



April 16, 2017
Luke 24:1-8, 36-49
Pastor Larry Adams
Easter Sunday

Triumph Over Death

Hi Everyone. My name is Larry Adams and I want to take a moment to thank you for reading this message. At Golden Hills we are committed to exalting Jesus and preaching the Word. Your downloading of this message is a great encouragement to us, as we know that our ministry is going out to spread God's Word all over the world.

We want you to know, too, that in no way do we intend these messages to be a replacement for your involvement in a good local church, where, sitting under the authority of pastors and other teachers, you can learn to worship, grow and serve and be engaged with a body of believers where you can grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We realize also, that some of you may be in areas of the world where there is no local church. Therefore, we hope these messages you are using, to gather with your family or other believers, or people from the community that it will be a great encouragement to you, as you hear God speak into your life, helping you to become disciples who are true, reproducing followers of Jesus Christ.

Easter is full of surprises. Life is full of surprises, and I have one of those this week, big time. Friday, after being down here for an early morning prayer time, I went home. I hadn't had time to take a shower, so I jumped in the shower real quick. When I climbed out, my little three-year-old granddaughter was standing there in the bathroom. I didn't know she was in there! So I came out of the shower and came around, and there she was! Her eyes got this big and she said, "Bumpa! You're not wearing your glasses!" It's true – I wasn't! (It's probably going to take her until she's in her fifties to get over what she saw there.)

I didn't expect her to be there. Life is full of surprises. I can tell you, when the ladies and the men went to the tomb that Sunday morning, after Jesus' crucifixion, they were given a great surprise. They expected to find a tomb with a body in it. They were bringing spices to anoint Him, but when they got there, the tomb was empty. There were some angels there, saying, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, He is risen." It's the best news that man has ever been given and it's a word and a message that saved my life. Maybe it saved yours, too, or maybe today, it will be one that saves you because you believe it.

All four gospel writers record the miraculous story of the resurrection. Here is the way Luke recorded it. He got a lot of his stuff from Peter, but he was alive at that time. Here is how he recorded it, as he wrote out this book for his friend, Theophilus, he wanted to know the whole story as it happened. This is what he wrote (Luke 24:1-8)

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you

look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

Let's pray together: *Father, this is the good news that saved my life, and I will always be grateful for the people who brought that message to me. I want to thank You, God, that our greatest enemy has been vanquished. In Christ, death can't hurt us any more. You've triumphed over it. That's what this Easter celebration is all about. That's why the choir has been singing, the band has been playing and why we've been lifting up these songs of praise. So today, Lord as we open this word, let us visit all over again, that glorious Sunday morning in Jerusalem when everybody began to learn that Jesus has triumphed over death. We'll thank You for all You will show us today. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

It has been said that there are two things you can count on that are always certain: death and taxes. I want you to know that there is a group of billionaires who are working to change that. Not on the taxes side, but on the death side. They are actually using their millions and billions to try to triumph over death. They've been trying all kinds of things, but so far none have been successful. One of the ones leading that effort is Larry Ellison of Oracle. Forbes Magazine has estimated he is worth \$43 billion. So, each year, he spends approximately \$40 million with the Ellison Medical Foundation, which is committed to finding – as they call it – the lifespan development processes. That is a long way to say this: they are trying to find ways and why people die and how they can stop it. Larry Ellison is investing \$40 million a year, trying to solve this thing. You might wonder, what motivates a man to give that much money to something that is seemingly impossible. This is what he said in an interview: (Nitasha Tiku, *Billionaires Will Disrupt Death if it's the Last Thing They Do,* Valley Wag, 8-22-13)

Death makes me very angry. It doesn't make any sense to me. Death has never made any sense to me. How could a person be there, and then just vanish? Just not be there?

