Four Common Objections to the Christian Faith

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Preacher: Chris Oswald

[0:00] We'll dismiss our kids to children's ministry. The rest of you could be seated. For the benefit of our visitors this morning,! We are actually just working through the book of John right now.

We've been taking a single chapter at a time over the last 17 weeks or so. So we are supposed to be in John chapter 18 today.
We'll be in John 18 through 20, given Easter. But if you want to come back and hear more about John 19, we'd love to have you. I do feel like I have to offer this disclaimer.
If you're visiting and come back next week, do not be deceived by the number of suits you wear. This is entirely a one-off kind of thing. You will see the same men you see in suits this morning, you will see in cargo shorts next week.
So I don't want you to come back thinking, well, I was a little underdressed last week, and I want to show I own a suit. And then everybody's standing around in polos looking at you like, well, hello, hello, Reverend, you know, kind of a thing.
[1:06] So come back, but just don't worry about this stuff. I guarantee you, that band is the best dressed you'll ever see them. But we have an Easter tradition in terms of the sermon where every Easter, we just take this particular Sunday to kind of stare our own doubts in the face.

We kind of stand next to the empty tomb, the surest of all sure things within Christendom, kind of hold our hand to the stone that was rolled away, and then we just mean eye our doubts.
If you are visiting, maybe you're not a regular attender of church, I don't know if you'd be surprised to find out that, you know, folks who are here every week have doubts. Those doubts sometimes are acute, and sometimes they are subacute, but doubting is actually just kind of a part of the whole proposition of faith.
And at Providence, like, we're just honest about our doubts. We take them directly to God. We don't hide them from one another, and we feel confident that no temptation has overtaken any of us, but such that is common to man.
Paul tells the Corinthians that. And so there's really no reason to feel singled out or ashamed by this point or that point of doubt. The truth is, is we're all struggling to see clearly.
[2:32] I heard about a guy who needed eye surgery, both eyes, and he was desperate to avoid this surgery, and so every day for two weeks, he rubbed his eyes with a certain brand of ketchup because he had been told that Heinz site is 2020.

Well, let's pass the offering plates. I sent that.
My dad and my mom are visiting our hometown, and they're visiting a church that we grew up in, and I said, Dad, I got a joke. I knew if I gave that joke to my dad this morning, 15 people in Jefferson City, Missouri are going to roll their eyes.
So we are going to look at chapters 18 through 20, and we're going to look at everything from Jesus' arrest and trial to his crucifixion and death, and finally his resurrection from the dead.
But we're going to interact with this section of Scripture through the four, five, most common, the four, the four most common objections to Christianity that are kind of universally held up, not only by people outside the faith, but sometimes even by people inside the faith.
[3:54] So we're going to look at this section of Scripture, but we're going to be answering or thinking about these four questions. Number one, the hypocrisy of Christians. Number two, the veracity of the Scriptures.

Is the Bible reliable? Number three, the problem of evil. Why do bad things happen to good people? And finally, the exclusivity of the Christian faith, the claim that Jesus alone is the way, the truth, and the life.

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So we're going to cover this section of Scripture by thinking about these four questions. Before we get into that, there is one feature of the story from John 18 to 20 that I definitely want to point out, and that is just that, you know, everybody in this story besides Jesus is missing bits of information, and everybody is missing the reality of who Jesus is here.
Okay, so everybody in that sense is on a level playing field. And so what we're going to try to do today is provide information to answer these particular objections.
And that's a good thing. A pastor years ago wrote, the faith that does not come from reason is to be doubted. The faith that does not come from reason is to be doubted.
[5:14] No one would celebrate a blind faith. Well, I wouldn't. Many others wouldn't. But he goes on to say, and the reason that does not lead to faith is to be feared.

The reason that does not lead to faith is to be feared. It's good to use reason and logic and evidence to build our faith. We'll do that today. But we must remember one key lesson from this particular passage of Scripture, and that is there were plenty of people who had far more firsthand information than even we do, and yet failed to ever believe what their own eyes told them.
You've got this group of people, this category of people, in the Bible, that are all missing things, right? From Peter to Andrew to Caiaphas to Pilate, everybody's wrong.
That's one of the interesting things about this story. Everybody's wrong. But there are subcategories within these wrong people, and I think you might describe it as there's a group of people who are slow to believe, and then there's a group of people who are too stubborn to believe. And at the end of the resurrection, only after the resurrection, do we get some clarity about who was in which group. Does that make sense?
[6:39] Jesus really was missed by everybody, but not everybody for all time. Christ distinguished, one author says, between doubt and unbelief.

