

King Jesus' Burial

Matthew 27:57-66

Halifax: 29 July 2007

Introduction:

For quite a while now in our Matthew series,

- I have been showing you what great things our Lord suffered for us.
 - We saw that the climax of His sufferings was reached during the hours of darkness on the cross when He bore the full of weight of God's curse against His people's sins.
 - During those three hours, He suffered the pains of Hell for us—
 - He bore the shame and the penalty of all our iniquity before His Father, even though He had committed none...
 - He even bore the rejection of His Father as demonstrated by His cry,
 - “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?”
 - We cannot comprehend what it was like for the One who lived for nothing but to please and honour His Father to be cut off from Him!

But alas, after He had made full satisfaction for our sin,

- He cried out to His Father and was heard...
 - The Father fully His sacrifice for our sins and His burden was lifted...
 - That is why, even though still hanging on the cross, our Lord announced in triumphant relief,
 - “It is finished!”
 - He was again reconciled to His Father and all of His elect were now reconciled with Him—their sin's penalty was paid in full forever!
 - Though He still had to die and be buried,
 - He could go to His grave in peace, knowing that even in death He would never be rejected of His Father again.
 - He could now say, as Psalm 16:8-11 tells us:
 - Ps 16:8-11: I have set the LORD always before me; Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

And so today, as we look at how our Lord was buried for us,

- I want you to consider in the first place that burial was a great humiliation for our Lord...
- Secondly, how He was honoured by the Father at His burial, affirming His hope that that Father would not leave Him in the grave...
- And then thirdly, I want to exhort you to be sure that you are not among those who wish that He had been left in the grave.

TRANS> So let us begin:

I. Consider first of all that burial was a great humiliation for our Lord Jesus.

A. Indeed, death and burial is a great humiliation for every human being!

1. In death, the master becomes the servant and the servant becomes the master.

- This is a very humbling thing...
- We may think of the prodigal son who was master of a portion of his Father's great and honourable estate...
 - Yet, by riotous living, he squandered it all!
 - He who was the heir of houses and lands and servants was reduced to the lowest servitude, that of feeding pigs!
 - He who was once a master became a lowly servant.
 - It was a great humiliation.

TRANS> This reversal illustrates the way the earth, our servant, becomes our master when we did.

2. How does this happen?

- It is in this...
 - a. When God created man, He made him Lord and master over all of creation...
 - All things were put under our dominion to be ruled by us...
 - 1) Our bodies were created to obey us
 - without clumsiness, weariness, sickness, and erosion of old age...
 - 2) The animals were created to serve us—all of them to obey our every command—
 - imagine what we could accomplish with their strength to serve us when it was their very joy and desire to always please us!

- 3) Even the very soil itself was to bring forth fruit for us according to our desires—
 - without thorns and weeds
 - without storms and droughts—yes, even the weather did not break out in rebellion, but perfectly served us.

- b. But when we sinned, God made a great reversal...
 - 1) Though He still left us with enough authority to eek out a living from the earth through toil and labour,
 - it was only for a time... then we were sentenced to return to the dust.
 - He said,
 - Gen 3:19: “For out of [the ground] you were taken... and to dust you shall return.”

 - 2) The very ground that we were created to subdue in the end subdues us...
 - We were made to walk upon it,
 - but we are at last put under it and brought to utter decay.
 - The earth over which we were given dominion at last takes dominion over us.

- c. See the body in the grave!
 - It is limp and lifeless, helpless...
 - It is eaten by the worms...
 - It is unable to praise God or serve man

TRANS> Surely, this is a great humiliation for us that God has brought upon us because of our sins.

- We must never think of death as natural—
 - It is not natural at all—
 - We never would if known it if not for our sin.
 - It is an expression of God’s curse, a direct repudiation of our sinful pride and rebellion...
 - As we rebelled against our Lord, so He causes the earth to rebel against us.

- Surely it is a great humiliation for us all to be made subject to death...

B. But how much more for our Lord Jesus Christ!

1. He is the very Son of God,

- by whom and for whom all things were created!
- Without Him, nothing was made that has been made...
- a. He is a member of the great trinity that make up the Godhead...
 - He is Jehovah, the Self-existing, uncreated God of all glory.
- b. Surely it is was enough of a humiliation for Him to come in our flesh and to take His place among those are dependent on the earth to sustain Him...
 - to join our ranks as One in need of the food and air He created...
 - to be as one dependent on the light of the sun when He Himself dwells in inaccessible light.

