

In the Name of the Living God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

What a beautiful Easter morning! Again, we have many here in the church. Lots of noise and lots of life...as it should be.

Today symbolizes everything about our faith. Easter is about the hope of rebirth. The change to us as brought about by God. So, I want to change up our Easter Sunday morning just a little bit...by mentioning how so many more thousands upon thousands focus their celebration this day, with a simple Easter egg hunt.

Well, on the surface, an Easter egg hunt may seem really out of place in a sermon. But, think about it. We, in the year 2018, are called by God to look for and find ways to bring together the places and things that we alone as humans divide into the secular (over here) and the sacred (over here). God does NOT split up creation into the secular (over here) and the sacred (over here). We do that, but God is everywhere at all times, all of the time.

Also, in this special time of challenge that we live in...the 21<sup>st</sup> century where the world around us sees the church as basically irrelevant to real, everyday life...God calls us to be creative. Creative in the ways that we interact with others. In that way, we Christians need to think outside of the box.

That is not a new idea for God's people in this time. We are called to "get out there". But, "get out there" with what? How should we do that? And why? As Christians, we are sometimes...and that is only sometimes...but we are sometimes known as "People of the Resurrection."

What does that mean? What are we really about? What is the message that we are called to share, fellow People of the Resurrection?

We are not alone in wondering about that. Not by a long, long shot. Christians world-wide struggle to do the hard work of answering those deeper questions. Answers that call for personal commitment...not of the head, but of the heart.

God does not ask us to believe. Believing in God is easy. It means nothing. 90-plus percent of Americans say that they believe in God...which means that they believe that God exists. But so what? I believe that, this year, my beloved New York Mets will have a better starting pitching staff than the cross-town New York Yankees, but so what? How does that belief make my life more meaningful? Where is the passion?

I believe that our government leaders exist and are controversial. I see them on TV. But, so what? That stuff is all head-based fact or opinion.

Where is the gut wrenching stuff? What causes your heart to beat crazy?

What is the greatest commandment? It is we **love** (not think about) God with all our heart, and all our mind, and all our soul.

For those of you who are in love, or have been in love with someone else, you know or remember what that felt like? Losing your heart to that someone. Doing strange things out of character. Aching to be with that someone. Thinking of little else. Do you remember, in a way, how great that felt?

You know what? God loves us in that way....and today is the proof of it. Easter shows how God aches...ACHES...to be with us. Longs to be in love with us....even me, as little and meaningless as I am. The way into that romance...that expansive opening of limitless expression within the heart...that all opens up today.

It is the Resurrection of Jesus, from the man who was crucified...risen from the dead into the Christ, the Anointed One of God, the King of the kingdom of Heaven. It is the Resurrection of Jesus that makes possible the closing of the loop of the great mystery in the cosmic journey of God's creation. It is through the Resurrection of Jesus that God can take each of us by the hand, so to speak, from the potential of our humanity when we are born from our mother's womb into the reality of transformation into the divinity that lies dormant within each of our souls.

If you hear and remember only one thing from this message today, let it be this one: Resurrection for us is NOT just about waiting until we are dead to see what happens next, if anything. Resurrection for us is the opportunity, through God, to live...to fully live...today. In peace. In security. In love.

So, back to the Easter egg hunt. Maybe some little ones in your family will go to an Easter egg hunt today..and you will go with them. If so, take your eggs home with you...because the hunt is over. In the darkness and bleakness of your day or night, or some others near to you when needed most, open up the egg of your heart to the healing and the miracles of rebirth that await each one of us.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ. By his great mercy, we have been born anew to a living hope, through the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead....brought to you and all the world in the loving Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.