

Easter Sunday. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the most solidly established facts in all of human history.

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- [0 : 0 0] Resurrection Sunday. This morning, we're in the Old Testament for two passages, and I would like you to turn to Job.
- And we'll be looking at Job chapter 19. Job 19, verses 23 through 27.
- Oh, that my words were written. Oh, that they were inscribed in a book. That with an iron stylus and lead, they were engraved in the rock forever.
- As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives. And at the last, He will take His stand on the earth.
- Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God, whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another.
- [1 : 3 3] My heart faints within me. Now, in my Bible, if you'll go back about 300 pages to the book of Daniel, Daniel 12.
- And we're in the last chapter of Daniel. Chapter 12. And the verses there will be verses 1 through 3.
- Daniel 12. Now at that time, Michael, the great prince, who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise, and there will be a time of distress, such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time.
- And at that time, your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.
- Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake. These to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.
- [3 : 0 5] Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven. And those who lead the many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.
- Whether or not there will be a resurrection for you and or your loved ones.
- This makes it not only vital, but very practical. If Jesus Christ was not raised from the dead, there is certainly no valid reason to believe that you will be raised from the dead.
- And since nothing, absolutely nothing, is more vital to Christianity than the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it seems only logical that if it is true, if it actually happened in time and space history, and being the be-all and end-all of our faith, one would think that God would have taken very careful and well-planned steps to assure us that it did really occur.
- And this is precisely what Dr. Luke attests to in our passage for today. If you would turn to it, please. It is the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 1.
- [5 : 0 7] The book of Acts, chapter 1. While you are turning to that, remind you of a story that I heard Rabbi Zacharias tell, one of my favorite teachers.

And he was recounting an incident to a group of people to whom he was speaking at the time along the theme of apologetics. And he told the story about a writer who was interviewing Dr. Bertrand Russell.

I don't know how familiar you are with him. He is off the scene now. But several years ago, he was considered one of the world's leading thinkers and philosophers.

Dr. Bertrand Russell certainly did establish himself, I think, with a worldwide reputation of being a highly intelligent, mentally gifted individual.

But he was an atheist. And the writer asked him, Dr. Russell, just suppose that you have been wrong about God existing.

[6 : 20] Just suppose there is a God and one day you stand before this God and He asks you to give an account for your unbelief.

What will you tell Him? And without a moment's hesitation, Dr. Russell replied, I would tell him, you did not give me enough evidence.

Well, rather profound answer. At least it was in his thinking.

He felt he was completely justified in maintaining a posture of unbelief because he did not have enough evidence.

And that brings us to a question. How much evidence is enough? Believe it or not, the answer to that question lies within the heart and the attitude of the questioner.

[7 : 26] You must realize that for some people there is no such thing as enough evidence because the mental posture of their position is simply that they choose not to believe.

And evidence is not the issue nor the lack thereof. There is no way that a satisfactory amount of evidence can be marshaled for anyone who is intent on rejecting the premise.

However, Dr. Luke tells us that very careful and deliberate attention has been given to make certain that an abundance of evidence is more than available for anyone who is truly open to the evidence.

And that is what we read in the first two verses of Acts chapter 1. Dr. Luke is continuing under the inspiration of the Spirit of God that which he wrote in Luke's Gospel.

There is his name. If you were to read the Gospel of Luke, I would suggest that you then skip John's Gospel and go right to the book of Acts.

[8 : 56] And if you do that, you will maintain continuity. This is the continuation of the story that Dr. Luke began in Luke.

It's interrupted by the Gospel of John, which is a glorious Gospel in itself, but it does tend to make us lose our train of thought. So if you want to really study the full picture, read Luke, skip John, and read Acts.

Because when he opens Acts, he says, the first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach.

What's he talking about? He's talking about Luke, the Gospel that he had written there. That is what he means by the first account. That's the Gospel of Luke.

This, as Paul Harvey used to say, the book of Acts, is the rest of the story. And you have to read it if you want to get a complete picture. All that Jesus began to do and teach until the day when he was taken up after he had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom he had chosen.

[10 : 05] to these he also presented himself alive after his suffering by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.

