



**Theme: Tell Me Something Good –  
Good News in the Gospel of John  
“Sent with the Good News”**

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber, April 4-5, 2026, at Summit Church, Durango

**Weekly Memory Verse:**

***<sup>21</sup>Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” <sup>22</sup> Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. – John 20***

**VIDEO                      Best News Ever Sermon Starter**

**SLIDE                        “Sent with the Good News”**

I am so grateful to gather with you this Easter weekend. I want to begin by recognizing that some of you are here because your family begged or bribed you to come. I get it, and I’m just glad you came. I realize this story is the same every year and some of us have questions about whether this really happened. I get that too, as it’s a common struggle for many when it comes to believing in the resurrection. I always remind our congregation that this is a safe place to bring your questions and your doubts. One of you sent me this great cartoon that captures why we struggle with both Christmas and Easter at times. We find Santa Clause and the Easter Bunny on a bench and the rabbit says to Santa, “What do you mean the only reason we exist is because of

Jesus? Who's Jesus?"

## **GRAPHIC          Santa and Bunny**

Who is this Jesus? This is one of the main reasons John wrote his Gospel 2000 years ago. In John's Gospel he is making the case that Jesus is more than a mere man. He is more than a great prophet or teacher. John wants us to be clear that God has come to us in the person of Jesus Christ. God wrapped himself in human flesh to reveal himself to us and to communicate to us as human beings. Through Jesus, we are meant to understand what God is like and who we are as humans and what we are meant to be like. **Jesus is God's response to the deepest questions that we ask and the struggles that we face in life.**

One of John's great concerns in his gospel is to make sure that we understand that what we believe about those deepest questions and the struggles we face in life, **should make a difference in how we live our lives.** Spiritual truth is meaningless for John unless it changes us, which is one of the points he is trying to drive home as we read about Jesus and his life and death and resurrection. **God understands the questions and struggles that we have as humans, the doubts and the confusion and fear and what we wrestle with daily.** God comes to us in the person of Jesus to respond to these human thoughts and emotions.

**Jesus is God's message to us** and John makes this clear from the very beginning of his gospel, in what's called the prologue. Everything else we see about Jesus in the Gospel of John is meant to teach us something about who God is and who we are meant to be. We read these words that we often read on Christmas Eve as we like the Christ candle.

## **BIBLE**

***1 In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

## BIBLE

***14 So the Word became flesh and lived among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.***

The Word is God's desire to reveal himself and communicate with each one of us. When we come to the story of the death and resurrection of Jesus, we come to the climax of that message to us. While we are here to focus on the resurrection that first Easter Sunday, we also must **remember the events of the week leading up** to that to get the full impact of what is going on in John's Gospel.

On **Thursday night, after Jesus is arrested**, the disciples go into hiding. On **Friday, Jesus has been crucified** and the disciples are still hiding from the authorities. **Judas**, the one who betrayed Jesus, **took his own life** that day because of the guilt he felt around his betrayal. Friday night, Jesus is placed in the tomb, and the tomb is sealed while disciples are still **hiding in a room with the door locked**. They remained in that room all **day Saturday**.

Here's what we read in John 19 about what happened late on that Friday night and early on that Sunday morning.

## BIBLE

***41 The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. 42 And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.***

***1 Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.***

Mary then runs to the disciples who are hiding behind locked doors and she says to them, **"Someone has taken the Lord's body!"** She is assuming someone has taken Jesus to further humiliate him. We

then find two of the disciples having **the great foot race as Peter and the disciple whom Jesus loved** which we often assume is John, running to the tomb. It's Peter in the lead and then it's **John and then it's Peter** and then it's **John who beat him** to the tomb. They saw that the tomb was empty, with **the linen cloths folded** on the ledge, and they still didn't understand what was going on so they headed back to the room and **locked themselves** inside again.

Mary Magdalene goes back to the tomb, and she **first sees two angels sitting** at the head and the foot of where Jesus had been. She then sees Jesus and he speaks to her. She runs back to the disciples and says, "I have seen the Lord! He is risen!" Luke's gospel tells us about their response in chapter 24.

