

Easter Sunday

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Date: 08 April 2012

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

- [0 : 00] This morning, that was a key to Keith, but hopefully you didn't include that. But, once we have read the scripture this morning, Marv is going to have the rest of the story.
- Please turn to Luke 23, and we'll be looking at Luke 23, verses 46 through 56.
- And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.
- Having said this, he breathed his last. Now, when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, Certainly this man was innocent.
- And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts.
- [1 : 34] And all his acquaintances and women who accompanied him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things.
- And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, he had not consented to their plan and action.
- A man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.
- And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid him in a tomb, cut into the rock where no one had ever lain.
- It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. Now the women who had come with him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb, and how his body was laid.
- [2 : 58] Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And you already know the rest of the story, don't you?
- Death could not keep its prey. Jesus, my Savior. He tore the bars away. Jesus, my Lord. Up from the grave he arose, with a mighty triumph over his foes.
- He arose victorious from the grave, and he lives forever with his saints. Amen. The rest of the story goes on in Luke 24.
- On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. But when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.
- And it happened that while they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling apparel. And as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, Why do you seek the living one among the dead?
- [4 : 18] He is not here, but he has risen. Remember how he spoke to you while he was still in Galilee, saying, That the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.
- And they remembered his words, and returned from the tomb, and reported all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest.

Doesn't say it right here, but it says it in Matthew's gospel, and it says it also in Mark's gospel. He is not here. He has risen just as he said.

Could it be that he actually meant just what he said? Yes, indeed. That is precisely what he meant. Although at the time, he said it, it didn't register with them, because they could not conceive of his really, literally, actually meaning that.

And he told them quite clearly, not only that he would be resurrected, but what would be that which led up to it. How he would be arrested, treated spitefully, abused, shamed, crucified, and raised the third day.

[5 : 41] They heard it all well before it happened, before they ever got to Jerusalem. But it just didn't register with them. And the reason it didn't was because it was so far out.

He couldn't have actually meant that. But that is exactly what he meant. And the resurrection, of which we are thinking this morning, I guess we would say, it has legs.

Yes. The resurrection of Jesus Christ has legs. not only has legs, but the legs have feet with wings on them.

Whatever in the world do I mean? The resurrection has legs. Well, this has become a rather familiar term used in the media world about news stories that come into public views.

Having legs means the story will sweep over the public in an ongoing way and the result of that story getting out will be significant so much so that changes will be made.

[7 : 03] In other words, a story that has legs is a news item that just won't die. It won't quit. It just keeps going and going and going and going because in their words, it has legs.

In other words, there is enough substance to the story that the public is not willing to let it go and neither is the media and they turn it over and over and over.

We see this all the time, particularly those who follow anything having to do with the political scene in American politics. There are things that have legs and things that don't.

Every now and then there is a scandal that surfaces and depending upon who the scandal involves, if it is a darling of the media, they have ways of trying to cut the legs right out from under it so it doesn't go anywhere.

It doesn't get traction. But if it is somebody that the media is after or doesn't like, they can pump it and flame it and hype it all out of proportion so that they try to make it a lot bigger story than it really is.

[8 : 27] It all depends on whom they are trying to hurt or help. And the media is comprised of liberals and conservatives. Far more of the former than of the latter and that ought to be quite obvious to anyone who is looking at the scene.

But there are conservatives in the media as well. Frequently, we encounter these kind of news items. Watergate in the 1960s was a result of intrepid investigating reporters.

Woodward and Bernstein. And it all started with a break-in in the Watergate Hotel. And you all know the story so well. I won't take the time to go over it.

But once the story broke, did it have legs? Did it ever have legs? It took off running. And as a result, Richard Nixon became the first president in the history of the United States forced to resign in disgrace.

All because of a media story that they wouldn't let die. It had legs. The tobacco lawsuits resulting in billions of dollars being assessed upon the tobacco industry was a direct responsibility of their cover-up by the makers.

