

The Road To Our Redemption

Luke

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Bible Text: Luke 8:51-56

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If you would please, turn to the gospel of Luke chapter nine. I was sitting there thinking, giving the Lord thanks for our time of worship and song this morning and thinking about the uniqueness of preaching, because for someone who would be here this morning with us who is not a believer, you come into a place like this and, perhaps, you have come as a guest. Someone has brought you with them and you sense this spirit of celebration on Easter Sunday and you hear the joyful songs. And there is a message communicated in the songs, but perhaps the message seems somewhat unclear to you. You are not really understanding what it is all about. Triumphant musical pieces are played such as the one we just heard. And you wonder: What does it all mean? What is it all about?

Well, that is what preaching is about. It is about giving the reason for such a celebration, explaining the reason why we rejoice when we talk about the resurrection this morning of Christ.

For this visiting with us, we are studying our way through the gospel of Luke on Sundays and we have just come to the regular course of our preaching to these verses, Luke chapter nine verses 51 through 56. Listen to what the Word of God says.

When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" But he turned and rebuked them. And they went on to another village.¹

Let's pray together and ask God's blessing on our time in his Word.

Father in heaven, I thank you for this day of worship, this opportunity we have to give you praise and thanks for all that you have done for us your people in Christ. I thank you that our Savior is alive, that he came and he lived and he died and he was raised and he

¹ Luke 9:51-56.

has ascended and even now by your Spirit he walks in the midst of this church and he is coming again and we look forward to that day when we will see him face to face, the one whom we love, the one who has saved us. We thank you for the opportunity this morning to proclaim him, to make the truth about him known. And we ask, Lord, that you would strengthen me to that end, help me to deliver your Word rightly and strengthen us as we listen to receive what is sown this morning, the seed of your Word. Lord, let it go down deep in our hearts and affect us, not just for a moment, but for forever. And we ask for this in Jesus' name. Amen.

You may have heard the word gospel. What does that word mean? Well, it means good news. But the biblical gospel, the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of Jesus Christ is not the kind of good news that this world is accustomed to, nor is it the kind of good news that this world is often comfortable with. The gospel is not good news about us. the gospel is not a message that comes to us and tells us that we are good. The gospel does not come to us and say that we have much potential. You know, we have all of these native abilities that we just need to recognize and acknowledge and confess. The gospel doesn't come to us and say, "You know, the real problem with you is that you just don't think highly enough of yourself. You are a good person. You are a great person. You have great potential. You just need to confess who you are, recognize who you are and confess who you are."

I say to you this morning that that is not the gospel. That is a false gospel. That is a message that if you believe it will ultimately lead to you condemnation. The true gospel message is not a message about us. It is a message about Christ. It is about the one who is truly good, the one who is truly great, the one who came to save us. The gospel says that we need a Savior.

The Biblical gospel is only heard as good news if you are willing to hear God's bad news to you. It begins with an understanding of bad news, but truthful news. Do you want bad news if it is truthful? I mean, if it is the truth do you want to know it? What is funny about this bad news is that it think men instinctively know it. They are just slow to admit it. The bad news is that we are fatally flawed. The bad news is that there is something terribly wrong with the human race.

I had a man just the this past week who is not a Christian, but he was very honest with me and he said, "You know, I look at humanity and it seems to me that we are the virus on the planet." He said, "I don't mean to be pessimistic."

Well, he wasn't being pessimistic. I think he was being honest. The bad news is that we are sinners, that our lives are offensive to God, that we have violated the law of God and, as a result, we deserve the judgment of God. The bad news is that we have guilt before God and there is nothing that we can do in and of ourselves to remove that guilt. We cannot atone for what we have done. The bad news is that is what is wrong with us is not just what we do, it is who we are. There is something wrong in our very nature and we are powerless to change it. We can engage in reformation. We can reform ourselves. We can sort of clean up our act. We can become, perhaps, more moral in some areas, but

what is really wrong with the human race down deep within our souls, we are powerless to change. The bad news is that if God gives us what we deserve, we will all perish.

Now do you believe that? Because I say to you that it is only when you believe that bad news that the good news will sound like good news. The good news is that Jesus came into the world to show us the love of God, to show us the mercy of God, to show us the grace of God and to be for us the salvation that comes from God. The good news is that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He came to save sinners. And I have to make something very clear at this point. Jesus is not just a Savior. He is also the judge. The Bible teaches that one day all judgment will be conducted by the Son of God. God will judge the world through his Son. Listen to John chapter five verse 21.

