that there's some of you today that are listening to this message that are hearing them in your heart saying, "That's you, you're not safe. That's you. I don't have a relationship with you. That's you. I came and died for you. Will you give your life to me?" And it would be inappropriate for me to finish a message like this and not give you the opportunity to respond.

And some of you wonder, "Would God really take me?" Let me tell you, he would totally take you. On the authority of his word because he sent his only begotten son that while you were yet a sinner, he'll take you.

It reminds me of a story. I heard that was post World War II about a son who got in an argument with his dad after the war. He said some really hurtful things. He took money from him, and he fled off. And he never talked to him again. But after a few years passed, he began to feel guilt in this conscience. And he was like, "I really wronged my dad. And I know he's aging, and I want to make sure I get to see my dad before he dies. And he'll probably never want to talk to me again."

So he wrote his dad a letter, and he told his dad he was going to be coming through on a train on such and such a date. And that at two in the afternoon of that date, he was going to be coming through the town where his dad lived and where he had grown up. And he told his dad, "Here's the date I'm going to be coming through. Here's the town. If it would be okay for me to come and see you, if you would be willing to talk to me again. Because I'm so sorry." He said, "Would you hang a white sheet in the window? Just to let me know that it's okay for me to come home."

So you can imagine what was going on in that young man's heart when he was on that train that day hearing the clickety-clacks of the tracks as he was going by. And as it approached closer to 2:00 and he was coming around the bend, he was anxious to see if his dad would've hung that white sheet out, if his dad even got the letter. So he started peering around the window of the train to see what was going on. And when he got to his town, he noticed that the whole town was covered in white sheets, because the dad had run around to all of his friends. And he told him, "I love my son so much. Will you please hang up white sheets so there's no doubt that he knows that he

can come to me no matter what he's done?"

God didn't hang out a white sheet. God had his son hung on cross so you would know you can come no matter what. Jesus Christ died for you on a cross so that you could come no matter what. "Yeah, but I've been sexually immoral." Come. "Yeah. But I'm divorced." Come. "Yeah. But I've kind of ruined my whole life." Come. "I've been a cheater. I've ruined relationships." Come. No matter where you've been, come. "Yeah. But I'm part of a different faith." Come. "Yeah. But my spouse will think that." Come.

Jesus inviting everybody to come home. And everybody Jesus called in the new testimony, he called publicly. It's not enough just to say, "Yeah, I guess I believe today. I prayed a silent prayer." No, you're denying yourself. You're going public. You're taking up your cross. You're following him.

So in a minute, I'm going to give you an opportunity to respond to the gospel. And by responding to this good news, it's God's gift to you, but you got to take it. And God's been speaking to many of you in your hearts. Maybe hundreds of you here today. And you're nervous because you're like, "If this changes, if I go this way, it might change relationships. It might change this." It will. But here's what you can know for certain. That you'll be declared not guilty. That you'll be set free by the blood of Jesus. And who the heck else cares?

Here's a guy named Bartimaeus. Amen. We give God praise. There was a guy named Bartimaeus who was blind and he heard Jesus was coming by. So he started yelling out, "Jesus son of David have mercy on me. I need you." The crowd started

silencing him said, "Don't talk to him, don't bother him." So he cried out all the louder. "Jesus son of David have mercy on me." Because he understood that if Jesus passed him by, he may never have had another chance to trust Jesus. He may have never had another chance to get healed. That was the day, and he did whatever he could to get there as fast as he could. Friends, I'm preaching to you on the authority of God's word that God's offering you an eternal gift.

And in a minute, both here in Broomfield in our overflow room if you're there, I'm just going to ask you if God's been speaking to your heart, and he's calling you to be his, and you want to be saved the full and have all your sins forgiven. I'm not asking you to get religion. I'm not asking you to join BRAVE Church. I'm asking you if you've heard the voice of the Lord today to respond to him. "But I've been baptized." But maybe you weren't saved when you were baptized. "Yeah. But I've gone to church." But maybe you weren't saved when you went to church. "Yeah. But this is the first time I've ever been in church." Great. That's a great thing to do your first day in church is get saved. Right?

Jesus is calling many of you today. And would you have the courage since he was willing to hang naked on a cross for you for six hours and be beaten for your sin, would you be willing to stand publicly for him? And in a moment when I ask you to stand, I'm going to ask you to stand and remain standing. And those who are standing, here's what we're going to do. You're going to hear a roar of our crowd, cheer for you. Because the Bible says there's more rejoicing in heaven over one sin of the repents than over 99 that don't need to. And here's what I'm telling you. Because some of you

are like, "My parents already think I'm Christians. My kids already think I'm Christian." Stand. It's God talking to you. So if you're here right now today and you like to trust Jesus as your personal Lord and savior, make the best decision you've ever made, would you just stand to your feet? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

I'm going to ask you to stay standing. Praise God. Here's what's going on in heaven right now. There are angels rejoicing. Please stay standing. Please stay standing. Don't be embarrassed. We are so excited. But even more than us, Jesus Christ is excited. He wants you to know that before the foundation of the world, he had his eye on you and he was choosing you to be his. He wants you to be in relationship with him. Amen. He loves you with an unconditional love. And when we pray this prayer, that cements it for all eternity.

And what God wants to do is he wants to grow in your faith. So here's what we're going to ask you to do. After we pray together, I know there's several standing down here and in the back, and you might be in the middle somewhere and that's okay. Look for people with red lanyards. Actually some of the people with red lanyards will start coming to you. It's not to gather a bunch of information and pester you. It's because of this. You just came into the family of God, and we want to make sure you understand the decision that you made. And we love you. And we want to grow with you. So as the worship team is here, they're going to start playing just a few chorus. I'm going to pray. We're going to begin to minister. And if while you're there sitting in your seat you feel like, "I need to go talk to somebody." We'll have a whole prayer team up here to do that. So would you pray with me?

Lord Jesus, we give you all the praise. Now, if there's everybody in this room would just repeat after me. Just loudly repeat after me. Dear Jesus, I believe I'm a sinner. But today I believe you died for my sins, and that you also rose from the dead, and that you're alive. Right now I confess you as my personal Lord and savior. Lord, I just pray you'd fill everybody here with the Holy Spirit that prayed that prayer, whether they were standing or sitting, Lord that you would have your way. And Lord, I'm just encouraging our team with lanyards just to go towards those people, to spill out into the aisles. We just want to get to know you. And Lord would you just have your way as we sing this chorus? In Jesus' name, Amen.