

Unveiling Glory and Unleashing Hostility – Part IV
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John 8
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We're going to be again in the passage we've been in, John 8, for some time, and we're going to focus on one of the attributes of the Lord Jesus Christ that He reveals in this passage. We saved it actually out of order a little bit last week. It would have fallen last week but we pushed it ahead to this week, and it is the fact that Jesus is omnipotent. And His omnipotence, that is the fact that He possesses all power, is seen manifestly and forever in His power over death. It is Easter Sunday, Resurrection Sunday, that declares that Jesus possesses all power. It's one of the reasons that Satan does everything he can to eclipse. He's always trying to eclipse Christ's glory, but it seems especially focused, his efforts are especially focused around the time of Easter Sunday when we celebrate the glory of God manifest in the resurrection of Christ.

I heard this week another one of those examples of just bizarre things that show how foolish men are, and how persistent Satan is to remove every reminder of the glory of Christ. I was listening to the radio one day and I heard about a principal in Alabama, you may have heard this, who has forbidden the Easter bunny from being called the Easter bunny in the classes this week as they were having their parties. I thought to myself, "How amazingly ironic." First of all, the Easter bunny is doing a great job of eclipsing Jesus as is, and now they're fighting among themselves and we can't even say Easter with bunny, which in the foolishness of man has to make people then wonder what was the bunny about in the first place. God, in His truth, will stand and be vindicated, but it shows how there is this desire to hide it, hide the fact that Jesus Christ is unique and supreme. We live in an age of inclusivism, pluralism, and that was basically the idea that Easter bunny is too exclusive. It doesn't include everyone. In that she's right, not about the Easter bunny, but Easter itself. Easter is exclusive. It is not inclusive because if you want to live in a world where all roads lead to Heaven, if you want to live in a world where all spiritual truth is equally valid, well you picked the wrong world because in this world there is only one truth that is valid, and that is the teaching of Jesus Christ. That is an exclusive claim the Bible makes clear again, and again, and again. There is truth nowhere else to be found but in Christ. Every other teacher is a pretender. Jesus Christ stands alone and it's the resurrection that validates that in the most wonderful way. Now we're going to read John 8:48-59. We're going to focus in on really Verses 51-53.

John 8:48 ~ The Jews answered and said to Him, “Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”

Based on what He’s already been saying, they are dishonoring Him in the highest way, and they ask a question. ***“Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?”*** “Isn’t it true that You’re a Samaritan and You are demon-possessed?” That’s what they say to the Lord of glory.

John 8:49-59 ~ Jesus answered, “I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me. 50 But I do not seek My glory; there is One who seeks and judges. 51 Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.” 52 The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets also; and You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste of death.’ 53 Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do You make Yourself out to be?” 54 Jesus answered, “If I glorify Myself, My glory is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, ‘He is our God’; 55 and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and keep His word. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.” 57 So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” 59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Let’s pray together.

Our Father, as we come again to the pages of holy Scripture, we come aware of our need of grace. We acknowledge that we are of yesterday and know nothing, and we ask that You might speak to us through the pages of Your Word, by the power of Your Spirit, that You might set us free, and show us the glory of Your Son. We pray in His Name, Amen.

So we’ve said there are seven attributes of Jesus that He is revealing in this passage, and the one we want to look at today is number six in the listing. We’re up to number six in Jesus is omnipotent, as He possesses all power. We see that in Verse 51 because He promises that those who keep His Word would never see death.

John 8:51 ~ Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.”

His hearers found this claim utterly astonishing, impossible to believe. They concluded He had to be insane or possessed to make such a bold claim. That’s why they say in Verse 52:

John 8:52 ~ The Jews said to Him, “Now we know that You have a demon...”

