

Approximately 35 minutes Topical



## **The Cross and the Empty Tomb**

### **A Sermon from All Four Gospels:**

#### **Opening Prayer:**

**Father God,  
Thank You for Your holy Word. Thank  
You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ,  
to die for our sins and rise again in  
victory. As we open the Gospels today,  
please open our hearts. Help us see the  
love of Christ more clearly, the  
seriousness of sin more deeply, and the  
power of the resurrection more fully.  
Strengthen believers, encourage the  
weak, and draw the lost to salvation. Let  
Jesus be lifted high in this message. In  
His precious name we pray, Amen.**

## Historical Setting:

The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus took place during Passover in Jerusalem. The city was crowded with Jewish pilgrims who had come to remember how God delivered Israel from Egypt through the blood of the Passover lamb.

👉 That is not accidental.

At the very same season when lambs were being remembered, Jesus Christ....the true Lamb of God....was going to the cross.

Jerusalem was under Roman rule. Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor. The Jewish religious leaders had influence, but Rome held the power of execution. Tension filled the air. The people were looking for a **Messiah**, but many were expecting a political deliverer, not a suffering Savior. Yet the plan of God was moving forward exactly as foretold in Scripture.

When we come to the cross and resurrection, we are not coming to a religious myth. We are coming to the center of human history.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John each give us a Spirit-inspired view of these events.

Together they show us the King on the cross, the Servant suffering, the perfect Man bearing sin, and the Son of God conquering death.

## **1. The Road to the Cross Was the Plan of God:**

The crucifixion of Jesus was not an accident.

- It was not a failure.
- It was not history spinning out of control.
- Jesus had already told His disciples this would happen.

In **Matthew**, Jesus plainly said He would be delivered over to be crucified. In **Mark**, He said **the Son of Man came “to give his life as a ransom for many.”**

**Mark 10:45**(NIV) **45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”**

In Luke, Jesus set His face toward Jerusalem. In John, Jesus said, **“The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep”**(Jn.10 Vs.11) and, **“No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.”** (Jn.10 Vs.18)

That is important for us to understand. Jesus was not trapped. He was not overpowered. 👉 He came for this very purpose.

In Gethsemane we see both His humanity and His submission. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all show the agony of the garden.

Luke even tells us His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

Jesus prayed, yet He submitted fully to the Father's will. He was not shrinking from obedience. He was preparing to **drink the cup of judgment for us.**

John's Gospel shows the splendor of Christ even in the arrest. When the soldiers came and Jesus said, **"I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.** (Jn.18 Vs.6)

Even in the moment of surrender, His glory flashes through. He is not merely a victim of men. 🙌 He is the Lord giving Himself.

## **2. The Crucifixion Reveals the Horror of Sin and the Love of God:**

All four Gospels lead us to Calvary, and at Calvary we see two things clearly:

- sin is far worse than we think,
- and God's love is far greater than we know.

Matthew shows the rejection of the King. The One who should have been crowned with **gold** was crowned with **thorns**.

- Those thorns were real, sharp, and cruel. They were likely cut from a common thorny plant growing in that region and twisted together by Roman soldiers into a false crown to mock Jesus as King.
- Thorns first show up in Genesis as part of the curse brought by **sin**, and now Jesus wears them on His brow.
- The King of glory took the sign of the curse upon Himself so that sinners like us could be redeemed.

The One who should have been worshiped was mocked. They spit on Him, struck Him, and crucified Him.

Mark presents the suffering of Jesus with striking rawness and urgent intensity.

The Servant (Jesus our Lord) suffers in silence. He is abandoned, beaten, and nailed to the cross.

Mark shows us the darkness and the shock of the moment. Even the hardened centurion, after seeing how Jesus died, said, **“Surely this man was the Son of God!”**

**Mark 15:39**(NIV) ***<sup>39</sup> And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”***

Luke highlights the compassion of Jesus even while He suffers. Luke records that Jesus said, **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”**

**Luke 23:34**(NIV) ***“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.”***

👉 Think about that.

They are driving nails into His hands, and He is praying for mercy over them.

Luke also gives us the regretful criminal who turned to Jesus and heard those beautiful words: **Luke 23:43**(NIV) **“...Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”**

John emphasizes the splendor and completion of Christ’s work. Jesus is in control to the very end. John records, **“It is finished.”** That is one of the greatest statements ever spoken.

**John 19:30**(NIV) **“When he had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”**

➤ The Greek word **“It is finished”**

carries the meaning of something fully accomplished, fully paid, fully completed. The debt of sin was paid at the cross.

The crucifixion tells us that sin is not small.

- If sin could be fixed by education, the cross would not have been necessary.
- If sin could be removed by religion, the cross would not have been necessary.
- If human effort could save us, the Son of God would not have needed to die.

👉 But He did die.

- He died because we are sinners.
- He died because the wages of sin is death.
- He died because without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
- He died because God is holy.
- He died because God is love.

👉 The cross is where justice and mercy meet.

- God did not ignore sin.
- 👉 He judged it in His Son.
- And God did not abandon sinners.
- 👉 He opened the way of salvation through His Son.

**Jesus took our place.**

That is the heart of the Gospel.