I used to wonder that same thing myself when I was a kid. I didn't understand death. When I was five years old, my grandpa died. One minute he was there, the next he was gone. I didn't know where he went. They just told me, he wouldn't be coming back. When I was nine years old, our neighbor boy, Hoppy, age 5, tragically and suddenly died. One minute I'm playing with him, the next minute, he is gone. They said he went away, and he wouldn't be coming back. When I was 10 or 11 years old, I was sitting in my living room alone our neighbor, Stevie came over. He walked in, sat down in a chair, grabbed his chest, had a heart attack and died – right in front of me. They told me that he was taken away. One minute he was there, the next minute he was gone and he wouldn't be coming back. So as a kid, I began to really fear death. All I knew about it was, it shows up unexpectedly, takes people I love to a place – I don't know where, and they're never coming back. I was afraid of it because I knew that one day, any day, death would be coming for me. It would take me somewhere, where I didn't know where I was going. Wherever it was, I wouldn't be coming back. I actually was traumatized as a kid. I remember laying on our couch in our living room, at times overcome with fear about being put in a box, and being put into the ground, forever. I lived with that fear. It stayed with me until I was 25.

Then, there were some witnesses to the greatest news I've ever heard. They came and told me that I didn't need to be afraid of death any more. Someone who loved me had triumphed over it. He had conquered sin, death and the grave, and He was alive, offering me hope and forgiveness and eternal life. He told me that man was Jesus.

All four gospels detail Jesus' triumph over the grave. His triumph over death is center stage. The whole Old Testament pointed to His triumph. Jesus told the crowds and the disciples and the people over and over and over again – He was going to rise from the dead; He was going to triumph over death.

That's why Luke wrote (Luke 24:7), "The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day, be raised again." The triumph over death that Jesus accomplished, is the most important message you'll ever hear. That's why the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas [Peter], and then to the Twelve.

"I give to you as of first importance." When I was 25, for the first time hearing it, I thought *why am I 25 and no one has told me before now? How is it that I could go to college, go to high school, have a job, live in America – and be 25 years old, lived through 25 Easters, and still have no clue what it is? How could I be 25 years old and not know that Easter had something to do with Jesus?* But I didn't. How in the world could I be 25 and not have heard the best news that was ever given to man? Because nobody told me. Nobody told me.

So I lived with that fear of death. But I thank God for those men who reached across racial barriers and all kinds of other barriers, because they cared more about me than those other things. They told me the good news, the gospel, the truth and the proof – that Jesus has triumphed over death.

The question is – how did He do it? How did He triumph?

He did it by His sacrifice for sin on the cross. He did it by His glorious resurrection from the grave.

Jesus triumphed over death by His sacrifice for sin on the cross.

Here is how Luke put it (24:6-7)

⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' "

I don't know how old you were when you got your first traffic ticket. Do you remember your first one? Anybody here remember their first one? Now the rest of you either have bad memories, or you're lying or you don't want to admit it, because almost everyone has a traffic ticket, unless you are the really good people who drive right all the time. I was not one of those. I was 24 years old. Driving one night in my MGB convertible, doing 35 in a 25. Now, I didn't know it was a 25, but that doesn't matter. You see, that didn't stop this very nice police officer pulling me over and giving me a ticket. I found out that the ticket was an invitation to go to traffic court, where I met another very nice man who was a traffic judge. He heard what I did. I told him I didn't know it was 25, and he told me it didn't matter, you still have to pay a fine. Which I did.

Now, when you think about it, what gives that police officer the right to pull me over. I'm an American. I'm free. I'm minding my own business. I'm not doing anything wrong that I'm aware of. Yet he pulled me over and gave me a ticket. What gives that judge the right to sit there in judgment of me, and tell me that I'm wrong and I have to pay a fine? What gives him that right? The LAW gives him the right to do that. The law gives him that right. He has full authority because of the law.

Do you know that sin has power and authority over us too? Do you know that sin has the power to not only destroy our lives (which it does), but it has the power to actually steal our life. It has the power to take our life and replace it with death. That is exactly what it does.