Doubt says, I can't believe. And unbelief says, I won't believe. Doubt is honest. Unbelief is dishonest and obstinate.
Okay, so I want you to know that because I'm going to give you the information, but I would say that the information alone is not enough. There must be revelation and transformation that there are plenty of people who left the scene of the cross and the empty tomb unchanged.
And there were plenty of people who left it changed. And that's where we begin to see the difference between those who are slow to believe and those who are too stubborn to believe.
I guess the one last thing to say about that is if you're wondering which group you're in, I think the idea here is that when you look at Judas, who was a firsthand witness of Jesus, or Caiaphas, who held all the oracles of God, you know, complete, perfect understanding, well, you know, memory of the Old Testament, Pilate, so forth.
[7:52] How did they miss it? How were they too stubborn to believe? And I think the answer is because they loved something else. They weren't really in love with the truth. They had found something else that felt better to them than the truth and probably just power and money and all the usual stuff.

Okay, so now let's go ahead and get into these objections in our review through the text. And the first objection to the Christian faith is the hypocrisy of Christians, the hypocrisy of Christians.
Well, when we start talking about hypocrisy, one thing we need to know is what are we talking about exactly? Because classically, hypocrisy is somebody who pretends to be one thing, but is in reality another thing, right?
The Protestants don't recognize the Pope. Catholics don't recognize Protestantism. And Baptists don't recognize each other in the liquor store.
Like, there's that, there's that, like, pretend, you know, kind of thing. So there's this hypocrisy that is, like, two-faced. And that's what we see with Judas.
[9:05] He was a disciple of Jesus who wasn't a disciple of Jesus. This is impersonating an officer kind of stuff here. So that would be what I think would be formal hypocrisy.

But I think when most people object to Christianity due to the hypocrisy, they say that word, the hypocrisy of Christians, they don't really mean that.
They just mean the miserable track record of Christians have living up to the claims and teachings of Jesus. And that's a real thing, for sure. I don't know if that's hypocrisy exactly.
I think that might be something more like, you know, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Anytime you choose, this is a hard thing, this is one reason why many people will not become

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Christians, is anytime you choose to say, I'm going to measure up to the Son, I'm going to use the Son of God as my measuring stick for my life, my attitudes, my behaviors, my, you know, my feelings, and so forth.
Well, guess what? You are going to fall short. So some people find it safer to just not live up to any other standard but their own, and that's unfortunate. That's no way to live, and there's certainly no way to die, my friend.
[10:14] But, so if we're talking about hypocrisy, we could point to Judas and say, well, there's a category of that. There's the impersonating the officer kind of hypocrisy. And then the other kind that comes out really strongly in John 18 is the flesh is willing, or the spirit's willing, but the flesh is weak kind of thing.

There's, Peter's basically our prototypical Christian in this section. It's not pretty. Like, it doesn't look good at all, really. There's a section early in John 18 where the soldiers come to arrest Jesus, and Peter takes out his sword and lops off the ear of a servant named Malchus.
It's in verse 10 of John chapter 18. There's just a, you'll find in this passage a massive amount of poetic irony in the whole section. But here, here there's this unique irony, something like this.
If Peter had been paying attention to what Jesus had been saying, that is, if Peter had been using his own ears properly, he would not have pulled out his sword to chop off Malchus's ear.
And I think that's a good way of thinking about some of the failures we see in Christians. A lot of it just comes down to people don't understand what God wants.
[11:36] And they're acting out of ignorance. They're just acting out of a sense of foolishness. They just don't understand. And Christians are certainly in that category sometimes. And then there's another more famous part of Peter's failures at the mid and end section of John chapter 18.

And that's, of course, where after promising Jesus he would die with him earlier in the Gospels, we see three times Peter denying Christ. Again, is that hypocrisy?
I think this is simply the spirit's willing, the flesh is weak, human beings screw up. I think that's a better explanation. And to be honest, it's still terrible.
It's not okay. But I do think it's important to understand that, you know, Christianity is not about Christians. Christianity is about Christ.
One of the very interesting things you'll see in the Bible is that it is amongst, if you haven't read a lot of ancient literature, first of all, shame on you. Secondly, if you haven't read it, you might not know that the way the Bible, which is ancient literature, talks about people versus the way that Herodotus does, it's a very different deal.
[12:56] Meaning, when you go to all the regular ancient literature, they polish up their heroes to a shine. But when you read the Bible, you see just the opposite.

