

The King is Alive

- Well, Jesus Christ is alive. He's defeated death. He has conquered the grave. He has forgiven sin. He has opened heaven, amen. Happy Easter, welcome to the best day of the year. And let me tell you, I've got good news. In the last few years, it's been a lot of bad news, but we've got some good news. Last few years, a spirit of fear gripped the planet. Everybody's afraid to die. Every day we get a death count. We shut down our nations, we shut down our cities, we shut down our businesses, we shut down our churches, 'cause we don't wanna die. Congratulations, you made it, but I have bad news. You're still gonna die. All of that and death is still undefeated. Here's the good news. Only Christianity tells us what the cause of death is and what the cure for death is. His name is Jesus. Our problem is sin. Sin against God brings death. Jesus is our God. He comes and dies for our sin. He goes through the grave. He comes back three days later. That's why we're here. And he tells us that if we trust him and follow him, he will get us through death to the other side, to the life that is truly life worth living. And so, we're gonna talk about the resurrection of Jesus. This is how our sins are forgiven. This is how our eternity is secured. This is how our death is defeated. And I'm gonna give you 21 reasons to believe in Jesus' resurrection. I've got an e-book, I'll give you it for free. It's really cool looking. They did a great job. I'm gonna move very, very fast. And if you wanna do more homework, I would love to make this available to you. What we're talking about is resurrection. Here's what that is. Somebody's alive. They die for a while. They come back. They never die again. This is different than, for example, a near-death experience. Like, I saw the light. I saw Elvis. I saw Jesus, and then I came back, and I ultimately died again. This is living, dying to never die again. I'm gonna give you 21 reasons to believe in Jesus' resurrection. You only need one to become a Christian. So what are you trying to do, convert me? Yes, thank you for paying attention. All right, so here is issue number one, Jesus died by execution from the ancient Roman government. We need to establish that he died before we can establish that he rose. So he was beaten all night. He was scourged or flogged. Many men died from that. He was then crucified, which the entire point was to end someone's life. To ensure that he was dead, a spear was run under his ribcage, so that it punctured his heart sack. Water and blood flowed from his side. They pronounced him dead. They then wrapped him in upwards of 100 pounds of burial linens and spices. They put him in a cold tomb, hewn out of rock, and he was there without food, water, medical attention, or a heart for a few days. True or false, he's dead? He's dead. So Jesus died. Number two, Jesus' resurrection was predicted in the Old Testament. God knew that the coming of Jesus and the dying and rising of Jesus would be so controversial and significant that he prepared people 1,000 years in advance. We read this in Psalm 16:10. "You will not abandon me to the grave." So somebody's gonna die. And they're gonna go into the grave, but they're not gonna stay there. "Nor will you let your Holy One see decay." How many are holy? Just one. It's here talking about Jesus Christ, that he would die, he would live without sin as the Holy One, he would die for our sin, he would be put in a grave, and that his body would not decompose and be destroyed there, that instead he would rise and defeat death. Number three, not only did the Old Testament tell us Jesus would die and rise, Jesus knew that he would die and rise, and he told us. Jesus knew exactly why he had come. And he told us exactly how he would die and rise. We read this in Mark 10:33 and 34. Jesus says, "I, the Messiah," or the anointed one. Here's exactly how he says it will transpire. "I will be arrested, "taken before the chief priests and the leaders,"

those are the religious leaders, "who will sentence me to die, "hand me over to the Romans to be killed," that's the government. "They will mock me, spit on me, "flog me with their whips and kill me. "But three days later, I will come back to life again." Now, if you're not a Christian, I need you to know this, of all the major world religions, as you're surveying all of your options, there's only one religion that has its founder declaring himself to be God. That is Jesus Christ. And Jesus says, I am God. And what that triggered was a coalition of political leaders and religious leaders saying, we agree on one thing. We see him as a threat. In declaring himself to be God, he is exercising authority over all of us. Therefore, we will execute him to end him. The entire reason that Jesus was put to death is he said he was God. And he told them, I know that they're going to kill me because I say that I'm God. And then I'll rise from death. And I'll prove that I'm God. So everything hinges on Jesus' resurrection. Number four, the tomb location was well-known. We were told 700 years before Jesus walked on the earth in Isaiah 53:9, it was promised that his grave would be quote, with a rich man in his death. Was Jesus rich or poor? Poor. He was very poor, so how did he get a rich man's tomb? Well, after he died, a quiet follower of his named Joseph of Arimathea, who was an affluent business leader and well-known in the community, he had a tomb that he