

Jesus is Buried and the Bible is True

(Mark 15:42-47)

(preached 2/14/16; Sunday AM)

Introduction

Rob Bell is a name that most of you may not know, but Bell is the former pastor of Mars Hill church in Granville Michigan...

Bell founded the church in 1999 when he was 29 years old and it quickly grew to 10000 attenders...

In 2011, he wrote a book entitled Love Wins, where he said that the idea of hell as a place of lasting torment must be rejected.

Instead, Bell wrote that everyone, -even those who reject Jesus, eventually gets to heaven based solely on God's love...

In 2013, he led the charge against the Bible's teaching on homosexuality as a sin...

He joined the fight to legalize gay marriage saying that the Bible was simply a collection of old letters...

And that the church needs to move from listening to a 2000 year old book and start getting with the times and the culture.

Today, Rob Bell is one of Oprah Winfrey's spiritual advisers, and here is what he says today....

“Oprah has taught me more about Jesus than the Bible ever did.”

And Rob Bell is just one example of a pastor who eventually denied the Word of God..

There are literally 1000s of them around the world today...

Some are standing up in pulpits this morning preaching from a Bible that they would say has errors in it..

Yet, what happens in the pulpits eventually flows to the pews and now we have churches filled with people who don't believe the truthfulness of the Bible either.

Literally, the number of people who deny the inerrancy of the Bible is growing daily...

Just last week, a famous Christian music artist announced that he has rejected Christianity because of all the errors in the Scriptures...

And that he will leave the rest of his life to “put his feet through the cracks of Scripture until the Bible becomes nothing but a book of holes.”

You may not hear this at the local store in the south, but I assure you it is all around us...

Schools and colleges look at the Bible as a piece of literature like it is a Shakespeare play and not the word of God...

And professors teach their students about the common errors of the Bible that show it to be just another book...

This is common in the world of education...

If you are someone today who walks in a class or even goes to work and talks about the fact that you believe the Bible is the word of God....

You are laughed out of the class or called a Bible thumper and immediately viewed as crazy by the people around you...

This is way of life in the world, and it will never swing back in the favor of Bible-believing Christians...

Simply put, if you believe that every word of the Bible is true and authoritative and trustworthy, you

are backward and old fashioned and simple minded..

That is the world's view of you...

And I tell today's parents and grandparents, if you are only telling your kids to believe in Christ but you aren't telling them how to defend their faith and their view of the Bible,...

You are sending them out into a world that will chew them up and spit them out when they identify themselves as a Bible-believing Christian...

There are college professors that are lying around in freshman philosophy class that can't wait to squash the Christian beliefs of anyone who dares to call himself a Christian...

This is the world in which we live, and this is the fight that is at our door if we are truly saved...

You must be able to defend your faith, and that all starts with your defense of the Bible...

Without the Scriptures to inform us, we have no defense to offer...

So, we must be ready to prove the reliability of the Bible when we are asked...

Now, the good news is that the Bible is defensible...

It is scientifically defensible. The science offered in parts of the Bible is true..

It is historically defensible. The historical events described in the Bible align with people's records of the same events.

It is experientially defensible. People have had their lives changed by the words of the Bible.

It is uniquely defensible. God has named himself as the author of only this book in all of human history.

But one of the most convincing ways to defend the Bible is through the fulfillment of predictions found in the Bible..

Some estimate that one out of every 4 verses in the Bible is a prediction of a future event...

Now, understand how incredible that is..

God wrote a book to man about Himself.

And He knew how unbelievable that may sound to people whose judgment is clouded by sin...

And is filled with unbelief...

So in order to convince people of the trustworthiness of what he wrote, he filled it with predictions of future events...

And then he brought these events to pass to prove that His Word was true,....

And from that, people would believe that He is the true God as well...

Therefore, the Bible has a built in defense of itself through its own predictions of future events...

