

Sermon Series: "The Darkness and the Dawn"—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN----3/30/2003

Title: "For Sure"

Text: John 19: 23-24

Intro: *Ills.: Statistics on Probable Causes of Death*

Theme: Jesus' death was more than a fluke or a coincidence; rather it is one that was planned out to the smallest detail so that placing our faith in it for our eternal life would not be a risky matter.

Is Jesus too risky to believe in?

- Does Jesus' life and death converge in perfect orientation with prophecy?
 1. The Gospel records of the four writers appear to have divergent information
 1. Not four different stories but four different vantage points
 2. **Matthew** to the Jewish; **Mark** to the Romans; **Luke** to the Gentiles; **John** to the skeptics/cynics
 2. The prophetic prophecies which Jesus seems to fill in perfect detail
 1. Selective Messianic posturing or purposeful planning by God?
 - **Ills.: Media's view vs. the Commander's view of the military plan**
 2. *"This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."* Acts 2:23
- Is it a reasonable risk to accept Jesus' call to surrender control of our life and destiny?
 3. *"And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it."* Mark 8:34-35
 4. Surrender is a scary thing —what if that one can't hold me up or drops the ball
 1. **Ills.: Royal River Gorge in Colorado — what if it can't hold me up?**
 5. Moving from factual to supernatural
 1. Giving over the outcome to the only one who has the attending circumstances in his control
 - *"Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."* Col. 1: 12-14
 2. That requires a supernaturally given faith which only the Holy Spirit can give to us
 - *"No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit."* 1 Cor. 12: 3

How, then, should we live?

- The miracle that had to be more than merely coincidental
 6. Well over 1,500 O.T. Messianic prophecies which Jesus fulfills
 7. *Psalms 22: 18* is just one of them: *"They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots."*
 8. The Roman soldiers would have had no clue of O.T. prophecy; Jesus' Messianic life; or their part in it
- John records a miracle that has an eye-witness
 1. John calls us to trust God's pronouncement and plan as reliable to lean on
 1. *"And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe."* John 19:35
 2. Resting by faith in Jesus proven record rather than demanding continual, further proof
 1. *"Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* John 20:30-31
- Living as if we are sure that Jesus is the real deal
 3. If Jesus, for sure, is the real deal, seeking in him the source of my life
 1. *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* John 10: 10
 4. If Jesus, for sure, is the real deal, expecting him to fill my life's emptiness

1. *"Listen! Whoever is thirsty, come to the water! Whoever has no money can come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk. You don't have to pay; it's free! Why do you spend money on what cannot nourish you and your wages on what does not satisfy you?" Isaiah 55: 1-2*
5. If Jesus, for sure, is the final word of forgiveness, refusing to live in guilt over past sins
 1. *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1*
 2. **Ills.: No chance of double jeopardy**

Statistics on Probability

The chances you will eventually die in a car crash: 1 in 125 Develop a brain tumor: 1 in 25,000 Die in a fire this year: 1 in 4,000,000. How you will die is up for grabs but that you die is not. However, in Jesus' case both the fact and the manner in which he would die was scripted down to the last detail that no doubt in his claim to be Savior for the world can stand.

No Chance of Double Jeopardy

DURING THE NAPOLEONIC WARS, men were drafted into the French army by a lottery system. When someone's name was drawn, he had to go off to battle. But there was once exception: a person would be exempt if another was willing to take his place. On one occasion the authorities came to a man and told him he was among those who had been chosen. But he refused to go, saying, "I was shot two years ago." At first they questioned his sanity, but he insisted that this was the case. He claimed that the records would show that he had been drafted 2 years earlier and that he had been killed in action. "How can that be, since you are alive now?" they questioned. He explained that when his name came up, a close friend said to him, "You have a large family, but I am not married and no one is dependent on me. I'll take your name and address and go in your place." And that was indeed what the record showed. This unusual case was referred to Napoleon Bonaparte, who decided that the country had no legal claim on that man. He was free. He had died in the person of another.

John 19:23-24

²³When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. ²⁴"Let's not tear it," they said to one another. "Let's decide by lot who will get it." This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled which said, "They divided my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing." So this is what the soldiers did.[NIV]