

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 3RD–5TH, 2026 // RESURRECTION

## BARRIERS AND FENCES

- Have you ever felt like there is a barrier between where you are now and where you should be?
- **Have you ever felt separated from what could actually give you life? In that separation, have you ever felt helpless, scared, or alone?**

## IN THE BEGINNING (GENESIS 1–2)

“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good indeed” (Genesis 1:31).

1. Perfect fellowship with God.
2. Innocence and perfection.
3. Everlasting life (no death!).

- “When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.” Genesis 3:4–6 (NIV).

## SEPARATION FROM GOD

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2, NIV).

- Because of their sin, humanity was cast out from the garden and separated from God's presence.
- Later, God's people would be given a tangible reminder of how sin has separated us from God's presence through a heavy veil in the temple of God.

## THE CURSE OF THE LAW

“For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.’” (Galatians 3:10, NIV).

- God's law and commands are perfect and holy, but God is so holy and we're so sinful that no person on earth has ever been able to keep the law (Romans 3:23).
- Anyone who tries to earn salvation from God by trying to keep God's commands is “under a curse.”

## THE CURSE OF DEATH

“Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Romans 5:12, ESV).

- When the first man sinned against God, death entered the picture—spiritual death (separation of the soul from God) and physical death (separation of the soul from the body).
- We are born spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:2), and someday we will all physically die (Hebrews 9:27).

## A REVERSAL (MATTHEW 27:50–54)

Death by Roman crucifixion is among the most painful, barbaric, and cruel forms of execution ever devised.

- After being brutally beaten, victims were often forced to carry their own crossbeam to the place of execution, where they were either tied or nailed to it with 6–9-inch iron spikes driven through their wrists or forearms and feet.
- Death on the cross was slow and agonizing.

As Jesus cried out in a loud voice during His final act on Good Friday, Matthew records three miraculous signs that occurred simultaneously.

- These are audacious claims! Claiming that these supernatural things literally happened in a document written only 15–30 years after the fact was risky, unless they actually did happen.
- These things happened to communicate something about the gospel.

## THE CURTAIN OF THE TEMPLE

In the Jewish temple, the Holy of Holies was the innermost sanctuary, the place where the Ark of the Covenant rested and where the presence of God abided.

- This place was so sacred that only the High Priest was allowed to enter, only once a year (the Day of Atonement), to offer sacrifice to atone for the sins of Israel.

The room outside the Holy of Holies was the Holy Place, and between the two rooms hung a curtain 60 feet long, 30 feet high, and four inches thick, separating humanity from God.

- When Jesus died, this curtain was torn from top to bottom, showing it was done by God's initiative. Jesus conquered sin, the thing that separated us from God's presence!

We no longer need a human High Priest or yearly sacrifice; Jesus is our “new and living way” into God's presence (Hebrews 10:19–22)

- God has removed the “no trespassing” sign—that reminder of our separation is gone.
- Because the veil is torn, everyone who places their faith in Jesus can now approach the throne of God with full assurance.

## AN EARTHQUAKE

Perhaps the earthquake reflected the immensity of the revolution that had just taken place.

- Or maybe it was a reference to what happened at Mt. Sinai when God gave the law to Moses (Exodus 19:16).
- The earthquake signified that the demands of the law had been met and the curse of the law had been done away with.

The spectacular sign of the earthquake caused the pagan Roman soldier who was overseeing the execution to acknowledge Jesus' divinity (v. 54).

- One of Matthew's themes is Jesus being recognized as Messiah by irreligious Gentiles (2:1–12, 8:5–13, 15:21–39), so it's fitting that the one proclaiming Christ's true identity on Good Friday was a pagan Roman soldier.

## TOMBS WERE OPENED

The earthquake broke open the tombs of many saints who were “raised” to life (v. 52).

- They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus was resurrected, they went into Jerusalem and appeared to many (v. 53).
- These resurrections were a sign that Jesus had conquered death—not just His own but for all the “saints.”

