

Truly this Man was the Son of God

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[0 : 00] Now as we continue then through this portion of Mark's account of the gospel, we read previously of the condemnation of the Jewish council, the Sanhedrin, and then of Pilate and his indifference to Jesus' clear innocence.

And that Pilate himself would have recognized that Jesus was not the agitator and the rebel and the insurrectionist that the chief priests attempted to portray him as.

Despite this, he was willing to content the people, verse 15, and deliver Jesus when he had scourged him to be crucified. And we mentioned how that the Lord Jesus, in taking all the hatred and anger of the mob against the Romans and being determined, as they were, to have released the one who Pilate would not want released, in other words, Barabbas, and to refuse the one whom he did want released, in other words, Jesus, because of their hatred for the Romans.

We then saw the Romans' hatred for the Jews and how they treated the one described as the king of the Jews. And so the loathing and hatred of each camp for the other became absorbed by the Lord Jesus Christ in the middle, making peace eventually between the two sides by taking the hatred and the sin unto himself.

And so we read, Now, just a brief word on Simon here.

[1 : 40] Clearly, he is not anticipating this when he comes into Jerusalem that day. He is obviously one of Jewish faith, whether or not he is ethnically Jewish, coming from Cyrene in North Africa, now part of Libya.

And so as the father of Alexander and Rufus, there's mention in the last chapter of Romans of Paul commending himself to Rufus and to his mother and mine, he describes himself.

So in other words, Simon of Cyrene's wife became such a noble Christian in the church in Rome. The likelihood is that Simon of Cyrene himself was subsequently converted, perhaps as a result of the events of this day, perhaps only later on after the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Remember that Mark is writing for Christians. He is writing for those who will receive the gospel account of Jesus' life and ministry. So when he says, Oh yes, he's the father of Alexander and Rufus and doesn't say any more, clearly he expects and understands that the early Christian community will know exactly who he's talking about.

In other words, these men, Alexander and Rufus, must themselves have become Christians. And the likelihood is that Simon of Cyrene, North African, likewise became a Christian subsequently.

[3 : 04] We don't know that, of course. It's speculation, but the likelihood is that Alexander and Rufus did so. Now, when he is compelled to carry his cross, this was standard behaviour by the Romans.

Usually after having been scourged and beaten up, the victim would be half dead, literally, already, and probably unable to carry his heavy wooden cross through the streets.

So it was normal practice just to grab somebody out the crowd and make them carry it. It was normal Roman practice to compel people to carry a Roman soldier's baggage or his pack or whatever.

This is what Jesus meant when he said in the Sermon on the Mount, if somebody compels you to go with him one mile, go with him twain. Go a second mile, just to show, you know, the gracious generosity of how God changes hearts.

So this is what he's meant by being compelled to go one mile. It may not have been a full mile to Calvary from Pontius Pilate's Hall of Judgment, but even if it wasn't directly, they would probably, as some commentators have pointed out, take the longest route through the streets.

[4 : 13] And partly this was in order to make the spectacle, the parade, as it were, of maximum impact, and also to terrify the population.

Because as well as Jesus, almost certainly the other two who were going to be crucified would be in the same procession. And the local population, on the day before their Passover, is exposed to Rome, saying, this is what we do to criminals.

And at the front here, this is what we do to your so-called King of the Jews. And this procession going through the streets, with the victim no doubt being whipped along as he went, by the Roman soldiers, because there would have been four, two at the front, two behind them, to guard each prisoner.

So they are demonstrating to the people, this public execution is about to happen. They want maximum exposure. They want maximum publicity through the streets.

They're not bothered about taking a shortcut to Golgotha. They want everyone to see what is going to happen. So they bring him onto the place, Golgotha, which is, in interpreted, the place of a skull.

[5 : 21] Some of you may be aware, of course, that there is that skull-like rock outside the walls of Jerusalem. Now, which some take near to the garden tomb, which some take as being the place where Jesus was crucified.

In those days, of course, the walls enclosed a much smaller space. And it's more likely that the actual location is on the site of what is now the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

But, of course, it's all changed completely from when it was then. The place of a skull, it's more likely to be that if that was where regular crucifixions took place, bearing in mind it was extremely unusual for a crucified victim to be buried, you know, that's what makes Joseph van Amatheus' action so unique.

