

Encounter the Resurrection

Philippians: Fighting for Joy

2021-01-17 by Ben Deaver at Tallgrass Church on Philippians 3:20-4:1 and 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

CG Flow:

- Your Love Never Fails (5 min.)
- Joy of the Lord (5 min.)
- Dismiss to Sprouts & Mingle (5 min.)
- Preach (40 min.)
- Matthew's Sharing (10 min.)
- Graves Into Gardens (5 min.)
- Jesus, We Love You (5 min.)

Your Love Never Fails + Joy of the Lord

Announcements:

- Guys Groups & Women's Group
- Grab a Bible and notepad

Pray and dismiss to Sprouts and intro Mingle

Mingle Question:—What's your prediction for the Chiefs vs. Browns game today?

Philippians: Fighting for Joy

"He is Risen!"

- Just a little practice for April 4th, Easter Sunday...or better yet, Resurrection Sunday!
- But do you really believe this statement that "He is Risen indeed!"?
- Can someone rise from the dead?
- But do you really believe that a historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, really died and then rose again?
Do you believe that the Resurrection happened?
- Belief in the physical Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a vital component of our faith if we're going to *fight for joy* together.

Encounter the Resurrection

1. Encounter the Resurrection in history to build your confidence in Christ.
2. Encounter the Resurrection today to have hope in Christ.
3. Encounter the Resurrection in the future to be present with Christ.

I hope many are here this morning who have yet to encounter the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. I hope that I can help you take the next right step towards the evidence.

- Visitors—Address visitors. You are very welcome here. We want to be a church that welcomes people very warmly no matter where they are at in their spiritual journey. We also want to be a church that helps people evaluate their lives and the evidence for a Creator God who is interested in a relationship with all people.
- Nominal Christians—Are you one of those folks who just go to church on Christmas and Easter? Are you a C and E Christian? That's great! You've come on a great Sunday! Everything about our faith hinges on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ!
- Doubters—I also hope that many of you here do believe this but are maybe struggling with doubts and that I can help you take the next right step towards greater faith this morning.
 - *Resurrection did not happen, say quarter of Christians*, April 9, 2017 BBC article—
<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-39153121>
- Enthusiastic folks—Those who are ready to go and ready to learn and ready to share. Let's go!

Honesty on your journey:

- Please be honest about where you're at in your spiritual journey.
- We're in this together.
- Grace abounds!

Philippians 3:20-21 ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

PRAY!

Three Types of Doubt:

Don't fear doubt. Be a lifelong learner. Don't shelter yourself but equip yourself. Defeat doubt and feed your faith!

1. **Intellectual Doubt**—Deals with our mind—the right brain specifically. Objective evidence is very helpful here. Are there good reasons to consider the claims of the Christian faith? Get your facts straight!
2. **Emotional Doubt**—Deals with the left brain, your emotions. Encounter the Risen Jesus! Subjective evidence is helpful here. Deals with our pain and feelings of guilt and shame. Dig into your soul!
3. **Volitional Doubt**—Deals with our will. CHOOSE to take the next step of faith. You've got to choose to take the step you know you should. Stop being stubborn! Repent. Can I say that, in love? I love you! But you're here for a reason. Take the step!
 - Non-Christian, what would it take to convince you that Jesus really died, was buried, and rose again?
 - Do you come to the Bible already convinced that the supernatural cannot be real?
 - "We must follow the argument wherever it leads." —Socrates

Modern "Faith" = belief despite evidence "Take a blind leap of faith."

Biblical Faith = reasoned response based on solid evidence "Take a step of faith where the evidence leads."

Morning challenge: I want to challenge you to take a calculated yet scary step of faith this morning. I want you to consider both the factual evidence that's presented in the Scriptures and consider also your own experiences. Then ask yourself, "What next step makes the most sense for me to take?"

1. Encounter the Resurrection in history to build your confidence in Christ.

"Don't try telling me the Resurrection happened because the Bible says so."

The Minimal Facts Method

- The minimal facts approach seeks evidence with a high degree of certainty using normal historical methods.
- Many skeptic scholars have moved from thinking the Resurrection is a joke to thinking Jesus physically rose again. They may still not follow him, scrambling for some other theories or being stuck in emotional or volitional doubt but nonetheless they believe Jesus physically rose again.
- If this book is divinely inspired, Jesus is raised from the dead.
- If this book ISN'T divinely inspired but is reliable, Jesus is raised from the dead.
- What if this book isn't inspired and isn't reliable but is just on the level of something like Homer and Plato, just a book from that time? Jesus is STILL raised from the dead!
- Scholars and skeptics use the New Testament. They don't think it's inspired but that certain passages are historically reliable.
- 13 books by Paul. Skeptics allow 6-7 of those books, even those who are far left. Which books are accepted? Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and 1 Thessalonians.