Knowing human nature as he does, our Lord Jesus realized that if he expected his apostles to carry on his message to the world after he departed, he would need to fortify and equip them very well by giving them absolute and total confidence in the fact that he really did die and he really did come back to life and he really was coming again.

He knew, Christ knew, he had to instill within them such an unshakable confidence in that reality that they would even be willing to die for it before they would deny it because that is what would actually take place.

The King James Version says, many infallible proofs. New American Standard says, many convincing proofs.

Demonstrative proofs. Actually, the word for proof in the Greek is the word tekbaros, and it refers to a technical term. That's right, first century, a technical term that is designed to provide precise, definite information.

[12 : 01] Nothing vague and general and loose and dangling. Specific, definite, pointed, particular, so that you can't miss it.

That's what is meant by the word proofs here. Tekbaros. One translator rendered it many convincing manifestations.

Rhames Douay Version that the Roman Catholics use for their Bible translates it sure tokens. Weymouth renders it sure proofs.

And our New American Standard says convincing proofs. The Amplified renders it convincing demonstrations well exactly what were these incontroverted proofs.

We are told that he was seen of them including Thomas who actually doubted. And let me ask you this.

[13 : 08] Why should it have been so hard for them to believe that Jesus Christ was alive again? why should it be so hard for them?

Was it hard for them? Absolutely. Do you know why it was hard for them? It simply did not exist in their frame of reference because dead people don't come back to life again.

If it had been easy for them to believe we would have real reason to be suspicious. You must understand that even as many people today actually doubt and deny the resurrection of Jesus Christ you'll have to stand in line to do it because the first doubters and the first deniers are the apostles.

That's interesting. Those very ones who were going to go on and be willing to give their life for that truth that he has risen from the dead were the very first ones to deny that it had actually taken place.

What were these evidences? Well, just for starters, and we will not turn to them because there are too many, but to just throw out ten for your consideration, there was the incident of the women at the tomb in Matthew 28, there was the appearance to Mary Magdalene in Mark 16, there were the two men on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24, there was Peter in Jerusalem in Luke 24, there were the ten disciples in John chapter 20, the eleven disciples in 1 Corinthians 15, the seven disciples fishing in Galilee in John 21, the eleven disciples in Galilee in Matthew 28, five hundred persons presumably in Galilee in 1 Corinthians 15, James the brother of our Lord in 1 Corinthians chapter 15, and that is just to say that's only the beginning.

[15 : 26] It is remarkable that the text goes on to say, and I think that this is just fascinating, we are told that the many infallible proofs were demonstrated over a period of forty days?

Almost six weeks? Not forty minutes or forty hours. Forty days! Repeated sightings, repeated encounters, and each one contributed to building into the mind and heart of these apostles the reality of what actually happened so that thereafter they would never be able to deny it.

Sometimes our mind works in strange ways. We can experience certain things. Some of you know exactly what I'm talking about when it is something that is so hard to come to grips with.

and yet you know you must because you've got to stay in touch with reality. And reality says she is gone.

He is gone. really died. You know what your mind tells you?

[17 : 07] Or some few times at least your mind tells you that isn't true because very soon now you're going to wake up and discover it was all a dream.

Bad dream. But you don't wake up and discover that it's a dream. The reality just keeps pounding away at you.

And finally it really does start to sink in. the disciples had 40 days to acclimate themselves to the reality that as difficult as it was for logic and reason to get their brains around it he really was alive.

No possible denying it. He was alive. I know it. I talked with him. I touched him. I felt him.

I heard him. I spoke to him. I cannot deny the reality of what happened. You can put me to death if you must but I know what I know and I cannot deny it.

[18 : 36] That's precisely what Jesus Christ was building into these men for almost six weeks before he left them. The reason it should have been hard to believe he was alive and it was hard to believe that he was alive is because it just militated everything they knew with reality militated against that.

Yes there were some instances where Jesus actually brought someone back to life again not long before his own resurrection there was bringing back the life of Lazarus in John 11.