TRANS> Surely this was enough, even for Him to be made like His creatures before the fall!

2. But no, He subjected Himself to much greater humiliation...
 - He not only made himself dependent on His creation...
 - He also allowed Himself to at last be swallowed by the very ground that He had made...
 - He entered the grave where His body lay lifeless under the earth, unable to serve man and unable to praise His Father in heaven.
 - It is an unspeakable humiliation that the Creator should be able to say:
 - Psalm 88:4-6:
 - I am counted with those who go down to the pit;
 - I am like a man *who has* no strength, Adrift among the dead,
 - Like the slain who lie in the grave, whom You remember no more,
 - And who are cut off from Your hand.
 - You have laid me in the lowest pit, In darkness, in the depths.

TRANS> Burial was a part of our Lord's humiliation for us... and what a humiliation it was for the Creator of the world to endure!

- But look!
- I want you to see secondly that...

II. His Father in heaven honoured Him in His death—

- **He provided an honourable burial for Him!**

A. See how remarkably the Father brought this about by His sovereign working!

1. It had been prophesied over 700 years before Jesus was born that He would be given an honourable burial...

- a. The prophecy is found in Isaiah 53:9:
 - Isa 53:9: “And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor *was any* deceit in His mouth.”
 - In chapter 53, Isaiah has been explaining in the clearest language that Jesus did not suffer because of His own sins, but for the sins of His people.
 - And here we are told that although they made His grave with the wicked—
 - showing that He would be crucified as a malefactor...
 - that He would be—somehow—with the rich in His death!
 - b. It was, you see, the Father’s plan that His Son would somehow be honoured in the dreadful humiliation of dying with the wicked...
 - He would be honoured in death “**because** He had done no violence, nor was any deceit found in His mouth.”
 - It was the Father’s way of expressing His approval of His Son even in this time of deep humiliation!
 - It was His way of foreshadowing the acceptance of His sacrifice that would soon be demonstrated by raising Him from the dead.
2. See how the Father marvellously brought forth Joseph of Arimathea to give Jesus this honourable burial!
- a. We are told from the start (in verse 57) that Joseph was a man who had the means to provide an honourable burial for our Lord...
 - 1) It says that he was a rich man...
 - He had wealth enough to own a tomb in the environs of Jerusalem...
 - and not just any tomb, but a tomb that was carved out of solid rock—
 - an amenity that few could have afforded in those days.
 - Moreover, John tells us in his gospel that he was joined by Nicodemus and that together they provided about 100 pounds of spices in which to wrap our Lord’s body according to the custom of the Jews...
 - They did not embalm the dead, like the Egyptians, but wrapped them in spices...
 - 2) We also know from the other gospels the Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin...
 - the great Jewish supreme court...

- This explains how he was able to gain access to Pilate in order that he might request the body of Jesus...
- a privilege that was not often granted even to the immediate family.

TRANS> God, in His providence, had provided Joseph with both the riches and the status necessary to provide an honourable burial for His Son...

b. But there was something much greater that God also provided for Joseph—to enable him to do this great work...

1) He gave Joseph the courage to come forward at this time and give this honour to Jesus!

- Up until this time,
 - Joseph had been a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews...
 - John tells us this in his gospel...
- And we should not wonder that he should keep it a secret...
 - For a man like him to confess to be a disciple of Jesus would have jeopardised his seat on the Sanhedrin...
 - It would have brought reproach and dishonour upon him and upon his family...
 - It would likely mean that he would even be put out of the synagogue...
 - He stood to lose even his wealth...

2) And yet now... now of all times...

- now, when all of Jesus' disciples had fled for fear!
- now, when many of Jesus' closest followers were in despair, supposing that Jesus' mission had failed...
- now, when Jesus has just been publicly charged, so cruelly treated, and crucified!
- now, when all the officials in Rome and in Judea can see him...
 - Joseph comes forward to give public honour to our Lord in His death!
 - What remarkable faith this is!
 - What remarkable courage this is!
 - What love this is!
 - What sacrifice this is—leaving all for His Lord...

- Giving up all his earthly honours when it was clear that there were no earthly honours to be gained from Jesus!

3) I tell you, this is a clear testimony to the grace of God!