God, as the perfect judge, rightly requires payment/restitution for sin against the law.

- God, as a forgiving and merciful Father, provided a way of salvation—the death of Jesus His Son.
- The cross answers the question, “How can God be perfectly loving and perfectly just at the same time?”

## “HE IS RISEN, AS HE HAS SAID” (MATTHEW 28:1–6)

### JESUS OF NAZARETH HAD BEEN STOPPED.

A lifeless, mutilated body.

- Absent, cowardly disciples.
- A two-ton stone sealed over the entrance of a tomb.
- Four Roman soldiers guarding the front of the tomb, 12 more sleeping in a semicircle in front of them, and guards changing shifts every four hours.

Imagine how demoralized and shell-shocked the women who followed Jesus must have been as they traveled to his tomb on the first day of the week (v. 1).

- What the Bible records them finding could be the most outrageous, audacious, and unbelievable claim ever made in all human history.
- The tomb was empty, and the body was gone.

The entrance to the tomb would have been blocked by a two-ton, circular stone, so only several strong men could move it.

- But an earthquake and an angelic miracle resulted in the stone being rolled away and the guards falling like “dead men” (vs. 3–4)
- Now the women stared into this empty tomb, looking at this angelic figure, in awe of what had just happened.

What sets Christianity apart from every other religion is this belief that its founder, Jesus, died an actual death but came back to life to live forever and reign as King.

- All other major world religions can point to the geographical burial places of their founders and important figures.
- But Christianity is different—the burial site of Jesus is a tomb that is empty.

## HE IS NOT HERE. FOR HE HAS RISEN” (V. 6)

The angel told the women not to “be afraid” because they were expecting to see “Jesus who was crucified,” not an empty tomb.

- The reality they witnessed must have been awe-inspiring and a bit frightening.
- The angels invited the women to “come and see”—to examine the evidence themselves and be convinced.

## WHY DOES IT EVEN MATTER IF JESUS ROSE AGAIN?

If Jesus is dead, then Christianity is dead, but if Jesus is alive, then Christianity is alive.

- Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, there is no Savior, no salvation, no forgiveness of sins, and no hope of resurrected eternal life.
- If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, He was simply another man who died and, therefore, no real help to us in this life or at its end.

If there was no resurrection, Jesus was either mentally unsound or a sociopathic liar who should never be considered a “good man.”

- If there was no resurrection, the 2.6 billion people who worship Jesus as God are gullible and deceived, and their hope for a resurrection life after this life is the hope of silly fools who trust in a dead man to give them life.

If the resurrection never actually happened, Christianity is of no importance at all.

- If it did actually happen, Jesus' offer of eternal life is profound, life-changing, transformative, and the most important message of all time.
- But the only thing it cannot be is “somewhat” important.

## THE VEIL HAS BEEN TORN LOST, DEAD, AND UNDER A CURSE

- Apart from Jesus, there's no way to know God or experience His loving presence in our lives. Our sin has separated us from Him.
- Without any true knowledge of God, we're lost and totally dead to the things of the Spirit.
- We can try to earn our way to God through keeping rules, but that's impossible, exhausting, and leads to death.

## A REVERSAL IS NOW POSSIBLE

- We no longer have to live separated from God because of our sin. We can trust Jesus and know our sin debt has been paid (John 19:30).
- We no longer have to live under the curse of the law. We can be made right with God through faith in Christ (Galatians 3:11).
- We no longer have to live afraid of death. We have confidence that if we trust Christ, we have the promise of resurrection life (John 11:25).
- We are all born into sin and therefore spiritually dead, but when we trust in Jesus, God gives us the same Spirit that rose Christ from the grave (Romans 8:11).
- We can experience a SPIRITUAL resurrection:
  - Love, Joy, Peace,
  - Patience, Kindness, Faithfulness,
  - Goodness, Gentleness, Self-Control
- “Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the veil...let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings...” Hebrews 10:19–22.