[9 : 58] This all started years and years ago when the tobacco industry was doing independent medical research and guess what they discovered in their own laboratories?

Tobacco, nicotine, really is a carcinogen. We can't let this news out because if we do, we can kiss the tobacco industry goodbye.

So what did they do? They covered it up. And one day, there was a man, I don't even know his name, but he was an executive and he worked for Philip Morris, a huge tobacco conglomerate with assets in the multiplied billions of dollars.

This man became a whistleblower. You might have seen him on 60 Minutes and what he revealed was not only does nicotine and cigarettes cause lung cancer, but the tobacco industry knows it and has already demonstrated it and has covered it up.

And he blew the whistle and the lid was off. Investigators swarmed in, confiscated all kinds of files. multi-billion dollar lawsuits were filed against the tobacco companies and all of the states got a piece of the pie.

[11 : 43] Justification for treating many of the citizens who had, as a result of years of smoking, contracted lung cancer. The story had legs for sure.

Recently, I don't know if you are aware of it or not, or if you saw it, but I watched this on 60 Minutes just last week and it was quite stunning.

There was a gentleman who was interviewed, I do not even recall his name now, but he was a medical doctor, and not only a medical doctor, but a specialist.

He's an endocrinologist. An endocrinologist deals with diseases of the glandular system. It's a very sophisticated highly specialized effort on the part of physicians.

This doctor came out on 60 Minutes being interviewed, and lo and behold, he called sugar.

[12 : 47] White, refined sugar. The kind you buy in five and ten pound packages. You put in your pies and cakes and cookies, and in your iced tea and in just about everything else.

Lots of people use it in coffee, but if the coffee is any good, you don't need sugar. Anyway, he said sugar is toxic.

Sugar not only massively contributes to the obesity problem we have in the United States, but sugar is also demonstrated to increase one's vulnerability to different kinds of cancer.

And he went on to say how many pounds of sugar the average American consumes in a year. And his contention is the human body was just not designed for that kind of an attack by sugar because the organs cannot withstand it.

it's too hard on the liver and the kidneys and everything else and the heart. Now the question is, is that the beginning and the end of it? We're not going to hear any more about it because it's just one physician who, as a result, by the way, of a highly controlled testing study, is that going to be the end of it?

[14 : 13] Or is the story going to have legs? Because if it does, it will make the tobacco settlement, small potatoes by comparison.

Do you realize how many things we utilize every day that have sugar? Do you realize how many spoons of sugar there is in one can of soda? And you know you get addicted to that stuff?

To the caffeine and the sugar? I mean, there are kids, now, it's perfectly logical, of course, to drink caffeine for breakfast and coffee, but not in Pepsi-Cola and not in Coca-Cola.

This is clearly a demarcation of the generations. When I look and see a young person sipping on a Coke or a Pepsi or something like that for breakfast, I know they're not from my generation.

If he had any sense, it would be black coffee. Seriously, though, do you have any idea if this story has legs? legs, the American diet and food preparation will never be the same?