He actually asks for the body of a crucifixion victim, and he's granted it. Usually they were left there for days, and even if they were taken down, as the Jews wanted these victims taken down so as not to defile this special Passover Sabbath, then they were usually just left, left on the ground, and the dogs and the wild beasts and the vultures would just pick them over.

And it is thought by some people that one reason why Golgotha was called the place of a skull was because of all the skulls of previous victims that happened to be lying around after the wild beasts had simply picked them clean and taken their bones apart.

[6 : 45] So they crucified him, and they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, but he received it not. This would have been a sort of drug to slightly weaken the pain.

It wouldn't have taken away the pain of crucifixion, but it might have dulled the senses slightly, but he received it not. He is determined to make this last sacrifice of himself completely clear-headed, make the offering complete, total, and perfect.

He received it not. When they were crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them what every man should take. Now this, of course, is fulfillment of prophecy, as most of you will be aware in Psalm 22, when the mocking of those that passed by, and also as we read, you know, dogs have come past me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and feet, and they tear all my bones, they look and stare upon me, they part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.

And that was written hundreds of years before Jesus was crucified. And yet, here we have the practice, standard practice again, amongst the Roman soldiers. It was just a little perk of the job.

You get the clothing of the victim, and you can either sell it or use it for whatever you like. And they cast lots for his clothing. When they had crucified him, they parted his garments. And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

[8 : 08] And that means it's nine o'clock in the morning. Now, at nine o'clock in the morning, okay, the Jewish day will have begun at six. So, you know, people are up and about, and they're beginning to go about their business. But remember, the last time anybody saw Jesus was the previous night anybody in the public saw Jesus.

He was probably going to the Passover, going to hold the Last Supper with his disciples. So, everybody else goes to their homes while Jesus has his Last Supper. And then he is in Gethsemane.

And then he's arrested. Then you've got the night trial. Then you've got Pilate at the absolute crack of dawn. The first that anybody is going to know, the first that most of the population is going to know, is when the deed is done and Jesus is already crucified.

And the word would have spread around. Have you heard what they've done? Have you heard what's happened to Jesus of Nazareth? It was the third hour, nine o'clock in the morning, and they crucified him.

And the superscription of his accusation was written over the king of the Jews. And with him they crucified two thieves, the one on his right, the other on his left. And the scripture was fulfilled, which sayeth he was numbered with the transgressors.

[9 : 16] Again, fulfillment of prophecy, Isaiah 53, at verse 12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great. He shall divide the spoiled with the strong. Because he hath poured out his son unto God, and he was numbered with the transgressors.

And he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. We did esteem him smitten of God as I have sins. And this is what Jesus is bearing.

He is taking upon himself the sins of all who trust in his name. He is numbered with the transgressors. And then he has to endure the mockery of those that come past.

It's not enough that he's crucified. They actually, their hatred of him is so great, they're actually mocking him as he's hanging there on the cross. Save thyself and come down.

They that went by, wagging their heads and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days. Save thyself and come down from the cross. Again, this is what Psalm 22 prophesies.

[10 : 16] I am a worm and no man. I reproach your men, despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh with his scorn. They shoot out their lip. They shake their head, wagging their heads, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him.

Let him deliver him. Seeing he delighted him. It's almost as if they had read the Psalm and said, Let's fulfill it. Of course they aren't. But hundreds of years before this is prophesied, and now it is all coming to pass.

With God, not one grain, not one drop of his prophecy falls to the ground. All is fulfilled. All is planned of the Lord. Save thyself and come down from the cross.

Just supposing he had. And I always feel myself that this temptation, there must have been a temptation to do so. Wouldn't you just, wouldn't all of us really in a way just love Jesus to sort of, just push the nails out, come down from the cross and say, Yeah, see, I am the Messiah.

Now, what are you going to do about it? But, of course, that wouldn't have achieved what he was meant to achieve. We would love to have seen the scribes and Pharisees and chief priests having an old rubbin and saying, Look, Jesus is alive.

[11 : 27] Ah, you didn't bank on that, did you? But in order for him to fulfill his calling, in order for him to bear the sins of his people, there wasn't time for these petty little victories.

There wasn't time or opportunity for these little trifles, as it were, of little victories. There's no time for thumbing your nose at the opposition here.

There's a big job to be done here. And that big job is the salvation of lost souls, the salvation of sinners. If he comes down from the cross, he doesn't die.