#### **BIBLE**

***11 But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it.***

The story that we will focus on today picks up from there. All Sunday afternoon they remained in that room, behind locked doors, terrified for their future. This is where we meet them in our text from John chapter 20.

#### **BIBLE**

***19 That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders.***

They were right to be afraid. It was **not uncommon for a leader who was a threat** to the Jewish establishment, the religious leaders or to Rome, to be killed but **all of those who were in their inner circle** as well. The disciples rightly believed that the Romans might crucify them just as they crucified Jesus. They were afraid for their lives, but there was something more going on in that room as they were hiding behind locked doors.

I have no doubt they were also experiencing trauma, grief,

**confusion, sorrow and pain.** I think that because I've been with many people in our congregation when they have **lost a loved one** in an untimely or tragic death. I have experienced that in my own life with the death of our son last 10 years ago. When I was a **youth pastor**, on several occasions **I found myself in the emergency room** waiting area where teenagers had been in terrible automobile accidents. Their friends and family were in a waiting room, **hoping the doctor would emerge with good news.** I have sat with families as the doctor came in and had to say, **"I'm so sorry. We did everything we could."**

I felt what was being **felt in that room** on that night the disciples were locked away. Many of you have probably been to the home of someone who has **lost a loved one tragically.** When you walk in, the neighbors and friends gather around. They have **brought food** and they try to find words that bring comfort. You finally can approach that person who has lost a spouse or a companion or some other family member or close friend, and **they begin to sob as you embrace** them. **Other people begin to cry,** and then it becomes **silent** as people sit there, **not sure what they should say or do next.** In these moments, there often is nothing to say **so don't say anything,** just be present. Be willing to sit in the **silence** because often, **that is where God shows up.**

I think that is what was happening in that room where the disciples had gathered behind locked doors that day. There are families of some of our **service members** today having that experience. There are families in **Iran and Ukraine** having that experience today. Family members had gone to church and shopping, and school and their lives were obliterated in **ridiculous and senseless violence.** This last year, another pastor lost his daughter suddenly and she was about the same age as our son who passed away. He wrote to me:

***"This has been a wretched ordeal. It has taken grief to a new level for me. We are just inching through the valley, trying to breathe."***

That may **capture what the disciples** were feeling that day in that room as they wrestled with **loss, trauma, sorrow, grief, despair and fear** all mixed into **one emotional cocktail**. That's the context in which we hear the next words from John's Gospel. While the disciples were behind a locked door in fear of the authorities...

## **BIBLE**

***Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said. 20 As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!***

**Can you imagine** what it must have been like at that moment for the disciples? There was **no knock** at the door. The door never even opened. **Jesus simply appears** in the room and is standing in front of them. Imagine what the disciples must've been feeling as they **rubbed their eyes**. What is going on? **Is it really you Jesus?** How is this even possible? That experience must've been **overwhelming and blown their minds**, as they see Jesus standing there in their midst. They no doubt wondered if it was **a hallucination** or if it was really happening.

Jesus even must show them his **hands** and his side **so they would believe** it was really him. He then says these powerful words, **"Peace be with you."** It was his way of saying, **"Don't be afraid.** I know what you have seen. I know the trauma you experienced. I know you saw with your own eyes, some of you from a distance because you were afraid. I know the pain you went through, but peace be with you. **I am here. It's me."**

Then there was **this joy** that came when they finally recognized and believed that Christ was risen from the grave. **If Jesus is the Word made flesh, what was God saying in this particular moment, showing up in the midst of the disciples after he had been crucified?** What God was saying is what we say **every single year at Easter**. He was telling us that **hate and sin and evil and even death will not have the final word.**

He was saying that the **worst thing will never be a last thing**. He was saying that Jesus, God in the flesh, had **triumphed over the grave**. Light has conquered darkness. Love has conquered hate. Life has conquered death. All of that was being said without a word being uttered as Jesus stands amid the disciples, resurrected from the grave.