What gives sin the power and authority to do that? The law does. The law of God. The law of God is good, but if you violate that law, you find out there is a serious consequence. The wages of sin is death: separation from God. That's why Paul wrote (1 Corinthians 15:56), "⁵⁶The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law."

The sting of death is sin. Death has a stinger. It's called sin. If you die with sin still in your life, death will sting you. It will separate you from God. Remember, God is life. There is no life apart from God. It isn't found in the things you possess, or the money you have, or the awards you've achieved. That isn't life. Life is found in relationship with God. If you don't have God, you don't have God. Period. Sin is what separates us from God. If we die with that sin still in our life, it will sting us. The sting of death is sin. So, if you could die with no sin in your life, death couldn't sting you. So you see, that's why, in order for Jesus to triumph over death, He has to first triumph over sin by paying the penalty and meeting the demands of God's law.

Now, Satan doesn't want anybody to believe that the creation story is real. That's why he has so many counterfeits out there, the chief of which is evolution. I was a bio major in college. I wasn't a Christian. I studied evolution. It didn't make sense then. I had all kinds of questions they couldn't answer. Though I wasn't a Christian, I came to the conclusion: it takes a lot of faith to believe this stuff. There is not a lot of evidence for it. That's because Satan is behind all of this. He doesn't want people to believe the creation story – but why? Because if you understand the creation story, you'll understand where sin came from, and you might understand why and how you need a savior.

Remember when God told Moses about that creation story in Genesis 2? (2:15-17) –

¹⁵ The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;

¹⁷ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

God made Adam and Eve and put them in this gorgeous garden. He said, look, there are not a lot of rules here. You can eat all of this stuff. (But love has to be tested. All love is tested. Marital love is tested by fidelity – so we'll remain true.) God said the proof of your love for me will be you will not eat of this tree in the middle of the garden. You can eat from every other tree, but don't eat from this one. The day you eat of it – the day you decide that your way is better than My way, the day you decide you don't need Me any more, or you don't need to listen to Me any more, the day you rebel is the day you will die. Sin will enter the world, and that sin will separate you from Me and you will not have life. Our relationship will be over.

That's why Paul told the Romans (Romans 5:12), "¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned."

Eve ate the fruit that day. She got her husband to eat. Death entered the scene, because sin entered the scene. It spread to all of us. That's why, when your kids ask you when they are little, why do people die? You can tell them it's because of sin. Sin is what brought death into the world. People die physically, and they are dead spiritually when they are separated from God. If they haven't dealt with that issue, they will die eternally. Eternally separated from God.

But you see, this is the good news of what Jesus has done. Jesus, who had no sin, went to the cross and took my sin with Him. He took your sin with Him. He died with it there. He met the full demands of the law. He paid my fine. He met that penalty. God's law was satisfied.

This is why the apostle John wrote (John 3:16), "¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

And it's why Paul told the Corinthians (2 Cor 5:21), "²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

That's why the apostle Paul later told the Colossian church (Col :13-15) –

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

He humiliated the forces of authority that were holding us captive to sin. That's why I would have loved to have been there when Satan got the word, when he thought he had beaten Jesus at the cross. He thought he had won his greatest victory. I would have loved to have been there when he suddenly – uh-oh. This is not good. Jesus has just triumphed over sin.

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus met the full demands of God's law. What He did that day on the cross was, He grabbed death by the throat and ripped the stinger out. Death is as harmless as a bee without a stinger, if you're a Christian. Your body may die. It may be put in the ground or cremated. But death will never touch you, because it can't. If you're a Christian you have the living Christ living in you, and you have eternal life.

We have become witnesses of these things. Luke said (Luke 24:48) "You are witnesses of these things."