- a) This is not something that was in Joseph!
 - This is the work of God in him, transforming him by the same power that would soon raise Jesus from the dead!
- b) In this, there is a foreshadowing of what the grace of God will do in Jesus' disciples after the resurrection...
 - We see what they were like before the resurrection—and even before Pentecost—
 - they were men who could not possibly turn the world up-side-down.
 - they were men who shuttered before the cross...
 - It was not until God's transforming power got hold of them that they were changed!
 - Joseph is a first-fruit of that powerful transforming grace that was soon to become operative in all.
 - Here is the kind of disciple that Jesus' Spirit would soon produce when that Spirit was poured out on the whole church.
 - A disciple who was bold, willing to sacrifice all for his Lord as one constrained by an unquenchable love!

TRANS> The Father is the One who brought this man forward at this time to give His Son an honourable burial...

- It was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes!
- The Father did it in order that He might show that His favour had been restored to His Son—
 - to give hope that He would not remain in the grave, but would be raised up to give life to all.

B. As the Father gave honour to His Son in His burial, so we ought to give honour to the members of His body in their burial...

1. Honourable burials are frequently commended in scripture...
 - a. Perhaps you will recall how Abraham gave honour to his wife Sarah in this way...

- how he purchased a plot of ground in the land that God had promised him to bury her...
 - for it was in that land that God had promised to bring His people in testimony that He was their God.
 - In this way, he showed his hope that God was still the God of Sarah and so would raise her body again...
 - As Jesus was buried in hope, so was Sarah.
- b. You find the same honour shown to Jacob—
- Before he died, Jacob made Joseph his son swear that he would bury his body in the land of Canaan...
 - and how this Joseph had the means and the authority to provide him with this burial
 - all because of hope in God’s promise to bring Jacob’s descendents back to the Land of Promise after 400 years in Egypt.
- c. And remember how Joseph also instructed that his own bones be brought to the land of Promise when the day came for Israel to leave Egypt...
- What a wonderful reminder those bones with those instructions were to the children of Israel of God’s promise...
 - All the while they sojourned in Egypt, those bones kept before them the promise of deliverance.
2. Do you see the connection of all this to us brothers and sisters?
- a. We too ought to bury one another in hope of God’s promise—
- In hope of the resurrection!
 - In hope of the promise that Jesus will come back at the end of the age to raise up our bodies from the grave to live forever!
- b. We are to lay our dead in their graves as in a bed, knowing that Jesus will soon come to awaken them...
- knowing that even in death our bodies remain the members of His body...
 - that they are not dead, but only sleeping until He comes.
 - We show love to them and to Jesus by burying them in this hope!
- c. The principle we learned in Matthew 25 applies here—when Jesus said,
- Matthew 25:40: “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.”
 - Unlike pagans who die without hope,

- Christians have always shown honour to the body in hope of the resurrection!
 - We believe the body is created by God and is therefore good and to be shown honour.
 - Even though our sin brings our bodies to the grave where they rot and decay,
 - we believe that these same bodies will be raised.
- As Christians, we do not believe in reincarnation—
 - that the spirit enters a new body—
 - but we believe in resurrection—
 - that the same body will stand up again...
 - The word we use in English is resurrect—
 - which means to rise again—to be erect again...
 - The Greek word in the original literally means “to stand again.”
 - That means that if a man was buried on Tuesday and the Lord came back on Thursday,
 - that man’s coffin would be empty...
 - His body would stand again...
 - That is the hope in which we bury our dead...
- Of course there are perversions in the opposite way also...
 - as in the superstitious attempts to preserve the body from decay and in the extremes to which the Egyptians went...
 - We do not have to spend a fortune to give an honourable burial,
 - but we do need to spend something to see that honour is given in expression of our hope!
 - Honour is something that must be seen...
 - Honour is not honour when it is invisible, and it is only right for us to have visible ways of showing honour to a dead body.
 - It is an act of love and hope that we ought to show to the departed, to their family’s and to the Lord.

TRANS> Okay, so we have seen first of all that our Lord had to submit to the humiliation of death for us,

- and secondly that the Father showed honour to Jesus' body in death by providing Him with an honourable burial.

III. And now last of all, I want to exhort you to be sure that you are not among those who wish that He had been left in the grave.

- **There are many who do!**

A. Matthew shows us that there were many in Jesus day who did not want Him to come out.

1. He shows us how the Jewish authorities did all they could to ensure that He would not rise again!
 - a. They were greatly relieved that they had last got rid of Him...
 - And the last thing they wanted was for Him to come back!
 - But they were haunted by something He had said...
 - He had said that would rise again on the third day...
 - They remembered this saying and it greatly troubled them!

TRANS> They felt that they must do something...