The Bible communicates this sort of transparent, this sort of transparent issues with all of the leaders. The leaders are sinful, they're broken, they do stupid things.
Peter is going to become, effectively, the chief apostle for a season, the earliest leader of the church. Normally, in ancient literature, you don't include all the foibles of the guy who's going to rise to be in charge.
But of course, the truth is, is that, you know, Peter's not in charge, and Peter's not the point of the story, and David's not the point of the story. And so when you look out and you see some Christian who isn't behaving like they're supposed to behave, really the proper way to think about that is that's why Jesus is the centerpiece of Christianity and not Jim.
You know? Jim's not the story. Peter's not the story. Jesus is the story. R.C., J.C. Ryle put it this way, the best of men are only men at their very best.
[14:13] The best of men are only men at their very best. patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, martyrs, fathers, reformers, puritans, all are sinners who need a savior.

Holy, useful, honorable in their place, but sinners after all. And bringing up this idea of the way that the Bible talks about its leaders in this sort of transparently, like, they're kind of a mess way, I brought that up here because it pivots as well into the second objection, which is about the veracity of the scriptures.
How do I know, objection number two, how do I know that the Bible is reliable? Well, one way you might think about it is this, if your effort is to write propaganda, you do not include all of the massive foibles of those you're hoping will one day be followed.

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The Bible has this unique thing, and one author says it this way, the scriptures bear the marks of their divine origin in their candor. The scriptures bear their marks of divine origin in their candor, revealing the faults of the saints without excuse.
And there's one other thing I'd like to talk to you about when you're asking, is the Bible really reliable? Again, this is a fair question, especially given the amount of disinformation put out there in the world suggesting that it's not by people who do not know what they're talking about.
[15:46] Well, I could point to a massive amount of evidence about why the Bible is reliable, and back in July of last year, I recorded a podcast called How Did We Get Our Bible, and I posted that this morning on our Facebook page, the church's Facebook page.

So if you want a lot of information, you could go and listen to that podcast. But let me, in addition to pointing out this fact that if the Bible's propaganda, it's kind of bad propaganda.
It really doesn't do the thing that we usually see, which is to celebrate its heroes and create some kind of really clear instrument of control over the people. It's really not that.
But there's another piece of evidence I'd point you to in this story, and that is that we see passages of Scripture written a thousand years in advance of the life of Jesus coming true in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus.
So we've got a passage like, for instance, if you've got your Bibles, look at John 19, 23. It reads, When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier, also his tunic.
[16:58] But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom, and so they said to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.

And now you'll see this phrase that appears a lot in the book of John in all the Gospels, actually. This was to fulfill the Scripture. This was to fulfill the Scripture. You'll see that all over the place.
And what the authors of the Gospels are doing there is they're telling you something just happened that checked off an Old Testament prophecy that was written sometime before.
That particular thing was written, as I mentioned in our call to worship, a thousand years before the life of Jesus Christ by King David in Psalm 22. And you can go read Psalm 22 for yourself and see all of the uncanny ways this psalm lines up with the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.
Another passage you could look at is Isaiah 53, written well before, well before the time of Jesus, and yet appears to have been written after the time of Jesus, given its uncanny accuracy in describing the crucifixion story.
[18:09] There's a couple of these in our John's Gospel version where we see prophecies written up to 1,500 years before fulfilled into life and death and resurrection of Jesus.

someone set out to try to count all of the possible prophetic fulfillments that happen from the Old Testament to the New Testament and they came up with a number of something over 500.
Let's say it's 300. You have 300 instances or so where things written centuries and centuries prior are fulfilled in this person, Jesus Christ.
I mean, it's a crazy thing. The Bible was written over a period of 1,500 years by 40 different authors all from different times and cultures all with different professions and ways of saying things and yet they all bear testimony to this same idea.
Theologians call this the unity amidst diversity. There's only one way to really conclude this sense of why are we seeing things written 1,000 years ago coming true now?
[19:20] And that is that in spite of there being 40 human authors there was one divine author and he was superintending watching over and writing his word to his people and managing and orchestrating and providentially guiding all of creation to flow in the direction that he wants it to so that his words are fulfilled as the Bible promised.