Because Abraham died. “If someone like Abraham died, and all the prophets died, who do you make yourself out to be?” But Jesus is claiming a supreme power that He really does have, the power over death. In fact, the title of our messages have been ‘Unveiling Glory and Unleashing Hostility’, but today is Part IV in that series, but there is almost a little subtitle here that we could add in: ‘The Death of Death and the Death of Christ’. I borrowed that from John Owens, an outstanding treatise, written in the 17th Century by that same name, ‘The Death of Death and the Death of Christ’. The reason that Jesus Christ is supreme among all other voices in the universe is because He alone brought about the death of death itself. Our final and greatest enemy is death. It’s the last enemy, the Scripture tells us, that we have to deal with, and Jesus has already defeated it. That’s the message of Easter Sunday. That’s why we worship every week on Sunday instead of Saturday. The Saturday was the Sabbath. Why do we worship on Sunday? Because Sunday was the day that He rose. So we get together every week on the first day of the week to commemorate the fact that our whole faith, all of our hope, is grounded in that one event, that the tomb is empty. If the tomb were still occupied, we would be of all men, most to be pitied.

There are some people that teach in the name of Christ and have popular followings today, and say if Jesus’ body was found, if they found out that He’d been buried somewhere, it wouldn’t change their faith. These are Christian teachers saying this kind of thing, selling videos and books by the million. The reality is if they found Jesus’ body and could prove it was Jesus’ body, you and I need to close the building, turn this into a daycare center or a restaurant because it doesn’t need to be a church. If He is not risen everything collapses, but the good news is He is risen. The good news is, as Ted alluded to earlier, that He was seen alive by more than 500 people. Paul makes that claim in 1 Corinthians 15 when he lays out the evidence for the resurrection. We often lose how grounded in fact this event is.

Paul is writing to the Corinthians in the mid-50's A.D. He's writing about 22 or 23 years after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Now think about that, 22 or 23 years. 1990, 22 or 23 years ago. Think about what happened, those of you that are older. You have to be at least 22 or 23 to appreciate this, and you really need to be about 30, but if you are like I am, pushing 50, I remember 1990 pretty well. What was going on in 1990? I could tell you about some certain things that happened in 1990. I can tell you that was the last year that the Braves were so terrible. '91 was the turning point. I hear an 'Amen!' out there. They were three years old when they came to Atlanta and they were terrible, and terrible, and terrible. Anyway, I digress, but I can tell you about watching Braves games and seeing them in 1991, and the joy that I had in seeing. We actually went from worst to first. Now would you doubt that it was true if you were born in 1995, do you doubt what I'm saying? I was there, I was an eye witness. Paul is saying, "Jesus is risen. More than 500 people saw Him," when people could go interview them, and they couldn't produce a body. The Jews wanted to hide the fact that He was risen, but the tomb was empty. All they could come up with was the disciples stole the body because they knew the body was gone. But the reality is, of course the disciples didn't steal the body, He got up and walked out of the tomb. That proves His omnipotence, and it proves that He has destroyed death itself.

The death of death—I want us to talk about this under three points this morning: The death of death promised, the death of death accomplished, and the death of death proven. Promised, accomplished, and proven.

1) The Death of Death Promised:

Here in John 8:51, Jesus promises the death of death.

John 8:51 ~ Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.

A) The Certainty of the Promise:

Let's unpack that a little bit. First of all, note the certainty of the promise. The certainty of, we're on the first point, the promise of the death of death. Death of death promised. The certainty of the promise, it's introduced with those two adverbs '***Truly, truly***'. ***Truly, truly, I say to you,...*** Twenty-five times in the Gospel of John, those words are on Jesus' lips as He starts into making an assertion. ***Truly, truly, I say to you,...*** In the Greek the word is '*amēn*'. It comes from the Hebrew word '*aman*'. Our English word is the transliteration of that same

word 'amen'. In fact, it's been said that 'amen', when it comes to languages, it is in more languages than any other word in the world because people just take it and they don't translate it, they just transliterate it. That's a letter-for-letter rendering from the original Hebrew word 'aman', came in 'amen', it went into Latin. Eventually it works down into English as 'amen'. He's basically saying, "Amen, amen..." What does that word mean? Not like we say it, it's the ending of the prayer, it's time to look up now. No, it means *'that which is true'*. That which you can build your life upon. The idea of the Hebrew word is *'firmness, certainty'*, and so when He says this, He is saying, as the King James says, "**Verily, verily, I say to you...**". NAS: "**Truly, truly...**" NIV translates it: "**I tell you the truth...**" He's saying, "What I'm about to say you can bank on with all of your life." **Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he will never see death.**" So we noted the certainty of the promise, the next note is the condition of the promise.