- But what could they do?

b. At last they came up with a fine plan (at least in their minds)!

1) They come to Pilate on the next day—

- Matthew tells us that it was the day *after* the preparation—
 - in other words, on the Sabbath day...
 - Probably it was just after the Sun went down on Friday,
 - for the Jews reckon sunset to be the beginning of the new day.
 - I get the impression that they wasted no time.
 - As soon as they saw that Jesus was buried by Joseph, they rushed to speak to Pilate...
- The fact that they met on the Sabbath Day shows how zealous they were about this!
 - They, who rebuked Jesus for healing on the Sabbath and for picking grain as he walked through the fields with his disciples...
 - felt that meeting with Pilate about this matter was a work of such necessity that it warranted doing it on the Sabbath.

- 2) So they come to Pilate with zeal and ask that a guard be posted at the tomb to ensure that Jesus does not rise...
 - a) Of course, they pretend that they have no concern that He actually will rise—
 - only that His disciples might come and steal away His body and say that He has arisen...
 - More than likely, this is just a show...
 - Their real concern was that Jesus' disciples would come to open the tomb to let Him out!
 - They knew that only recently Jesus had raised up Lazarus...
 - so you can be sure they were concerned!
 - b) But how wonderful it would be if He were to arise in that stone tomb, all shut up, and be unable to get out!
 - or in coming out, to be apprehended by the guards!
 - Pilate gave them the use of a Roman guard, and they saw that the tomb was sealed,
 - the seal was an authoritative way of forbidding it to be opened...
 - So they placed the guard to keep watch.
 - c. Whether He meant it or not, Pilate's words to them are full of irony
 - v. 65: "You have a guard; go your way; make it as secure as you know how!"
- 1) You get the impression that he is mocking them...
 - It is as if Pilate is saying...
 - Go ahead fellows—you have a guard—do all you can...
 - "make it as secure as you know how!"
 - If God has purposed to raise this man from the dead, how will they be able to prevent that?
 - Were they really concerned about Jesus' disciples who had all disappeared?
 - Pilate knew better than that!
 - What possibly motive would the simple disciples of Jesus have to fake a resurrection?
 - What was in it for them to go on without Jesus who alone held them together if He were now gone?

- 2) What a foolish, feeble effort these Jewish leaders make to ensure themselves that Jesus does not come out of that grave!
 - “Make it as secure as you know how!”

TRANS> And if you should doubt that these men are wicked enough to try to prevent the resurrection of Jesus...

2. Just look at what they do when He does come out...
 - Look at what extreme measures they take to suppress it!
 - a. In 28:11, we are told that some of the guards (perhaps the leaders?)
 - go to the chief priests and tell them just what happened at that tomb!
 - They tell them what Matthew describes in verse 2-4:
 - Matthew 28:2-4: And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.
 - b. You can imagine what it must have been like for the Jewish leaders!
 - 1) What they most dreaded has occurred...
 - Jesus has come out of that tomb alive!
 - 2) You can imagine that they were dumbfounded,
 - but they quickly do what every good politician knows to do at such times...
 - They call for a meeting to discuss the matter!
 - They are desperate.
 - c. And in their desperation they come up with a desperate plan which they present to the guards...
 - 1) They bribe them to say that Jesus' disciples stole Him away while they slept.
 - Probably they used the part of the story about the guards being like dead men when they saw the glory of the angel to gain this idea that they went to sleep...
 - They did not apparently see the risen Lord with their own eyes.
 - 2) Ordinarily, the guards would not have wanted to say they went to sleep, but they had a couple of good reasons to agree to this...

- First, there was the fact that it was up to these Jewish leaders to bring charges against them for allowing Jesus to be taken from the tomb under their watch...
 - The punishment for such was sometimes death, as it was for the guards under whose superintendence Peter escaped in Acts 12:19.
 - The Jewish authorities therefore promised the guards that they would not press charges if they supported the story that they slept.
 - They said that **if** Pilate should find out about it (which would not likely be the case as this matter did not much concern him),
 - they would take care of it...
- Second, there was the bribe—a sizeable one at that!
 - Now we know that the Jewish leaders were not liberal with their money...
 - but their liberality here is an expression of their earnest zeal!
 - They wanted to do all they could to keep this matter quiet!
 - When you are zealous for something, you are willing to support it...
 - Matthew Henry points out what a shame it is that they were so zealous to give money to promote a lie when we are not more willing to give liberally to promote the truth!

