

**Sermon Notes**  
**Good News Church Easter Sunday**  
***“The Most Unbelievable True Story in the History of the World”***  
**1 Corinthians 15 (selected verses), Hebrews 2:14-15, 1 John 4:18**  
**Drue Warner**  
**4-5-26**

**SCRIPTURE TEXT: 1 Corinthians 15:1a, 3-9, 14, 17, 20a, 56-57; Hebrews 2:14-15**

1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you...

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that **he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born (unexpected, unmerited, unplanned).**

9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am.

14 And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 17 And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.  
**19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.**

**20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead.**

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“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and **free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.**”

- Hebrews 2:14-15 (every fear is rooted in this one fear... fear of death)

**“Perfect love cast out of fear.” - 1 John 4:18**

- Outside of Christ’s love, there is fear (and there should be) because we are still under the penalty of sin. But inside of His love, we are saved and protected.
- **Good News: In Christ, God saves us (by grace, through faith) from God (justice)!**

**Easter is either completely true or completely ridiculous.**

This past Christmas Eve, I preached a message that I called *“the second most unbelievable true story in the history of the world.”* Easter is the first.

In that *“second most unbelievable true story in the history of the world,”* five missionaries risked their lives in 1956 in the jungles of Ecuador to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the most savage

tribe in the history of the world. All five men were speared to death, and what makes this the second most unbelievable true story in the history of the world, is that the wife, her two-year-old daughter, and a sister of the men who were killed, went to live with this tribe and led the entire tribe to faith. Not only that, but one of the tribal men who speared the missionaries to death, baptized the son of the man he speared and became the boy's adopted and spiritual father.

**That story was motivated by this Easter story. If this story isn't true, then that story would never have happened.**

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul provides a detailed account of the multiple appearances and many people that Jesus met after His resurrection from the dead. Paul would have had no problem finding a notary to give their stamp of approval on the statement. In fact, he could've gotten thousands of notaries, because everyone at that time knew that what he was saying was completely true.

This story (and the Bible itself) has been "notarized" with the blood of the martyrs.

- *"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."* – Tertullian (2<sup>nd</sup> Century)

The Good News is that IT'S TRUE!

**But what difference does Easter really make?**

Until color TV was invented, everyone was content with black-and-white. It's possible to live a content life, but if you're living it outside of relationship with God and an awareness of his extravagant love and amazing grace, then you're still watching black-and-white TV and missing all that gives the vibrant color to life... Jesus!

**When we understand, embrace, and experience the love of Christ and the hope of the resurrection, everything changes.**

Anxiety and Fear	to	Comfort and Peace
Guilt and Shame	to	Freedom and Joy
Loneliness & Isolation	to	Community & Family
Meaninglessness	to	Purpose
Hopeless	to	Hopeful
Darkness	to	Light
Anger	to	Love
Empty	to	Full
Lost	to	Found
Black and White	to	Color

**DISCLAIMER:**

Followers of Christ still experience everything in the first column. The difference is that:  
1) we are not alone  
2) we have hope.

**If you're not there, it's really important to understand what are your obstacles and or challenges to faith?** Often our challenges are related to bad experiences in life (i.e., some form of abuse, untimely / unexpected death of someone you love, really hard life circumstances, bad experiences with church, religion, or religious people, etc.).

If you're interested in talking more about faith as you try to figure it out for yourself, Ray and I (and others in this room) are available to walk with you in that journey. We've been in your shoes. A LOT of us here have been in your shoes. You wouldn't believe the stories in this room!

**This past week, I took our 16-year-old son, Micah, on a little spring break getaway to Rome, GA.** Both mornings, I forced him to join me in my daily "Bible in One Year" reading (highly recommended, by the way). There is an option to listen to the audio, but I told Micah that, when we read, it gives opportunity to pause and meditate on what we're reading.

Listening is good, but when we're reading and we come across something that catches our attention, we can stop, reflect on it, and let that seed sink deep into our heart and plant itself into our spirit. That's a spiritual game changer called meditation. It's much harder for that to happen when we're listening to the audio. All that to say...

The story we were reading was from Luke 8 of Jesus in a crowd of people and a desperate woman with the flow of blood being healed by Jesus just by reaching out and touching the edge of his garment. **The "Gold from God" learning was that there were many people in the crowd touching Jesus with no real impact, but this woman was healed because she touched Jesus with faith.** The same is true today. Many people touch Jesus on a regular basis (i.e., going to church, Bible reading, prayer, and all the good spiritual practices), but unless we touch Jesus with faith, nothing happens.

**It's not enough to touch Jesus. We have to reach out in faith.** The Bible says, "For it is by grace you have been saved, THROUGH FAITH—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast (Ephesians 2:8-9)."

**Where does faith come from?** It is the gift of God.

**How do you get faith?** Ask God (and the fact that you're asking God probably means that He has already given it to you). SURRENDERED LIFE / HUMBLER HEART

### **CELEBRATING THE RESURRECTION (your participation)**

- 1. DECLARATION – During the last part of our closing song of the service ("This is Our God"), we're going to give an opportunity for anyone who wants to reach out in faith to Jesus, to simply raise your hand and make a resurrection declaration.** It could be your first time it could be your hundredth time. And if you're curious and interested, but not quite there yet, that's fine too. If you're not sure, then think of yourself as being at a fork in the road with two ways to go. One way is "your way." The other way is "Yahweh" (Jesus' way). If in your mind you say, "I want to follow Jesus and go His way," then that's your answer :)
- 2. STORY – Your story is one of the greatest and most powerful evidences of the truth of Easter. So, as a way of celebrating Easter (i.e., "the most unbelievable true story in the history of the world"), I'm going to invite you right now to participate by sharing (very briefly so others can share, too) the difference that Jesus has made in your life personally.**

And since this is the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Good News Church, if you'd like to share the difference this church has made in your life and faith journey, feel free to share that, too.

**TIP: Maybe the easiest way to share is to talk about how things were for you before you met Christ, what happened that led you to Christ, and how your life has been different since coming into relationship with Christ.** If you'd like to say something about Good News Church, you could use that same format.

**Here's a great example from John Newton...** *"Amazing Grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see."*