B) The Condition of the Promise:

...if anyone keeps My word... This promise is for a select group of people, that is those who keep His Word. It's not for all men. The reality is that all men are destined to die, and it's only if we come to know Jesus and keep His Word that we will be kept from seeing death. If we keep His Word. The word 'keep' means *'to guard, to attend carefully to'*. It has the idea of guarding a treasure. If we look at His Word in this way, if His Word is so precious to us that we act on it, we obey it, we obey His Gospel, repent and believe the Gospel, return from your sins, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Trust in Him completely, that's the first part of keeping His Word. Not trusting in our own righteousness, not trusting in our own efforts, but trusting completely in Him.

We have light shows at Providence too. So He has promised us that we will never see death if we meet the condition. If we have given ourselves to Him in faith, and if that is a reality, if we've truly been born again our life will be changed and over time we'll be keeping more and more of His Word. It becomes evident. It's not something that you just pray one time and you have your insurance, your fire insurance as it were, and you live however you want to. No, salvation is by grace alone, or by grace have you been saved, we heard earlier read. "For by grace have you been saved," but if you've been saved by grace, your life is going to demonstrate it. Once you've been saved and changed, you've been born again, Jesus said, then you can't but help, but manifest new life. If something is alive you'll see it. There is movement. That is what He is saying, "If you keep My Word..." That is the condition. So the certainty of the promise, the condition of the promise, now let's unpack the essence of the promise.

C) The Essence of the Promise:

...**he will never see death.** Now the verb ‘see’ is important for us to look at. It’s actually a rarely used verb here in this passage. The word ‘see’ here is the word ‘*theōreō*’. Now we get our English word ‘*theorem*’ from that. Now I want to explain to you what it means. Actually this word is a compound word that takes two different words that mean ‘see’, two different Greek words and puts them together. ‘*Theōmi*’ which means ‘*to behold with wonder*’ and ‘*ōreō*’ which means ‘*to see and perceive*’ and he puts them together and you have ‘*theōreō*’. The idea in ‘*theōreō*’ is to be a spectator, to look at, to view attentively. It means ‘*to observe, to consider, to carefully, thoughtfully observe*’ and ‘*to figure out, to look with knowledge*’. It means to look until you understand something.

There you get the idea of where that word ‘*theorem*’ came from. I mean theorems are principles in geometry that are truths that have been learned by observation and study. The Pythagorean Theorem, a right triangle, $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$. That is the square of the length of the sides of a right triangle added together equal the square of the hypotenuse. You have a right triangle, you put it down, and you’ve drawn it off, and you measure it, it’s true every time. Pythagoras discovered that by carefully observing. Through experience he came to understand this. That’s the idea of this verb—to look at, to view attentively, and to come to an understanding through experiential knowledge.

Now this word is used I think by Jesus to say something about what death is for the unbeliever so that we can understand what it is for the believer. He says the negative, ...**he will never see death.** He will never ‘*theōreō*’ death. That implies that the unbeliever will see death that way. The unbeliever will come to develop a complete and full understanding of death. The idea is when the unbeliever enters into death he looks intently at it, he studies it, and he gains experiential knowledge. With increasing observation, he comes to understand the horrors of death with time going on, in eternity he observes all the terrors, the unending agonies. That’s the idea of this word, it’s to come to a full knowledge of. What an awful picture of what the unbeliever experiences. It’s not the extinguishing of life when someone dies, that’s why that word ‘*euthanasia*’ is so wicked, it’s so wicked in so many ways. ‘*Euthanasia*’—‘*good death*’. ‘*Eu*’ means ‘*good*’, plus ‘*thánatos*’, ‘*death*’, ‘*euthanasia*’. Putting people out of their misery, out of their suffering. The reality is if they are not in Christ their suffering will only escalate a thousand times over, a million times over. So there is no good death. It’s an ungodly concept to think of good death. Jesus comes to say, “I have come to offer a path so that you will not