TRANS> And so you that in this way the Jewish leaders sought to suppress the fact that Jesus had come out of the grave!

- They first did all they could to keep Him in the grave...
- And when that failed...
 - they did all they could to suppress the fact that He had come out.

B. But look at how the suppression of this truth goes on!

1. Matthew tells us that at the time of his writing,

- the lie that the disciples stole the body of Jesus was still being promoted...

a. This was about thirty years later, and that lie still stood!

- This is really rather remarkable when you think about it!

1) The story was absurd—but it was the best they had so they clung to it for thirty years!

a) You know what the disciples were like at this time...

- They were not standing up to tell everyone that Jesus was going to

rise...

- They themselves did not even expect it...
- When they heard tidings of it from the women, they considered it to be idle tales!
- They were about as far away from fabricating a hoax like this as they could be!

b) What's more, the story itself is ridiculous...

- To suppose that a whole Roman guard could fall asleep and none of them be awakened while a company of simple disciples came, opened the tomb, and removed the body they were guarding without any of them waking up—it was absurd!

c) And even more, to think that the disciples would have any motive for doing such a thing...

- They got no earthly honour for it—they all died for it—died for a lie if it had been a lie!
 - How could it be that not one of them would come forth with the truth—especially under the threat of death!
 - They all claimed to have seen the risen Lord with their own eyes.
 - It is unreasonable to think that all of them would lie about such a thing

2) And perhaps even more remarkable is what we learn from history...

- that the lie was still being promoted 100 years later!
- Justin Martyr, a Christian apologist who himself died for his faith,
 - wrote to Trypho the Jew, declaring it as common knowledge that the story that Jesus' disciples stole the body was still current—in about 150 AD!
 - He said:

b. How was it possible for such a feeble story to go on for so long?

1) It was only because sinful men do not *want* to know the truth—

- Because the natural man, until touched by the Spirit of God, cannot bear to acknowledge that Jesus rose from that grave!
 - He is just as motivated at the Jewish leaders!
 - He wants to believe that it is not so!

2) Why does he want to deny it?

- a) Because to admit it is to admit that Jesus is Lord...
 - And to admit that Jesus is Lord is to admit that He is to be believed in obeyed in all things.
 - He is to be believed when He says that we are desperate sinners who cannot redeem ourselves...
 - that the only way we can be saved is by humbling ourselves and trusting in Him and the work He did to redeem us.
 - And He is to be obeyed when He tell us to put Him before our own life...
 - to die to self that we may live to righteousness...
 - to put away our covetousness, our immorality, and our bitterness, our excuse making, our idolatry, our blasphemy.
 - b) Sinful men do not want to believe Him or to obey Him...
 - They would much prefer to make up silly stories excuses to justify their unbelief...
 - to protest that as far as they can tell, Jesus never did really rise from the dead.
2. The suppression of this truth went on until Matthew's day—and it went on until Justin the Martyr's day—and it still goes on today!
- a. The old story that his disciples stole his body has not survived very well,
 - but there are doesn't of other scenarios that have been concocted that are just as foolish.
 - They are so foolish that it ought to be obvious to anyone who is truly honest that they are not credible...
 - b. For example...
 - 1) There is the swoon theory.
 - This one was thought up by a desperate man named Venturini in about 1600.
 - It is the theory that Jesus did not die, but only fell into a swoon...
 - that He was able to go through the crucifixion, have the spear stuck in his side, appear completely dead to the Romans, to the Jews, to Pilate, to the disciples, to Joseph and Nicodemus,
 - then to be wrapped in a hundred pounds of spices with cloth,
 - closed up in a tomb for two days without food or water...

- and then come out on the third day with full vigour and show himself to his disciples—
 - all the while making the false claim that He had risen from the dead,
 - and the disciples making the false claim that He and the ministering angels had made the same claim.

2) Then there was the hallucination theory...

- That the disciples were expecting that he would arise, and so imagined that He did rise...
 - Renan's version of this in 1886 was that Mary Magdalene started it all and then that the hallucination spread to others...
 - That all eleven of them imagined it as did Paul...
 - And that five hundred others who saw him imagined it.
 - And that these did not see some sort of apparition in the clouds or in a shadow,
 - but that they claimed to have spoken with him, to have eaten with him, to have touched him.
 - And that not one of them ever questioned it afterward.
- And this all flying in the face of the fact that the disciples are liars when they present themselves as not at all expecting to see Him rise...
 - of being completely without hope and in despair...
 - of not even believing the reports that were told to them by the women who saw Him first.
- And that the prophets of the Old Testament prophesied that Jesus would rise.