Now it is one thing to have the power and ability to affect the resurrection or bringing back the life I must correct that Lazarus was not resurrected Jesus was resurrected Lazarus was brought back to life because Christ was resurrected he'll never die again but because Lazarus was simply brought back to life he did die again and so did the widow's son of name and so did Jairus' daughter yet it is one thing for Jesus to orchestrate their resuscitation to life when he was there and in command of the situation but when he himself is dead that's another issue how does a dead person arrange for their own resurrection that's another matter and another reason that it was so hard for them to believe that he was alive was because they were absolutely totally thoroughly completely convinced that he was dead that death was real one of the favorite old liberal arguments was that

Jesus didn't really die this is called the swoon theory it is so filled with garbage it is embarrassing to the human race that another of us came up with it but Jesus swooned on the cross and he passed out and went into a coma but then after he was buried with all of these grave clothes and a couple of hundred pounds of ointment on him they placed his body in the tomb and it was within the cool temperature of the tomb that he came back to life again and in a beaten emaciated condition was able to rip off the grave clothes get up roll away the stone and present himself alive anybody who can believe that has credulity that won't quit it's just amazing you know when a person dies they turn into a different color a very unbecoming unattractive color it's the color of death the skin tone is gone there is no ruddy complexion it is like a bleach job that pinkish toned flesh turns into a bluish gray color color death it's very unbecoming and when you go to the funeral home and you see this loved one they don't look like that in reality the embalmers take the course in embalming school called cosmetology their cosmetics applied to the courts that makes them look flesh colored otherwise there probably wouldn't be any viewings it would be shocking to most and let me say this these people in the first century the

Roman soldiers in particular who had carried out so many executions you suggesting these people didn't know what death looked like they knew a corpse when they saw it and the soldier that took that pointed spear and placed it strategically right at the chest cavity right below the ribcage of our Lord and then lunged with that sword that spear and forthwith John said there came out blood and water and you could see both of them clearly distinctly separately indicating that death had surely taken place and the serum had separated from the blood so that there were the two elements that speaks only of death and when they took that limp lifeless body down from the cross it just sagged all the life was gone and they knew the life was gone and when they embalmed they put on layers of salve and myrrh and aloes and these were highly pungent spices and salves and ointments that were available and they were very expensive and we are told that there was an excess of a hundred pounds of this stuff put on the body of our

[24 : 34] Lord and then the body was wrapped like a mummy with linen cloths wrapped and twined all around it fingers wrapped individually toes wrapped individually then hands and feet and arms all wrapped individually and then all of it put together and all wrapped together just like a cocoon oh he was dead all right had there been any way that he could have survived the crucifixion he could not have survived the entombment that's for certain and they knew he was dead that's what makes his coming alive so hard for them to believe because death was so real they knew death and they knew there was no question about it and then in John 20 after the resurrection some of these many infallible proofs

Jesus said handle me and see reach here your finger reach here your hand and put it in my side he invited them to do that because he had nothing to hide he had everything to show everything to disclose everything to reveal he was insistent on inculcating in them a belief and a conviction and an assurance that was unshakable but nobody at the point of death could talk them out of it they could always say we know what we know we were there we saw him we touched him we handled him we know wherever we speak and in Luke 24 see my hands and my feet that it is I myself and I become so weary and so embarrassed for some of my colleagues across the country who this morning this morning we'll be saying things like it doesn't matter whether

Jesus rose from the dead physically or not and he probably didn't but the truth is that the spirit of Jesus lives on that is such pure unadulterated hogwash it is a travesty and it goes on in places called churches behind things called pulpits all that matters is that Jesus is alive to you such tripe disgusting people like that call themselves Christians when we've got such a clear incontrovertible revelation before us and they say things like that these people are clear cut enemies of the cross of Christ there's nothing else to call them I care not what denominational or non denominational handle they may have they are not friends of the gospel they are enemies in John 21

Jesus invited them his disciples to a fish breakfast that he himself prepared for them and they ate and watched him as he in a physical body ate physical fish before their very physical eyes and this is the kind of thing that occurred repeatedly not over 40 minutes or even 40 hours but day in and day out for 40 days nigh unto six weeks after his undeniable death these incidents so compelling so convincing took place so as to build that rock solid case and remove all reasonable doubt from the minds of all reasonable people let me ask you this question if our