ever even begin to see death.” This is the glory of the Gospel. In fact, the word ‘never’ here in this passage is the next thing we need to consider. In the Greek there is a double negative. It could be translated ‘by no means’. “The one who keeps My Word will *by no means* see death.” What is He saying? He will by no means begin to see...**[there is break in the audio right here for about 13 seconds]**This kind of eradicates any idea of there being a temporary place like purgatory, which is an ungodly, and wicked, and unbiblical teaching. The believer that dies doesn’t enter into a holding place. Jesus says, “He will not begin to see death.” In fact, literally in the passage it says ‘*by no means see death unto eternity*’, and you translate it, ‘*never see death*’. The unbeliever will experience it. For the believer to die physically is to really not die at all. That’s what He’s saying. If you think about it, what is physical death for the believer? Is it not in reality putting off that which is dead in us? All that remains that is unredeemed is our physical bodies. It’s what we’re chained to. It’s what we’re imprisoned as it were, we feel imprisoned in. Paul talks about how we have this war in our members going on. We want to glorify God but we have present within us the principle of sin that resides in our members. When are we delivered from that? At the moment we put this body off. And for us, it’s not death. There is no sense in which it is death.

Now obviously, naturally, we have an aversion to it. We’re afraid of it at some level. But basically He’s saying that the reality, if we could see what it really was as a Christian, death is not death at all for the believer. It is instant paradise. The moment that someone breathes their last in Christ, they behold His face. They come into the presence of Him who is life itself, and their hearts are thrilled. I mean, think about that. In one instant, to close the eyes of this old, tired body, and in the next instant to see the Savior. That’s what He’s saying. Death is not even entered into. We go straight to Heaven because of what Jesus Christ is doing. He’s declaring, He’s promising that this is the reality. Death has died for the believer. That is the promise that Jesus is making. Now, that’s the first point: The Death of Death Promised. The second thing we want to talk about is:

2) The Death of Death Accomplished:

When did death die? I know there’s an element in which it’s probably true that we would think of the resurrection, but I think strictly speaking, biblically, that’s not when death died. The death of death was accomplished in the death of Jesus Christ. At the moment Jesus died, death died for everyone who would ever believe. That’s why I mentioned that title of John Owen’s credible work on the atonement. He called it *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*. Not the resurrection, but the

death of Christ. Now, the resurrection is essential. It's what proves it. That's our third point, but the death of death was accomplished in the death of Christ.

Let me show you some Scriptures that show us this. Turn to Hebrews 2:14-15. When was the power of death broken? Was it on Sunday morning? We tend to think that, don't we? But the power of death was not broken on Sunday morning. It was broken on Friday afternoon. Look with me at Hebrews 2:14.

Hebrews 2:14-15 ~ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Through His death, He renders powerless the one who had possessed the power of death. Satan had the power of death, but Jesus in dying renders him powerless. Let me show you in another passage how this is unfolding, and we'll look at another couple of passages, here. Next, let's look at Colossians. Turn back toward the front of your Bible just a few pages to Paul's letter to the Colossians in Colossians 2:13-15. We just saw in Hebrews 2:14 that Jesus took away Satan's power of death. He took it away. When did He take it away? Look at Colossians 2. When did He disarm Satan?

