

The Other Easter Message

by Jim Cymbala

The other Easter message is that God wants us to go back to the beginning, to the place where we first received Jesus Christ, and to have childlike faith in him.

Duration: 29:45

Scripture: Matthew 4:23-25, Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 1:32-39, Mark 4:1-20, Luke 4:42-44, Luke 8:4-15, John 21:1-14

Topics: "Easter"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the seriousness of sin and the need for atonement. He explains that God cannot overlook sin and that every sin will be punished either by a worthy substitute, Jesus, or by the person who committed the sin. The preacher also highlights the three sins that put Jesus on the cross and reminds the audience of Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations. He then discusses the significance of Good Friday and how Jesus became the substitutionary sacrifice for the sins of the world. The preacher encourages the listeners to turn back to a life centered on Jesus and warns against compromise, jealousy, and apathy, which he believes crucify Jesus today. He concludes by urging the audience to prioritize their relationship with God over worldly pursuits.

Transcript

If I would ask anybody here, what is the briefest message of Easter? What's the truth that Easter brings us? I think almost everyone would know that it's, he is risen, or Jesus is alive, or Christ is alive. And that seems to be the main message of Easter. But there's another Easter message, that in all these years, reading the scriptures, all these times, I never saw this truth until this very week.

God began to unfold something to me that has become so precious. So let's, for our scripture reading, and to quickly go over the story, let's look at Matthew together. Matthew, the last chapter.

Matthew 28, after the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, and going to the tomb, rolled back the stone, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.

The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, he has risen, just as he said.

Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly, this is the angel talking, then go quickly and tell his disciples, what? He has risen from the dead, and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.

Now I have told you. So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid, yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. Suddenly Jesus met them.

Greetings, he said. They came to him, clasped his feet, and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, do not be afraid.

Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee. There they will see me. Jumping to the 16th verse, then the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

And when they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. And then Jesus came to them and said, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded.

And surely, I am with you always to the very end of the age. We all know the story about Good Friday and the fact that Christ went to the cross, dying for the sins of the world. He bore the punishment that you and I deserved.

He was the substitutionary sacrifice. He was the atonement. He was the fulfillment of all those lambs that they used to kill across the street.

If you would have gone to the temple back 2,000 years ago or more, you would have gone to Jerusalem, all you would have heard is the bleeding of animals and the smell of blood, because the priests all day and night, beside the daily sacrifices, blood, blood being poured out. Why? Because God said, which was celebrated last Monday night by the Jewish people, when I see the blood, I will what? I will pass over you. Sin is so serious.

God is so holy. The universe must be run on a principle of justice. God can't wink at anything.

God cannot wink at sin. There must be an atonement, a sacrifice, death. The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die.

Every sin will be punished, either by a substitute who is worthy, that's Jesus, the Son of God, or by the person who committed the sin, but there'll be no, not dealt with sin. All sin will be dealt with. You know, it's interesting, just in passing, because we get so light about sin, the three sins that put Jesus on the cross, a lot of us look down at other people who we think are like, did a crime, but those weren't the sins that put Jesus on the cross.

Just in passing, there are three sins that put Jesus on the cross. Number one was envy. Pilate, when they brought Jesus to him, when the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to him, he wanted to find a way out.

He wanted to let Jesus go, because the Bible says he knew it was because of envy that the Pharisees and chief priests had brought Jesus to him. He wasn't spiritual, but he was street smart, and he knew, no, this guy's innocent. You know why they hate him? They're jealous of him.

They're jealous of him. Why? Because he had the blessing of God. God's favor was on him.

The people loved him. He always had an answer. He always could outdo them when they tried to trick him.

And that envy and that jealousy, which is so common to us, you know, pastors are jealous of other pastors. Churches are jealous of churches. We're jealous of someone who's nicer looking, has a better education, has a better job, someone who's smarter than us, better musically.

You always want to be tall, and you're not, and there's someone tall. You resent them because of their inches of height there. Jealousy is a crazy thing.

It put Jesus on the cross. Jealousy. And then there was Pilate who wanted to get rid of him and find some way out, because his wife had a dream.

Did you know that? His wife had a dream the night before, and she said, don't have anything to do with that man. That's a just man. Don't have anything to do with him.