I added a slide this morning. You might have seen this before if you're a Jordan Peterson fan I imagine you probably have here's a chart that's been composed by a graphic artist named Chris Harrison and the idea with this chart is is that underneath there you've got all the chapters of the Bible beginning in Genesis 1 and ending in Revelation 22 and what you're seeing with all those lines are the 63,779 cross-references found in the Bible.
Jordan Peterson wept when he saw this graphic and said that this is the first hyperlinked document it is the truth within the truth within the truth within the truth and a chart like this shows you what the central claim regarding the Bible is and that is that God wrote it that all scripture is breathed out by God and that God is overseeing and superintending his inspiration through these 40 different

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authors to produce exactly the thing he would like it to be and if you have some idea that there's been massive mistranslations books withheld and so forth I'd say make sure you know what you're talking about before you base your eternity on that go to listen to that podcast I wrote or I did and it's on the Facebook account make sure you know what you're talking about I'm a naturally doubtful guy but I'm also a guy who likes to read and I worry for people who are naturally doubtful and don't like to read because then they're just caught up in sound bites
I wouldn't spend my I wouldn't bet my eternity on sound bites okay so that's that's a little bit about the reliability of scripture the second objection related to Christianity it also kind of gets answered and resolved in this story that we see from John 18 to 20 not only do we have some way of having a handle on the reality of the hypocrisy or the failure of Christians we also have pretty good evidences just in this story alone that the Bible itself is reliable what about this third one the third objection is the problem of evil the problem of evil why do bad things happen to good people when the old theologian R.C. Sproul was asked that question why do bad things happen to good people R.C. Sproul answered thusly that's only ever happened once and he volunteered so I would encourage you to reorient your evaluation of this question around the question of true innocence and true guilt and I actually think a more interesting question and probably the question that's been asked more classically forever is why do good things happen to bad people
I think that why do bad things happen to good people is a wholly modern invention built into like 1970s roller skating self-esteem kind of stuff why did roller skating come out there that was what that was big at the time it was roller skating and self-esteem probably the more perceptive question to ask is why do good things happen why do bad things happen to good people or why do bad things happen to good people so R.C. Sproul says hey listen that's actually only ever happened one time and he volunteered the point being that the problem of evil is actually central to the scriptures the center line of the scriptures is there was this person who was perfect in every way and all of the worst possible things happened to him and they happened to him on purpose both from human perspective and from God's perspective now you can go through and find people that were less good than Jesus and ask your questions but here's what
[23:32] I would invite you to do just logically infer this if God is doing this with the most righteous one and he has accomplished all of this through the suffering of this most righteous one then doesn't that give you some indication that suffering while terrible is a necessary part of life to communicate goodness and joy and glory to others doesn't it just explain at least a potential philosophical purpose behind suffering itself as to the fact that Jesus is without guilt this is important before we see before we see Peter denying Jesus three times we weirdly in 18 and 19 see Pilate confirming Jesus three times this is one of those little poetic details that gets missed out sometimes yes Peter who loved Jesus denies him three times

Pilate who couldn't care less really says one thing of Jesus three times in a very short period of time in chapter 18 verse 38 after questioning Jesus he went back outside to the Jews and told them I find no guilt in him again in 19 verse 1 then Pilate took Jesus and flogged him and the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put it on his head and arrayed him in a purple robe they came up to him saying hail king of the Jews and struck him with their hands Pilate went out again and said to them see I am bringing him out to you that you may know that I have found no guilt in him I even tried to torture it out of him I found no guilt in him and then in verse 5 and 6 Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and a purple robe Pilate said to them behold the man when the chief priests and the officers saw him they cried out crucify him crucify him Pilate said to them take him yourselves and crucify him for
I find no guilt in him this is the actual centerpiece if you want to have a conversation about the problem of evil this is the center problem he who knew no sin was treated like the worst cretin on the face of the earth he was scorned and rejected and scourged it was the father's good will to crush him so that through that he would make atonement for our many sins the bible does in fact take the problem of evil seriously it just happens to say that the central the central figure of the bible is the one to whom the most injustice has occurred namely god the cross is a way of god handling that and i think it is reasonable to say again this may differentiate those who are slow to believe and those who are too stubborn to believe i think for me even as a naturally doubtful guy i can infer from this story that god does care about pain and that he has a purpose for it and that that purpose is sometimes hidden from us and so i would just let me just be super frank to you like if something terrible has happened to you i am sorry i will not give you some kind of glib explanation as to why i