I thank God for the people who reached into my life to share this good news that broke my fear of death. Now, today, if you're here and you haven't known that this kind of triumph has taken place, I want you to know that witness has been passed on to you. You have now heard what Jesus has done. You don't have to fear death any more. He has triumphed over death. Romans 6:23 – "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Not only did He do it by triumphing over death by conquering sin at the cross, **Jesus triumphed over death by His glorious resurrection from the grave.** Luke said (24:1-8) --

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you,

while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷ 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' ⁸ Then they remembered his words.

John Ortberg is a well-known author and pastor in Menlo Park Presbyterian Church (right here in the Bay Area). John Ortberg has a friend in Minnesota who is also in the ministry, also named John. John's friend has a very unique ministry: he is the denominational executive, and part of his job is, he travels in Minnesota to little villages that have no church. He goes there to help the people with weddings and funerals.

John in Minnesota was telling John Ortberg about a recent time when he was riding with the undertaker, in the hearse, out to one of these little communities to do a funeral for a family that had no church. When they finished the funeral, they were driving back together in the hearse. John said he got very tired, so the funeral director said, "There's nobody back there, why don't you lay down in the back of the hearse and take a nap." So John did that. He fell fast asleep.

Now they were driving along, when the undertaker realized he needed to buy gas, so he pulled into a gas station. The gas station attendant came out to pump the gas. He was a little creeped out to be pumping gas into a hearse to begin with. But he was pumping the gas and he looked into the window and saw a guy stretched out in the back of the hearse. He was totally freaked out. He was so horrified, he wouldn't even look near the window, hoping this would soon be over.

John's friend John woke up, wondering where they were. He sat up and looked out the window, and saw the gas station guy. So he tapped the window and waved at the guy!

The gas guy dropped everything and ran. John said, you've never seen anyone run so fast! He left everything! The pump was running. He just ran! Because you don't expect to see a dead guy sit up and wave! In fact, you don't expect to see a dead guy do anything except lay there and be dead!

Jesus reversed all of that. He said, if you kill Me, bury Me in a tomb, then three days later, I'll reverse the curse. I'll conquer sin, death and the grave and I will rise again. I'll prove to you that I am the way, the truth and the life, the only way to God. That's exactly what happened. He died on a cross for our sins. He was buried in a tomb. Three days later, He rose again.

People, Jesus told His disciples that the resurrection would be the proof of who He was. When they saw that resurrection, it changed them. They were not the same people. Remember, the disciples and those who gathered, thought the cross was the end. They thought their hope was over. Jesus their Messiah was dead. They had no hope. So they gathered together in an upper room on that Sunday, trying to figure out what to do next. What made matters worse was, the women came back from the tomb (Luke's gospel says), saying they had seen angels. Mary had seen Jesus Himself, thinking it was the gardener. So they're running back from the tomb, saying, "We've seen the Lord!"

The men said, "You ladies are nuts! (a loose paraphrase!). He is dead."

"His body is not in the tomb!"

"Well, I don't know where He is, but He isn't alive."

So that night, they were gathered together in that upper room, trying to sort all this out. Jesus appeared in their midst. He said, "Look at My hands." (Luke 24) "Look at My feet. I'm not a ghost. I have flesh, just like you. Better, but I have it." They gave Him some fish to eat. He ate it. (Luke 24:44-48) –

⁴⁴ He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

Boy were they ever! They were so transformed by what they saw, and the living Christ, that they would not be silenced now. They were not afraid of anything. They were out there, telling everybody who would listen. And they paid a price for it. They were even willing to die, rather than deny this truth. Because they knew it was real. Jesus had really died. Their sins were really forgiven. He was really alive and they were going to live forever.

You see, the resurrection is the lynch-pin of Christianity. If the resurrection isn't real, if it didn't really happen, then Christianity is a hoax, a terrible hoax. It's a lie. It's like every other worthless religion that is out there.

That's why the apostle Paul said (1 Corinthians 15:12-19)

¹² But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? ¹³ If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. ¹⁴ And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ¹⁵ More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. ¹⁶ For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. ¹⁹ If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

The apostles understood. Everything hung on this. If Jesus hasn't really been raised, then His death on the cross was meaningless. The Christian faith is a hoax and people who believe it are lost. They ought to be pitied for their sacrifice.