Lord went to such extremes for such an extended period of time to demonstrate the reality of his resurrection why then are there so many in the world who still don't believe it two reasons maybe more than two but there are two that come to mind first is they are ignorant ignorant and their ignorance is either a willful or an unwilling ignorance they may not know because they just do not know they may live in a corner of the world where this information has never been made available and they are completely unaware that such a thing as the death burial and resurrection of Christ ever occurred these are people who are ignorant our sympathies are with them we would say that they are ignorant but they are unwillingly ignorant ignorant in other words they don't particularly want to be ignorant they just are they've never and you've heard me say that we are all ignorant just about different things that's all so there are people who are simply ignorant to the facts and that's why they don't believe it they've never heard of it it isn't that they've heard it and rejected it it's that they've never heard it and secondly there are people who are unreasonable in that no amount of evidence will satisfy them because they do not want to believe they do not want to face the implications or the consequences of believing they know if they come to that position there will be certain changes certain demands certain requirements made of them that they do not want to make chiefly the surrender of their autonomy they want to be in charge we all do that is part of our fallenness we all like to run the show we all want to be our own boss we all resent anybody telling us what to do even

[31 : 32] God people like that who do not believe do not believe because there is insufficient evidence they do not believe because they do not want to believe hence they are Ephesians two people to whom the apostle Paul referred to as children of disobedience that's the problem that is the systemic human problem we are all disobedient it is as if we have a disobedient gene in our DNA we are just wired that way that's what sin is it is expressly self centered self seeking self serving get out of my way God I want to do my own thing by the way if I do get into trouble and I call on you

I expect you to be there otherwise just leave me alone don't call me I'll call you that's the typical human condition and it's no different with me than it is with you we're all infected with this thing and only partaking of the grace of God in Christ with the spirit of God entering the life and changing the individual so that there is a new heart and a new attitude and new desires and new motivations that's the only thing that can cut through that that's the only thing and that is remarkable what it is saying is that the human condition is so irreparable and so damaged and so totally out of sync that it takes God himself to fix it the only one who can we are not sufficient for these things not only can we not change it we don't want to change it it's a remarkable gracious gospel that has been provided to us so that we can believe that and grab hold of that truth

Christ died for my sin I acknowledge my sin I'm not excusing it I'm not dismissing it I'm not downplaying it I'm acknowledging it and I believe that Jesus Christ died to pay my sin debt therefore I owe him everything and I want to deliver the goods Jesus Christ is my Lord and my Savior I take him I believe on him I trust him that's amazing and if any person does that I care not who they are or where they are they become a new creation in Christ Jesus old things have passed away behold all things have become new this is amazing this is incredible this is saying that man's condition is so bankrupt and so hopeless and so helpless that unless

God steps in there is no possible remedy and then God stepped in and he makes something available that we can embrace if we choose to do so it is called the obedience of faith we can simply believe the record that God has given of his son and I want to leave you with this thought I'm going to conclude this message very shortly because I do want some time for Q&A; and I also want you to indulge me because I'd like to continue this next week it's apparent that I'm not going to get through the material that comes as a real shock to you doesn't it I know it does yeah yeah but we have dealt with a question in time past and I think it is always an appropriate question because it is very very important to understand how

God respects and regards human doubt this is exactly what we've been talking about I don't ever want anyone to feel guilty or be ashamed because they have doubts a doubting mind is an indication of a thinking mind I had a delightful conversation with a young man not more than two weeks ago and he said something to the effect that I hope my questions don't irritate you or bother you and I said quite the contrary I love it doesn't irritate me in the least it's it's an encouragement to me and it indicates that you're thinking and that's wonderful because Christianity is a thinking faith listen to me it is not a feeling faith it is a thinking faith that may be followed by feelings but it is never generated by feelings or emotions it's okay for the emotions to come along to tag along and the emotions are based upon the reality of the truth you feel what you feel because you know what you know and that makes the feeling wonderful and legitimate because it's anchored in something but if feeling is all you get you get no mileage from it the feeling is gone by the time you get to the parking lot you need content doctrine truth for the anchor of the soul and the feelings come along with that as a result of what you know feel so good because you know the right things that's all the difference in the world and I related to this young man listen any faith any belief system that cannot and will not subject itself to the most careful and extreme scrutiny and investigation it is subjected to the stronger it will show itself to be the more stable it will become the more convinced its adherence will be and if what we believe is not true and we're all better off for finding out about it there is objective truth and it's all wrapped up in this person

