

**2010 ACTS #16 CHAPTER 13**  
**GOD'S LAST WORD "RESURRECTION PROMISE"**

John 20:1-18

**Today were summarizing all the words  
 That we heard from Lent and Maundy Thursday.  
 And adding to it Gods final word.**

**John 20:8 Finally the other disciple who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed.**

I really like that statement:

It gets right to the point,

It's neat and concise.

**He saw and believed.**

Don't we all like things neat and to the point.

John and Jake went into a diner that looked as though it had seen better days.

As they slid in to a booth, John wiped some crumbs from the seat.

Then he took a napkin and wiped some mustard from the table.

The waitress, in a dirty uniform, came over and asked if they wanted some menus.

"No thanks," said John, "I'll just have a cup of black coffee."

"I'll have black coffee, too," Jake said. "And please make sure the cup is clean."

The waitress shot him a nasty look. She turned and marched off in to the kitchen.

Two minutes later, she was back.

"Two cups of black coffee," she announced. "Which one of you wanted the clean cup?"

Now that's neat and to the point.

We all would like things to be clean.

Not just our cup,

But our knowledge of what we know to be true.

And we like to know the correct answer when we face life and death issues.

Rudyard Kipling's, The Jungle Book: Tell the story of Mowgli, the man cub, asks the animals what's the most feared thing in the jungle. He's told that when two animals meet on a narrow path that one must step aside and let the other pass. The animal that steps aside for no one would then be the most feared.

Mowgli wants to know what kind of animal would that be?

One tells him it's an elephant.

Another tells him it's a lion.

Finally the wise old owl exclaims,

"The most feared thing in the jungle is death.

It steps aside for no one."

SLIDE----When the women came to the tomb that first Easter

They expected to find a body.

A dead body.

They had come with spices and ointment for a dead body

What do we expect when we go to a cemetery?

We expect that tears will be shed,

Grief will be expressed.

a body will be lowered down in the ground, and covered with dirt.

Its true isn't it that no matter how physically strong,  
 financially rich, fantastically popular or  
 overwhelmingly powerful you are,  
 Death is an absolute for all of us  
 No one is exempt from death

**Heb. 9:27 – It is appointed to all men once to die and after that the judgment.**

**Ecc. 7:2 – ...for death is the destiny of every man.**

This was also true of Jesus.

Death also took his human body.

Jesus died.

He took our sin and suffered the agony of that separation from God.

That separation from LIFE with a capital L

No wonder he cried out

**My God My God why hast thou forsaken me.**

Sin does that for us.

It separates us from God.

Destroy relationships.

Sin is very dangerous to our soul.

**Dr. Howard, an Australian pastor preached at a school very strongly on the subject of sin.** After the service, the church officers said: "Dr. Howard, we don't want you to talk as openly as you do about man's guilt and corruption, because if our boys and girls hear you discussing that subject they will more easily become sinners. Call it a mistake if you will, but do not speak so plainly about sin."

Dr Howard took down a small bottle and said, "You see that label? It says strychnine -- and underneath in bold, red letters the word 'Poison!'"

"Do you know what you are asking? Your asking me to change the label."

Suppose I do, and paste over it the words, 'Essence of Peppermint';

do you see what would happen? Someone would use it,

not knowing the danger involved, and would certainly die.

So it is, with the matter of sin.

The milder you make your label, the more dangerous you make your poison!"

God turns his back on sin.

It is his nature.

When Jesus took your sins and mine,

God turned his back on him.

Jesus pray of anguish confirmed his descent into hell.

He went to hell to face death for us.

That is why in our misery and despair

We can change the familiar prayer.

**Our Father which are in Hell with me.**

**Hallowed be your name.**

God knows the hell you can live,

God knows the pain you can suffer.

Because He went through it with his Son.

And God will go through it with you.

It doesn't end there.  
 Because from out of hell he arose.  
 Out of the grave He defeated,  
 Out of death He took eternal life.  
**God will have the last word.**

Jesus set the pattern for all of us.  
**He who believes in me though he dies yet shall he live again. John 11:25.**  
 Jesus alone went to hell for us that we might go to heaven with him.  
 He confirmed it on the cross to the thief.  
**Today you shall be with me in Paradise**  
 Who else could promise that to any man?

Dead did not step aside for Muhammad, or Buddha, or Confucius.  
 Their teaching may have made an impact on the world,  
 But they died never to be seen alive again.

Jesus showed us through the thief on the cross  
 That He could be trusted.  
 That God can be trusted.  
 But he backs it up with his own example.  
 When he arose from the dead.  
**Today you shall be with me in Paradise**

**There is an old story of a father who took his young son out and stood him on the railing** of the back porch. He then went down, stood on the lawn, and encouraged the little fellow to jump into his arms. "I'll catch you," the father said confidently. After a lot of coaxing, the little boy finally made the leap. When he did, the father stepped back and let the child fall to the ground. He then picked his son up, dusted him off, and dried his tears. "Let that be a lesson," he said sternly. "Don't ever trust anyone."  
[Bernie May, Learning to Trust, Multnomah Press, 1985, p. 4.](#)

What a terrible story,  
 But we have all heard and seen worse  
 Father and mother accused of beating and abuse of their children?  
 But  
 We have a father that can be trusted.  
 Isn't that what we desire?  
 Isn't that what our hearts long for?  
 When we leap off this porch of life into eternity?  
 A God who reaches out and takes us home with him.