had purchased for himself hewn out of rock, and he retrieved Jesus' body, he prepared it for burial, and he buried Jesus in his own tomb. So it was the tomb of a rich man. And it was gifted to Jesus following his death. As a result, everyone knew exactly where he was buried. It was a registered legal piece of land. The owner was well-known and still available. Additionally, in point five, Jesus' tomb was guarded by the Roman government. I'm moving fast. It's all in the book. But the governor Pilot, he told the soldiers, we just need to make sure that no odd thing happens here. So they rolled a large stone over the entrance to the tomb. They sealed it with the Roman government seal, declaring it, it is now state property. They established guards 24/7 in front of the tomb to ensure that the body was not in any way tampered with. The point is, everybody knew where he was buried. Joseph knew. The land plot was legally registered. The government knew, everyone knew. This was not a secret. And then on Sunday morning, the day of Jesus' resurrection, the historical record is that the first eyewitnesses on scene were female, not male. This goes to show that the story is factual, not fictional, that it was not constructed, but it was, in fact, reality. In that day, the testimony of a woman was not held in as high a regard as a male. Sometimes a man could testify in court, but a woman could not. So if you were going to create a false narrative or fake news, you would create one that was more conceivable and believable. You would have eyewitness testimony of men. The reason that it tells us that Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James, and other women were present is because they were. These women loved Jesus the most. So they were first on the scene of the empty tomb. And God honors them by including them in the historical record. Number seven, Jesus' disciples were transformed from cowards to courageous. Previous to Jesus' resurrection they had fear, not faith. They were cowards, not courageous. After he died, everything changed. They no longer feared death. I'll give you two examples. Number one, the leader of Jesus' disciples was a man named Peter. As Jesus was arrested and being prepared for crucifixion, Peter was sort of observing from a distance, and he was asked, aren't you with Jesus? Aren't you one of his friends and followers? And he completely denied knowing Christ. Never met him. Don't know him. Don't know who we're talking about, because he was afraid of death. And then after Jesus died and rose, he

reunited with Peter, and he restored him to ministry. And after that moment, Peter no longer feared death because he knew that Jesus had defeated it. And on the other side of death awaited his savior. So throughout his life, he's preaching and teaching. He's writing books of the Bible. He's being persecuted. As he was an older man, history outside of the Bible says that the leaders came to him and they basically said, Christianity's growing too fast. And there are too many Christians, and you seem to be their leader. So here's what we're going to do. We're going to ask you to deny Christ to end Christianity. We know you can deny him. You've already done it once. You just need to do it again. And he said, I can't deny Jesus. He's risen from the dead. They said, well, you have two choices. You deny Jesus or we'll crucify you. And Peter said, hang me upside down. I'm not worthy to be murdered like my Lord, and I no longer fear death because I know who awaits me on the other side. See, the big idea is this, friend, the worst thing is not to die, it's to die without knowing Jesus. If you know Jesus, this life is as close to hell as you will ever be. And you got heaven to look forward to. If you don't know Jesus, this life is as close to heaven as you'll ever be. And hell awaits you. The Bible says to live is Christ, to die is gain. To depart and be with the Lord is far better. And after the last few years, I think I agree with that. Amen. I just can't wait to be in a place where there's no problems. There's no conflicts. There's no wars. There's no elections. There's no death. There's no pandemic. Lord Jesus, please come, like now. It would be great. And so, what happens is once you know what's on the other side of death, it loses its grip of fear on you. There was another one who was transformed from fearful to faithful, and from cowardly to courageous. And he is named Thomas. And he said, after hearing that Jesus had risen from the dead, he said, I'm not gonna believe in that unless I see it for myself. He was, like some of you, a bit more skeptical. He needed more facts and evidence. So Thomas went in your place, and he saw the risen Lord Jesus. And Jesus said, feel free to investigate. Here are my scars. It is I. They had been friends for three years. It had been a relationship where Jesus was his pastor, and they did life together. So Thomas knew, this is Jesus, and he is back from death. And he fell down and he worshiped Jesus, declaring, "My Lord and my God." Let me say that Thomas went, for those of you who have doubts. And he confirmed that Jesus defeated death. In addition, number eight, after Jesus rose from death, he appeared to crowds upwards of 500 people over the course of 40 days. This was not private. It was public. This was not a secret. This was well-known. Over the course of 40 days, if people said, well, I'm not sure. I heard Jesus rose. I'm not