### **3. The Cross Was Not the End:**

If the story ended with the burial, it would be tragic.

But thank God, the story does not end in the tomb.

All four Gospels tell us that Jesus was buried, and all four Gospels tell us that on the **third day the tomb was empty.**

This matters. Christianity is not built only on the death of Christ, but on the **death and resurrection of Christ.**

- The resurrection is the Father's declaration that the sacrifice of Jesus was accepted.

Matthew tells us about the great earthquake and the angel who rolled back the stone. The guards trembled and became like dead men. 🖐️ Heaven itself was announcing that death had been defeated.

Mark gives the message of hope so simply and powerfully: **“He has risen! He is not here.”** (Vs.6)

What a sentence. What a victory. What a turning point for the world.

**Mark 16:6**(NIV) <sup>6</sup> **“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has**

**risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.**

Luke shows the confusion of the disciples turning into amazement. The women come to the tomb and hear, **“Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!” Luke 24:5-6**(NIV)

Later, on the road to Emmaus, the risen Christ opens the Scriptures and causes hearts to burn with truth. (Vs. Luke 24:13-32)

John gives us deeply personal resurrection scenes. Mary Magdalene comes weeping, and then she hears her name spoken by the risen Lord. Peter and John run to the tomb. Then later Jesus appears to the disciples. Thomas, who doubted, is invited to see and believe. John shows us that the resurrection is not only a doctrine to affirm; it is a Person to know. (John chapters 20 and 21)

- The resurrection means Jesus is exactly who He said He is.
- The resurrection means the cross worked.
- The resurrection means sin was defeated.
- The resurrection means death is not the end for those who belong to Christ.
- The resurrection means our faith is not empty.
- The resurrection means there is hope for the guilty, hope for the broken, hope for the grieving, hope for the backslider, and hope for the dying.

👉 Because Jesus lives, the believer has living hope.

#### **4. What the Resurrection Means for Us Today:**

- For the new Christian, this is simple and precious: Jesus died for your sins

and rose again. Your salvation is not based on your performance. It is based on His finished work. You are not saved by trying harder. You are saved by trusting Christ.

- For the mature believer, the cross and resurrection are not truths to move beyond. They are truths to go deeper into. The cross humbles us. The resurrection strengthens us. The cross reminds us what our sin cost. The resurrection reminds us what our Savior won.

The cross says, **“You were so lost that Jesus had to die.”**

The resurrection says, **“You are so loved that Jesus did die and rose again for you.”**

- The cross kills pride.
- 🙌 The resurrection gives hope.
- The cross tells us that we cannot save ourselves.

- 🖐️ The resurrection tells us that Christ has done what we never could.

And because He rose, we do not serve a dead teacher.

🖐️ We serve a living Savior.

- Many people admire Jesus.
- Many respect Jesus.
- Many speak kindly about Jesus.

🖐️ But the question is not whether you admire Him. The question is: **have you received Him? Have you trusted Him? Have you bowed before Him as Lord and Savior?**

## 5. An Invitation to Be Born Again:

- Maybe you have heard about Jesus all your life, but you have never truly come to Him.

- Maybe you know the Easter story, but you do not yet know the risen Christ.
- Maybe you have religion, but not salvation.
- Maybe you carry guilt, shame, fear, or secret sin.
  - 👉 Jesus went to the cross for sinners, and He rose again to give new life.

You do not clean yourself up first and then come to Christ.

You come to Christ because you cannot clean yourself up.

- Jesus paid the price.
- Jesus shed His blood.
- Jesus finished the work.
- Jesus rose again.

The Bible says **that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.** (John 3:16)NIV....

To be born again means you turn from trusting yourself and place your faith in **Jesus Christ alone.**

- You admit you are a sinner.
- You believe Jesus died for your sins and rose again.
- You receive Him as Lord and Savior.

If that is your heart today, you can call on Him right now.

Let us Pray.....

**“Lord Jesus,.... I know that I am a sinner.... I believe You died on the cross for my sins and rose again from the dead..... Please forgive me,.... save me,.... and make me new..... I turn to You and place my trust in You alone..... Be my Lord and Savior..... In Jesus’ name, Amen.”**

If you prayed this, or something like it, and meant it by faith, Christ will not cast you out.

- Stand on His promise.
- Begin reading His Word.
- Follow Him.
- Walk with Him.
- Tell someone that you have trusted Jesus Christ.

👉 Listen.... God made this simple for us....It is a gift..... Take your gift of eternal life today....  
God is Good!!!!

## **Closing Prayer:**

Let us Pray....

**Father God,  
Thank You for the cross. Thank You for  
the empty tomb. Thank You that Jesus  
Christ is alive forevermore. Help us  
never lose the wonder of Calvary and  
never grow cold toward the resurrection.  
Strengthen every believer to live boldly,  
faithfully, and gratefully. Comfort the  
hurting, restore the wandering, and  
anchor our hearts in the risen Messiah.  
And Lord God, for those who have come  
to You today, hold them close and  
establish them in Your grace and truth.  
We love You and we praise You. In the  
mighty name of Jesus we pray, Amen.**



Matthew 28:19-20