- [15 : 24] Now, maybe that's the end of it. It may not take legs. The whole food industry may just poo-poo the thing, but do you know the whole tobacco industry poo-pooed it also when independent studies came out and said tobacco causes lung cancer.
- And the official response of all the tobacco companies was, no, no it doesn't. There has been no conclusive evidence. We find no evidence. And they were lying through their teeth. They not only knew it, they had it in black and white in their own files, proving it.
- And they denied it. So it wasn't for what they did with the nicotine, it was the cover-up. It wasn't what Nixon and his henchmen did with the Watergate break-in, it was the cover-up.
- And the cover-ups were exposed because the stories had legs. They just wouldn't let go of it.
- And I'm here to tell you this morning that the resurrection of Jesus Christ has legs and feet with wings on it.
- [16 : 34] Nobody can kill it. It won't die out. legs. It just goes on and on and on. Because a really peculiar thing about legs and the staying power that legs has is when the story is understood and accepted to be true.
- tobacco. The facts surrounding the Watergate incident, ugly and unfortunate though they were for the president, they turned out to be true.
- Started out as just accusations, insinuations. things. But the more the evidence amassed, the more it was demonstrated to be true.
- And now, as with tobacco, nobody in their right mind questions about tobacco being injurious to your health. You would have to be from another planet if you've never heard of that.
- And the sugar thing, we'll just have to wait and see whether it has legs or not. But I can tell you one thing. I am confident there are a lot of high-powered executives, in well-positioned places, who are in seven-figure salaries and they are not sleeping well at night.
- [17 : 55] Do you realize what an impact this would have if what this singular endocrinologist said on 60 Minutes gets picked up and carried on?
- It could be cataclysmic to the whole food situation. in the Western world. And we would probably be the better for it.
- What do all these leg stories have in common? So, stories take legs and some stories don't take legs. What do all these that have in common, what do the leg stories have in common?
- men? Just one thing. They severely impact life.
- Life is what we're all about. Life is what everybody is all about. Life is what the resurrection is all about. Life is what creation is all about.
- [18 : 59] Life is what death is all about. life. Precious commodity that each of us possesses, one per person in a physical plane and one per person on a spiritual plane.
- And they are both described as life, physical life and spiritual life. They are the very essence of life. They are life.
- Without them, there is no such thing as life. Life, life, life is what the pro-life people are all about.
- This is why we hate abortion with passion. It destroys life. It demeans life. It devalues life.
- And when you become a believer and you see life as a gift of God, it is something to be treasured and cherished.

[20 : 07] We go to all extremes possible to preserve it. We think that there is nothing so valuable as a human life. It is human lives for which Christ died.

The tragedy of the Titanic with 1,517 people losing their life. That has legs.

That is real news. For 2,000 people losing their lives, Pearl Harbor, 1941.

What was the big news about? It was the loss of life. That is the news. That is the news. The World Trade Center, the Pentagon. It was lives lost.

There isn't anything. There isn't anything that makes news like lives taken, lives forfeited, lives murdered, lives snuffed out.

[21 : 10] Nothing gets our attention more than that. life. We value life in a way that we value nothing else.

Life is the universal quest. You are as aware of, I am, of a man by the name of Ponce de Leon, who came to the United States as an explorer, Spanish explorer.

He devoted all of his energies to looking for what we would describe as the mythical fountain of youth. Why was he searching for it?

Because of life. Extend life. Preserve life. Life, life, life. It's what everything that matters is all about. Paul said, for to me, to live is Christ.

Another way of saying, for as far as I am concerned, what life is all about, is Jesus Christ. And why is that?

[22 : 22] It's because he himself said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. And in John 6, he said, the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

What? Life in words? Certainly. Life in the words of the one speaking who is the life.

This one could say, let there be light. And there was light. Just through the spoken word. Incredible demonstration of power.

It's all about life. When you hear that blaring siren go down the street, and the lights flashing in that emergency squad vehicle, you know what that's all about?

It's all about life. Somebody's life, somebody's being, is threatened, is in peril. And they are rushing off to get to that person so they can aid them solely for the purpose of sustaining life, saving life, extending life.

[23 : 50] And they try to get them stabilized and then they bundle them up and put them on a stretcher and whisk them off to an emergency room. And there are specially trained people. standing by that don't do anything but this all day long.

And they are devoted to intervention to save life, preserve life, extend life. Could we almost say life makes life worth living, doesn't it?

We don't have anything apart from this. We don't need anything apart from this. And he who is the way, the truth, and the life, has himself said, this is what it's all about.

He that believeth in me should not perish, but have everlasting life. Life. That's being. Existence.

And it all begins with the giver of life. You see, he gives us life by virtue of birth, life. And he provides a capacity for our spiritual life in the portion that he created in us that is called the human spirit.

[25 : 05] And the human spirit resides in the human body. The body is alive and the spirit is alive. But when the body dies, the spirit no longer has a place of residence and the spirit vacates the body and leaves it and is absent from the body and present with the Lord.