[39 : 07] Jesus Christ who is the way the truth and the life doubting is nothing to be ashamed of it just indicates that you were thinking doubts God can handle God is not put off by your doubts he is not irritated by your doubts God wants to address your doubts and solve your doubts and he will if you will simply investigate the information he will there is good clear sufficient evidence for anyone who is willing to believe worst thing one can do is be naive and uninvestigating and uncritical so that you are just some kind of a super sap that believes anything and everything that comes down the pike there is nothing in that to be commended that's to be pitied we need to be people who require evidence sufficient evidence that reasonable people can embrace but there are unreasonable people and for them as

I said earlier there is no amount of evidence that will suffice because they don't want to believe they aren't looking for truth they aren't looking for information they're looking only for those things that will substantiate their unbelief they are looking for reasons to continue in their unbelief without feeling so much guilt about it these are insincere seekers God does not have the time of day for these people but for those who are willing to say as I would encourage you to pray God I don't even know if you're there or not I don't even know if you really exist but I want to know and I don't know if this business about the resurrection and the coming again of Christ I don't know if all that stuff is true or not but

I want to know and I want to be open to your truth and if you are there I am trusting you to get that information to me so I will be able to identify it as from you and it will settle the questions of my heart I want to know the truth God loves a sincere seeker and he will reveal himself you can count on it God will not leave anyone in the dark who wants the light problem is many times we don't want the light because we know we know where that light will lead us and we don't want to go there we want to stay here so we can poo poo we can deny we can dismiss we never run out of yes but never run out of it because we're not really looking for the truth and do you know only you and

God knows whether you're really open to the truth or whether you're not and if you are relax enjoy the ride because God will get to you what you need to know in his own good time but if you are not one of those sincere seekers and you're one whose mind is already made up and it doesn't make any difference what the claims are what the evidence is I'm going to believe what I want to believe because that's what I want to believe because that's what's going in your life that can serve as a wake up call the likes of which may leave you flat on your back in an ICU someplace with wires and tubes stuck in you and all you can do is lie there and stare at the ceiling that could be a wake up call and it could be an act of grace and mercy because at times of extremity we tend to be more open to we're not open to in the good times that's part of our human condition we're all like that all of us no difference

God could reveal himself in such a way and somebody asked this question why doesn't God reveal himself in such a way that nobody could doubt if it's such a big deal to God that he wants everybody to believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him why in the world doesn't he reveal himself in a way that even the most profound atheist and agnostic could not deny why doesn't he do that for a very very good reason and that's what we will discuss next Sunday but for now have you questions or comments that you'd like to ask David oh wait just a second we've got a microphone here that'll help thank you

[45 : 31] Roger at the beginning of your message you talked about people needing evidence to go along with that Romans 1 18 19 and 20 addresses that it was made evident to everyone in the world of his creation and so forth and they are without excuse that is a powerful passage Dave that Romans 1 and the conclusion is that the evidence God says the evidence is such that the things about him are clearly seen so that man is without excuse that is a powerful indictment man is without and that is just on the basis of what God has revealed in nature these things are clearly seen so that man is without excuse and another passage a little later on he talks about that all the world may become guilty and every mouth stopped why would every mouth stop and what does that mean in the first place it is really significant when you can stop a man's mouth or a woman's mouth that is really significant and the only reason these mouths are going to be stopped is because they've got nothing to say when you get a human being in a position where he is utterly speechless and cannot offer anything for his own defense man that is really something that is really something and the judge of the universe is going to be holding man to account and when asked for an account he is going to be speechless he just will not he knows he will not be able to marshal an argument or to offer an excuse that will even begin to hold water and he just stands there speechless that is going to be something and it's going to happen another comment or question someone yes