Colossians 2:13-15 ~ When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. 15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

This passage is saying that Jesus made a public spectacle out of His enemies in His cross, and that's when He disarmed Satan. Satan had this certificate of debt that was his power of death. The fact that we had sinned, and the sting of death is sin, he had the certificate, and when did Jesus disarm him? It was on Friday. It was on the cross. Look at Verse 14: ***...He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.*** He took that certificate of debt, He took Satan's right to hold us, and He took it from him rightfully when He died.

Now, let me show you another passage, here. Turn to Matthew 27, and let me clarify something that we need to understand. Earlier, Cary sang that song that

reiterated the glorious words of victory of the Lord Jesus Christ: *It is finished*. He said those words, according to John 19:30, right before He died. He said, “It is finished! Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.” When you compare the various Gospel accounts, we come up with all the sayings of Jesus, and the last two things He said were, “It is Finished! Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.”

Now, there are some who believe that Jesus (and this has been taught through church history and there’s been confusion about this at different times) that when Jesus died, He went into the place of the dead. In fact, it even formed the original Apostles’ Creed. Remember the Apostles’ Creed? “We believe...” and then there are several different things about Jesus. *We believe He suffered under Pontus Pilate, was crucified dead and buried, and He descended into hell*. That’s how it reads in that order. In reality, it is wrong. Jesus did not descend into hell after His death. Calvin and the Reformers came to understand He descended into hell, if they had just put that back on the cross, that’s when He descended into hell. He descended into hell in His experience of the agony of the cross.

Remember what happens on the cross. He becomes sin for us. We read from Isaiah 53. All of our iniquity was laid upon Him, and He’s treated as the sin-bearer, and the Father turns His back on the Son. Remember it gets dark at 12:00 noon, and what does Jesus say? “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” He quotes Psalm 22:1 to show us that He is forsaken as the sin-bearer. What is hell? Is it not separation from God? Jesus is experiencing hell on the cross, and the reason we know that He doesn’t go into the place of the dead, first of all, is He said, “It is Finished!” Those who taught that He goes into the place of the dead in Hades have sometimes taught He suffers more in hell. Jesus said, “It is Finished!” before He died. “It is Finished!”

In Aramaic, the language that Jesus said those words in, “It is Finished!” were analogous to our words that used to be – we don’t have this anymore, but before the days of computers, you used to have to take out, remember, stamp pads? Some of you all remember that. You take out a stamp pad and you would stamp things. They would take out a stamp pad and do this to a bill: [Paid in Full]. In Aramaic, the words that Jesus said, “It is Finished!” were stamped on documents to say, “Paid in Full. The debt is completed. It is exhausted. There remains no more to be paid.” He also said, “Father, into Your hands I commit My Spirit.” What He’s saying is, “I’m coming to You, Father. I’m coming to You right now. I’m not waiting til Sunday. I’m coming right now. I have paid in full the sin debt.”

Now, let me show you the definitive, final proof of this in Matthew 27:50-53. We’re asking the question: When did He disarm the rulers and authorities? When

did He destroy the power of death? And we're saying it was in His death itself, in His cross. Look at Verse 50 of Matthew 27:

Matthew 27:50 ~ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. 51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection they entered the holy city and appeared to many.

That is an astonishing bit of amazing evidence. At the moment He died, the veil was torn in the temple. What was the veil? It was the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, the Most Holy Place from the Holiest Place. And remember, the Holiest Place was where the Ark of the Covenant was, where the High Priest could only go once a year. That was the place where God's glory dwelt, and when Jesus died, this veil, this incredibly thick piece of material that no man could tear, was torn from top to bottom, and the way is open. Not on Sunday, but on Friday the way was open.