Alexander the Great example from history

- SLIDE—For example, Alexander the Great, remember him? Do you believe he existed?
- A couple of the main historical sources we have on him, Plutarch and Arrian, wrote 450 years after Alexander the Great. And those writings are considered legit.
- Compare that to the New Testament writings. All four Gospels were written 30-65 years after the events. And the letters in the New Testament were written earlier than the Gospels.
- Friends, these are historically reliable documents that we hold in our hands.
- You can be more sure that Jesus rose from the dead than that Alexander the Great was a real person. I believe both but historically speaking, there's stronger evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ than the existence of Alexander the Great.
- Dave Geldart gave a great talk called *Why Believe the Bible* a couple years ago. Go search for it on our website.

Let's turn to 1st Corinthians chapter 15. This creed that Paul refers to was in use for sure 2-3 years after Christ died. Bart Ehrman, a leading scholar and skeptic of the New Testament who also grew up in Lawrence, KS, puts this creedal statement to within one year of Jesus' death! From a historical standpoint that is extremely early material about these events.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8—Early Creedal Statement

³For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Did Jesus really rise from the dead? The claim is that yes, Jesus of Nazareth has risen indeed!

There are good reasons to believe in the physical Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Five Historical Facts:

1. Jesus died by crucifixion.
2. Jesus' disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them.
3. The church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed.
4. The skeptic James, brother of Jesus, was suddenly changed.
5. The tomb was empty.

Fact #1: Jesus died by crucifixion!

- **1 Corinthians 15:3** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that *Christ died* for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures...
- *The Annals of Tacitus* by Publius Cornelius Tacitus (Senator and historian of the Roman Empire; written around 116 AD; not a Christ-follower), Passage 15.44—Follows a description of the six-day Great Fire of Rome that burned much of Rome in 64 AD,
 - “Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judæa, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.”
- *The Antiquities of the Jews* by Titus Flavius Josephus (first-century Jewish scholar; written around 93-94 AD; not a Christ-follower) Book 18, Chapter 3, 3
 - “About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who performed surprising deeds and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Christ. And when, upon the accusation of the principal men among us, Pilate had condemned him to a cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. He appeared to them spending a third day restored to life, for the prophets of God had foretold these things and a thousand other marvels about him. And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared.”
- No one questioned whether or not Jesus lived and died. It was clear that he had died. The Roman centurions were experts in killing. There was no question mark in people’s minds if Jesus had died. The theory that Jesus hadn’t really died didn’t come about until later. It’s called the “Swoon Theory” or “Apparent Death Theory”, the notion that Jesus faked His death. The more we learn about what actually happens to the body during a crucifixion the more certain we become that Jesus definitely died. In many ways, modern medical evidence should bolster our belief that Jesus really died.
- *The Case for Easter* by Lee Strobel may be helpful in convincing you that Jesus really died.
- Jesus really lived and Jesus really died by crucifixion. The historicity of that fact is so clear.

Fact #2: Jesus’ disciples believed that he rose and appeared to them. They claimed it and they sincerely believed it.

- The disciples were cynical, skeptics with unmet expectations. Remember Jesus riding in on a donkey from the Mount of Olives to the praise of the people? They thought he was King Messiah who had come to overthrow Rome. But that didn’t happen. Instead He died a brutal death by crucifixion.
- **1 Corinthians 15:5-7** ⁵...and that he *appeared to Cephas*, then *to the twelve*. ⁶Then he *appeared to more than five hundred brothers* 1) at one time, 2) most of whom are still alive, 3) though some have fallen asleep. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then *to all the apostles*.
- Paul encourages his readers to go ask people who saw the Risen Jesus! Talk to the 500 people. You know there’s a buzz around town about who those folks are.
- Just 40 days later or so at Pentecost Peter was preaching that Jesus had raised from the dead.

- **Acts 2:22-24** ²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know— ²³ this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. ²⁴ God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.”
- **2 Peter 1:16** For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.
- Early refusal to deny. People may die for a lie. But people don’t die for something that they know is a lie.
- The disciples never got political power, never got wealthy. Most died as a result of their claim, often with torture.

Fact #3: The church persecutor Paul was suddenly changed.