For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.²

In Christ is life eternal, but if you don't receive that life eternal that is found in Christ, one day, Jesus will be your judge. And the only way that that could possibly be true is if Jesus is alive. If Jesus is alive and if he is coming again then he can be the judge that he said he would be.

Today we celebrate the resurrection. In fact, as Christians, every day is a resurrection celebration. But today on this Easter Sunday we celebrate the resurrection and we have got to be clear about what the resurrection means. What does the resurrection mean to you? What does Easter Sunday mean to you? Well, it is not this vague, benign message that the world often portrays it to be. It is not some general message of renewal.

I was listening to the radio this past week and they were talking about Easter and they were sort of, you know, comparing it to this attitude that we have new starts. We have second chances. They said it is the message of things that seem to be dead coming back to life. That is not what the resurrection is about. It is certainly not about bunnies and eggs. That is not what it is about. It is not just about spring time. What is the

² John 5:21-30.

resurrection about? It is a message, listen, it is a message of a historical reality. It is the message of something that really happened in history that 2000 years ago there was a man who was born in Bethlehem, who lived in the land of the Bible, the land of Palestine. His name was Jesus, Jesus of Nazareth. And he claimed that he came from heaven. He claimed that he was God incarnate. And he lived a sinless life according to the Bible and then he was executed. He was crucified on a cross. And they put him in a tomb and according to eye witnesses and according to an empty tomb, three days later he was raised from the dead bodily. Easter Sunday says that really happened. And that reality speaks of who Jesus is. You see, the resurrection is about Jesus. It says that Jesus was no impostor. It says that what he claimed about himself was true, what the Father claimed about him was true, what the prophets claimed about him was true, what John the Baptist claimed about him was true, what the eye witnesses of his resurrection claimed about him was true, what his disciples recorded about him was true. The resurrection says it is all true. This is the very thing the Jewish leaders were afraid of after his crucifixion.

Matthew 27:62 says:

Next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first."

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can."

So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.³

Despite all of that, that tomb is empty. Why? Because Jesus was raised from the dead. He is ascended into heaven. And now we await his return to the earth. The resurrection says that the doorway of salvation now has been open. Christ's offering for sinners was accepted by the Father. We have the authority to declare the good news this morning that if you will recognize what God has done in and through his Son to save sinners, if you will recognize God's bad news about you and believe it and repent of your sins and trust in Christ alone for a right standing with God, because, you see, his death on that cross was a substitutionary offering. He died in the place of, in the stead of sinners, taking their full sin debt upon himself, suffering as if he had lived their lives, God's wrath poured out upon him so that if we now look to him, not to our own selves and our works, but to him alone for a right standing with God, our sins are forgiven and God grants to us the righteousness of his Son and he accepts us forever. We become a part of his family forever based upon what Jesus did, not based upon what we have done.

That is the good news we announce, that Jesus is coming again and what will be

³ Matthew 27:62-66.

completed is everything that has been received by faith on the basis of what Jesus did to save sinners. But also, don't miss this, the resurrection and the ascension means that when Jesus comes again there will also be judgment. The resurrection doesn't just speak of salvation. The resurrection speaks of judgment.

You see, this morning if I am to explain the resurrection to you, I must also tell you that this Jesus who is alive, if you don't receive him as your Savior, one day you will face him as your judge. It is amazing to me when you read the book of Acts how often the resurrection of Jesus was preached in association with judgment. For example, Acts 17:30 says this:

“The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.”⁴

A change of mind, a change of heart so that you turn from your sins to trust in Christ. God commands three world to repent. Listen on, verse 31:

“...because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed.”⁵

There is a judgment day coming and God has already appointed the judge. Next statement:

“...and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”⁶

Don't doubt that Jesus will be the judge. Look to the empty tomb and recognize he lives and he lives not only to save, but he lives to judge.

Acts 10 verse 42 Peter preaching he says this:

“And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.”⁷

Jesus Christ is alive. He is coming again. And when he comes again there will be judgment.

Now I want you to understand how that relates to the verses we just read. Let me describe it to you in general terms. Jesus Christ came into the world the first time to bring salvation. He came the first time so that mercy would be shown to human beings, so that the way of salvation would be accomplished. In general terms when Jesus comes the second time he is coming to bring judgment. Did you get that? First time mercy. Next time judgment. Now that is a general description, because Christ did bring a kind of

⁴ Acts 17:30.