In the case of those who know Christ as their savior. So life, its preservation and its saving is what this is really all about.

And when Jesus Christ came forth from that grave, that's the very thing that gave the story legs. Its truthfulness, the reality, the perpetuity, of life and the miraculous restoration of life, but even in addition to that life because the body of Jesus that went into the ground in some respects was the same body that came out, but in other respects it was different because it had a glorified dimension to it which made it from that time on incapable of death.

That's going to be true of us too one day. Paul said when this corruptible puts on incorruption and this mortal capable of dying body puts on immortality incapable of dying, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory.

Oh, death, where is your victory? Oh, grave, where is your sting? Christ has taken the sting out of death because he took its sting upon himself.

[26 : 57] And you know, there are those who tried to deny legs to this story from the very beginning. Remember when the soldiers came and reported that the tomb was empty and they don't know what happened.

They don't know what happened. And the Pharisees and scribes, just about to be embarrassed to death, got together and they gave the guards money and they said, now, let's get our story straight.

This is what you're supposed to say. Anybody ask you what happened to the body of Jesus, you're supposed to tell them that his disciples came and stole his body away at night while we were asleep.

Got that? Yes, sir. That's the official story. And of course, that's the line that they used. But one can only look askance at that and ask the question, well, if his disciples came and stole the body away while they were asleep, number one, how did they know that if they were asleep?

And number two, how do they know that it was his disciples that took the body? if they were asleep? I don't know about you, but when I'm asleep, I'm not too aware of anything that's going on around me.

[28 : 18] I don't think it's possible to sleep with one eye closed and one eye opened. So they tried to deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ and keep it from having legs right at the outset.

And then, shortly thereafter, in the early chapters of the book of Acts, the apostles just would not be silenced. And the reason they wouldn't be silenced was because they couldn't.

They knew what they knew, and they knew that they knew, and they just couldn't keep quiet about it. Because this thing has legs. We've got to talk it up and tell everybody everywhere we go.

It's an incredible story. It's all about life. It's about life. Eternal life. And they were proclaiming this out in public, telling the people, I'm telling you, we were there.

We saw him with their own eyes. He appeared to Peter. He appeared to the twelve. He appeared to five hundred brethren at once, and they're all still alive. You can go ask them if you want.

[29 : 24] Sadducees, Pharisees, scribes, religious establishment got together and said, this thing's getting out of hand. I don't know that they ever said, this story's got legs, but that's what they were scared of.

And they said, lest this spread any further, let's call them in, threaten them.

Let's just scare the bejabbers out of them and tell them if they don't stop spreading this stuff, there's going to be serious consequences, they're going to be locked up and will throw away.

They called them in, they beat them, they physically beat them with rods, foot bumps and bruises and cuts and welts all over them.

And then they said, and if you don't shut up, worse is going to happen to you. Now, get out of here. and they left and the text says, they went out from the presence of the authorities and rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ.

[30 : 50] You know, it isn't hard to cut the legs out from under a story if it isn't true. eventually people start finding out and the thing just fizzles.

It just peters out. Remember the nasty case that developed a few years ago about the Duke lacrosse team and the gang rape that these young men were supposed to have participated in?

and the prosecuting attorney was absolutely convinced that it was true and he began the prosecution. Nifong was his name, wasn't it?

Yes. Bruce Nifong, I think. He was the prosecuting attorney. And they tried to make a case. But when the facts are not facts and they're just accusations, it's hard to build a case on that.

You're building a case on fluff. And eventually what happened? The truth came out. The truth is ever the greatest enemy of the lie.

[32 : 02] And pretty soon, that which had legs, and do you know why it had legs originally? Because everybody thought it was true. The media treated it like it was true.

Like these young men have already had their day in court, have been tried and convicted, slam dunk, you scum. And that's the way they were regarded. Lo and behold, who would have ever dreamt that there wasn't a shred of truth to it?

So the story that had legs lost them because it wasn't true. It didn't deserve to have legs. Truth is what gives legs to a story that matters, that makes a difference.

