

Thought For The Week

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The Graveclothes of Jesus, Part 1

A Sermon That Strengthens Faith Through Scripture and Evidence

On the morning of May 17, 2026, in a Sunday service, the Preacher, Mike delivered the first part of a two-part sermon titled “The Graveclothes of Jesus.” Drawing from the Gospel of John and other resurrection accounts, Mike focused on the often-overlooked detail of Jesus’ burial wrappings. He argued that these simple linen strips and face cloth serve as powerful, tangible proof of the resurrection while directly refuting modern claims that seek to undermine it. What might appear to some as a minor biblical footnote becomes, in Mike’s teaching, a cornerstone for defending the historical and divine reality of Christ’s victory over death.

The service began with two Scripture readings that framed the entire message. John read from John 11:43-44 (NKJV), recounting the raising of Lazarus: “Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, ‘Loose him, and let him go.’” Roger followed with John 19:38-40, detailing Jesus’ burial. Joseph of Arimathea, a secret disciple, received Pilate’s permission to take the body. Nicodemus brought approximately one hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes. Together they wrapped Jesus’ body in linen strips with the spices, according to Jewish custom.

These readings established the cultural and historical context for first-century Jewish burial practices. Mike would return to them repeatedly to contrast authentic biblical accounts with later legendary or pseudoscientific claims.

In his introduction, Mike acknowledged the sermon’s unusual focus. “There’s not much said about Jesus’ grave clothes,” he noted. Yet Scripture records them in two key places: Luke 24:12, where Peter sees the linen cloths, and more extensively in John 20. Mike posed a thoughtful question to the congregation: Why would the Holy Spirit inspire the Gospel writers to include this detail about empty wrappings? His answer was direct and pastoral. The graveclothes exist in the text to put false reports to rest. In an age of skepticism, where videos and theories circulate weekly attempting to debunk Christ’s divinity, death, burial, and resurrection, the empty clothes stand as quiet but irrefutable testimony.

Mike warned his listeners not to entertain every speculative claim. “We should stay with the scriptures,” he urged. He then revealed the sermon’s central thesis: the graveclothes prove Jesus arose from the dead. This proof emerges not from abstract theology alone but from the physical evidence left behind in the tomb.

A significant portion of the morning message addressed a specific modern claim Mike first encountered in the 1970s—the Shroud of Turin. Housed in Turin, Italy, this linen cloth bears a faint, full-body image said by some to be that of Jesus. Proponents point to scientific tests and the facial imprint as evidence. Mike approached the topic carefully. He admitted limited expertise in the

technical analyses but refused to concede the central claim. Instead, he turned to measurable facts and Scripture.

The Shroud measures approximately 14 feet 5 inches long by 3 feet 7 inches wide. Traditional explanations suggest the body was laid lengthwise on half the cloth, with the other half folded over the top to cover the face. Mike asked the congregation to keep these dimensions in mind. He then walked them through the biblical record of Jewish burial preparation, showing a clear mismatch.

In Jesus' time, bodies were not wrapped in a single large sheet. Linen strips were used to bind the body—wrapping the legs, torso, and arms—while a separate cloth covered the face. Mike reinforced this by returning to the Lazarus account. Four days dead, Lazarus emerged still bound hand and foot with graveclothes, his face wrapped with a distinct cloth. Jesus commanded others to loosen him. The same method appears in John 19: the body of Jesus was “bound in strips of linen with the spices.”

Mike then turned to John 20, reading from the Tree of Life Version for added clarity. Mary Magdalene discovers the stone rolled away while it is still dark. She runs to Peter and the beloved disciple (John). The two disciples race to the tomb. John arrives first, peers in, and sees the linen strips lying there. Peter enters and observes the same strips, plus the face cloth that had been on Jesus' head. Crucially, this face cloth “was not lying with the linen strips, but was rolled up in a place by itself.”

This detail, Mike emphasized, destroys any connection to the Shroud of Turin. The biblical graveclothes consist of multiple linen **strips**—not one continuous 14-foot sheet. The face cloth is separate and neatly rolled. In the New King James Version, the wrappings are called “cloths” (plural). A single large shroud simply does not match the scriptural description. Mike stated plainly, “That shroud of Turin has no connection at all with the body of Christ.” He expressed uncertainty about whose image appears on the cloth but declared confidently, “I know who it isn't. It isn't Christ.”

Beyond debunking the Shroud, Mike highlighted the resurrection power revealed by the clothes themselves. The strips lay there “as if” the body had been wrapped in them, yet the body was gone. No signs of hasty theft or disturbance—just empty graveclothes. The face cloth, set apart, suggested deliberate order rather than chaos. For Mike, this scene supplied one strong piece of evidence among many that Christ had risen. The disciples had not yet fully grasped the prophecies of resurrection. The days between the crucifixion and Sunday morning were among the darkest in human history. Yet the empty tomb and its remaining cloths proclaimed victory.