⁵ Acts 17:31.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Acts 10:41.

judgment in his first coming and he will bring salvation for his people in his second coming, but in general terms we can say the first coming of Christ is about mercy. It is about salvation and the second coming of Christ will be to judge the unbelieving world even as he provides salvation for those who have trusted in him. That means that his mission on the earth in his first coming was a merciful mission. And his disciples had to get a hold of that. They had to understand that in his first coming he did not come to condemn the world, but to save the world. And even right now we are living in a window of grace. We are living our lives right now in an age that represents a window of mercy. God is giving you space and time and opportunity to repent of your sins and to trust in his Son. But if you refuse the mercy and grace of God, realize that Jesus is coming again and if you reject him as Savior, one day you will face him as judge. Jesus voiced this himself. John 12:46 he says:

I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.⁸

John 3:14 says:

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up...”⁹

Which refers to the way that he would die on a cross.

...that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.¹⁰

You see, there is the human race. We are already under condemnation. We are already guilty before God. We already deserve his wrath. And there is not one thing we can do to change it, but God has done what is necessary for us to be saved. He sent his Son into the world to save us so that if we receive him, we have good news, but if we reject him, we are still under that sentence of condemnation and one day we will meet the Son of God as our judge.

So that now the mission of the Church, the mission we have in this world is to announce this good news that can only be heard as good news against the backdrop of the bad

⁸ John 12:46-48.

⁹ John 3:14.

¹⁰ John 3:15-18.

news, but the good news is there is still time, there is still opportunity. Today is a day of salvation if you will repent and trust in Christ. Today you will be saved if you look to Christ as your Savior and Lord.

Now this is magnified here in verses 51 through 56 and we are going to see how this message of mercy is magnified under four headings. We only have time this morning to deal with the first one. We will come back this evening. We will celebrate the resurrection by worshiping this evening and we will come back this evening and look at the second one and the third and the fourth, all right? We will finish it tonight, Lord willing.

But here are the four headings. We are going to focus on Christ. Then we are going to focus on Samaria. Then we are going to focus on the disciples and then we are going to focus on Christ's mission. A focus on Jesus, a focus on Samaria. Christ has sent some men ahead of him. He is going to a village in Samaria. The village rejects Jesus and his men want to call down fire from heaven and see them all wiped out. They want condemnation now. They want judgment now. And Christ rebukes them and heads on to another village.

So a focus on Jesus, a focus on Samaria, a focus—because I want us to understand Samaria and why there was this conflict, a focus on the disciples and then a focus on Christ's mission. But this morning we focus on Jesus.

And there are four things I want you to note with me that we learn about Jesus here and about his mission and about his understanding of his mission. Look at verse 51.

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.”¹¹

Let's just stop there. Four things I want to point out from that one verse. First of all, I want you to see with me that this is a new step in a divine mission. What we read here represents a new phase, a new step, a shift in focus as it relates to a divine mission. I can describe it this way. For 32 years now of the life of Jesus, it has been sort of like he has been heading up this hill and heading up this hill represents saying, “I am here.” God with us, the promised Messiah, the only Savior given to the world, the Son of God, the Son of Man, I am here. The fulfilled prophecies, the men who pointed to Jesus like Zechariah and John the Baptist and others everyone was saying, “Here is here. The Messiah is here. The Messiah has arrived.” So that the first part is saying, “I have come into the world.” Now, beginning with verse 51 there is this shift. We head downhill. Now we are headed toward the city of Jerusalem. Now we are headed toward the cross, the burial, the resurrection and the ascension so that now the emphasis is I am leaving. I have come. I am leaving. I am about to accomplish that for which I was sent into the world and then I am going to leave. And when I leave—because now this ministry is really focused on his disciples—when I leave you have to understand your mission. You have to understand why I have come, what I have accomplished and what your mission is. But all of this has to do with a divine time table, a divine mission.

¹¹ Luke 9:51.

You say, “Richard, where do you get that from?”