So Pilate was looking for a way out, but you know what happened? The crowd started screaming, give us Jesus, crucify Jesus. Crucify Jesus, give us Barabbas. Crucify Jesus, we have no king but Caesar.

And the Bible says, to fit in with the crowd, he compromised. And casually, he washed his hands with water, as if you can wash your hands with water. And said, scourge him.

You know what scourge meant? That meant stripped him, and they beat his back to hamburger meat. Why did he do it? He compromised. He knew better.

In his conscience, he knew better. But to keep in with the crowd, how many people who God is dealing with, how many Christians we compromise, because we wanna fit in with people who are very hip. And we don't want anyone to say, you don't believe in Jesus, do you? I mean, like, you're not like a Christian or something.

You're not like dinosaurs, and you believe in what? You believe in all kinds of hocus-pocus. That's what put Christ on the cross. Jealousy, compromise, and one other thing, which I've been marveling at this week.

Across the street, you know your Bible a little bit, don't you? Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic gospels. They cover a lot of the same material. John covers new material.

But Matthew, Mark, and Luke cover the sermon, a little bit of the Sermon on the Mount, miracles that Jesus did, certain healing, certain teachings, the parable of the four different kinds of seeds, the sower, and all of that. And the Bible says that they were with him for three and a half years, the disciples. And every day was so chock-full of ministry.

Jesus didn't begin till he was 30. He died around 33 and a half years old. And he was so busy ministering every day that he had no time to eat sometime.

His family came and said, we gotta slow Jesus down because he's lost his mind. All he does is minister, minister, preach, teach, pray for people, take time. He's lost his mind.

Now, if Jesus did that every day for three and a half years, he must have touched a lot of people. John, in the book of John, says that if everything Jesus did were tried to be put in a book, metaphorically speaking,

the world wouldn't be big enough to put all the things that Jesus did. So I wanna ask you a question.

When Pilate was looking for a way out, where were all those people that Jesus helped? How come the crowd was just screaming, crucify him, crucify him! Let Barabbas go free, crucify him! Where were all the people going, no, no, don't crucify him. He healed me, I was blind, now I see. I couldn't walk, now I can walk.

He blessed my children, he healed my mother-in-law. He did this, he did that. Where were all those people? I don't see one voice lifted to preserve him.

See, that's what crucified Jesus Christ. It was jealousy, it was compromise, and it was apathy. When Jesus needed the most, where were all the people that he helped? They were texting and watching American Idol.

They were going to a sports game, whatever. They had no, no relationship with where Jesus was and what he needed. And isn't that the way he gets crucified today? This is what hurts Jesus the most today.

Compromise, jealousy among believers, and then apathy. Like Jesus said, beware the cares of this life. You'll get so busy earning a living and taking vacations that you won't even have time for me.

The things of God will be squeezed out and you're living and you're running and you're running for what, por que? What are you running for? When you die, you're not taking a dime with you. Naked, we came into this world. How are we gonna leave it? Naked.

But Jesus went to the cross for those sins and everything else, and then he rose from the dead, and yes, the message was he is risen. But you know what happened on the Last Supper? When he was at the Last Supper, Jesus said this according to Mark. Tonight, all of you are gonna betray me, and all of you are gonna flee and leave me alone.

And they all looked around. What? We're like this with you. We're your posse.

We would never forsake you. No, you're all gonna do that. But when I'm raised again from the dead, which they didn't understand, go to Galilee and meet me there.

Well, they didn't get the Galilee part. They were just, what is he talking about? And Peter remonstrated with him and said, what? These other guys might forsake you, not me. You know I'm rock solid.

And he said before the cock crows, you're gonna deny me three times. Now, when Mary Magdalene, who had lived a horrible life, and Jesus had delivered her, when she went to the tomb and saw the angel, did you notice what the angel said to her? It was a double message. He's alive.

Now, tell his disciples he's not only alive, but go to Galilee where he will meet you. Then when she sees Jesus, isn't it odd that Jesus would say it yet again? Tell the disciples, don't worship, don't hold onto me. There's other things gonna happen now.

Tell the disciples I'm alive, but tell them to go to Galilee. Now, if this is the map of Israel, the front of this pulpit, Palestine in the time of Christ, it was divided into three general areas, north, middle, south. The south area was called Judea.