IF I would have told you last Sunday morning that the Broncos were going to win the Super Bowl by a score of 24-10, you would have been amazed...

But I had predicted the results of every Super Bowl in the 42 years that I have been alive, they would call be a miracle....

That is how much faith people put in others who predict the future...

God has been right about his predictions in the Bible every time...

And he is doing far better than picking the winner of 42 Super Bowls, yet people have less faith in Him than ever...

This morning, we are going to look at Mark
15:42-47....

Which is simply the story of the time between
Jesus's death and his resurrection...

Most people ignore this section of Scripture...

We tend to focus on Jesus' death and his
resurrection, which is great and important...

But in this little section of Scripture that details how
Jesus was buried, we see the glory of God's Word...

Which not only predicted where Jesus would be
buried and how long He would be there...

But also gives us the reason why Jesus' death on the
cross was carried out according to the perfect plan
of God..

I have entitled this message,....

Jesus is Buried and the Bible is True...

And though this passage is given to us to see the
details of how Jesus was taken off the cross and put
in a tomb...

We are going to see how God uses the details of the burial of Jesus Christ to point to the fact that His word can be trusted with your life...

I have broken this passage into 3 parts....

I. How Jesus Found a Rich Man's Grave (42-43)

II. How Jesus Kept All His Bones Unbroken (44-45)

III. How Jesus Was Buried at Just the Right Time (46-47)

Let's begin our look at the funeral arrangements of Jesus in Mark 15:42-43....

I. How Jesus Found a Rich Man's Grave (42-43)

42 When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus.

Verse 42 sets the time frame for us.

The Jewish Sabbath was on Saturday, and the day before the Sabbath day was often called preparation day...

The Jews would use Friday as a day to get ready for Saturday...

Sabbath laws prevented them from doing the slightest bit of work on Saturday, so the Jews would do double the work on Friday...

Moms would have their work caught up...

Dads would make sure their work was caught up as well...

Because the laws of the Sabbath prevented anything from occurring that even looked like work...

And Mark lets us know twice that the events of this day are occurring on Friday....

Therefore, we know that Jesus was clearly crucified on a Friday, which was the day before the Sabbath...

Now, this Sabbath was no ordinary Sabbath because this Sabbath day was also the start of the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread which ran for 8 days..

This was what the Jews called a high Sabbath day, meaning that it was a very important Sabbath...

Now, the Sabbath day always began at sundown on Friday...

So, there would be all kinds of work going on in order to get home and do nothing from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday..

Now, this is important for two reasons...

One, the Jewish leaders want Jesus off the cross by sundown...

They would not want their own people hanging outside Jerusalem on a sabbath day, especially the Passover sabbath...

But two, their laws required that anyone who was hung on a tree must be taken down before the next day began...

And since Sabbath began at sundown, it was necessary to get Jesus off that cross and in a tomb pretty quickly...

If you were here last week, we know that Jesus breathed his last breath at 3 pm...

And so, time is running short to get him off the cross and in a tomb before the Sabbath begins at sundown..

Now, Mark doesn't mention this, but we know from what John writes that the Jews went to Pilate that afternoon to ask him to speed up his death by breaking Jesus' legs...

John 19:31...

31 Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath ([o]for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

And so on one hand, you have the Jews wanting Jesus dead quick...

And God accomplishes that because Jesus gave up his life around 3 pm...

We will look at that more closely in a moment...

But for now, we see the desire to Jesus off that cross as soon as possible...

But how will God bring that about?

And how will he bring that about according to his Word which predicted where Jesus would be buried?

I want you to look at a verse in the book of Isaiah...

Isaiah 53:9...

9

***His grave was assigned with wicked men,
Yet He was with a rich man in His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was there any deceit in His mouth.***

There is not enough time to look at all of Isaiah 53, but let me just tell you that this was a chapter in the OT that was full of God's predictions about Jesus...