Well, you see there in verse 51 where it says:

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up.”¹²

It is the word συμπληρωω (soom-play-ro’-o) in Greek and it is a word that means to fulfill or to be fulfilled. You can hear in that word the word πληρωμα (play’-ro-ma) which means fulfilled or fullness. When the days were being fulfilled is what it means. When the days were being completed, Christ came into the world in the fullness of time, Galatians 4:4. When the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son. Christ came into the world right when God ordained from before time that it would happen. He came in the fullness of time. And now the time for his departure, for his leaving the world was approaching, the fullness of time was coming, the fullness of his mission on the earth was almost complete. That is what he is saying here. He wants us to understand that Jesus is not a victim, that Christ is not being taken by surprise with respect to any of these events. He is marching the road that the Father set before him, that he himself as chosen and everything that is happening is accomplishing the purpose and plan of God. And you wouldn’t even have to know that Greek word that indicates fullness, completeness to know that this is true, because Jesus has made very plain already that he is absolutely fully aware of everything that is happening.

Look back for just a moment to Luke nine verse 20 where Jesus is telling his disciples this.

Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”¹³

I mean, he walks them right through the whole plan. I am going to go to Jerusalem. I am going to be arrested. I am going to go through these trials. I am going to be rejected. I am going to be killed and then I am going to be raised from the dead. The whole plan he sets out before them.

Look down at verse 44, same chapter, Luke nine. Look at verse 44 where Jesus said:

“Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.”¹⁴

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Luke 9:20-22.

¹⁴ Luke 9:44.

And this is at a time when everyone is wondering at everything that Jesus has done. There is this sort of groundswell of popularity and yet he doesn't want his men to misunderstand what is happening.

“I am going to be killed. I am going to be put to death. And then I am going to be raised from the dead.”

And he is saying all of this before it happens. Jesus came into the world to die. Jesus came into the world to give his life, voluntarily as a sin sacrifice so that sinful people could be forgiven.

Luke 19:10 says:

“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”¹⁵

Matthew 20:28 says:

“...even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”¹⁶

John 10:11 he said:

I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.¹⁷

We could not be saved if Jesus didn't die for our sins. And so he came into the world to save us. He came into the world to save us by dying for our sins. He is not a victim. He is the one who has won the victory for us. He is not taken off guard. He is marching his way intentionally to that cross knowing every step of the way this is the plan when the days of fulfillment were approaching.

The cross was something that wicked men are fully responsible for. Sinful hands put him on the tree. But at the same time there was something Jesus chose and it was the pre-ordained plan of God. We read it this morning. Mark read it this morning in our Scripture reading. Isaiah 53 where it says that God was pleased to crush his Son. Jesus died for God. God put his Son to death on the cross to save sinners.

Acts 2:23 says:

¹⁵ Luke 19:10.

¹⁶ Matthew 20:28.

¹⁷ John 10:11-15.

“...this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”¹⁸

So, first thought, this is a step according to a divine plan, a new step in a divine plan. Second, this is a step with a triumphant vision, a triumphant vision, because notice verse 51 says:

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up...”¹⁹

Isn't that interesting? Remember, if you were with us back when we studied the mount of transfiguration, Jesus was talking to Moses and Elijah about his exodus. And here it says:

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up...”²⁰

And this is a word for ascension, for him to ascend. It is the same word that Luke uses later to talk about the ascension of Christ, which means that even as Jesus is marching his way to the cross knowing he is going to die, he has got the cross clearly in view. Get this. He is looking beyond the cross not only to the tomb and to the resurrection, but even to the ascension that is going to follow the resurrection. So that Christ is making his way to Jerusalem not just thinking about dying, but also about being raised from the dead before he even dies and then the victory is going to be won as a result of his death and resurrection, the exaltation of the Son of God and the great salvation that will be accomplished as are result of his life, death and resurrection. All of this is in view as he makes his way to Jerusalem. The days are drawing near for him to be taken up, for him to ascend back into heaven.

We saw it just a moment ago. Look back at verse 22. Jesus already said this in terms of the resurrection.

“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”²¹

He is already talking about his resurrection. And we read it a moment ago. Remember when the Pharisees called him an imposter? Jesus has so clearly talked about his resurrection before he ever died that the Pharisees knew that they wanted a guard placed at the tomb because they said, “This imposter said while he was still alive that after three days he would be raised from the dead.” That is how clearly Jesus talked about his resurrection before he ever went to the cross.

So this is not only a divinely ordained course that Jesus is on, but this is a course with a triumphant vision. He is already looking beyond the cross to the resurrection and to the

¹⁸ Acts 2:23.

¹⁹ Luke 9:51.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Luke 9:22.

ascension.

Hebrews describes it this way.

“...looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”²²

Even as Jesus went to the cross, he had joy in his sight, the joy of the salvation that he would accomplish was set before him at the outset.