- **1 Corinthians 15:8** Last of all, as to one untimely born, he *appeared also to me*.
- Paul is the skeptics darling
 - He’s one of the only author’s of the NT who we know who he is.
 - He’s a convert. Something happened to him.
 - He’s a scholar. Studies under Gamaliel. He was chosen to root out Christianity. He really knows his stuff and can go out and do it, like a scholar athlete.
- **1 Corinthians 15:9** For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.
 - Paul was definitely not predisposed to believe that Jesus, the person whose followers he was seeking to kill, had risen from the dead. But Paul’s life changed on a dime. He did a 180 degree turnaround. That’s crazy historically. That doesn’t just happen unless something significant happened.
 - And Paul was not a crazy person. Just read his writings.
 - Just read his stuff and you’ll know he’s a first-rate philosophical mind. Anthony Flew on Romans and Sermon on the Mount regarding Jesus as a first-rate ethicist.
 - Right place at the right time, scholar, changed, and knew the right people (eyewitnesses).

Fact #4: The skeptic James, brother of Jesus, was suddenly changed.

- **1 Corinthians 15:7** Then he *appeared to James*, then to all the apostles.
- This isn’t some random and vague Elvis sightings. Elvis Presley died 40 years ago. People claim they spotted him. None of these claims are substantiated in the least. They’re ridiculous.
- But here we have the brother of Jesus, a big time skeptic, all of the sudden claiming that his big brother, Jesus of Nazareth, who clearly died, rose from the dead. That’s significant.
- **John 7:5** For not even his brothers believed in him.
- **Mark 3:21** And when his family heard it, they went out to seize him, for they were saying, “He is out of his mind.”

Fact #5: The tomb was empty.

- **1 Corinthians 15:4** ...that he was buried, *that he was raised on the third day* in accordance with the Scriptures...
- Three Considerations of the Empty Tomb:
- The Jerusalem Factor—The following of the Risen Jesus took root in Jerusalem, the very place Jesus was buried. Where's the body? There wasn't even an attempt by the opposition to produce a fake, dead body.
 - I just watched Iron Man 2 this past week. Remember that jail break scene where Mickey Rourke's in prison and a look alike shows up and takes his place in the explosion?
 - I've been to Jerusalem. It's not that big of a place.
- The Principle of Enemy Attestation— Any source that does not have sympathy for a certain person, message, or cause comes to affirm something about it. When writers or enemies corroborate the given facts or data, it is more likely to be authentic.
 - Failure to exhume the body. The Jewish leaders came up with the theory that Jesus' disciples stole the body. See Matthew 28:12-14. The Jewish leaders agree that the tomb is empty.
- Testimony of Women (The Criterion of Embarrassment)—The Gospel accounts document that women were the first to discover an empty tomb. The testimony of women weren't considered reliable by the Jewish community. The only reason that all four gospels would include this detail is if that's how it really went down. Notice that even in the earliest creedal statement that Paul is using when writing to the Corinthian church that it doesn't mention the women being at the tomb first. The creed mentions the men because that was what was significant as eyewitness testimony to the ancient world. When Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John went to document the event they recorded the significant and true details.
- The early church simply didn't care where the tomb of Jesus was. It wasn't until the 4th century that Constantine's mother went searching for the burial spot of Jesus Christ. Then the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was founded at the supposed spot.

Church of the Holy Sepulchre photos—Construction, Veneration, Washing Stone

- The deeper they dig the more evidence they find that corroborates the Scriptures.
- We can be more confident today in the historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead than many things that may or may not have happened very recently. Think about it. Think about technology and deep fakes and falsified information. There's a scramble right now for discernment between fake news and true facts. Friends, the Resurrection is based on true historical facts.
- You can and you should believe it and choose to follow this carpenter from Nazareth who died for YOU and rose again to lead the way into the abundant life of joy for YOU!

Does the Resurrection matter? Does it really matter if Jesus really rose from the dead or is it alright to just think of it as a figurative rising from the dead?

- It's the difference between a merely natural world and the reality of the supernatural. So yes, it matters! Apart from an actual, literal, physical resurrection of Jesus, Christianity ceases to exist!
- Without the Resurrection my faith is futile
 - **1 Corinthians 15:17-19** ¹⁷ And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. ¹⁸ Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. ¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

- Without the Resurrection, Jesus isn't King Messiah, He's just some dead guy that shot His mouth off.
 - **Romans 1:3-4** ³ ...concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord...
- Without the Resurrection, becoming a good person is dependent on me alone...and that ain't good.
 - **Romans 6:4** We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.
 - We're left with humanly-keepable niceness. And honestly, if not for life in Jesus I don't even want to be that nice.
- Without the Resurrection, this decrepit body of mine is the end of it.
 - **1 Corinthians 6:14** And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.
 - **Philippians 3:20-21** ²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Is the Resurrection possible? Yes or no?