And if he doesn't die, then death itself has not been absorbed, has not been defeated, has not been taken on. If Christ does not pass through death, then it remains the one unconquered foe.

He has to go through it. He has to endure it. He has to come out the other side. Save thyself and come down from the cross. And the temptation must have been there.

[12 : 30] Because all who know the Lord, part of us, wishes he had just done it. But we know if he had, we wouldn't be saved now. We wouldn't be alive today in that sense.

Certainly not alive eternally. Let Christ, the King of Israel, be sent now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him, revile them.

You know it's bad when even those who are being put to death alongside you, hate you just as much. Of course we know from Luke's account of the gospel that one of them did not revile him.

One of them, maybe he began by reviling him. But you know, six hours is a long time to hang on the cross. And maybe you begin to think about things a bit more in the first instance.

Maybe it was just, to begin with, we thought, well this guy actually can come down from the cross. Maybe he can save us too. And begin to revile him and say, come on, come on, why don't you do it? But in due course, as we know from Luke's account of the gospel, one of them eventually turns to his colleague and says, don't you fear God, we are here for things we have done.

[13 : 36] This man has done nothing. And then says to Jesus, Lord, remember me when I come into thy kingdom. And of course, that's one of the famous words of Jesus from the cross. Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.

Seven words we have of Jesus from the cross, but most of them we glean from Luke and from John. The only word from the cross that we actually have recorded in both Mark and Matthew is this cry, this quotation from, again, Psalm 22 at verse 1.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And before that happens, we read that the sixth hour was come, that's midday, when the sun should have been at its height.

And the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. It is as though creation itself turns away, as though it dares not look upon this spectacle.

Now, often, communion time, of course, makes reference to the fact that there was another time when there was thick darkness on the land, and that was the plague of darkness in Egypt, where we read that the Lord said unto Moses, stretch out thy hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness which may be felt.

[14:52] And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven, and there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt. Three days. Now, of course, three days corresponds to the time that Jesus was crucified, and then in the tomb, and then the day that he rose again.

And I personally like to think, although, of course, we don't know for the whole world, like to think that when there was darkness over Jerusalem at this time, there was darkness over the whole world.

Because this is no ordinary kind of, it's not just an eclipse. It's not just something, oh, where the moon comes in the way of the sun. So, yes, we can explain that. Nobody could explain it, because they've calculated these things.

And they can say that there wasn't a sort of eclipse at the time. Or if there was, it would just have been localised for a little while. Three hours, the darkness is over the whole land.

Personally, as I say, I like to think there was darkness over the whole world at that time. Because this is Earth's darkest hour. It is also Christ's darkest hour.

[15:57] When we have this cry, verse 34, which, again, as most of you will be aware of that, is slightly, slightly different from Matthew, because Matthew is simply quoting the scripture in the Hebrew, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, as it's written in the Hebrew scriptures.

What Mark is doing is he puts a tiny little twist of accent in it. It's a little bit of Galilee in it. Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, which is being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

And it's thought by some it's because of this, perhaps, Galilean accent, and maybe, and because he was dehydrated, people couldn't quite realise that he was quoting the scripture.

And they're always calling for Elias. And so they go out and got the sponge in and put it on there, put it up to his lips and so on. But when he cries out, what is he going through?

Jesus is not simply crying out about the physical pain. We've got to remember that at this point, when Jesus is on the cross, he is not simply enduring physical crucifixion, he is also taking upon himself the sin of all his people in every age.

[17:07] Now, what is the wages of sin? The wages of sin is death. But that doesn't just mean our physical death. It means to endure eternal death in hell for all eternity.

And that is the equivalent of what Jesus is experiencing. He is experiencing separation from God. That's what death is, separation from God.

That's what sin is, separation from God. And up until this point, that is something which, if we can see it reverently, our Lord Jesus had never experienced.

He had been tempted like as we are, although the power of the tempter over him would be considerably less because there would just be no attraction to half the things that the tempter offered him.

So although he was tempted like as we are, he was without sin. He didn't give in to temptation. So he never knew up until this point what it was like to feel the consequences of sin.

[18:06] He had never experienced sin. He had never experienced that separation from God. He had never experienced what it was to have that, as one commentator has put it, an unscalable wall between himself and God.

