



An Easter Life of Renewal

Vienna Presbyterian Church
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Colossians 3:1-4

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I have an Easter Sunday sermon for you today! After all, we're still in this season of New Life. In fact, we've got six more weeks in this Easter Season, of keeping alive the reality that Jesus is alive in us. Paul is going to help us with this this morning, along with an "all-in" proposition/invitation from me and our VPC leadership.



In case you've already lost the Easter-Celebration spirit, here's a great celebration moment to get us back in the mood. It's just a baseball game, but, hey, the first pitch of the Home Opener at Nationals Park is this Thursday at 4:05pm! Here's the set-up to this clip: It's last year's World Series. In the best-of-seven series, the Kansas City Royals are up three games to one against the New York Mets. In this fifth and decisive game, the not-to-be-denied Royals tied the Mets in the top of the ninth inning, 2-2, sending the game into extra innings. Finally, in the 12th inning, the Royals blasted five runs, then took the Mets out, 1-2-3. Here's the last pitch.

Now that's a celebration! Imagine us jumping around like that at the news that Jesus is Alive, Risen from the Dead! I love what Royal's manager Ned Yost said in his post-game interview: "It never entered my mind, not for a second, that we would lose this game," Yost said. "Going into the 9th I knew we were going to get two or three runs. I believed in our guys and I knew we were going to win" (November 1st, 2015).

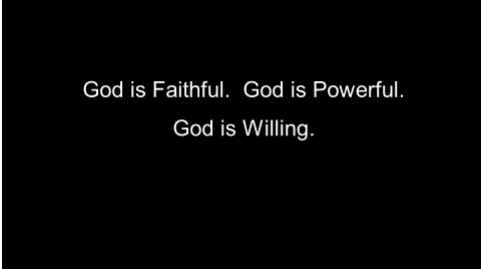
Complete confidence, laser-focus. Ned Yost's and his Royals' hearts and minds were set on winning. The Easter truth is that it never entered God the Father's mind, not for a second, that His Son would stay dead in the grave. Out of

His complete love for us, God knew without a doubt that Jesus was going to win on Easter Morning.

How do you and I let Easter shape every day of our lives, not just for these few Easter Sundays between now and Pentecost? How do you and I let Easter shape every day of our lives? How do you stand in (what Paul Tripp calls) “resurrection strength” when some of our days feel like we’ve got no leg to stand on? How do you stand in a life of renewal when you’ve sinned against? Or, conversely, how do you stand in a life of renewal when something God calls sinful starts to look pretty appealing and attractive to you? How do you stand in Resurrection strength when this fallen world breaks your door down again and again, on any given day? (Paul Tripp, *Wednesday’s Word*, April 1, ’15).

Paul motivates us in this passage from Colossians. It’s titled, *Living as Those Made Alive in Christ*. Colossians 3:1-4: ***Since, then, you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.***

With complete confidence and laser-focus Paul speaks, “...you have been raised to new life with Christ.” Let this Easter truth shape every day of your life. At the Empty Tomb, God shows us three character qualities which give us the confidence to do this: God is Faithful, God is Powerful, God is Willing (Paul Tripp). God is Faithful. It’s in the Garden of Eden; Eve and Adam are at the “Tree of Knowledge” and there’s the serpent and the apple. Adam and Eve, sadly, have their very first taste of sin, and they’re cast out of the Garden. This breaks God’s heart;



God is Faithful. God is Powerful.
God is Willing.

but even before this, God had promised to once and for all destroy sin and death. God had already made a plan to send a Rescuer, a Deliverer, a Savior. God is Faithful.

God is Powerful. With all His power, God choreographed the precise moment when God would give up heaven to come down to earth as our “Immanuel.” Fast-forward some 30-plus years later, our Immanuel is beaten, broken on a cross, dead, and then buried. God’s ultimate power is on full display when Jesus takes off his grave clothes and walks out of the tomb, alive. I heard a preacher say once, “Those strong-men you see on TV, those power-lifting guys, they may be able to pull a loaded bus with their teeth; but (unlike Jesus) they’ll all die!” God is Powerful.