- No? How do you know? You're sure that the Resurrection isn't possible? Science says that dead men don't come back to life, right. Well, if science DID SAY that dead men rise from the dead quite often then Jesus' Resurrection would not be significant, would it?
- Yes, the Resurrection is possible. Well, now then, the implications of that possibility are huge. Don't you think it would be worth a little further investigation if it's even a little bit possible that Jesus rose from the dead?
- The greater the claim the more evidence needed! The closer the claim hits home the more evidence I need. I get it. The evidence is there for you to investigate!
- The greater the claim and the closer it hits to home the more evidence needed. Why are people so adamantly opposed to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Because this claim demands a response from them. I don't have to do anything in light of the rule and reign of Alexander the Great way back in the day or the claimed sighting of Elvis Presley recently. I'm not going to spend time on those two figures. But Jesus Christ, now if that's a true story then my whole life has to change.
- What will it take to bring you to a tipping point to take the next step of faith? God wants to have a relationship with you beginning today if he doesn't already have a relationship with you.
- Faith is cumulative. It builds over time but there comes a time when you need to make a decision. Today, is the day to believe in and follow Christ! You come to a tipping point.
 - Illustration: Deciding to marry Maris.

Encounter the Resurrection

1. Encounter the Resurrection in history to build your confidence in Christ.
2. Encounter the Resurrection today to have hope in Christ.
3. Encounter the Resurrection in the future to be present with Christ.

He is Risen! He is Risen indeed!

Homework:

What's your one calculated scary step of faith? Explain why "scary" step of faith.

1. Are you battling with intellectual doubt? Get your facts straight! Encounter the Resurrection in history.
 - Want to dig deeper into this? Ask me!
 - *The Case for the Resurrection of Jesus* by Gary Habermas and Michael Licona
2. Are you battling with emotional doubt? Dig into your soul! Encounter the Resurrection TODAY!
 - Pray
 - Call out to God! Why wouldn't you call out to God and see if He answers you? Are you scared? What's the worst thing that happens? Nothing, then your suspicions are confirmed that God is not there or if He is there He's silent. Maybe you're scared that God will answer you in some way. Now that would be something, wouldn't it?
 - Ask God to show up and give you a Prophetic Promise.
 - Talk—Talk to someone. I'd love to sit with you and help you take the next right step.
 - Baptism—Maybe you've come to a point of belief in Jesus and need to take the plunge of baptism.
 - *Sexual Integrity: 101*
 - Begin (or continue) Discipleship 101!
 - 2021 WOTYs
 - Reading the *Whole Bible Under 2 Years*
 - There's almost 40 of us in this reading plan together.
 - The questions and comments have been great.
 - Memorize and meditate on Philippians 3:20-21.

²⁰ But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.
3. Are you battling volitional doubt? Stop being stubborn! Choose to take the next right step of faith in Christ TODAY!
 - Take a calculated yet scary step of faith. Don't delay!
4. Are you excited about the Resurrection? Share this Good News with someone, like Paul did.
 - Why do you believe what you believe? What's your defense for your hope?
 - Who will you go and tell what you know? Tell friends and family to listen to this talk.
 - Just plant a seed. Water a seed. God causes the growth. Pressure's off. This can be exciting, especially in the context of a loving community like ours.

Have Matthew Schmitz share with us!

Philippians 4:1 ¹Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm thus in the Lord, my beloved.

- One of the best Tallgrass Church stories involves Matthew Schmitz and Mike Dunn. That story is for another time though. Feel free to ask about it.
- I can't say enough how excited I am about what God is up to in Matthew's life and the life of his family.
- Questions:
 - Tell us about this group you've been in and how it's been helpful to you.
 - Can you share with us one of your Prophetic Promises?
 - Will you please pray over our church?

PRAY!

Ephesians 1:15-23 ¹⁵For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, ¹⁶I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, ¹⁷that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, ¹⁸having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might ²⁰that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. ²²And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Then sing Graves Into Gardens + Jesus We Love You

Pray Prophetic Promises

- Consider the encounters with God in the garden and elsewhere after the Resurrection.
- Consider future encounters with God after our Resurrection.
- Jesus, We Love You—Look at the end of Luke 10.