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wouldn't dare to do that i really am sorry this precious girl i went to high school with i just on facebook this morning she's had medical problems her whole life and the only person who stood by her is her father and her father died this morning and what would i say to this girl i wouldn't tell i wouldn't dare tell her here's why this is going to work out fine here's here's the plan here's the purpose but i would tell her god crucified his only begotten son who deserved nothing of it to set this world right and i think this is probably the most important thing i'd say to you that are struggling with the problem of evil to expand the real timeline for when justice actually when this life is supposed to make sense if you have been really hurt and you're just stinging and you're like why would god allow this first of all i don't know in specifics one thing i will tell you is is that god doesn't have 10 years to make sense of this or 50 years to make sense of this god has eternity to make sense of this when paul looked at his own unrighteous sufferings he said these light and momentary afflictions are preparing for us an eternal weight of glory meaning if you're evaluating whether god is good or not on a on a three month or a two month or a ten year cycle you're not using the proper window to evaluate god's work he will make sense of it all that's what i would tell you if you are suffering i'll tell you!
there will be a day clear why but for now i would point you to the cross and say here is the one central figure who did not deserve any of it and look at all the good that has come from it the fourth objection is the exclusivity of christianity why do christians insist that jesus is the only way you know first of all how dare you what gives you the right well the short answer is is the resurrection of jesus christ john 20 verse one now on the first day of the week mary magdalene came to the tomb early while it was still dark and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb so she ran and went to simon peter and the other disciple the one whom jesus loved and said to them they have taken the lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him so peter went out they were going toward the tomb then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in and he saw and believed a big thing that we do on easter kind of the main touch point for us every easter is to simply affirm once again in the minds of everyone here this really happened this really happened using any kind of reasonable means to evaluate historical claims this event really happened there's this collection of facts that give us confidence this really happened and these facts are not only dependent on a particular theology or theologian these are simply historical facts number one
Jesus existed don't believe all of this Rogan-esque weirdness although I don't think he thinks this that Jesus never existed Jesus is a historical figure all reliable scholars both believers and unbelievers agree that Jesus lived with too much evidence to suggest otherwise secondly he died by crucifixion the old theory that was taking place back in the 80s and 70s I suppose called the swoon theory has been completely disproven we now know 100% for a fact that when you're crucified you die there's no way to stay alive Roman soldiers knew what death looked like by the way they're pretty good at their job the swoon theory doesn't really work Jesus died by crucifixion and this is confirmed by both Roman and Jewish sources his tomb was empty remember this about the empty tomb something I say every year it's not as if it was 10,000 miles away from the place where it was proclaimed to be it would be as if I said to you the tomb is empty and you're like where is the tomb and I'm like by the men's bathroom what a bold and completely falsifiable claim right it's a completely verifiable falsifiable claim to say just down the road the tomb where they laid Jesus is empty the tomb is empty no one produced a body despite tons tons of deep state incentives to do so both by the
[31:54] Romans and the Jewish his disciples claimed to see him alive and were willing to die for this claim skeptics like James the brother of Jesus and Paul the persecutor of the church were both converted after encountering the resurrected Christ that's just a few of the facts you can go back and listen to all my other Easter sermons for more of them the fact is is that the resurrection is simply not a fairy tale it is the best explanation it is the best honest explanation for the evidence and that means that if Jesus really did rise from the dead after claiming he would do so after saying that he was God if Jesus really did rise from the dead then his words in John 14 6 mean more I am the way the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me that statement carries weight because the tomb is empty what other religion after all has such a central verifiable claim a while back

I was reading I love to read these old explorer stories man men in the 1900s and the 1800s they're just built different they're sitting around one day like hey you want to go to the South Pole and they

