

"Nothing Can Stop Jesus"

The Scriptures teach nothing is impossible with God, and that's true! Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." Yes, the things that seem impossible are not impossible to God. Stay tuned.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. We know God's word never fails, because God Himself never fails. Skeptics may question and doubters may doubt; but God's word is settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89) and cannot be broken (John 10 verse 35). Things impossible with men are possible with God. And God is able to do more than we ask or think. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be a part of your life each week.

My preacher friend Paul Shero of San Angelo, Texas tells the story of his four-year-old grandson wanting to look through the scope of his hunting rifle. When his grandfather asked why, the boy replied he wanted to see the cross in the scope. The little boy saw what he was looking for and then explained the crosshairs in the scope reminded him of the cross of Jesus Christ. The grandson told his grandfather the story of Jesus' suffering at his trials, his scourging, and the tragic death of Jesus upon the cross. Paul Shero, seeing the pure heart of his innocent grandson and remembering what the Lord Jesus suffered felt tears fall down his cheek. Paul called for his wife to hear what the grandson told him. The tender love of a four-year-old boy for a dying Savior touched her heart, and she too shed tears.

The little boy seeing them weeping did not fully understand the heartfelt commitment of lifelong servants of God; he didn't understand the heart of grandparents who see their grandchildren know the Lord. What happened next surprised and delighted them. The little boy wanted to comfort them. And so he said, "Don't cry; He's alive! Nothing can stop Jesus!" Of course, the grandparents knew Jesus had arisen; but the reminder from a grandchild encouraged their hearts. Parents who teach their children the glorious gospel can find hope.

We offer this study free on "Nothing Can Stop Jesus!" And if you'd like a printed copy of our study and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have materials free on our website at www.searchtv.org.

We'll now worship in song, read from Matthew 28, 1 to 7, and see how nothing could stop Jesus.

Our scripture reading today comes from the gospel according to Matthew chapter 28, verses 1 through 7, speaking of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave. And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you." Oh what a marvelous thing, Jesus arose from the dead, just as He said.

Let's pray. "Father we're thankful for the gospel message which gives us hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And Father we pray that we may set our hearts upon

serving You, and enjoying the hope that You have given to us, of one day being able to rise from the dead ourselves. Bless us and be with us, and help us to do Your will. In Jesus name, Amen.”

Jesus predicted both His death and His resurrection. Matthew 20:17 to 19 says, that “As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them, ‘Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, and will hand Him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up.’”

What Jesus told the twelve disciples that day was to confirm what had already been spoken through the prophets of old. We know from the prophets that Jesus was to die for the sins of His people. Isaiah 53:4-6 says, “Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” We also know from David’s prophecy in Psalm 22:16 that they would pierce his hands and feet. The prophets clearly proclaim the Lord Jesus was also to rise from the dead. In Acts 2 verse 29 to 32, you remember that Peter declared this on the day of Pentecost: “Brethren, I may confidently say to you regarding the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. And so, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath to seat one of his descendants on his throne, he looked ahead and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was neither abandoned to hades, nor did His flesh suffer decay. This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses.” Now Peter is here quoting from Psalm 16 verse 10.

Predicting a bodily resurrection from the dead was quite bold! If Jesus failed to rise on the third day as He predicted, we probably would never have heard of Him; and there would never have been a church. The testimony of the angel, the women, and the apostles argue that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. The fact that the doubting apostles were convinced of His resurrection and willing to suffer for their faith is undeniable. Now these facts reveal that Jesus overcame death, just as He predicted. What’s interesting in our study are the number of things that caused the death of Jesus and wanted to keep Him in the tomb.

First, the officials of the Jews and Romans couldn’t stop Him. After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, the Jewish officials regarded Him as a threat to their place and their nation and planned together to kill Him (John 11:53). After they arrested Him at the garden of Gethsemane, they illegally tried and condemned Him. Because the Jews did not have the power to execute Him, they brought Him before Pilate. Pilate more than once proclaimed that he found no guilt in Jesus worthy of death, and even tried to release Him. The Jews, however, continued to insist on His death until Pilate handed Him over to be crucified. The Romans scourged and crucified Him. After his death, a Roman soldier “pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out (John 19:34). There can be no doubt the efforts of the Jews and Romans caused the death of Jesus. They wanted to destroy Him and keep Him from building His kingdom, the church. But nothing could stop Jesus!

Second, the crucifixion of Jesus couldn’t stop Him from coming back to life or building His church. When Peter confessed Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Lord Jesus replied to Matthew in Matthew 16 verse 18, “I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.” Now Hades is that place where departed spirits go at death. In Acts 2 and verse 27 reminds us that the soul of Jesus was not abandoned to Hades, neither

did He undergo decay. Now death and Hades did not prevent His resurrection. God raised Him up! Nothing could stop Jesus.

Third, the grave clothes that wrapped the body of Jesus couldn't hold Him. Mark 15:42 to 46 says that "When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 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 he went in before Pilate, and he asked for the body of Jesus. Well, Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. 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 rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb." Well, Matthew 27:60 describes the stone as a "very large stone." It would take several men to move that stone back out of its place.