And he is not here. He is risen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. That's got legs.

legs. And it deserves legs. And we are still propagating that story today. And what's more, we want to add more wings to the heel so the story will go more and more and out further and further, longer and stronger.

[33 : 22] It deserves it. It's true. He is not here. He is risen. And another story that has legs is one that concerns you.

Because he lives, we too shall live. Oh, unless he comes first for us, we're going to die.

We are going to die. You know, that's the story, and that story has legs. That's true, too. But we're not going to stay dead. We are going to be transferred.

when this body dies, when Jesus said, he that believeth in me shall never die. What does that mean? What does that mean? It means those who believe in Christ will never really fully die.

Because you're translated. You're human spirit, which is the very essence of your life. And by the way, your physical body is not the essence of your life.

[34 : 30] We tend to think it is. That's why we take such good care of it, or at least those of us who do. You know, you work out, you feed it right, you buy the right cosmetics, you put the right sunscreen on, you do all of these things for the body, because we think the body is what we are all about.

But that's not what you're all about. What you're all about is inside of you. That's the body without the spirit is dead. So what the real essence of life is, is the spiritual life that you have in Christ.

Do you? Has your human spirit, which you may or may not even be aware that you have, but you do, God says you do, has your human spirit inside of you ever been quickened?

It's an old English term used. It means, has it ever been made alive? I've even talked to people who in honesty and frustration would actually admit, Pastor Wiseman, I just feel dead inside.

And you know why they feel that way? Because they are. They are dead inside. The human spirit that resides within them has never been regenerated or made new in Christ.

[36 : 13] That's what gives us real meaning, value, and purpose of life. It is so significant and so different and so radical.

It's even been called being born again. It's just like you have a whole new start in life. Everything is new.

Because it is. Because if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. You still look the same. Still walk and talk the same. But he's a new creation.

Old things passed away. Behold, all things are become new. Because when you are in Christ, you start seeing the world differently.

You see yourself in a different way. You see others in a different way. Everything is new. It's just like starting all over again. When did you experience that?

[37 : 20] Oh, well, that was when I was baptized. Well, if you're talking about having been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ, I would agree.

But if you're talking about the simple application of H₂O to your external body, whether it was sprinkling, pouring, immersing, or effusing, that's not true.

Because H₂O, refreshing as it may be to the tongue and to the body, cleansing as it may be for our exterior person, can't do anything for the human spirit.

H₂O can't reach the human spirit. Only the Spirit of God can reach the human spirit. And when you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior, and you put your trust in him, God makes you a new person on the inside.

You know, some people would actually say, I don't want to be a new person. I like the person I am right now. You can stay that way. You can stay that way. You can maintain your cussed, old, miserable self if you want to.

[38 : 33] But pray tell me who would want to when God has made provision for you to be a new person and have a new glimpse of life, a new value of life, a new perspective on life and everything.

That's what was purchased for you in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. Christ. And it is conditioned, the reality of it and our experience of it is conditioned upon certain things.

We are told that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. What does it mean to call?

It means just that. It means call. It means what Peter meant when he was walking on the water out to Jesus and started sinking and he said, Lord, save me!

That's what it means. He called upon the Lord. But now the question is, why would you do that? Why would anybody do that? you do it out of a sense of personal admitted weakness.

[40 : 00] It's an admission of personal weakness. You cannot do and you cannot provide what is required to be brought into a right standing with God.

Have you recognized that? Do you understand that? Because it's true of all of us. I don't care who you are. Does that apply even to preachers? And my answer is, oh, especially to preachers.

Especially to preachers. The only reason for calling upon the Lord is a recognition of your own deficiency and your own shortcoming. Are you willing and honest to admit that?

Or do you have the attitude that I had as a 21 year old punk who thought I had a handle on life and macho stuff and all the baloney that went with it and don't need nothing.

They're nobody and I'm strong. I'm the captain of my own destiny and the master of my own fate and all of that baloney that goes with it. And I knew there wasn't a bit of it that was true, but it just sounds like the manly thing to say and to believe.