Encounter with God/ Who You Are!	The Defining Passage	The Limbic Lie From Hell	The Prophetic Promise
Watching “Luther” and sharing it with EmmaHouse friends at the Stone Barn (2004?)	1 Thess. 1:5 ...because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.	You’re a maverick. You’re the problem. You shouldn’t bring who you are.	You’re a man of conviction who God is using to bring the gospel in word in power in the Holy Spirit and in full conviction.
Holding the lamb in China (summer of 2005)	Ps 23:1 The Lord is my shepherd...	God doesn’t really care about you. He’s too busy taking care of the other sheep and so are His undershepherds.	I care so very much about YOU!
Utilizing Romans 8:1 to battle for peace in the middle of the night. (2009-2011)	Rom. 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.	You’re worthless!	There’s no condemnation.
Exodus 14:13-14 hitting me hard when doing Soul Care with Ken Goodyear. (Fall of 2017)	Ex. 14:13b-14 ^{13b} “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. ¹⁴ The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”	You have to figure things out on your own. You’re alone.	God is the Way Maker!
Watching the monarch butterfly Lula emerge from its cocoon. (9/6/14—9/17/14)	2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.	You’ll be sunk by anxiety like others before you. It’s just a matter of time before something bad happens.	I’m a NEW creation! I’m being transformed.
Walking at the Konza when God said, “You’ve done enough!” (4/29/20)	Matt. 25:21, 23 “His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’”	You’ve squandered and wasted your life. You had so much potential but didn’t live up to it because of your fear of failure.	Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.
Time at St. Benedict’s Abbey—“relational capacity” and “allow others to love you” (10/24/19—10/25/19)	Luke 7:47 “Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.”		

The Chopping Block:

Facebook Live Description:

Join us in person or online for Church in the Club! 10am Sunday mornings at the Boys & Girls Club of Manhattan or right here!

“Encounter the Resurrection”

Philippians 3:20-4:1; 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

January 17, 2021

Ben Deaver

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WEB: <http://tallgrass.church>

INSTAGRAM: <https://www.instagram.com/tallgrasschurch/>

YOUTUBE: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0drX4wrsE5n9yLza8HSNIQ>

FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/tallgrasschurch>

*Because God first loved you, you exist to love God and love your neighbors!*

## Notes:

- “The Resurrection Argument That Changed a Generation of Scholars” by Gary Habermas on the YouTube
- 70s the Resurrection was viewed as foolish in academia. Now, not so much.
- How to help move people from Fs and Ds to Cs and Bs and perhaps eventually an A.
- Watch the 2016 film *Risen*. It’s a good movie that helps you consider what it would’ve been like to be there.
- Transformation of our lowly body to be like His glorious body! Remember my monarch butterfly Lula? Such a beautiful transformation and one seemingly made with such ease...no striving. I can’t wait!
- There’s continuity between the identity of Lula as a caterpillar and as a butterfly. They are the same Lula yet drastically different. One has been transformed!
- And so it will be with you and I for those who’ve trusted Christ as their Savior.
- “What you do in life, echoes in eternity!” –Maximus Decimus Meridius (aka Gladiator)
- **Philippians 2:9-11** <sup>9</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
- The greater the claim the more evidence needed! The closer the claim hits home the more evidence I need. I get it. The evidence is there for you to investigate!
- The greater the claim and the closer it hits to home the more evidence needed. Why are people so adamantly opposed to the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ? Because this claim demands a response from them. I don’t have to do anything in light of the rule and reign of Alexander the Great way back in the day or the claimed sighting of Elvis Presley recently. I’m not going to spend time on those two figures. But Jesus Christ, now if that’s a true story then my whole life has to change.

- What will it take to bring you to a tipping point to take the next step of faith? God wants to have a relationship with you beginning today if he doesn't already have a relationship with you.
- Faith is cumulative. It builds over time but there comes a time when you need to make a decision. Today, is the day to believe in and follow Christ! You come to a tipping point.
  - Illustration: Deciding to marry Maris.

## 1/24

<sup>2</sup> I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. <sup>3</sup> Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- Fellow Christ-followers need to battle for agreement, for sure for relational peace.
- We'll spend eternity with these relationships. Get to work on them NOW!
- Doesn't silence these women. Doesn't have them separate. Encourages them to work through things.
- "labored side by side with me in the gospel"—The Phalanx!

## 1/31 (5<sup>th</sup> Sunday)

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; <sup>6</sup> do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

## 2/7

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. <sup>9</sup> What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

- Revisit imitation/discipleship

## 2/14 (Valentine's Day!)

<sup>10</sup> I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. <sup>12</sup> I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

<sup>14</sup> Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble. <sup>15</sup> And you Philippians yourselves know that in the beginning of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me in giving and receiving, except you only. <sup>16</sup> Even in Thessalonica you sent me help for my needs once and again. <sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit. <sup>18</sup> I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

## 2/21

<sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. <sup>20</sup> To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.

**2/28**

<sup>21</sup> Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brothers who are with me greet you. <sup>22</sup> All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household.

<sup>23</sup> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.