John 19, verses 39 to 40, says that "Nicodemus, who had first come to Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds weight. So they took the body of Jesus and bound Him in the linen wrappings with spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews." The body of Jesus was bound up with linen wrappings and a lot of myrrh and aloes. The myrrh and aloes would be spread on and between the wrappings to kind of form a seal from the outside. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead in Bethany, you remember he "came forth bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped with a cloth" (John 11:44). Now others were told to unbind him from the wrappings.

John 20, verses 1-9 says, "Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb. So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "Well, they have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they've laid Him." So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; and stooping looked in, he saw the linen wrappings lying there; but he didn't go in.

"And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. For as yet they didn't understand the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead." The wrappings and the folded face-cloth that bound Jesus were left in the tomb. Jesus left them there, because He no longer needed them; He was no longer dead. Some say the disciples stole the body of Jesus, but we wonder why the disciples would leave the grave-clothes. I tell you, nothing can stop Jesus.

Fourth, the tomb of Jesus couldn't hold Him. The Lord Jesus was buried in a new tomb, a new tomb in which no one before had ever been buried. The tombs of ancient Judea were often cut from a hillside made of limestone. They were made to hold several family members. The large stone covered the door to a cave-like structure cut out from the rock. And they would have a place where a new body could be laid down, the place where they could clean and prepare the body. And this body would usually lay in place for a year or so until the body was only a skeleton. At which time the family would move the large stone, enter the tomb, move the bones to another place in the tomb, and prepare the place where the body laid for another when the time came.

Now the Jews condemned Him, because He was authentically able to work miracles and became a threat to their power. Once He was dead, they didn't want anything to challenge them from beyond the grave. And they thought by turning Him over to be crucified and keeping Him in the tomb, they could triumph and the threat of His being the Messiah would simply go away. And so they took extraordinary measures to end any support to the One who claimed to be the Son of God. They wanted to demoralize the disciples; but they failed.

Matthew 27:62 to 66 describes how the Jews determined to keep the body of Jesus in His tomb until the third day. They knew that He raised Lazarus from the dead just days before, and they took His prophecy seriously. They feared the disciples might steal the body and claim that He arose. And so Matthew wrote: The next day, that is, the day after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Now the Jewish leaders were taking no chances; they asked Pilate for a guard. And the guards were there specifically to keep anyone from disturbing the grave. The guard at the tomb and the seal of the governor is strong evidence. The location of the tomb would have been evident to all, because of the guard and the Pilate's seal. And we shouldn't imagine that the guards were weak or incompetent. Since they knew His prophecies about rising on the third day, they only needed to protect the tomb until the third day. Pilate said again, "make it as secure as you know how," suggesting the number of guards would have been strong enough to stop any threat from the disciples. They wanted maximum security and a guarantee that nothing would disturb the tomb. Well, a normal Roman guard would have about sixteen soldiers. Now Roman soldiers were well-known for their discipline. The penalty for negligence while on duty (that is falling asleep or abandoning their post) was execution.

The Romans also secured the tomb with the governor's seal. Now to break the seal was a criminal offense against Rome, carrying harsh penalty. They sealed the stones in the presence of the Roman guards who were left in charge. They sealed the tomb to prevent anybody from tampering with the contents. The guards would inspect the tomb, roll the heavy stone into place, and stretch a cord across that stone. And they fastened the cord at either end with a sealing clay or wax, and stamped both packs with the official signet of the Roman government. Now, Craig Keener a scholar notes, "Sealing the stone made it impossible for anyone to enter the tomb while the guards slept and then replace the stone." Now any unauthorized persons who broke the seal defied the authority of Rome and could be punished by death. Guards and governor's seals though were not strong enough to stop Jesus. God raised Him up! Nothing can stop Jesus!

Let's pray. "Father we're thankful for the many evidences we have of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and that nothing could stop Him. And Father we are grateful for the hope that that gives us. Help us to live with faith and trust. In Jesus name, Amen."

If nothing could stop Jesus from rising from the dead, nothing can stop Jesus from keeping His promises. He promises to save those who trust and obey Him. Hebrews 5:8 to 9 says, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation." The Lord is looking for people who will follow Him and say, "Your will be done!"

He promises to come again and raise the dead. The Lord Jesus said in John 5:28 to 29, "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, and those who committed evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." Yes, our bodies will one day come forth from the grave and He will give us eternal life, if we do what is right.

We can believe the risen Lord, and we must believe Him! With our trust, we must repent of our sins and take up our crosses to follow the Lord Jesus. We must confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and we must be baptized into Christ. The Lord Jesus said you must be born again (John 3 and verse 7), and being born again means being born of water and the Spirit (John 3 and verse 5). Now that's a reference to baptism in water. When the people at Pentecost were baptized they were forgiven of sin and added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:38 to 41, and verse 47). Now baptism is the time when sins are washed away (Acts 22 verse 16). And baptism is when we become children of God (Galatians 3:26 and 27). Now I hope you'll take these promises seriously and become a child of God.

We hope today's study about Jesus has stirred you to put your faith in Him. If you live in the United States and want a free printed copy of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There's also a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. You can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry", that's one word. And be sure to like the programs that you watch; that helps spread the program. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Don't worry, we're not asking for money. We're here to help you to become a Christian and to draw close to God.

We do ask that you focus your heart on God by worshiping at church. Everyone needs a church family. And there's probably a church of Christ near you. And if you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll gladly help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word, and tell a friend about this program, tell them you're watching. And as always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.