[41 : 13] life and it was all just a bunch of hooley. And when you understand that God loves you in such a way that he made the ultimate sacrifice for you, what does that do for you?

What does that do to you? Some people say, I didn't ask him to do that. He didn't do it for me. I didn't ask him to do that for me. No big deal to me. That's 2000. Man, that's ancient history. I don't care about that.

That's the attitude some people have. But if God gives you the grace and the wisdom to see that in the death of Christ, there was an inexpressible love that the Father was demonstrating for you, you understand that you'll never be the same.

you can deny it, but in your heart of hearts, you suspect that it's true. And when you come to grips with that reality, how does it make you feel?

This is what the Bible refers to as remorse, regret, sorrow. sorrow. Someone says, do you have to be sorry for your sins in order to be saved?

[42 : 43] Well, there isn't any place where the scriptures actually say that. But I don't think you can be saved if you're proud of them. If you're defensive of your sin, if you're in denial about your sin, sin, because when you understand that the death of Christ was a substitutionary thing, and that as Jesus was on that cross, he was doing and going through what you deserve.

You say, well, I never did anything bad enough to do that or to deserve it. Oh, yes, you have. Not compared to our standards, you haven't. No, no, no, because we all make each other look pretty good. But compared to the standards of a God who is holiness, and righteousness personified, we all fall far short of that.

And it is to make up that difference that Jesus died. And when you understand that, that has to affect the way you feel. You can't feel very good about yourself, and you're not supposed to.

You're supposed to see yourself as God sees you, and that's not a very pretty picture. but that's the real picture. That's the truth. And then you realize that despite what you are and what you look like, and how far short you fall of God's standards, Jesus died for you, knowing everything about you.

He still loved you and died for you anyway. God's got to bring some remorse to the heart, some regret. And it is out of that feeling, that emotion, because you see, salvation is a decision of the will, and it involves the intellect, but it does not omit the emotion, because emotion is part of our being, just like our intellect is.

[44 : 48] And Jesus doesn't save half people. He saves us whole, and he makes us whole. And when we come to Christ, we do so as a result of an emotional decision, an intellectual decision, a willful decision, a deliberate decision.

It is in recognition of who he is and what we are, and we embrace him. We take him as our savior, and we embrace him rather than our past or our church or our good intentions or something else.

What an incredible Resurrection Sunday this could be for someone who is spiritually. Resurrected and comes to new life in Christ.

Would you pray with me, please? Loving Father, once again, we have very briefly and superficially examined a subject that we know is so much deeper and broader than we are able to go.

But in order to be saved, and because of your grace, we don't need much depth, and we don't need much breadth.

[46 : 15] We only need a basic understanding that we will never be able to measure up to the standards of a righteous God, and that Jesus Christ did.

So we want his righteousness and his measuring up to be ours. And the only way we can get it is by trusting, receiving, believing on Jesus as our own personal savior from sin.

And Father, we are so grateful that this gospel has legs, the resurrection has legs still going all around the world.

Every year it surfaces with new vitality, bringing new men and women to faith in a loving savior. For any who may be here today, boy or girl, man or woman, who's ever struggled with this issue, looking for the reasons for living, looking for the purpose of life, looking for something they can't even describe, but they know they feel empty inside.

We pray the Spirit of God, even in this moment, will tenderly speak to them and reveal to them that Jesus Christ is the one they're really looking for.

[47 : 40] And may they, with complete abandonment, open their heart and life and soul to Christ and say, Come in, Savior, lover of my soul. Come in and make me a new creation in Christ.

That's what I want. Thank you for dying in my place to make it real. We bless you for, loving Father, in Christ's name.

Amen. If anybody here this morning made a decision like that, let me or someone else know before you leave, because I have some wonderful literature items that would be really helpful to you and get you started off in the right way.

And once again, let me say, the Lord is risen. Amen. God bless you. You are dismissed.