Mike connected this historical event to the personal hope of every believer. When Jesus emerged from the grave, He won the victory not only for Himself but for all who trust in Him. Satan may hurl “fiery darts,” and doubters may circulate theories, but firm belief in Scripture provides unshakable hope. Those who die in faith will rise just as Christ did. Those alive at His return “will all meet Him in the air and evermore be with Him.”

Mike closed Part 1 by noting he had focused heavily on the Shroud of Turin that morning. Additional elements would come in the evening service. He invited the congregation to return for the conclusion.

Theological Depth and Pastoral Relevance

Mike's sermon exemplifies a classic evangelical approach: grounding apologetics in the text of Scripture itself rather than external debates. By contrasting the Shroud's single-sheet dimensions with the multiple linen strips described in John, he offered a straightforward, accessible rebuttal requiring no advanced scientific training. This method empowers everyday believers to defend their faith using the Bible alone.

The message also carries emotional and spiritual weight. Many Christians encounter skeptical content online or in documentaries. Mike validated those encounters without allowing them to dominate. Instead of fear, he modeled calm, Scripture-saturated confidence. The graveclothes become more than ancient artifacts—they are God's provision of evidence for doubting hearts, much like the scars Jesus later showed Thomas.

Furthermore, the sermon underscores the reliability of the Gospel accounts. Small, incidental details (plural strips, separate face cloth, folded napkin) are exactly the kind of realistic touches expected in eyewitness testimony. Fabricated stories rarely include such mundane yet precise information. The fact that John, an eyewitness, records these details adds historical credibility.

In a broader cultural context, Mike's emphasis on Jewish burial customs highlights the importance of understanding the New Testament within its first-century setting. Roman and Jewish practices differed significantly from later medieval or modern ones. Ignoring that context leads to misguided claims, as Mike suggested happened with Shroud proponents.

The sermon also carries evangelistic undertones. By proclaiming the resurrection victory and its implications for believers' future, Mike moved from defense to encouragement. Christians facing illness, grief, or spiritual attack can find comfort knowing the same power that left the graveclothes empty works in their lives.

Why This Message Matters Today

Delivered in 2026, Mike's words arrive amid ongoing debates over relics, historical Jesus studies, and documentary-style skepticism. The Shroud of Turin continues to fascinate both believers and skeptics, with new analyses periodically making headlines. By addressing it directly yet subordinating it to Scripture, Mike provided a model for engaging contemporary issues without compromising biblical authority.

The sermon's pastoral tone—praying for the congregation's health, acknowledging dark days, offering hope—makes it especially relevant. In an anxious world, reminders of Christ's completed work and promised return strengthen weary hearts.

As Part 1 concluded, listeners were left with a clear challenge: trust the Scriptures above sensational claims. The graveclothes of Jesus, though silent, speak volumes. They declare that death could not hold the Son of God. The strips lie empty; the tomb is vacant; the victory is won.

Those who heard the message that Sunday morning, and those who will hear Part 2 in the evening, received more than information. They received renewed confidence in the resurrection—the central hope of the Christian faith. In Mike's own words, "If we solemnly believe what the Bible says... it will give us hope." [back to top](#)

The Graveclothes of Jesus, Part 1

Proof of the Resurrection

In his Sunday morning sermon on May 17, 2026, the Preacher, Mike presented Part 1 of “The Graveclothes of Jesus,” drawing from the Gospel of John to show how the linen wrappings left in the empty tomb provide powerful evidence that Christ truly rose from the dead.

The service opened with two key Scripture readings. John read John 11:43-44, where Lazarus emerged from the tomb bound hand and foot with graveclothes, his face wrapped in a separate cloth. Roger followed with John 19:38-40, describing how Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus prepared Jesus’ body by wrapping it in linen strips with spices, according to Jewish custom.

Mike noted that Scripture mentions Jesus’ graveclothes in only two places—Luke 24:12 and especially John 20. He asked why these details were recorded. His answer: to silence false claims that undermine the resurrection. Addressing a popular modern theory, Mike examined the Shroud of Turin, a 14-foot-5-inch by 3-foot-7-inch cloth bearing a facial image some claim is Jesus’. He demonstrated a clear contradiction. Jewish burial practice used multiple linen **strips** to bind the body and a separate face cloth—not a single large sheet.

Reading John 20 from the Tree of Life Version, Mike highlighted the scene: Peter and John found the linen strips lying in the tomb and the face cloth rolled up by itself. The clothes were there, but the body was gone. This orderly scene, Mike declared, proves Jesus did not have His body stolen or simply revived—He resurrected.

Mike encouraged the congregation to stand on Scripture rather than sensational claims. The empty graveclothes offer believers hope: just as Christ rose, those who trust Him will also rise to victory, whether at His return or in the resurrection.

Mike concluded by inviting everyone to the evening service for Part 2. This message reminds us that the simple linen cloths left behind proclaim a mighty truth—Christ is risen indeed.

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