God is addressing our deepest questions and challenges and struggles that we face as human beings, as Jesus is raised from the dead. Paul Tillich was a German American philosopher and theologian who wrote at the heights of World Wars I and II. He placed doubt at the center of his thoughts and faith. He said these words I find powerful to remember at Easter.

***“The face of every man shows the trace of the presence of death in his life, of his fear of death, of his courage toward death, and of his resignation to death. This frightful presence of death subjects man to bondage and servitude all his life.”***

**SLIDE** (Use Paul Tillich GRAPHIC on the side of this quote.)

***“But Christ’s resurrection liberates us from bondage and servitude. Christ’s presence is God’s answer to our frightful presence of death which lingers with us at every moment of every day.”***

We recognize that as human beings, we are mortal. Whether we have faith or not, we sometimes come to a place where we are okay with our own death. **We can come to a place of peace** and recognition that we are going to die, but we still struggle as human beings when we **think about the death of people that we love** the most. That’s **where the pain really comes in**, when we must deal with the pain of separation by **saying goodbye** to someone that we are used to seeing every day.

Jesus’ **resurrection is meant to speak** to us in those moments and say to us, **“Death is not the end of the story** for human beings. There is something more and so don’t be afraid and take heart and be at

peace.” The apostle Paul speaks powerfully about this in 1 Corinthians 15. He uses his beautiful phrase from Isaiah 25 that I often share at graveside services.

#### **BIBLE**

***51 But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed!***

#### **BIBLE**

***53 For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.***

***54 Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”***

#### **BIBLE**

***57 But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.***

There was a man whose **mother died on Palm Sunday**. That’s a good day to die if you’re going to die. Easter is even better if you can manage to have your **death work out to be on Easter Sunday**. I fantasize about that sometimes. **Right after I preach my Easter sermon**, I say those words I often share with you at the end of Easter services, **“Not only do I believe in the resurrection, but I’m counting on it.”** Then **I sit down and that’s it**. Wouldn’t that be a **dramatic** ending?

This man’s mother **wasn’t afraid to die**. She had faith in her redeemer, and she was **anticipating going home to be with Jesus**. She **wasn’t necessarily in a hurry**, but she looked forward to being in the presence of God. I have sat with **many older people who have felt** this way, and they **didn’t want their kids or grandkids to be afraid**. They want their family to know with confidence what they believe, and that

they will be okay.

Her pastor was **visiting and anointing her with oil** and praying with the family, **giving her to God**. The next day was Palm Sunday, and her **breathing became shallow** and she had been unconscious and unresponsive for several days. But as she **drew her last breath**, she **raised her hand**, even though she hadn't spoken or opened her eyes or moved for three days. As she took her last breath, she lifted her hand and **then laid it down and then she was gone**.

I have had that experience with several people as they have come near to their death, where they raise their hand as if wanting you to **take their hand**. I usually will take their **hand and pray**, but it's clear they're **reaching out for something more**. **Thomas Dorsey** wrote a spiritual hymn in 1932 about this experience of reaching out for the hand of Christ when he penned the words, "**Precious Lord, take my hand**." He wrote that hymn shortly after his wife died during childbirth to their firstborn. Just two days after her death, their newborn son passed away as well. In the midst of that grief, he wrote these words.

**SLIDE      Precious Lord, take my hand,  
              Lead me on, let me stand,  
              I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;**

**SLIDE**  
**Through the storm, through the night,  
              Lead me on to the light:  
              Take my hand, precious Lord,  
              Lead me home.**

The first person I was with when they took their last breath was my **grandma Huber, my dad's mother**. I was holding her hand as she took that last breath, and I could physically **feel something leaving** the room. I think **God took her hand** to lead her home. I think **Thomas Dorsey** in 1932, walking to the **overwhelming grief of losing his wife and his only child**, also felt the Lord taking his hand and leading him

home.