This is why Jesus said also – remember what He said to the thief that died beside Him in Luke's Gospel? Remember there were two thieves beside Him? Originally as we look at the different Gospel accounts, you see early on they were both taunting Him. There Jesus is crucified among common thieves. Appearances can be so deceiving. There He's crucified and they're taunting Him, but then later in the day, before Jesus' death, one of the thieves continues to taunt Him, asking Him to do some kind of miracle. "If You're really who You say You are, why don't You get us off this cross?" The other thief has been observing Jesus, and even in his own agony observing Jesus, he says, "Don't say such foolish things. You and I deserve what is happening to us, but this Man has done no wrong." He looks at Jesus and says, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom." Can you believe that? The eyes of faith have been opened as he beholds the Lamb die. And what did Jesus say? "I tell you, you will be with Me today in paradise," not in a couple of days but today in paradise.

You see this clearly in Verse 52 after the earthquake: ***The tombs were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised;*** They were raised on Friday. Can you imagine what that was like? I mean, I thought to myself, "How long had some of these people been dead?" Obviously He raises them with bodies that people are going to be able to recognize. They're going to go into the city and see some of their family, and say, "Look what's happened. We've been raised."

But they don't get to go until Sunday. They're raised on Friday, and I guess they have a party out there way out in the cemetery until Sunday, but the reason they can't go is because they cannot have the preeminence. They have to wait until Jesus picks up His body and walks out of the grave. But the point to see is death had lost its power at the moment He died. The graves couldn't hold those who believed in Him. God said to them, "Get up! Get up!" and they got up. Satan had lost his power because Jesus Christ had paid in full the sin debt. He had taken away everything that Satan had on us. So it was accomplished.

The death of death was accomplished in the death of Christ. It is His cross that is the centerpiece of our hope. We were doomed because of sin, every one of us wicked, filthy, vile sinners. If you're hoping today to get into Heaven because you're not as bad as your neighbor, you are hoping in the wrong place. We can all look at some people around us, and people in history, and say, "I'm not as bad as him. I'm not as bad as him," but God doesn't grade on the curve. Adolf Hitler is going to go to hell and you are going to go to hell unless you believe in the only Savior Jesus Christ. We are all sinners. The Bible says our righteousness is as filthy rags, and there is no escaping death, not in and of our own abilities. There's no way.

Do you see how people are doing everything they can to escape death, escape aging? There's nothing wrong with that in some sense, I mean, to try to cosmetically do things like that, but it could be a preoccupation that's unhealthy. And what is it? At some level, for some people, it's trying to escape the fact that they're going to die, but the reality is we're all going to die. Unless Jesus comes back first, we will all die, and the question is: Are you prepared to die? Are you ready to meet your Maker? The only way that you can be ready is to know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, to place all of your faith in Him, and to keep His Word by obeying His Gospel. So that is the accomplishment of the death of death. We've looked at the death of death promised, the death of death accomplished, and now:

3) The Death of Death Proven:

That's what the significance of the resurrection is. The resurrection proves what He accomplished on Friday, and the reason the Lord had His body stay in the ground – remember, what happens when someone dies is we're separated from our bodies. Jesus' body is in the tomb from Friday to Sunday, but His Spirit is with the Lord. The same thing is true when we bury a believer today. We put their body in the grave, but at the moment of their funeral, they're not there. They're in Heaven, for to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. So His body is in the

tomb from Friday to Sunday, and then Jesus getting up out of the grave on Sunday is the verification, the certification, of the infinite power of His cross. It verifies that He was sinless and spotless, for if Jesus had ever sinned, death would have been able to hold Him, because the sting of death is sin. But as we read earlier from Acts 2, as Ted read to begin the service, God raised Him up again, Acts 2:24, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power. It was impossible for Jesus to be held in its power, and it is His resurrection that proves that He has brought us back to God.

I said if the body were still in the tomb, we would be, as Paul said, of all men most to be pitied. We'd be living for a hope that was empty, but the news that we have is that the tomb is empty. Jesus is risen, and therefore we know that He has brought us back to God. I love those words in Hebrews 7:16, where the author of Hebrews is commenting on Jesus' ability to serve as a High Priest. The High Priest is the one who represented sinners and brought them back to fellowship with God. He was the one who would go into the Holy of Holies once a year and offer the blood sacrifice on the Mercy Seat on the Day of Atonement, that would make it possible for God to overlook the sins of all of His people, so that they could dwell in His presence. The High Priest was chosen among men to do this.