Roger I was thinking about Mr. Russell you were speaking of there at the beginning and we've had some movies or DVDs here of people very intelligent people about the design and all that and these people are choosing to believe in themselves I guess because creation like Dave says speaks of his almightiness and I feel so sorry about them people because I went through that I was trying to get rid of God and I couldn't do it my reason brought me to him and I just feel so sorry when I see people like that go on denying until their last breath and they're very intelligent but they just they're I guess are so full of themselves that they just want to do that to their dying breath so logically logically the only way logically and

I'm talking about logically now logically the only way that you can justify with clear cut justification the basis for you staying in charge is that you succeed in your own mind of dismissing God as either non-existent or irrelevant so that even if he does exist it doesn't make any difference and that's precisely what many people have done in fact there is on the scene now in a spate of books that have been produced by them a new breed of atheists that have come along and they have had a rather significant impact on many in our community and they have written some bestsellers and these are intelligent people they are not stupid they are foolish but they are intelligent now you say well how can you be foolish and still be intelligent very simple very simple we all know people who are book smart and too dumb to come in out of the rain we know people like that we know how someone can be highly educated and polished on one plane and have their

PhD from an Ivy school and yet balance their own check book or stay out of debt or keep from declaring bankruptcy because they're just foolish and the writer solomist made it clear it's the fool who has said in his heart that there is no God man is to be pitied he is a fool but there are there are intelligent people and yet foolish people you know Solomon Solomon was regarded as the wisest man who ever lived and yet when it came to the opposite sex he was dumb as a box of rocks women women were his real waterloo he could not handle femininity and it was his downfall he proved that as brilliant as he was he was really stupid in certain areas and there isn't any human being who is totally brilliant in all areas and stupid in none except Jesus Christ he is the only one one of my favorite quotes by

John Wayne that great philosopher of America said life is hard and if you're stupid it's a lot harder that's certainly true so you can be very intelligent in one area and you know there's a verse in Timothy Paul wrote about said talked about people who are ever learning never coming to the knowledge of the truth they learn all kinds of stuff about all kinds of stuff and they can talk to you about all kinds of stuff but they're never able to put it together in a cohesive way so that it means something and they're ever learning but never coming to the knowledge of the truth reminds me of some of the political pundits who have all kinds of opinions but never able to nail down anything everything is always floating well when your soul and your eternal destiny is at stake you need something that you can nail down and that's what the resurrection of

[52 : 23] Jesus Christ really does are there other questions or comments feel free a couple up here Marvis and then Marie you're talking about intelligence but yet stupid makes me think that our God is so wonderful that really intelligence is not required because the smartest person in the whole world might not believe but yet the student who graduated from town and country has much better handle on things than that really intelligent person so oh that's priceless isn't that something you know God has provided an incredibly profound gospel but he has made it available on such a simple plane that even a child can embrace it that's a beautiful thing who else but our heavenly father could even do that

Marie along those lines a verse that came to my mind is Matthew 23 37 when he said how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gather her chicken on her wings and ye would not you would not powerful testimony to human volition we do have the ability to reject God because God has given us that ability God is sovereign but he respects our volition and he does not bulldoze over it brush it aside and force us to believe he does not do that someone else well thank you all for your kind attention and for your comments and questions and for indulging me for a continuation of this next week we will take up where we left off and we will deal with that issue about why it is that

God has not seen fit to just absolutely overwhelm and overpower the situation so that everybody gets it there's a reason for that you are right now living it and we will elaborate on that Lord willing come next week may we stand please loving father how grateful we are for more than adequate information that you have provided so that anyone looking for the truth need not err therein we are grateful that the gospel has an element of simplicity to us that enables us to embrace it by simply taking Jesus Christ as an act of our will to be our Lord and our Savior and as we close even now father there may be a heart here a searching mind that is wondering and questioning these things and yet really wants to know the truth we pray in this closing moment that they may be willing where they are to say

Lord Jesus I don't know if you're there I don't know if you exist I don't know if any of this is true but I really do want to know and if it isn't true I want to be comfortably convinced of that as well so I'm asking if Christ is the way the truth and the life I want him as my savior I believe if this is true he died for my sin and I want to appropriate that by taking him to myself and believing on him and if it is not true I want to know that as well look forward to more information that you or others may provide in Christ's name Amen Amen