And this he is feeling now. Not because of his own sin, but because he is taking upon himself now the sins of all who had ever been redeemed up to this point and all who would be redeemed from this point till the end of time.

Now, as I've mentioned in the past, if you were to think in terms of one person's life and all the sin that we commit and how it takes us an eternity in hell to expiate those sins if we were paying for it

ourselves.

And then if you were to think, well, if those two lives were telescoped into one, it would be twice the intensity. But then if you think of the, not the infinite number, but the large number of those who are saved throughout all time, all their lives, all the sin of their lives poured into even one person's eternity, the intensity that would create, and then think this is telescope, not into an eternity, not even into a lifetime, but into six hours.

We cannot conceive of the pressure of demonic darkness which Jesus must have endured in these times.

[19 : 37] The sense of being as far away from his father as it was possible to be. That sense of living hell Jesus is going through.

Quite apart from the physical torment and pain of crucifixion, there is the spiritual separation from his father. That is what he is taking upon himself.

And that is what he is dying in the midst of. And he is crying out in the midst of it, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And Mark, with this sort of eyewitness kind of animaic recognition of using the Galilean accent of the animaic tinge to it, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? As we've mentioned in the past, Mark has all these little self-eye witness tinctures throughout his gospel account. It's the only account where Jesus says, Abba, Father. It's the only account where he uses these animaic or syriac, to raise up Jairus' daughter.

There's all these little sort of things throughout it. And this is one of them again, because there's a little difference between Matthew and Mark's account here. But this is the only word from the cross that Mark records.

[20 : 55] Most of the words from the cross we have from Luke or from John. And of course, because they're coming from Luke or from John, it's almost certain that Luke takes most of his information, almost certainly from Mary, who is right there at the cross.

And of course, John himself is right there at the cross beside me. So they are two, I want to say, two of a fuller account. Peter, from whom Mark is thought to take most of his information, may or may not have been actually present at the cross at a distance.

But at any rate, there would have been plenty of people who were. Some of them had stood by when they heard it said, Behold, he calleth, he lies. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, put it in a weed, gave him to drink, saying, Let us see whether lies will come to take him down. Just a curious, let's see if there's a spectacle, let's see if anything's going to happen. And Jesus cried in a loud voice and gave up the ghost. We know from other gospel accounts that one loud cry would be the single word that translates, I've finished.

As John says, it is finished. And then almost certainly after that, he would have murmured quietly to himself, Father, into thy hands, I commend my spirit.

[22 : 11] But only those very close would have heard these things. What he is enduring in those six hours is physical torment, but spiritual hell.

And he is enduring it so that his people will not have to. Because the most severe judge in heaven and earth, which God is not, he's merciful, he's gracious, he's compassionate, but supposing he was the most severe and cruel judge in all the world, even the most severe judge cannot exact the same punishment twice of the guilty.

And however guilty we as sinners are, if the punishment for our sin has been paid, if the price of our sin, the wages of sin, which is death, has been paid for us upon the cross, God, the judge of all the earth, cannot exact it of us a second time.

It is paid for if we are trusting and believing in Christ. but you cannot have your sin paid for by one in whom you will not believe.

And you cannot claim to believe in one in whom you will not trust. And you cannot claim to trust one in whom you will not give your whole life to him as he has given his whole life for you.

[23 : 39] if we are to be redeemed and saved, it will not be by the works of our religion, will not be by our righteousness, for we have not.

It is only by the death of Christ Jesus, our Lord, which is why with all the respect and love in the world that we may bear to those who differ from us, there is no other religion or prophet or guru or ideology in all the world which can redeem.

And all its followers and all its adherents, whatever it may be, are lost as lost can be except and unless they come to put their trust in Christ because none else can save.

The church cannot save you. Your goodness cannot save you. Your Bible cannot save you. None of the trappings of religion can save you. Their only helps to guide, direct, instruct, to help us to put our trust, our faith where it must be placed in Christ Jesus and in Him alone.

When He cried out with a loud voice just in that moment before He expired, not only would there be physical darkness over the earth, but also it would be the darkest hour in the history of the world because at the moment when Christ dies, the heavens begin to clear, the darkness begins to blow away physically, but also because the price has been paid, things have begun to change from that moment.