That's where Jerusalem was, right about there. That's where the temple was. That's where the priests went and ministered in the temple.

That's where all Hebrew men, Jewish men, went three times a year at the different feasts that they were required to go to Jerusalem. That's where all the rabbinical schools were. That's where all the famous Bible teachers were in the south.

Judea was very religious. It was like the Bible Belt, Old Testament Bible Belt. In the middle was Samaria.

Samaria, which I've been in on the only trip I ever took to Israel, I was in Samaria, and Samaria now is still inhabited by the same people that were inhabiting it then who are called Samaritans. And the Jewish people, especially the very religious ones, despised the Samaritans because the Samaritan religion was a mixture. It was syncretism.

It was a hybrid between some principles of the Old Testament, but then a lot of mixture of stuff that they got from Assyria and Babylonia and other places. They hated the Samaritans so much that sometimes to go north, they would avoid going through that and go all the way around, cross the Jordan River, and come all the way around just not to walk on Samaritan dirt because some of the rabbis taught if you get the dust of Samaria in your shoes, in your sandals, you become unclean. Talk about prejudice.

North above Samaria was Galilee. Galilee was like farmlands. Galilee was not so religious.

There was a mixture of some Gentile people up in Galilee. In fact, it was called Galilee of the Gentiles. There were Jewish people there, but there were other influences.

People were more involved in trading and moving business and all of that. It wasn't religious like Judea and Samaria was another whole matter. This is where Jesus was raised in Galilee.

Jesus wasn't raised in the south. He was raised in Nazareth. Nazareth was a little town right about here.

The Sea of Galilee was up over here, and that's where Capernaum was. That's where Peter came from. Jesus, it seems, had a house in Capernaum once he started to minister.

He didn't go back to a house in Nazareth, which was a little town. He would go to Capernaum. This is where all the disciples were picked and selected.

This is where he saw Peter, James, and John fishing and said, come on, I'll make you fishers of men. Follow me. That's where he saw Matthew, who was also called Levi, and said, follow me.

He left everything and followed him. Now that he's risen from the dead, he says to them, don't meet me in Jerusalem. Don't meet me at the temple.

That makes more sense. Meet me at the temple, because that's where people worship God, and I'm God in the flesh. No, don't meet me in Jerusalem.

Don't meet me in Samaria. Don't meet me in some remote desert down in the south part of Judea. No, go back to the place where we first began.

Now the Bible mentions this several times, so it must have significance. First of all, I just would like to point out to you that the double message of Easter is so important, because just to scream and shout, he's

alive, and I believe Jesus is risen, what good is it if you never go and meet him and encounter him and have fellowship with him? In other words, some of you might just come to church on Easter Sundays. What good is that if you don't have an encounter with Jesus Christ? No church has power.

No Roman Catholic church, no statue has power. The pope has no power. No minister has power.

All power is in Jesus Christ, and even if we intellectually believe that he's risen, the only proof that it's a true heart faith is you go to where he is so that he can work in your life. You can talk to him. You can listen to him.

Go to Galilee so we can have fellowship again. I've gone to the cross. I died.

I rose again. Now tell them, go to Galilee, because it's not just that I'm alive. I want to be with them.

I want to talk to them. Religion is not about in our head believing certain things because the devil believes those things. If you went to Satan today and said, do you believe Jesus is alive? Believe Jesus is alive.

He knows Jesus is alive. He was there probably when Christ was raised from the dead, but he's still Satan. Jesus being alive didn't change Pontius Pilate.

Didn't change the priest that planned his murder. No. Jesus is alive.

Jesus is alive. All right, then what are you gonna do with Jesus is alive? Are you gonna go where he asked to meet you and are you gonna open up your life to him and submit to him and worship him and let him talk and speak into your life so that you can pour out your needs to him? That's what Christianity is really about. It's not about he's alive.

He's alive. It's about going to the one who's alive. Fellowship with Jesus.

Talking to Jesus. And I wonder when was the last time that some of us were with Jesus all alone? Just all alone. You had a meeting with Jesus.