3) Then there was the mistaken identity theory...

- that someone was able to pretend to be Jesus risen from the dead,
 - to conduct himself so much like the Lord, to look so much like Him, to talk so much like Him, to have enough wisdom to open the scriptures to them to show them all that was written about himself...
 - as to fool all eleven of his disciples who had spent three years with Him...
 - and as to fool the women who had followed Him, including His own mother...

- to some how mark himself with scars on his hands and feet and in his side...
 - to work miracles including ascending into the clouds...
 - to some how remove the body from the tomb despite the guards...
 - and so on...
- 4) And then there are many others that I will not go into in detail...
- the no burial theory... that Jesus was never actually buried...
 - the telepathy theory (that the thought of seeing Jesus was somehow injected into the disciples' minds)
 - the séance theory—that Jesus was called up by a medium—
 - even though it is contrary to the nature of spiritism for a spirit to be touched, to eat and drink, and that this also makes the disciples all liars because they claim that He declared that He was risen.
 - Today there are many who just immerse themselves in ignorance...
 - ignorance that is equal to a man in the city questioning if there really is a rural area...
 - or a man in the country questioning if there is really such a place as New York City.
- c. These stories are surely unworthy of thinking people!
- 1) That intelligent men, practical men, working men, educated men, all kinds of men should believe them!
- That some should write books about them and that others believe these theories and should spread them!
 - That they should not realise that so many theories have arisen because none of them are at all believable...
 - would be impossible to account for if not for one explanation...
- 2) And that explanation is that fallen men are desperate to deny the truth that Jesus rose again from the grave because they do not want to accept the claim that He is Lord and Saviour.
- What else could account for such behaviour but an ardent zeal to deny that Jesus is Lord?
 - What else but a pride that does not want to own sin as sin, to repent of sin, to live a new life, to trust fully in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin...

TRANS> See that it is not so with you!

- C. See that there is not in any of you a wicked heart that wants to deny the undeniable.
1. Is there possibly someone among our small number this morning that wants to suppress the truth that Jesus came out of that grave?
 - a. Is there a person here who is desperately trying to avoid this truth?
 - Is there a person among us who has been trying to ignore the clear facts of history, and to resist the very Word of God?
 - Is there someone here who is just looking for some theory to latch on to, and who is willing to accept anything—no matter how absurd—to avoid facing the truth about Jesus?
 - b. Let me call you to your senses!
 - Why should you want to deny that a Saviour has come from heaven when you look at this sinful world?
 - Why would you want to deny it when you know your own selfishness and your own emptiness without God?
 - Why would you want to suppress what is so clear when it means eternal hope, the forgiveness of sins, the reformation of all things, escape from everlasting judgment?
 - What could be possibly be thinking...
 2. But now I want to say something to you who rejoice in the risen the Lord!
 - a. To you, the truth of His resurrection is very precious!
 - It is the ground of all your hope and joy...
 - The empty tomb promises you that your tomb will one day be empty also and that through Jesus,
 - you will live with God in heaven forever in perfect peace.
 - b. But I must ask you if you do not find that you also are guilty of suppressing the truth that your Lord is risen?
 - 1) Whenever you are enticed and your heart starts to go after temptation...
 - do you not put aside the truth that your Lord lives?
 - do you not at such times try to squeeze Him back into that tomb?
 - 2) That certainly is what you do!
 - As far as you are concerned,
 - Every time you grumble, Christ is in the tomb...for you would not complain to Him if you thought Him to be alive...
 - Men, parents, every time you abdicate your responsibilities...

- you certainly do not see yourself standing before the living Lord...
 - Children, every time you try to deceive your parents—to pretend you forgot what they ask you to do—to sneak around and do what you know is forbidden...
 - you are pretending that Christ is in the grave—that He is dead and cannot see you...
3. I could go on and on...
- but let me urge you not to be so foolish as to suppress this dear Lord...
 - He is not in the grave, but He lives!
 - And because He lives, you will live also if you will but trust in Him!
 - He is the Saviour of all...
 - He did not come to destroy us, but to rescue from our sin and misery.
 - Why should you want to suppress a Saviour like that?
 - It is only because corruption—because we are twisted and defiled!
 - That is why we so desperately need Him...
 - Indeed, anyone that would try to suppress so wonderful a Saviour shows by that very suppression how much He needs this Saviour!