It was written 700 years before Jesus was ever born, but in this chapter is the greatest picture of Jesus in all of the OT...

And verse 9 was a prediction of what kind of grave Jesus would have...

That is how detailed that God is in his predictions...

God doesn't do what phony fortune tellers and con men psychics do by giving general predictions of the future....

He doesn't say things like...

Good things are in your future...

When God predict the future, he predicts it specifically and with perfect precision..

In Isaiah 53:9, God wrote that the Messiah would be assigned the grave of a wicked man...

However, a rich man's grave is where he would ultimately be laid to rest...

That is where Joseph of Arimathea comes in according to verse 43...

HE was a prominent member of the Sanhedrin, which was the religious leadership of Israel...

IF you remember the Sanhedrin met at the home of Caiaphas for the phony trial of Jesus...

However, we can safely assume that Joseph wasn't there...

Sometime, Joseph had come to faith in Jesus...

Though he had kept his faith a secret according to John, he was a disciple and believer in Christ...

And as the Jews are asking Pilate to speed up the death of Jesus so they can get him down before the Sabbath begins....

Joseph is walking in to Pilate and volunteering to take care of Jesus' dead body...

It took great courage to do that because his secret of being a believer in Christ would no longer be a secret to the rest of the Jewish leaders...

And in case you are wondering, Joseph was the rich man that Jesus was with in his death...

We know that Joseph was rich because no member of the Jewish leadership was poor....

And we also know that Joseph owned his own grave site, which was only a privilege given to the most wealthy of Jewish society...

Now, before we move to the next set of verses...

Let's just take a minute to reflect on all that had to happen to put Joseph in the right place at the right time to volunteer to take Jesus' body and give it a proper burial so that it fulfilled God's Word in Isaiah...

Joseph was either born into a wealthy family...

Or he made his money on his own..

Joseph rose to a place of prominence in the Jewish religion that he could go in and speak with Pialte without fear of punishment...

Joseph had at one time purchased an unused tomb...

Joseph had to have his heart changed to come to faith in Jesus to cause him to want to care for his body after he died...

And then Joseph had to have the courage to go and ask for the body even though that meant throwing away all of his status in Jewish society...

And God worked all that out so that the Isaiah 53:9 would come true just as he predicted it would...

Now, you want to tell me that the Bible is just an old book written by people who lived long ago...

And that there is nothing special about it and it contains errors in it?!

You want to tell me that a man can choose to obey the Bible or not and that it really doesn't matter since its just a book?

You want to tell me that the Bible can be redefined to mean what you want it to mean instead of what it says?

The Bible is true because God said that Jesus would be with a rich man in his death, and then God worked out his plan to bering a rich man to take down Jesus' body and place in in a rich man's tomb.

Not convinced yet?

Well, there's more...

Let's look at verses 44-45...

II. How Jesus Kept All His Bones Unbroken **(44-45)**

I touched on this earlier but this is supremely important...

The Jews went to Pilate after Jesus was on the cross and asked him to speed up the death of Jesus...

He needed to be off the cross so that his body wouldn't be hanging around on the sabbath....

So they had gone to Pilate asking that Jesus' legs be broken to speed up his death...

The reason was this...

A person on the cross needed to lift himself up to take a breath...

And if his leg bone was broken, he would not be able to lift himself to breathe and therefore die much faster...

And though Mark doesn't record it, Pilate granted the Jews request.

John records it for us in his gospel....

John 19:31-33

31 Then the Jews, because it was the day of preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath ([o]for that Sabbath was a high day), asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32 So the soldiers came, and broke the legs of the first man and of the other who was crucified with Him; 33 but coming to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

Now, that is important as we read verses 44-45...

So, Joseph came to Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus..

This would have been right after Pilate had granted the Jews request and sent the soldiers out to break his legs...

So Joseph walks in...

The Jews who asked for the legs to be broken may be still in there...

And he simply asks for the body of Jesus...