[25 : 23] But until that hour while He's still dying, while Satan is still, as it were, dancing around the cross, convinced that He has got this wondrous victory, convinced that He is delighting in the fact He's got the Son of God crucified, agonizingly dying under His hand, what a victory for Satan.

And then, at the moment when Christ expires, the fearful realization, said, oh no, we didn't want this to happen, oh no, now that means we haven't got a hold over sinners who put their trust in Him anymore.

If Satan could have clawed Jesus back from the dead at that moment, He would have done it. But it was too late. The veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

The access to the Holy of Holies no longer barred to man and woman. And when the centurion which stood over against Him saw that He so cried out and gave up the ghost, He said, truly, this man was the Son of God.

Now we tend to think, oh, what a good guy He must have been, what a nice centurion He must have been. Let's not sentimentalize this man. He'd be the equivalent of the sergeant major for these hard-bitten, brutal, pagan soldiers who have done hundreds of crucifixions probably in their time and probably thought this one was no different.

[26 : 50] And yet, this veteran of no doubt many campaigns and many crucifixions is affected in this way when he sees Jesus die and how Jesus dies.

This pagan soldier is moved to say, truly, this man was the Son of God. And there can be few more succinct testimonials from such a source as the effect that our Lord's death has upon this man.

We have to remember, we have to bear in mind that if Jesus had simply lived and served and ministered and grown old and died having helped people and opened the eyes of the blind and healed the lepers and maybe thrown out the tables of the money changers too but if it had all just been his living ministry he'd have made an impact on his generation and people might have talked about him for a few years afterwards but had he not died, salvation would not have been achieved and purchased for those who trust in him.

Had he not died on the cross, we wouldn't be here gathered today. There would be no churches. There would be no Christians. there would be no people who had been moved by the love of Christ to reform prisons, to abolish slavery, to do all the things that Christians have been moved to do over the years.

The impact, the leavening effect of the gospel on nations and countries and governments would have been completely absent had Christ not died.

[28 : 33] it is his death that we remember. It is his death which changed the world and if we are trusting in him it has certainly changed our world.

Truly, this man was the son of God. There were also women looking on and far off among whom was Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James the Less and of Joseph and Salome.

Now, James the Less is usually thought to be James the son of Alphaeus, one of the disciples. It is sometimes taken as being that this Mary, the mother of James and of Joseph is in fact the mother of Jesus and the reason for this is because in Mark chapter 6 and verse 3 we read is not this the carpenter the son of Mary the brother of James and Joseph and of Judah and Simon and are not his sisters here with us?

And he thought oh, this is Jesus' two eldest brothers so maybe this is Jesus' own mother meaning who else would be there at the tomb if not Jesus' own mother?

Well, two things would militate against that. First of all, why only name two of Jesus' brothers instead of all four of them? Secondly, you would not mention Mary the mother of Jesus after Mary Magdalene.

[29 : 51] Word order, name order is important in Scripture. It's one reason why in the Acts of the Apostles we begin with the name that Barnabas and Saul and then gradually as Saul becomes and Paul becomes the gaining promise it becomes Paul and Barnabas because name order is

important.

That's one reason why in the Acts of the Apostles Peter is always first. Judas is always last. The others vary away from the tomb. It is almost impossible to conceive that if the women who were there who went to the tomb afterwards included the mother of Jesus then she wouldn't have been named first.

She would have been named first. So the likelihood is Mary, the mother of James the less son of Joseph is the mother of James the son of Alphaeus. And so in other words the wife of Alphaeus and possibly one of the other disciples too.

And Salome and we don't know exactly who Salome is except that if we cross reference with Matthew's account we find that verse 56 in chapter 27 among which was Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph in other words exactly the same few people and the mother of Zebedee's children.

So the name list here it's including the mother of Zebedee's children in other words the mother of James and John and she's named here as Salome.

[31 : 11] So this is who you've got in other words women who are connected directly with the disciples who also when he was in Galilee followed him and ministered unto him and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

Now when the evening was come because it was the preparation that is the day before the Sabbath Joseph Van Amathia an honourable counsellor which waited for the King of God came and went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus.

We should never underestimate this word boldly. To be able to step into as it were the Lion's Den the Romans own territory and to be able to go up not as part of a huge Jewish mob or like the Sanhedrin with all the council there the high priest and so on this is Joseph going alone asking Pilate for the body of a crucified victim and Pilate marveled if he were already dead.