sure I believe that. They're like, well, he's at Denny's. Go say hi. Check it out for yourself. He has breakfast there every morning. This is very public. And he appeared to crowds upwards of 500 at a time. People gave him hugs. People asked him questions. People checked out his scars. And people had meals with him. He was very much alive in a public way. Number nine, Jesus' followers remain loyal to him. You need to understand that the way that Jesus died was crucifixion. The entire point is state-sponsored terror. This is like a jihadist publicly beheading someone and live-streaming it on the internet. The whole point is we're gonna take the leader, and we're gonna destroy them to end any sort of influence that they might have. If you can get rid of the leader, you can scatter the followers. And so, this was done openly, publicly, and shamefully, yet after Jesus was crucified, his followers remained loyal to him. The question is, why would you follow a liar? Why would you follow a dead man? Why would you give everything for someone who can do nothing? It makes no sense. Jesus rose. And so, they were faithful and loyal to him,

as we are. In addition, number 10, Jesus' tomb was not enshrined. When someone we love dies, we memorialize it. My grandpa George died when I was 10. I know exactly where he is buried, 'cause I love him with all my heart. I miss him every day. When you drive down the road and you see a memorial, you know that someone tragically died there. On Veterans Day, if you go to the cemetery, those who served in service will be memorialized with a flag, rightly so. When someone who is holy dies, their tomb is enshrined, and people make sacred pilgrimages there as a religious observance. So there are four major world religions founded by a person, and three of the four, we know exactly where they are buried. And so, in the upper left, Judaism is founded by Abraham. That's his burial place in Hebron. It's a tourist site. Upper right, Buddha, the founder of Buddhism is buried there in India. And again, it is a place for pilgrimages for those who are Buddhist. Bottom left, that is the burial place of Muhammad, the founder of Islam in Medina. And they know exactly where he is buried. Where is Jesus buried? We have no idea. You know why? He's not there, so no one cares. For Jesus, I mean his tomb was a hotel and he checked out after a weekend stay. He's not there. So people didn't keep going back to memorialize it. We went to Israel as a family some years ago, and I asked the tour guide and I hired an archeologist and a history professor. I was like, so tell us where Jesus was buried. They're like, we don't know. We wish we knew. We'd charged you \$20, but we don't know. And the guide said, he said, it's weird. It's like, the most famous person in the history of the world. And nobody ever went to his tomb. It's weird. It's not weird. He's not there. Makes perfect sense. They said, well, we can take you to this place where there's a hole in a wall in a cave that was like a tomb. And if you pay us \$20, you can go in there, pretend it's where Jesus was, but it's not true. I was like, okay. So we gave him the \$20. But that's the best you get. Let me tell you this, if Jesus was buried somewhere, they'd tell you and charge you \$20. Number 11, Jesus' followers worshiped him as God. Jesus' initial followers were largely devout Jewish people, very committed to their belief system for generations, and very committed to their traditions. Devout Jewish believers don't just pick a new God. The first two of the 10 Commandments, which summarize the heart of Judaism, are that there's one God and you worship him alone. So you don't just pick a new God, or worship another God in a new way, 'cause if you do, you go to hell. Jesus was Jewish. They saw him as the fulfillment of all of the Old Testament promises. And as a result, they began worshiping him as God. So now, they're not just singing songs to God. They're singing songs to Jesus as God. They're not just praying to God. They're praying through Jesus as God. Why would they do that for a dead man who claimed to be God, because if so, it meant that he was a false prophet and a liar? The only reasonable explanation is his resurrection. Number 12, Jesus' family worshiped him as God. How many of you couldn't get your family to start a religion for you? How many of you, if they said, hey, I'm sinless. Ask my mom. She'd be like, don't ask me. I spanked that boy every day. He was naughty. And so, nobody knows who you are more than your family. You could fool some people, but you can't fool your brother. How many of you, if your public reputation depended on your brothers, it would not be a good thing? And you would never stand up and say, I am without sin. Ask my brothers. Your brothers would come forward, they'd say, it's the devil. It's not the Lord. I grew up with the devil. And so, when Jesus initially declares himself to be God, his family comes to take him home. They think he's lost his mind. And he says, no, I'm God. And they're like, come home son, come home brother. Instead, after he rises from death, they convert. We see in the book of