And here is how Pilate reacts....

44 Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. 45 And

ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph.

Pilate was probably surprised by the request, but he is probably also figuring that Jesus isn't dead yet...

So, he calls for a soldier who confirms that Jesus was in fact dead before they came to break his legs...

Now, this is important for two reasons...

One, it needs to be established that Jesus didn't simply wake from unconsciousness and walk out of his tomb...

IT needs to be established that Jesus didn't was out of a coma and escape from the tomb...

The Romans, who could care less about Jesus' claims that he would rise form the dead, are the ones who declared Jesus dead...

And he was dead to pay the penalty of sin for all who would believe in Him...

But, these verses are also important for another reason..

Exodus 12:46

46 “It is to be eaten in a single house; you are not to bring forth any of the flesh outside of the house, nor are you to break any bone of it.

Numbers 9:12

12 ‘They shall leave none of it until morning, nor break a bone of it; according to all the statute of the Passover they shall observe it.

These two verses are instructions for the Passover lamb that Jews were to sacrifice each year...

And the biggest instruction about this lamb was that it was to be perfect..

A family wasn't meant to grab the runt of the group to offer as a sacrifice to God..

It couldn't be the one with broken bones or one that looked sick..

It needed to be the best...

And when God offered His Son as a sacrifice for sin in our place, Jesus was not going to a man with defects...

He was perfect in every way even down to the fact that none of his bones were to be broken.

The true Passover lamb of God had to be according to his own guidelines found in the Bible...

In that sense, God is bound by His own word...

He isn't like the parent that says, "Don't do as I do, Do as I say."

He isn't like the boss at work who doesn't follow his own company policy...

God's word demanded a perfect Lamb to sacrifice for sin, and God made sure that the sacrifice that He offered lived up to His standard...

Which brings up a great question...

If God cannot abide by His own word, what makes you think that you can pick and choose which commands you will follow and which ones you won't?

God is a God who gave us his Word, and He is also a God who acts according to His Word..

The reason that Pilate was able to give Joseph his body so quick is that Jesus gave up his life before a single bone could be broken...

IF God's word must be kept by Him, it must be kept by us as well..

Jesus kept all of his bones unbroken because God acted according to his own Word....

One final thing to see in these verses.....

III. How Jesus Was Buried at Just the Right Time (46-47)

It is clear from the study of the last week of Jesus' life that God was behind the death of Jesus in every way...

He moved Judas to betray Jesus on Wednesday night...

He moved the Jewish leaders to have a quick trial early Friday morning...

He moved Pilate to sentence him to die on Friday morning so that the largest crowd of Jews could witness His death...

He made sure Jesus was on the cross at 9 am and dead by 3 pm when all the other Passover lambs were being killed in the temple...

God directed every part of Jesus' death for His glory...

And we have seen that God directed all the events of his burial for his glory as well...

Even to the point that Jesus will be in the tomb before sundown on Friday...

And that is important as well because Jesus even predicted that he would be dead for 3 days...

And since the Saturday sabbath started at sundown at Sabbath, Jesus needed to be in the tomb before Friday was over to keep his own words...

And that is what we see in verses 46-47....

***46 Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.
47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus were looking on to see where He was laid.***

In these verse we found the people who will be the ones who testify to the fact that Jesus was dead for 3 days...

On one hand we have Joseph who made sure he was in the ground before sundown on Friday and on the other hand, we have the women who will testify that he rose on Sunday...

Joseph is the one who probably had no idea that Jesus needed to be buried by sundown...

Instead, he just came to care for His Lord in his death, but the reality is that he was also making the predictions of Jesus come true...

It was Joseph who pulled Jesus hands and feet off the nails and covered him in cloths soaked in perfume and spices to keep the smell down...

We also know that Nicodemus was here....

Though Mark doesn't talk about Nicodemus...

Nicodemus was the other Jewish religious leader that came to faith in Christ...