BUT if He did rise from the dead, all of that changes. Now, suddenly Christianity is the only reality. Now, Jesus is the only way to God. Now He is the way, the truth and the life. Now, every other religion and approach to God is false.

That's what made 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 such a powerful testimony, when Paul said:

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

In Adam, we all die. We inherited that sin nature. Every one of us. We have all sinned and fall short of God's glory. There are no exceptions. In Adam, all die. But in Christ, all can be made alive. All of us are in Adam, that's why we have sin. But not all of us are in Christ.

That's why the apostle Paul told the Ephesians (Ephesians 1), you were included in Christ when you heard the truth and believed the gospel of your salvation, the good news of the death, burial and

resurrection of Jesus. Paul told them, when you believed that, then you were included in Christ. But until that time, you weren't. When you are included in Christ, you are made alive.

The women who came to the tomb that day got a surprise. They expected to find a body that they would anoint with spices. But He wasn't there. The angel said to them, why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen, just as He said.

The resurrection of Jesus is what sets apart Christianity as true; and every other religion and approach to God is false. That might sound a bit arrogant to you, but it isn't. If you've been around here a while on Easter, you've heard this before. It's a good review. If you haven't heard this, you need to, because basically religion is a mass of confusion. There are so many different religions, so many different versions. People either assume they all end up in the same place, or they are all worthless. The fact of the matter is, Satan has created all of these religions because he knows religion can't save anybody. Only Jesus can save people. That's why Satan doesn't care if you have all the religion in the world as long as you don't have Christ. That's why he doesn't care if you even call yourself a Christian, as long as you don't have CHRIST.

The fact of the matter is, the resurrection of Jesus cuts through all that religious confusion like a knife. The fact is, that all the religions of the world, except four, are just pure philosophy, invented by men and they attach gods to go with those beliefs. They invented systems and responses to make these religions, but they are pure philosophy. You and I could invent a better religion than billions of the world's people are now laboring under. Our invention, though better, would still be as worthless as the ones that are out there now. They are all just pure philosophy.

The four that are not philosophy, are all based on the life and teaching of their founder. Only four. Abraham, the founder of Judaism. Guatama, the founder of Buddhism. Mohammed, the founder of Islam, and Jesus, the founder of Christianity. Here are the facts:

- Abraham died at the age of 175 years. He was buried next to his wife, Sarah in a cave near Machpelah in Israel. His body is still in the tomb.
- Guatama, the first Buddha (Buddha is a title), died at age 80 while on a pilgrimage to the Himalayan mountains, on a search, he said, to find the truth. Isn't it ironic – there are millions of people following this guy who still hadn't found the truth himself. Well, he knows it now. In that pilgrimage into the Himalayas, he died. They buried him in a village there, called Kusinara. His body is still there.
- Mohammed died on June 8, 632 AD at the age of 62. He was buried in a tomb at Medina, in western Saudi Arabia, north of Mecca. He is still in that tomb today and millions of people pilgrimage there to visit his grave.
- Jesus died on or about April 6, 30 AD at the age of 33. He was buried in the tomb in Jerusalem, sealed with a stone, guarded by soldiers to keep the body in the grave, but all those efforts failed. His body isn't in there. Do you know why? Because He isn't dead. Sin couldn't defeat Him. Death couldn't hold Him. The grave couldn't keep Him. Because He is the resurrection and the life. He conquered sin, He conquered death, He conquered the grave for us. The tomb is empty. He is not in it.

The tomb is for the dead; Jesus is alive. He has triumphed over death, and He is offering hope and forgiveness, and eternal life to all of us who will believe and receive Him.