Acts, which is the history book of the New Testament, the first 120 Christians are gathered, and Mary, Jesus' own devout Jewish mother, is there worshipping her son as her savior. In addition, it mentions his brothers, James and Jude. James and Jude are Jesus' brothers. They testify that he was perfect and he rose from death. They become pastors. They write two books of the Bible bearing their names, James and Jude. And they die without disowning the resurrection of their brother, because they knew that he was also their savior. Number 13, Jesus' followers changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. When God created the heavens and the earth, it tells us in Genesis, six days he worked, seventh day he rested. That was Saturday. So the Jewish life was built around the seven-day week with the one day of a Saturday Sabbath. If you know about Jewish people or you've been to Israel, they're very strict about the Sabbath. Their entire schedule rotates around the Sabbath. The Sabbath comes, electricity is turned off, businesses are shuttered, everyone goes home, and everything is architected around the Sabbath. Once Jesus rose from death, the original believers who were largely Jewish transitioned their Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday. Why? That was the day of Jesus' resurrection. And they then started to call it the Lord's day, 'cause it was the day of the resurrection of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. And you gotta realize what a massive transition this was. We're gonna change our business schedule, our school schedule, our personal schedule. We're gonna transition our entire nation from one day to another. That makes no sense apart from a resurrection. In addition, number 14, Jesus' followers practiced communion and baptism. These are sacraments or means of grace. Communion reminds us of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. Jesus says, when you partake, remember that the bread represents my broken body. The wine represents my shed blood. Do this in remembrance of me. We did that on Good Friday. And then baptism shows the resurrection of Jesus. So these two major sacraments are about his death and his resurrection. And Jesus was baptized, put underwater, and brought forth. And Christians have always been baptized. And it shows that Jesus died and rose for me. And in me being baptized, I'm demonstrating what he has done for me. And I am trusting that as he rose, I will rise, that as he got up from his grave, I'll get up from my grave. And I'm gonna be with Jesus, and I'm gonna be like Jesus, and I'm gonna be for Jesus forever. And just as water cleanses us from filth, the point of baptism is that Jesus cleanses us from sin. Baptism doesn't save you, but it shows how Jesus saves you through his death, burial, resurrection. So, as soon as I'm done preaching, and I promise at some point I will be, we are gonna do baptisms. If you're brand new, you've never been to church, you're like, this is not a hot tub. This is a baptismal. This is not a weird date night. This is a church service. So what we're gonna do, we're gonna baptize people, and they're gonna go under the water and they're gonna come up and they're publicly declaring, I believe in Jesus and I belong to Jesus. And it's their way of coming public at their faith. Let me say this, if you're here and you're not a Christian, any one of these 21 reasons to believe in Jesus' resurrection is all you need. So pick your favorite. If you have any questions about Jesus, you wanna give your life to Jesus, you just need to be prayed for, as soon as I'm done preaching, there's a prayer team in the back. We'd love to pray for you. We'd love to talk to you. We'd love to answer your questions. We'd love to give you a Bible. And if you're ready to make that most important decision to step over the line of faith and receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior, we'd be overjoyed to welcome you. And we'd love to then baptize you. And some of you are Christians and you've never been baptized. You're like, is this

the day I get baptized? Yes, it is. Some of you are like, I not ready. Well, God knew you wouldn't come if he told you were gonna get saved or baptized. So he told us, and he's telling you right now, but we're ready. And we have towels. We have shorts. We have shirts. You can get changed in a private spot. You don't need to do that in your seat or the foyer. We got this all figured out. We're ready to go. Okay? And when we baptize people, we celebrate. It's a great day. It's one of the most important days in your whole life. And I want you to stick around and cheer with us. Number 15, Jesus' enemy, Paul, was converted. He hated Christians, and then he became a Christian. He hated Christ, and then he loved Christ. He went from a jihadist against Jesus to a servant of Jesus. How does that happen, that one man who devotes his whole life to harassing, arresting, and even murdering Christians himself is suffering and dying for Christ? Well, it's because he saw the risen Jesus and realized that he was wrong. That man went on to write the majority of books in the New Testament, more than any other author. How do you explain one man who hates someone and something so deeply, and then loves someone and something so completely? Apart from the resurrection, it makes no sense. Number 16, Jesus' resurrection was recorded in the scriptures shortly after it occurred. Sometimes what happens is people say, well, there was a guy named Jesus. He probably lived. He's probably a nice guy. Didn't say he was God. Surely he didn't rise from the dead. Probably didn't do any miracles. But then many decades, generations later, this myth occurred and accrued