Jesus was talking to Nicodemus when he said the famous words of John 3:16....

And somehow those words that have led so many to salvation also led Nicodemus to salvation....

And so he joins his friend Joseph in getting Jesus off the cross and into the tomb...

These tow men who had followed all the laws and would have not been ever caught near a dead body for fear of defilement....

Are now handling the dead body of the Lord Jesus Christ with such care...

Lowering the cross and then laying cloths all over his body...

And carrying him to a tomb near the cross that Joseph had purchased some time in the past...

And even was the tomb was important...

Jews often reused tombs...

Most tombs were carved out of the rocks around the land and shelves were made in them where bodies were laid for some time...

Once the body was rotted to the point of just bones...

The bones were removed to another place and the the tomb was reused....

Jesus was placed in a tomb that had never been used before according to the book of John...

Joseph had the financial means to purchase an unused tomb, and though he probably had no idea that he would lay Jesus there when he purchased it...

That is in fact what happened...

And then we see these ladies who were at the cross last week...

They are not keeping their eyes on Jesus's body...

They would have no idea who Joseph or even Nicodemus was...

These would have been very poor and common ladies...

Joseph and Nicodemus were the upper crust of Jewish society....

And so they simply stand back and watch just so they know what happens to Jesus' body...

But it also is important because God is going to send them to the tomb on Sunday morning and they need to know where to go...

They needed to get there on the third day to be witnesses the resurrection because Jesus' words needs to be proven true....

And so God has them there to see where to go i the same way that he has Joseph and Nicodemus there to make sure he is buried on Friday before sunset..

In short, God goes to great lengths to preserve and prove the truthfulness of his word...

He had a rich man come and get Jesus...

He had a soldier stop stop of breaking Jesus' legs...

And he had a burial of Jesus completed before
Friday was over...

And all of that was orchestrated by God to make
sure that not one point of his Word was broken...

That is the high view that God has of His own
Word..

Conclusion

Let me say this again in case you missed it...

The details of how Jesus was buried prove that the Bible is true...

So, where does that leave me and you?

If the Scriptures is true, then it must be obeyed....

And if it must be obeyed, we must worship the God of the Scriptures...

And to worship Him, we must be in a right relationship with him....

And the instructions for that relationship are found in God's Word...

You can't come to God on your own terms...

As a kid and even as a teenager, I used to say a prayer every night before bed...

And I believed if I said it just right every night that God would take me to heaven if I died in my sleep...

What I had done is created a god in my own mind who was pleased with a prayer that I made up...

And millions of people do this every day...

They create a god of their own imagination and they do things to try and please this imaginary god...

And they will go to hell worshipping a god who isn't real...

The God of the Universe is the God that is described in the Bible..

What pleases is not a mystery but instead, it is plainly written in the Bible for you to understand...

Don't doubt God's word.

Read it and obey it.

God have proven the truthfulness of it by how he fulfills predictions that He made in it...

And in case you don't know, here is the one minute summary of what you need to know for the Bible...

You have sinned against God and broken your relationship with him...

Though he created you inside your mother's womb, you have moved away from him by your sin, even the smallest of sins...

And that severed relationship has separated you from God...

And nothing you do will ever close that gap between you and God...

Good works and good morals and good behavior will never lose that gap..

You could sit on the street corner in Columbia and help 50 old women across the street every day for the rest of your life...

But you would never have enough good works to fix your broken relationship with God.

You could give millions or billions of dollars to feed the starving children around the world, but money will never bring you back in the right relationship with God...

There is but one way to fill the gap and fix the relationship...

And that is repentance of your sins and faith in Jesus Christ alone...

The Bible has clear instructions for the sinner...

Stop trusting in your self and enjoying your sin....

Say no to your sin and start trusting in Christ alone to save you..

The Bible has stood the test of time....

But you will not stand the test of judgment unless you repent and trust in Christ to save you...

Let us pray...