

## **“The Ultimate Do Over – RESURRECTION”**

**Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 20:1-18**

March 31, 2024 - **Easter Sunday**

### Introduction

- It's Easter, and, if I'm counting correctly, this is going to be my 15<sup>th</sup> Easter.
  - ~ I've learned a lot in that time. I mean, A LOT.
- Because just like any job, being a pastor takes some time to learn all the ins and outs.
  - ~ They only teach you so much in seminary, believe it or not. The rest you kind of have to learn on the fly.
- So, true to this sermon series I'm in, I remember an incident where I didn't get things right in ministry.
  - ~ I use that then to look at historical events in the life of the church universal where things went wrong.
    - Finally, I turn us back to the pages of the actual Bible where we hear and see perhaps different emphases than what might typically be said here at church.
- Let me get you to my mess up – I call it “The Eastergeddon of 2010.”
  - ~ By 2010, I'd had my first Easter in 2009 under my belt, did it their way. BUT, by 2010, I wanted to put my own spin on things.
  - ~ I had learned at Myers Park and what I wanted really was to do it like they did.
    - That meant a few things
      - An Easter Egg Hunt for the Community.
      - A True, honest to goodness Sunrise service.
      - A butterfly release after the worship service for everyone.
- Let me just say things, EVERYTHING went horribly wrong.
  - ~ We advertised and ended up with way more kids than we had stuff for or to do. Fail
  - ~ It was like 38 degrees that morning and I'd had the volunteers put out metal folding chairs the night before. They froze so people couldn't sit on them.
  - ~ It was still too cold for the butterfly release, so these poor little bugs, they stayed dormant.
- Here, my ego had led this little church on the bumpiest, most inept Easter ever.
  - ~ But you know what?
    - It was still a spectacular success!
      - Why?
        - Source Material. It's Easter.
- Easter is the Day that most clearly intersects with perhaps the greatest news within the greatest good news of all time.
  - ~ And it is simply this – RESURRECTION!
    - And let me spell that out for you a little more clearly.
      - Resurrection is eternal life in the kingdom of God.
      - A place where the Bible itself tells that.
        - Revelation 21:1-4
        - Isaiah 25:6-9
    - ~ We've been in this series called “DO OVER” for several weeks now and my claim this morning is that our destiny as Christians, our trajectory if you will, is this...
    - ~ Eternal Life in the Kingdom of God FOLLOWING an ABUNDANT LIFE here in this world.
      - And the entryway?
        - Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
          - Not good works.
          - Not right thinking.
          - Faith. Just believe in Jesus Christ, confess Him with your lips and believe in your heart that what happened today 2024

years ago today happened.

- And guess what?
- You're in.

- And the mission, the work of the church, of every single pastor everywhere should be nothing more than trying to line people up with that good news.
  - ~ But you know what?
  - ~ Sometimes we get it wrong.
  - ~ Sometimes, we within the church, its leaders lead in a way that we shouldn't.
- Today, we're going to just very briefly be reminded of a particularly difficult episode in the life of the Church of Jesus Christ.
  - Indulgences.
    - You see by the 15<sup>th</sup> century, following the plague, the Church's leadership had become incompetent and corrupt.
    - Instead of teaching people about the FREE GIFT of Jesus Christ, they made it all about guilt.
      - Guilt, you see, is monetizable.
    - And that's what the church did.
      - Sold tickets to heaven, so to speak.
        - So first, they scared you with hell.
        - Then they charged you a ticket to get out of it.
- A bad business. And one, that the Bible refutes.
- The Bible, and particularly Jesus makes it easy. The Church, sometimes, makes it hard. We use guilt to make people do things our way.
  - ~ But Jesus makes the terms much easier than we imagine and we get a glimpse of it here.
  - ~ Here, in the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Gospel of John, Jesus comes to Mary Magdalene.
    - She's lost and hopeless, her life now in jeopardy and her best friend, her teacher, is dead.
    - He comes to her, calls her by name and shows her in Himself what will become of us all.
- What it means
  - ~ The Bible calls Jesus "first fruits."
    - In such a way, Jesus shows us what life after death will look like.

## Resurrection

- The Bible reveals the ultimate destination for Christians, it's eternal life in the Kingdom of God.
  - ~ There we will have physical bodies, but not like these ones.
    - One's perfect, free from sin and thus equipped to live life forever.
      - Which would be pretty depressing if it was here. We don't.
  - ~ Revelation 21:1-4 – No sickness no weeping no death.
- Isaiah 25:6-9 – food and drink, Jesus ate.
  - ~ I'm hopeful there are cookie butter doughnuts.
  - ~ We have hope.
    - Our bodies will wither and die.
    - But we will be reborn into eternal life.
      - That's not some fantasy.
        - It's real and we know it because of Jesus Christ. HE was really resurrected.
- But best of all is the awareness that, in that place,
  - ~ We can do things over in a manner of speaking.
  - ~ We will choose love, living perpetually in a state of joy!

Everybody

- And our God wants this for everyone and He sets the bar at a really, really manageable level.
  - ~ **Romans 10:9-11**: *“Because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame.’”*
- So don't miss this!