



## Radical Love

*Andy Stanley*

I love this week leading up to Easter—next Sunday being Easter Sunday. It's really cool to think about all the things that happened a couple thousand years ago and around Good Friday and the resurrection and all that. A few years ago, my wife and I took a trip with another couple. I saw something (I'm going to show you a picture of it in just a minute) that more than anything else I've ever seen in my life took the story of the resurrection and the story of Christianity out of the romanticized fairy tale world of the Bible and brought it home into the twenty-first century. So, I want to show this picture in just a minute.

We went to Italy. This was Sandra's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday and this was kind of a big trip. We saved up for it. We went to Italy, drove around, which I don't recommend; I was the driver—another story for another day. We ended our trip in Rome, and we actually drove into Rome, which we were warned you don't ever want to drive in Rome and whoever warned us was correct, but we did it anyway. Eventually we found our way to where we wanted to be, dropped the car off and got a guide. And there's so much to see in Rome. You can spend over a month in Rome and never see it all. But one of the things I wanted to see that was on my list, as would probably be on your list, was the Coliseum in Rome. Now you've seen pictures of the Coliseum and in fact, we've got a couple of pictures. I took a few pictures. The Roman Coliseum was built in 72 AD by Vespasian—Emperor Vespasian. It was finished in 80 AD, and it took about eight years to build by his son, Titus, who was then the emperor. It is like 140 something feet tall. You can see the scale; it is just massive. It can seat, they say, up to 50,000 people, and as you can see there's all these entrances around the bottom.

This is from the inside of the Coliseum. There were 76 entrances, like a modern stadium, baseball stadium or football stadium, 76 entrances, and 72 of them were numbered, which is kind of cool. So you know, you park your chariot, you get your kids out, and you've got to remember, "We came in gate 43," so you got out the same way. I don't know how they did parking with the Coliseum. Anyway, so you've got that whole thing going on. But four of the gates aren't numbered—the Emperor's Gate, which was where the emperor and his family entered, and then directly across from the Emperor's Gate is the Gladiator Gate where the gladiators entered. And then there were two other gates for VIPs; they didn't have numbers. Now, the interesting thing is when you enter, if you buy a ticket to see the Coliseum and walk around inside the Coliseum, one thing you will notice is that the floor of the Coliseum, you may know this, was wooden. All this was wooden, and underneath were areas for animals, slaves, gladiators, and I guess body parts. I don't know what all they kept down there. But the floor was wooden with sand on top.

The Coliseum actually was used for almost 400 years, essentially as an arena for death, an arena for death. Four hundred years it was in use. Gladiators—obviously the games that we're all familiar with—they used animals, they did executions oftentimes in this arena. And again, the gladiators came from across the street on the other side through their entrance, the emperor through his entrance. So, if you buy a ticket, what I was going to say, when you buy a ticket to visit the Coliseum, you actually enter through the Emperor's Gate. So, you would buy a ticket