**Father into thy hands I commit my Spirit.**  
 The dying last words of the savior  
 Confirmed for time and eternity  
 That we have a Heavenly Father who loves us.  
 And that he has a place for us.  
**I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. John 10:28-29**

**Karl Barth said: A preacher has nothing better to do than to stand like John the Baptist and with a boney hand, point people toward the cross.**

Jesus committed his life into the Father's hands.

That is what we too must do.

That is what the Thief on the cross did.

He knew he was headed to hell.

**We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But his man has done nothing wrong. Luke 23:41**

He knew his sin,

He knew his hearts condition.

He knew he was lost.

He had lived in a world with deceitful men.

Even our children recognize the deceit of those in our world.

**It reminds me of a father who was trying to explain Easter to his 5-year-old son. On Easter as they were sitting in church just before the service began, he pointed to the cross and said, "See the cross? The people put Jesus on the cross. The people killed Jesus." The little boy looked around very nervously, then asked cautiously: "These people?"**

Yes, these people, you and me

So the thief knew he was guilty.

There come a time when we can no longer cover it up

**Like Joan Rivers used to say: She never cleaned when people came over to her house. She just put out drop cloths and covered thing up and said: Were painting.**

We don't have enough drop cloths to cover the sins of our lives.

Or the deeds that we have done.

We are lost and dying.

And like the Thief on the cross.

He did what we would all want to do.

He asked the Savior,

Is there room for me?

**Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. Luke 23:42**

Jesus said:

**I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise. Luke 23:43**

**Paradise is where Jesus is.**

If you don't want to be with Jesus

You won't be in paradise.

Once the thief heard those words

We do not hear anything else from this thief.

Because there is nothing else to hear or say.

He had found hope beyond the grave

Beyond his wildest imagination.

The thief teaches us,

That no matter how bad or indifferent,  
 Cruel or careless we might have lived,  
 Christ still died for us,  
 And he moved us from death to life,  
 From a vacuum to value,  
 From empty irresponsible living to resurrection life.

**Arthur Ramsey put it bluntly,  
 No resurrection, no Christianity.  
 No Christianity, no eternal value.  
 No value, no meaning to life.**

When Jesus said:

**It is finished.**

He completed all levels of judgment for us.  
 There was no penalty left to pay.  
 No sentence left to serve,

**He was stricken by God, Smitten by him and afflicted. He was pierced for our transgression and He was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him and by his wounds we are healed. Isaiah 53:4-5**

Jesus completed all the levels of the justice game for us.

Ask a 6-8 years old what the word level means.  
 They will tell you that it's not about making something plane or even,  
 A level is something you need to pass in a video game to get to a harder screen.

Recently I got the new New Super Mario Brothers Wii game.  
 For my grandchildren.  
 Then discovered this was way too hard for them.  
 So I thought I would play it.  
 Way too hard for me.  
 I got down into a pit and I couldn't get out.  
 I jumped and twirled  
 I got all the coins I could capture.  
 But I was entombed in the lower level.  
 I'm still there as far I know.  
 I need someone to help me up and out.

Don't we all?  
 Don't we all know we don't have it within us to live right?  
 To quit sinning,  
 To start loving and caring like we should?  
 If there had been no Jesus  
 There would have been no forgiveness,  
 And there would have been no resurrection.

**If Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still under condemnation for your sins. I Corinthians 15:17**

You see if Jesus work ended at the cross,  
 He can't give eternal life to anyone  
 But God had something more to say:

**He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification. Romans 4:25**

**Justification is the act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous in Jesus Christ.**

But when Jesus rose,  
 All hope rose with him.  
 And he is the best comeback in the world.

The November, 2001 Sports Illustrated magazine was covering the baseball World Series where the Arizona Diamondbacks defeated the New York Yankees in the last inning of the final game. The editor started thinking about the greatest comebacks in world history. They produced the "TOP TEN COMEBACKS OF ALL TIME."  
**Elvis Presley** was on it, his TV special in 1968 that revived his sagging career.  
**Muhammad Ali** made the list when he returned from his forced seven-year exile from boxing, to reclaim the world championship.  
**Harry Truman** made the cut, owing to his 1948 victory over Thomas Dewey when all the polls had him losing by a large margin.  
**Michael Jordan's** comeback from retirement to basketball found a spot.  
 Number two among the all-time comebacks was a tie between **Japan and Germany**, devastated in the Second World War by becoming world economic powers within a generation.  
 But the number one greatest comeback of all time named by the editors of Sports Illustrated magazine November 12, 2001, was **Jesus Christ. AD 33.**  
 When he rose from the dead.

Today if you need a comeback,  
 From a life that has let you down,  
 And your feeling like your chances are slim to none,  
 And old Slim just took the bus out of town,  
 That's okay,  
 Because on this Easter you can place your trust in the  
 Greatest comeback of all time.

**“Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we’ve been given a brand new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven—and the future starts now. I Peter 1:3-4 MSG**

Christ is Risen, He is risen Indeed.  
 Believe it and receive it.