Someday, if Jesus hasn't returned, my kids are going to pack me up in a box and put me in the ground. And I'm going to remind them constantly, you can put my body in the ground, but you aren't ever

putting me in there! I'm never going to be there, because the grave is the place for the dead, and I can't ever be dead again. My body can die, but I never will. In fact, the instant death closes my physical eyes, I'll be more alive than they have ever known! And I'm going to live with Jesus forever. (cheers)
That's the truth that we celebrate at Easter.

I was reading a piece, an interview by Larry King, of *Larry King Live*, famous talk show, radio host, author. He was doing an interview with the New York Times (Mark Lebovich, *Larry King is Preparing for the Next Generation*, NY Times 8-26-15). Shawn, his seventh wife, said how he was absolutely traumatized and paralyzed by the thought of dying. Larry King, by his own admission, is emphatically non-religious. But he is really concerned about dying. He is 83. In the article, we read

King takes four human growth hormone pills every day ... and (he claims) he is feeling great. But in the case of death, he said, he has arranged to have his body frozen and then thawed out when researchers discover a cure for whatever killed him – the so-called cryonics approach.

Now, listen to what King said about that:

People behind the cryonics thing are all nuts. But at least I know that if I'm frozen, I'll die with a shred of hope. Other people have no hope.

When I read that I thought, *how pathetic is that?* Here is a guy, looking for a solution for his greatest dilemma – death – and it's right in front of him, if he could only see it. In fact, he doesn't need cryonics and growth hormone pills and all these other things. The answer to his death problem took place 2000 years ago, when Jesus Christ died on a cross to conquer sin and its penalty. When He was buried in a tomb and three days later, rose victorious. Somebody needs to get a word to Larry King. The best news that has ever happened, Larry, is this: in Christ, you don't have to fear death any more. Jesus has triumphed over death. And, you and I have been made witnesses for that reason, so that there are people all around us now, who are just like Larry King, just like me.

Maybe one of those people is you. You're still concerned about dying. You're still not sure what will happen when that takes place. You still haven't heard (before today) that there is an answer, a solution: Jesus has triumphed over death. Those who are in Christ are going to live forever. Death may grab your body, but it will never touch you. And the good news is, Jesus' triumph means triumph for you, and that's why we're celebrating this good news every Easter.

Father, I want to thank You today for the good news of this salvation, this triumph of Jesus Christ. It's real! It's true! And those who believe in Jesus may die physically someday, but they're never going to know what it's like to die. Their body may die, but they never will. They'll never be in the grave. They'll never be cremated. The instant death closes their eyes, they'll be in heaven with You. That's our hope. That's the promise You've given. That's the joy of this good news. Lord, You're still saving people who believe this. Because, by grace we are saved through faith. It's not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. You told us, if we confess with our mouth, that Jesus is Lord and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead, we would be saved.

That's why today, while you are all still praying, I want to ask you: do you know today, that you are a sinner like the rest of us? Do you know today and believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins? Do you believe today that He rose from the grave, victorious? That He is offering hope, forgiveness and eternal life for you? Do you believe? Do you believe? If you do, then ask Jesus to save you and He will. Ask Him to come and live in your life, and He will. He will take that payment He made on the cross and He will apply it to your account. Your sin will be forgiven. He'll rip the stinger out of your death, so death

can't hurt you any more. It will be the means God brings you to Himself. This salvation is by faith. You can't earn it. It's a gift. Like any gift, you must receive it, in order to have it. So if you're here today, and you know you're a sinner, and you believe Jesus died for you and rose again, and you're ready to receive that gift, then ask Him. In fact, you might pray something like this in your heart to God and He will hear you. Just say:

Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I believe that it's my sin that separates me from You. I believe You love me. That's why You came to die for me, in my place, for my sin, on that cross. And when You died, I believe my full payment was made. Then You were buried in a tomb. But as You promised, I believe that three days later, You rose again, victorious. And You are alive right now. So Lord Jesus, I ask You, please come live in me. Wash away all of my sins. Forgive me. I ask of You, that I might be given the gift of life, that I might have the joy of sharing in Your triumph.