Six hours was you know double quick time rocket quick time for a crucifixion. People hung for days normally before they died. He marveled if he were already dead and calling unto him the centurion he asked him whether he had been any while dead and when he knew it of the centurion he gave the body to Joseph.

And he bought fine linen and took him down and wrapped him in the linen and laid him in a sepulcher which was hewn out of a rock and rolled a stone into the door of the sepulcher and Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph beheld where he was laid.

[32 : 38] Notice how James the Less has dropped off now the description there so it's now to Mary the mother of Joseph. So Mary Magdalene and the other Mary they see where he was laid. The tomb itself if we cross reference with the other gospel accounts Matthew says he was laid in his own new tomb which he had hewn out in the rock.

In other words the tomb in which Jesus was laid not only had nobody else laid in it because Luke tells us laid in a sepulcher that was hewn in stone wherein never man before was laid.

John's account tells us again that in the place where he was crucified there was a garden and in the garden a new sepulcher wherein was never man yet laid. There laid day Jesus therefore because of the Jews preparation day for the sepulcher was nigh at hand.

It was near it was close by but it belonged to Joseph and the implication is he had prepared it for himself. He had it cured out of the rock in preparation for his own death.

He has nothing else to give Jesus. What can he give him? He gives him his own tomb which when it says where he never man was laid you think well okay that's nice it's like no sheets that nobody slept in sort of thing but it's more than that because when people made these tombs they would leave the body in them without wanting to be gross about it to decompose for a year or more and they'd roll the stone over it and then they would roll the stone back and they'd go in by which time it would be just bones and then they would gather up the bones and put them in a little bone box basically and the boxes would be either on the shelves in the sepulchre in the tomb or they'd be stored somewhere else but for the full length laying out you would only do that until the body had begun to decay and there was just bones left.

[34 : 35] So a tomb that wasn't brand new without wanting to be indelicate about it would be full of bones and decaying bodies of other people who had made use of the tomb or family members who had been made in the tomb it would be in other words an unclean place but because Joseph's is a new tomb hewn out the rock nobody has been made in it before it is clean it is ready there is no defilement in going into it when Jesus comes out from it risen from the dead there is no defilement

contracted not even ceremonially it is clean it is ready it is prepared and Joseph has done all that he can do and now at this point in the narrative Jesus is dead and everybody thinks that's the story over everybody thinks we've lost everybody thinks we had trusted we had hoped but it's over as the disciples on the road to Emmaus said we had trusted that it would be he and we deliver Israel it's only then that Jesus says oh fools and slow heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken ought not Christ to have suffered and died and risen again that the scriptures may be fulfilled now if we think oh this is where it ends it's just about death and that's it no this death is significant because it has purchased life this saviour is significant not just because he died but because he rose again there is more to the story to come there is this final chapter which Lord willingly will deal with tonight when there is death there is resurrection and for those who trust in Christ there is resurrection for all of them unto Christ now of course at the last day there is a resurrection of all the just and the unjust but the resurrection of the unjust and the lost isn't exactly a happy occasion but for those who are in Christ the resurrection and the triumph over death that he has purchased is that into which they enter because he has gone before them and yes because of this he himself has experienced death he has tasted death he has tasted also what it's like to pass through sin to be separated from God so when Hebrews tells us that he is not only holy harmless and undefiled but he is able to sympathise with those who are tempted because he himself was in every way tempted like as we are but also he tasted what it was like to have sin separate him from his father he has been where you have been he has passed through what you have passed through and much worse there is nothing that we can experience that Christ hasn't already experienced more there is nothing that can happen to you that Christ hasn't already been there there is nothing that is ahead of you through which

Christ cannot bring you and draw you through to the other side and there is nothing behind you from which Christ did not protect you and bring you through after all you are here today we are here today because of what Christ has done we are here today alive because Christ has died and because he lives he is not just one whom we remember from long ago because he is a living saviour that is why we can abhor to rejoice when we remember his death because it is not the end it is not the end for him it is not the end for us and this though we have come to the end of the chapter is not the end of the story everybody in this stage is mourning everybody is bereft everybody feels their loss and there will be times in your life and mine where we too feel the loss as though we are separate from the Lord as though he doesn't care but he does and he has been there and he has come through and he will bring us through likewise if we put our trust in him who has died and risen again for our justification let us pray