where Jesus was God, but it wasn't originally part of the story. It was a false narrative that was created and constructed. It's in the book, but the truth is the time from Jesus' resurrection to the beginning of the writing of those sections of the New Testament that report it is just a few short years. There's not sufficient time for a fake narrative to be created. Additionally, 1 Corinthians 15 says, the eyewitnesses are still alive. And the people who saw it and gave the testimony that is recorded in the New Testament, they're still alive to verify their eyewitness testimony, meaning time was not given for a myth to be constructed. Number 17, Jesus' resurrection is unique in history. Some of you will say, okay, Pastor Mark, this is a lot of Bible. Is there any evidence outside of the Bible that Jesus rose from the dead? Well, we're looking at a lot of cause and effect reasons to believe it. But yes, there are other additional ancient historical sources outside of the scriptures that report the resurrection of Jesus. For the sake of brevity, I'll give you one. Christianity was growing and the church was exploding. And so, some of the leaders wanted to know, hey, who are the Christians? And what do they believe? And who's their founder? What is that about? So then there was a historian. He was Jewish, well-regarded, named Josephus. He was born right around the time of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, or shortly thereafter, they sent him to go investigate. Here is his report. About this time, there lived Jesus, a wise man, if one indeed ought to call him a man, for he was one wrought surprising feats, and was a teacher of such people that accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and Greeks. He was the Christ, or chosen anointed one. When Pilot, that is the political leader, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us had him condemned to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. He says, what's weird is he did miracles, and he taught, and he said he was the Christ. And then we killed him. And people still loved him and followed him. Here's why. He says, quote, on the third day, he appeared to them restored to life. That's Easter Sunday. For the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvelous things

about him, and the tribe of Christians, so-called after him, still has not to this day disappeared. The report is, here's who the Christians are. They follow a guy named Christ. We killed him. He came back. He did miracles, and he taught people, and he defeated death. And the Christians were really excited about that. And true or false, we still are. We still are. Number 18, there was no concept of an individual resurrection prior to Jesus' resurrection. There were three primary cultural groupings that I wanna deal with. First, there were the Jews. They had a concept of all of God's people being risen at the end of time, not one person in the middle of time. This comes out of the Old Testament, Daniel 12:2, multitudes that sleep in earth will arise, some in everlasting life, which is heaven, others to everlasting death, which is hell. They had no concept of an individual resurrection within the Jewish community. The prominent philosophy of the day was Greek, and it undergirded the ancient Roman Empire. And so far as the Greeks were concerned, not only did they disbelieve in a bodily resurrection, they didn't even like the idea. So let me give you a simple analogy. Let's say there's a kid and you hand him a candy bar. Are they excited about the candy bar or the wrapper? Which one are they excited about? Unless you got a weird kid, they're excited about the candy bar, and they could care less about the wrapper. The whole point is to get rid of the wrapper and to get that which matters. For the Greeks, they were dualistic. They believed that the material and physical was bad. The spiritual, immaterial was good. So the whole goal was, get rid of the body and live in your soul. The last thing you wanted was your body back. There was no desire for it whatsoever. The third category is some would say, well, I've heard that the pagans have some concept that sort of sounds like a resurrection. Did Christians steal it from them? Two things. Number one, if you read the reports from the pagan mythology religions, they sound more like DC or Marvel. They're fanciful. They're not historical. These are not actual people. Secondly, the pagans didn't start creating the equivalent of a resurrection myth until after Jesus' resurrection. They stole it from Jesus. Christians didn't steal it from them historically. Number 19, we come to this conclusion, Jesus' resurrection defies any potential alternative explanation. The burden of proof, friend, is here's all the reasons to believe. You're like, I don't believe it. Well, then do you have a better reason? And there have been three historically given. Number one, in the early days of Jesus' resurrection, they said, they stole the body. Well, first of all, it was in a tomb guarded by the government. So they didn't steal it. And even if they did steal it, my question is, how'd they make it alive? Like, if you told me right now, they stole Tupac's body. I'd be like, oh, that's interesting. And he's on tour. I'd be like, that's really interesting. That's really interesting. The second option is that he didn't die on the cross. He swooned. So we're supposed to believe was beaten all