The author of Hebrews is saying all of the High Priests of the Old Testament were just types, and that their High Priesthood was temporary, and really without efficacy, but Jesus is a Great High Priest, and His High Priesthood is not based on some physical requirement by being delineated from a certain person. His High Priesthood is validated by virtue of an indestructible life. That's the wording of the author of Hebrews. The reason you know Jesus can bring you back to God, and the reason you know He alone can bring you back to God, the reason that you know that Gandhi can't bring you back to God, the reason you know Mohammad can't bring you back to God, the reason you know that Confucius can't bring you back to God, or Buddha can't bring you back to God, is they're still in the grave. Jesus Christ, by virtue of an indestructible life, is the only One who can bring you back to God. There is salvation in His Name and there is salvation in no other name. It's Jesus Christ, and we must make that claim unashamedly, unapologetically.

It doesn't mean we're not tolerant. We are tolerant of people having their views. They have a right to believe what they want to believe, but they don't have a right to have us say that their view is accurate. That would be for us to lie to them. Their view is not accurate. Jesus alone can save. Isn't it amazing that that's the definition of tolerance? It used to be tolerance was understood as tolerating other people. If they have a different view, you show tolerance. You show kindness to them. This

is Christian tolerance, and in fact, the only place that tolerance is ever really born and lived out is in Christian circles. Study world history and you see that. You don't find tolerance among the Hindus or among the Muslims. They don't tolerate other views. Christians have tolerated other views. I mean, we tolerate other people who have other views. That's tolerance. Now tolerance, though, has become intolerance, because tolerance today means you must tolerate all ideas. We've gone back to first century Rome where you can worship your own god as long as you give lip service to the emperor. No, and the Christians would not. They would not worship any other God but Jesus Christ alone. The fact that He is risen from the dead shows that He alone is our Savior.

In Revelation 1, the apostle John sees the Lord Jesus Christ behind him in this vision on Patmos. He hears the sound of a trumpet, and he hears the Lord speaking to him, and he turns around to see Him. It says in Verse 17:

Revelation 1:17 ~ When I saw Him (that is, the risen Christ), I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, 18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

That is the glorious hope of the Gospel. Jesus has accomplished the death of death. He possesses the keys, and the question is: Do you know Him? Are you keeping His Word? We come back to that condition, the promises for those who keep His Word, who guard His Word by obeying it. His Word is repent and believe. Trust in nothing else but My sufficiency, and surrender to Me. Give yourself to Me. If you're holding on to your own righteousness, if you're holding on to control of your own life, then you are still outside of Christ. But today is the day of salvation. It's never too late. How glorious it is to be able to remember that the thief on the cross who had been casting insults at Him, before he died said, "Lord, remember me," and He said, "Today you will be with Me in paradise." It's never too late, but don't presume on the grace of God. The Scripture also says that today if you hear His voice, do not harden your heart as they did at Meribah. Do not. Receive Him today. Go to Him today. Repent and believe in Jesus Christ the Living Savior, who is worthy of your love, and who is able to save you from all enemies, especially the enemy of death.

Let's pray together...

Our Father, we come to You grateful that we serve a God who cared about us, and who sought us in our sin, and was willing to do all that was necessary to save us.

Thank You for sending Jesus into the world. Thank You for His perfect life. Thank You for His atoning death. Thank You for the power of His blood that destroyed the power of Satan and the power of death for everyone who would ever believe, and also determined that Satan himself and all of his kingdom would be destroyed forever. What an amazing God, that You win the victory through apparent defeat. Death on a cross was the greatest height of victory. We praise You; we worship You. Lord, grant faith. Grant repentance to those who need to seek You today for their salvation. Be our all in all and the source of great joy to everyone who believes. We pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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