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just go to the South Pole there was a competition at the time between a bunch of Europeans to get to the South Pole first this is around 1910 and there was a gentleman named Robert Falcon Scott who assembled his team and they arrived in January 17th 1912 only to discover that a rival team from the Norwegians yes had gotten there a month earlier so they they turned around defeated and not only defeated but depleted they didn't have any supplies really they had pressed too hard to get there and they were going to try to make their way back but they were going to die they literally just experienced slow starvation as they sort of wilted back to their home base
I think they made it back to their home base but Scott's journal he wrote a journal for as long as he was able to write a journal and March 29th he wrote this had we lived I should have a tale to tell but instead these rough notes and our dead bodies must tell that tale respectfully that's how I would explain or describe every other religion in the world a collection of rough notes and dead bodies only Christianity has a resurrected Lord Charles Spurgeon put it this way the empty tomb of Jesus is the cradle of our faith Buddha's bones lie smoldering Muhammad's dust is in the grave but Jesus lives this is the miracle that sets Christianity apart the living
Lord who burst the bonds of death now look one last section of scripture we are really just minutes from being done but don't lose track of me pay attention this is important stuff John 20 one last section of scripture verse 30 and 31 now when Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name these things are written so that you might believe remember how I argued that God is really the author of!
scripture and that that's really the only way to explain how he's able to communicate a point over thousands of years across all these different authors let's concede that for a moment and say God is the author of the scriptures then that means that he when writing these things are written so that you might believe was able to think of you in particular isn't that something the God of the universe spirit John's writing the word a simple word you and in the divine mind every one of the people he would say for all time came to his mind isn't that something God the writer of the bible wrote this these things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name now I want you to his name yes
[37:29] Christians are imperfect yes the bible is reliable yes evil is a problem and God sent his only begotten son into the world to die at the hands of evil men to save you from your sin and yes Christianity really is the only true way it rightly claims that not only because Jesus said it but because Jesus proved it no greater love has any man than to lay down his life for his friends and no greater power has any God than to raise himself from the dead to my Christian friends here I don't overlook the fact that you have these objections from time to time or these questions from time to time as you know if you know me I grew up in a naturally doubtful temperament I also grew up with a big mouth there was a time in seventh grade when there were three high schoolers that

I would see our campuses were split but they were close and somehow I was on their campus the high school campus I was a scrawny tall you know I wasn't the Adonis you see before you today mouthy sassy so I say that because I'm sure I deserved to some degree what followed next but I was at the high school not my campus and these three big high school boys grabbed me and threw me in a closet and started beating me and I did you know I was hoping some kind of you know Jean clad and I would suddenly you know arise to the moment but wasn't a lot of meat on these bones and at some point getting punched by six different fists I thought well I just have to wait until they get tired that was all I could do I was in this closet I really couldn't see and
I remember someone threw a punch and threw me hit me in the stomach and I just dropped immediately. And when I dropped, my hand hit something. And, you know, I wasn't really thinking, but when your hand touches something, you know, you just grab it.
And what it wound up being was a baseball bat. So now I'm getting punched, but I've got a baseball bat in my hand.
Big steel high school baseball bat. Okay. And I must have moved it enough for someone to see, one of these three guys to see that I had this bat, because they screamed, he's got a bat.
[40:17] And part of me was like, I do? And they just scrammed. And instantly the tables were turned. I didn't have to do anything with the bat, by the way.

I don't know how that would have gone, thankfully. Instantly, though, this thing, I had it. And I was thinking about this, I was trying to think of instances in my life where the tables turned unexpectedly in massive ways.

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That was one of those times. Friends, followers of Jesus, take up this truth and hold it tightly. Jesus really did rise from the dead. And when you start getting harassed and confused and beaten by your doubts, just remember the truth you actually hold in your hand.
Thanks be to God. The God of the universe took on flesh, came and lived a perfect life, suffered a terrible death to atone for my sins, and then rose from the dead to lead me in this life all the way until I die, and then I join him in eternal joy.
[41:41] I still get beaten up by plenty of doubts, but hold this one thing in your hand. I'm promising you it's true. The God of the universe died for you, and then he rose again.

And these things were written so that you might have life. Let me pray for us, and then let's just end our service today with a bit more singing. Father God, we pray that through your Holy Spirit you would do a work in the hearts of each hearer here, strengthening, confirming, establishing, blessing, convicting.
To those who are here who are slow to believe, I get it. And I am so thankful, Lord, that you are such a tender and compassionate Father that you'll walk slow with the slow to believe.
But these things were written so that we could believe. And so if we're interested in the believing, we're not simply presenting that, but it's true, we really want to believe, then these things that have been provided in your word are sufficient for that.
So would you, through your Holy Spirit, trigger confidence in you in all sorts of the different ways it's needed in this room for your eternal praise and glory?
[42:57] Thank you, Jesus, for loving us. Thank you, Jesus, for dying for us. Thank you, Jesus, for being God. We look forward to spending eternity with you one day.

In your great name we pray. Amen. Stand with me, let's sing.

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