night, crucified, they ran a spear through his heart, wrapped him in 100 pounds of burial linens and spices, put him in a tomb. Three days later, he woke up without a heart. He got out of his burial wrappings. He stood on his crucified feet. He walked over to the large stone and he moved it with his crucified hands, and he overwhelmed the guards, and he walked into town, and he told everybody, look how healthy I am. And they believed it. The third option is that it's a mass hallucination. Now that we've legalized marijuana, we know that this is now possible. A hallucination is, some of you are like, that's not funny. It is. When you have a hallucination, is it a public or private event? It's very private. You're like, do you see the purple dinosaur? That's just you, bro. That's just you and the edibles. I'm not involved. Okay. If there is a public event, it's not a hallucination. It's a reality. So it leads to this conclusion from Thomas Arnold, the former

professor of modern history at Oxford. No one fact in the history of mankind is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, quote, than the fact that Christ died and rose from the dead. Let me give you the last two. Number 20, Jesus' church has stood the test of time. Friends, here we are. The day that Jesus was crucified, two guys died. We don't know the names of the other two men. We don't have holidays for them. We didn't start a religion for them. There's not a global movement for them, because three men died and one man rose, and his name is Jesus Christ. And in his wake comes the church. The biggest movement of any sort or kind in the history of the world. Today, billions of people on earth worship Jesus Christ as their only God and savior. Easter is resurrection Sunday. More songs have been sung to him. More paintings painted of him. More books written regarding him. More lives devoted to him than anyone who has lived in the history of the world. We measure time by this man, BC, before Christ, AD, anno Domini, the year of our Lord. And today, we are here to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And if Jesus is dead, then the church does not exist. But the church is alive 2,000 years later, 'cause Jesus Christ is still alive right now. Amen. I just have LL Cool J in my head. Don't call it a comeback. All right, number 21. Number 21, Jesus is alive and still changing lives. I would appeal to the believers, the Christians in the room. Has Jesus Christ changed your life? Is there anyone in this room that Jesus Christ has changed your life? If there are billions of people on the earth worshipping Jesus and they're all saying he changed my life and he's dead. The question is, well, then who's changing everybody's life for 2,000 years? And I want you to have a testimony of your changed life. If you don't know Jesus, go to the back. In a minute, we're gonna pray with you. We'll baptize those who are ready to go public. Let me share a little bit about my testimony. At the age of 17, I met an adorable pastor's daughter. At the time, I didn't care about God. Wasn't going to church. Had no interest. Was just living my life. And I asked her, "Hey, do you wanna go out?" She's like, "Well, are you a Christian?" I was like, "Does that matter?" She's like, "I only date Christians." I was like, "Well, praise the Lord, sister. "Yeah, sounds great." I was not a good guy. I was not a good guy. So we start dating and she's like, I don't think he's a Christian 'cause Jesus makes you new. You get a new mind. You think differently. You get a new heart. You feel differently. You get new desires. So you choose differently. So she bought me this Bible. She gave it to me. Went off to college, I'm reading it. I became a Christian. God saved me. Oh, Jesus is God. My big question was, did he rise from the dead? 'Cause if he did, then everything he said must be true. And if he didn't, then everything he said must be false. So I spent a lot of time investigating the resurrection of Jesus, and I'm honored to share my findings with you. And now, I'm happy to report that this August, me and the pastor's daughter, she's now a pastor's wife, will be faithfully married 30 years. 30 years. And I would not be married today because I would have destroyed our relationship. Without Jesus, we're not together. Here's what I've learned, most of the pain in my life is caused by me. And everything good in my life has come from Jesus Christ. He's even given us five wonderful children who are my heroes. And they're all serving here at the church and I love them so much, but had I not met Jesus and had he not changed me, and he's still changing me. I'm a work in progress. I do things I regret. I say things I regret. I've said things I regret in the last 30 minutes. So I'm still a work in progress. But my kids love the Lord and they love each other and they love me. And I know the man I would be apart from Jesus. My kids wouldn't even want a relationship with me. I'd just be a broken, angry, selfish man. Here's what I could tell you.

Jesus has only been good to me. He's forgiven all my sins. He's healed my hurts. He's overcome my failures. He's led me and guided me and redirected me. Jesus Christ is only and always good. And the longer I walk with him, the more incredible he seems to me. I love you with all my heart and I'm just telling you, you need Jesus. We all need Jesus. Our only hope is Jesus. And Jesus loves you and he's ready to receive you.