Third, new step in a divine mission, a step with a triumphant vision, third, this is a step with a resolute purpose. It says:

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face...”²³

This is just a Hebrew idiom. It is just a way of saying he was determined. His course was determined in his own mind and heart. There was a joy set before him, but there were real sorrows to endure on the way to that joy. There was a real cross upon which he must die. There was the wrath of God that he must truly suffer so that to accomplish our salvation he had to choose it. He had to be resolute in his mind and heart. He must endure these things in order to rescue us. And he has set his face to do it. He has determined in his mind and heart that he is going there. He knows what it means. He has already told his disciples what it means, arrest, rejection, crucifixion. He knows what it means for him, but he has set his face to go there.

And we must never in celebrating the resurrection, we must never diminish in you thinking what Jesus had to endure in order to bring salvation to us. It took this kind of resolution. It took this kind of determination for us to be saved. So terrible was the prospect of it that he had to be strengthened by an angel in a garden where he was sweating great drops of blood already under the weight of what he would suffer to save us.

Luke 22:41:

And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.²⁴

²² Hebrews 12:2.

²³ Luke 9:51.

²⁴ Luke 22:41-44.

We read it a moment ago. It says that Jesus, for the joy set before him, but don't forget the next word, endured the cross, despising the shame. You see the cross was real and the shame was real. But he endured it and took no account of it that salvation would be accomplished for his sheep.

A new step in a divine mission, a step with a triumphant vision, a step with a resolute purpose. Finally, notice, this is a step with a specific location.

“When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.”²⁵

Jerusalem is where he must suffer and die. This is where the temple is. This is where the Passover is being observed and many, many lambs are being slaughtered. This is where the light of God is shown most rightly. This is the city of David. This is where the promised Davidic and divine king will present himself as Messiah and be rejected. He must go to Jerusalem. Here is King Jesus making his way to the place where he will wear a crown of thorns so that we might receive a crown of life.

Hebrews 2:9 says:

“But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”²⁶

Now he is crowned with glory and honor, but first he must suffer death on the cross and there test death for every one whom he will save.

James 1:12 says:

“Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.”²⁷

Will you receive crowns of life? Jesus wore a crown of thorns and it was in Jerusalem that he would die.

This is the good news. The good news is not that we are ok. The good news is not that we have great potential. The good news is that we have great abilities we just need to recognize it. The good news is not that you need to learn to love yourself. The good news is that though you are not ok, though you are fatally flawed, though you are a sinner who has violated and broken the laws of God and deserve his wrath who are, in fact, according to Ephesians two children of wrath, that is by your very nature deserving the wrath of God, though that bad news is true of you, the good news is that you can be saved, saved from the wrath of God, saved from the darkness of sin, saved from the bondage that we were all born into, slaves of sin, slaves of Satan, that we can be saved

²⁵ Luke 9:51.

²⁶ Hebrews 2:9.

²⁷ James 1:12.

from the judgment of God because his Son took the judgment upon himself for all those who will trust in him.

Do you want that? Do you receive that good news? Do you want to be saved?

You say, “Richard, what must I do to be saved?”

Well, first you have got to believe the bad news. You have got to accept it in your heart that that is who you really are and that is what you really deserve. And then you must believe the good news that Jesus is this Savior the Bible says that he is, that he was raised from the dead, that he has ascended into heaven, that this is a window, an age of grace and mercy and opportunity for salvation. You must believe this good news and that he is coming again to bring salvation to those who trust, but judgment to those who don't. You must believe this good news and then you must turn from your sinful ways, you own way of trying to earn your way to heaven and you must trust in Christ alone for life. And when you trust in Jesus it means you come to him for who he is and he is not just a Savior. He is the Lord.

Listen. You don't make Jesus Lord. He is Lord. You simply receive him for who he is. You say, as we sang together this morning, “I want to live for you.”

And I exhort you with all of my heart to trust him even today. You can trust him right where you are sitting. Cry out to Christ. And when we are done this morning if you want to talk with anyone about it, I will be here waiting. There will be people in the front foyer to talk to you. You find someone and you tell us. I want to follow Christ.

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for your Son. Thank you for our Savior. Thank you for all that he has done so that we sinners can be delivered from your wrath, which we deserve. Lord, let these words rest in our ears. Deal with our hearts and bring sinners to life. And may your Church recognize at what great cost we have been redeemed so that we love your Son all the more and strive with all the energy that you supply to serve him well until we see him face to face. We pray for this in Jesus' name. Amen.