You know, like you go to lunch with someone on the job? Let's go hang out and have lunch. Or you go and you watch TV together or you take a walk together or you just hang out with someone or you ride the subway and you talk or you go ride in the car. When was the last time some of you met Jesus and had some time with him? Because what's the sense of saying he's alive if you're not gonna go talk to him? What's the sense of saying, oh, no, he's alive.

He's alive. Jesus is alive. He overcame death in the grave.

I know. So what's it mean in your life and my life? That's why Jesus said, tell them I'm alive, but meet me in Galilee. The other thing about Galilee was Galilee was the place where they began.

Galilee was the place where they started with virgin hearts when he first called them. And when they had childlike faith. And it seemed like I, while I was praying about Easter Sunday this past week, seemed like God kept saying this to my heart, I felt.

That he would have people here today, upstairs, and you watching on the screen across the street. You need to go back to Galilee. You need to go back to the place where you had childlike faith and Jesus meant everything to you.

You know, when they started out with Jesus, this was all new and wonderful. And now so many things had happened. He had been arrested.

And they thought for sure he would just speak a word and angels would deliver him. But no, it didn't work out that way. So they were filled with doubts and confusion.

And I thought he was the one and what? On the cross? And they beat him and now he's dead? No, come on. Our rabbi can't be dead. Jesus can't be dead.

Yeah, no, he died. So they had so much confusion in their minds and Jesus is calling them back to the place where they started. How about you, sir, right over there? How about you up in the balcony? How about you across the street? How did you start with Jesus? Were some of you in the Caribbean, some island, some church or down south or in Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, or in a little storefront church in New York? Wherever you come from, were some of you once in a place where you just had childlike faith and you trusted Jesus for everything? And now look at you now.

Look at us now. We've got complicated, we've gotten cynical, we've gotten hard, we've gotten mechanical. And we try to write it off like we're maturing and we're older now.

No, no, no, no, no, no. The sweetest place to be is to have childlike faith in Jesus Christ. Do I get a witness to that? In fact, Jesus said, except you become like a little child, you can't enter the kingdom of heaven.

Come on, how about some of you? Remember when you prayed about everything? Remember when the Bible was the most important thing in your life? Remember where no one had to say, read the word, read the word. You just couldn't wait for God to speak to you. You had a virgin heart.

You had such a love for the Lord. Remember what Jesus said to the church in Ephesus in the book of Revelation, second chapter? He said, I know you do this and you work and you labor and all that, but I have this against you. You lost your first love, that first faith, that tender heart.

And now you get older, life gets cluttered. You have children, you have grandchildren, jobs, the economy, the price of oil, the cost of gas. And the next thing you know, just what Jesus said, beware of the cares of this life.

And now Jesus is saying, come back to Galilee. Come back to where we began. Come back to where it was simple and childlike.

You know, a lot of people, we try to get to a new place in God, but we forget that God's route to that new place is always to go back to the beginning. There's no sweeter place than when you first receive Jesus Christ. As you receive the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul says, so also grow in him.

As you received him, how did you receive him? So simple. The thief on the cross just said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom. What did Jesus say to him? Today you'll be with me where? In paradise.

Just that simple, childlike trust. So Jesus says, tell them I'm alive, but tell them we're gonna go back to the beginning and start again. Oh, I love that about Jesus.

Have you been like me where you've messed up in life and you get disappointed and you run in a dead end? Anyone here ever mess up and run into a dead end? Just lift your hand, spiritually speaking. And instead of Jesus saying, what a mess this is. Can you believe this? Angels, would you look down here and see what's going on here? No.

Jesus is always saying, no matter how big the mess, I can un-mess it. But come back to the beginning. Come back to me.

Come back to being with me. Come back to childlike faith. Come back to first love.

First love. Now, when the disciples, let me close, when the disciples first heard that Jesus wanted to meet them, you could imagine the fear that they had. What? He's not just alive, he wants to see us? Aye.

After what we've done, can you imagine the brow-beating we're gonna get? Can you imagine the talk he's gonna give us? Because they thought he was like them. See, if Peter would've had someone fail him like Peter failed Jesus, Peter would've let that guy have it. And he thought Jesus would say something like, hey, Peter, yeah, it's me.