God is Willing. Why did God go to the lengths He did to sacrifice His own Son? Because God knows us inside-and-out, God is willing, because God completely understands our condition and utter need, God is willing. God is merciful and God loves us. So God does what it takes in coming down to earth to rescue us, in coming down to give us life, big life, true life. God is Faithful, God is Powerful, and God is Willing. Question: Are you willing to let Jesus shape every day of your life?

The “hidden” life = a life grounded and secure with Christ.

The “hidden” life = true life, freely given to us out of His love for us.

In verse 3, Paul explains that because of being raised up in Christ, our lives now are “hidden” with Christ. This means a life secured with Christ. This “hidden” life is the true life, freely given out of His love for us at the Cross, at the Empty Tomb. Hidden with Christ, now into eternity, means we can experience a whole new make-over here on earth. We no longer need to live as if this world is all that matters (Barclay, p.147). It doesn’t—the world of power, prestige, possessions, pride—these are not important

compared to standing secure with Jesus. They may seem important; they may feel urgent as you run the daily “rat race” of competition and comparison. But nothing matters more than standing in Jesus’ rock-solid Presence, right now and forever. Have a peace, a quiet confidence, steady hope: you are hidden with Christ and can stand in “Resurrection Strength.” Let this promise shape every day of your life.

“Set your hearts on things above,” Paul tells us, and “set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” Paul is telling us to focus on the things of heaven while here on earth. He’s telling us to have laser-focus on the things of the Spirit rather than things of the flesh. “Things of the Flesh”? Look at this tough list Paul is describing in verses 5 to 9: sexual immorality, impurity (pornea), lust, greed, lying, anger, slander, abusive words and actions. All false-self, old-self stuff that you and I need to “die to,” before these things kill us! Pursue the “Things of the Spirit” instead! Ask the Holy Spirit to grow these “fruits” in you—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

Things of the Spirit?

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. – Galatians 5:22-23

Keep seeking/setting your heart and your mind on the things above. Someone wise once said, “standing in a garage doesn’t make you a car; swimming in the ocean doesn’t make you a fish; and sitting in a pew doesn’t make you a Christian.” By your outward expressions and demonstrations, only then will people see and know your inner hidden life as a Christian! Let what Jesus does at Easter shape your daily outlook, attitudes, ambitions.

So, I want to tell you about a plan we’ve got here at VPC for the Easter season, for the next six weeks. I want to

personally invite you to join me, and our leadership, in a season of day-by-day renewal. For these six Easter weeks—between now and Pentecost—we want to invite you to live and breathe into renewal. We want to invite you to move into renewal with us. We’re asking you to set your heart and your mind on the “things above.” Alongside our Sunday worship, there’s our daily devotional, called Ready for Revival. Using this devotional, we’re asking you to commit to praying with us each day for renewal.



Six weeks, six sections. Each section focuses on a specific area where God wants to give us (and our church) hearts and minds that are renewed. Will you join us? Give us, give yourself 15 minutes a day, to pray this devotional, to pray for renewal. You can also sign up on our website to receive electronically a daily Scripture and Prayer. OR, you can buy this devotional, Ready for Revival, right out in the Lobby after this service. I promise you, God will meet you, God will renew you, and God will renew our church.

Let Easter shape your daily life. We pray: “Renew us, O Lord, make Your face to shine upon us, that we may be saved.”

Prayer is essential to what we’re going to be and do together these next weeks. So may we do some prayer right now with each other? May I ask you to do these three things with someone near you, sitting next to you? FIND someone near/next to you:

- share a prayer request (a concern or thanksgiving),
- promise to pray for each other for the week,
- close in a prayer (Ephesians 3; there’s one in your bulletin and on the screen)!