Yeah, Galilee, I'm glad you came. I'm risen from the dead. Look, Peter, do you remember that night, I have a video of that night when you told me that, you told me that you were never gonna deny me and all of that, and I have another video that a friend of mine took of you in the courtyard, and there's a girl saying, no, you're a Galilean, you have that accent, and you, I think those are curse words you're saying there, Peter, and you say you don't know me.

Peter, when I was there for you, how come you couldn't be there for me? Isn't that the way a lot of us would've handled it? We're so judgmental. Do I get a witness? We're so judgmental. Isn't this amazing? I found this out about myself and about people.

We can judge other people and see their faults, and we have 1,000 more before God, and we just say thank you for your mercy, and then we don't show mercy to other people. Come on, can we put our hands together on that? We're judging everyone, but oh, thank you for your mercy, Lord. So you know what Jesus wants you to know tonight? I think I'm speaking the mind of Christ now, what he wants you to know this afternoon.

He wants you to come to Galilee. I'm making this altar right now, Galilee. He wants some of you who, when you were 14, maybe, somebody 14 years old, 18 years old, you knelt in some little church somewhere that no one knows about, and you poured out your heart to Jesus, and he was so precious, and now things have gone off, and you've drifted, and the train has gone off the tracks, and all Jesus is saying to you is, not only am I alive, but meet me in Galilee, because I'm the God of a second chance.

I'm the God of a 10,000 chances. How many have had a lot of chances, and Jesus has always been there? Come on, can we say that, affirm it? One more thing. One of the things that Jesus also wanted to meet them about Galilee was not only, first of all, to be with them.

What's the sense of him being alive if he's not gonna be with you? I mean, that's so simple, but so true. What's the sense of shouting, Jesus is alive, and you never talk to him, and you never let him speak to you? No, but he wanted to bring them back to childlike faith, childlike obedience, childlike love. I wonder how Jesus felt.

I wonder how he feels when we come into his presence, and we go, no, Lord, just a little longer. Talk to me, Jesus. I wanna open my heart just a little more, Jesus.

How glad he must be when we just don't rush in and out. Give me this, give me that. Signing off now, bye, Lord.

I gotta go. How many love the presence of the Lord? Can you lift your hand up if you love just the presence of the Lord? But Jesus said this, and I wanna leave it with you. Even though you forsook me, I want you to know, lo, I am with you always, to the end of the earth.

Jesus, to the end of the age, Jesus never pays back in kind. You deserted me, Peter, but I will never desert you. You let me down, Peter, and so did you, James and John, but I'll never let you down.

Now, I'm giving you instructions. I want you to go out, and this is another thing. The Lord wants us to go to Galilee and meet him because he's got instructions.

Why did he save you? He's got purpose for your life. Some of us have drifted. We have no sense of purpose, and then we wonder why we have no peace and no joy.

There's no sense of purpose. Why did Christ die for you? What's the reason you're on planet Earth? We don't give that a thought. We're racing, racing, racing, and getting emptier by the moment.

But the Lord says, I got something for you to do, and while you do it, always remember this. I will never leave you. Close your eyes with me.

Praise God. Praise God for Jesus. Across the street, I hope you've been listening carefully to my words because this Easter 2011 is turnaround date, turnaround Sunday, turnaround resurrection Sunday.

You're gonna go to Galilee. You're gonna start over with the Lord. The confusion, the doubts are gonna get out.

You're gonna go back to simple childlike faith. You're gonna go to a life centered on Jesus, just like it once was in your life. And I know I'm speaking to people.

I know by the Spirit that I'm speaking to people now who once had such an intimate walk with the Lord. Oh my goodness, he was everything. And you excuse it now because you're older.

You're in your 40s, 50s, 60s, 70, 80, 90. Listen, there's no excuse for drifting from Jesus. He's always calling us back to childlike faith and love and trust.

And he wants you to know I'll never leave you. And while I've been speaking, some of you have had a little burning sensation in your heart because it's the Lord saying, come on, isn't it time we begin afresh? Come on, isn't it time for a new beginning? I'm waiting for you. Meet me in Galilee.

I'm alive, but you have to meet me. Can't just be running, running, running. You'll end up in fear and you'll end up empty.

If you're here today and you say, Pastor, I believe in the Lord. I believe that he rose from the dead and I want to go to Galilee to meet him and start afresh. There are some things that have to have adjustments made in my life with Christ.

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