**This is the promise of Easter to each of us.** This is the message God is sending to us as Jesus is wrapped in human flesh and resurrected on that first Easter morning. Death is not the end. There is life beyond death and Christ has prepared a place for us and will lead us home. That brings us to what Jesus says after he shows them his hands and his side.

## **BIBLE**

***21 Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." 22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.***

Notice that the beginning of this text begins with this word, **"Again."** John is reminding us that this is **not the first-time Jesus** has used these words. This moment is a reaffirmation of the message that **Jesus has given to the disciples, and to us, repeatedly.** Easter is not just God's way of reassuring us that death is not the end. **Easter is not just God's way of saying that the worst thing** is never the last thing and that there is always hope.

**Easter is also a restatement of God's mission.** Easter comes with an expectation. God is doing something at **Easter to transform the world and change humanity.** Jesus reminds us that God has sent him, and **God has sent us to do something** and be about something and be a partner with God in the world. Jesus then breathes on them and sends them out because **Easter is a calling and is meant to tell us about our purpose in life.** Sometimes we wonder about our purpose and why we are here, **especially during hurt and pain** and other things that we experience in the world.

**SLIDE      Easter is God's answer to what happens even after we experience loss and trauma.**

Let's remember that John's Gospel is written in layers. There is a

clue at the very beginning of John's Gospel that points us to a deeper layer we are meant to see whenever we read his words. John starts with these words that are meant to be familiar.

**SLIDE                    "In the beginning..."**

Do you recognize these words? These are the same three words that we find beginning the book of Genesis, the very first book of the Bible, as we read about the creation story. **In Genesis, God creates Adam and Eve and places them in the midst of a garden.** He gives them wonderful things to eat and drink and enjoy, and God walks with them in the cool of the garden in the afternoon. God places a tree in the garden and says, **"This tree is mine.** You can have anything else in this garden as a gift from me to you, but this tree is mine, so please don't eat from it. If you do eat from it then horrible things will happen, so please don't eat from this tree."

Some people read the story, and they want to read it historically. Some people read this story and see it as archetypal. Whichever way we read it, we can't miss the fact that **this story is meant to be our story.** What happens when **you tell a child**, or even an adult, that they can't have something? They **desperately want that thing**, and sometimes we don't even know why! The one thing they can't have is the one thing they desperately want. Every one of us knows what it's like to have the **serpent whisper in our ears** that we should **take something that we know we shouldn't** take; that we should **do something we know we shouldn't** do; that we should **say something** we know we shouldn't say. **Paradise is lost** in our own lives in this story is **repeated every single day.**

Have any of you ever noticed how **some news stories that don't seem like** they should be that significant end up exploding and consuming our lives? Some **people want to blame the media**, or social media, but **who is it that consumes** all of that? It's us! We all think we should have an opinion and have our say, even when we don't know all

the facts. Or we do those very things we are criticizing in our own lives! **Do you know why we do this?** It's because we are human and this is our story.

In Genesis, we see the beautiful garden which God has made and the paradise God created destroyed when they begin to pray a prayer something like this, **“Not THY will, but MY will be done.** I know what you have said God, but I want to do what I want to do. I want to have the satisfaction that I want to have. **I want the world to run my way.** I want to be God.”

When we human beings decide to go down this path, and we turn away from God, **we find pain and brokenness.** How can you doubt that when you watch the evening news and see the things that happen in our world? We see the evidence of paradise being lost in human interaction all around us.

When John is telling us about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, **he is taking us back to the garden.** John tells us that Jesus went to pray in a garden the night before he was crucified, just before he was arrested. Matthew, Mark and Luke simply tell us that Jesus went to Gethsemane. **Why would John make sure we knew that was a garden grove of olive trees?**

We read these words earlier from John 19 which also point to the deeper level and included detail which Matthew, Mark and Luke don't give us.

## **BIBLE**

***41 The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before.***

So, Jesus **prays in a garden.** The place of **crucifixion** was near a garden where there was a **new tomb** in which the body of Jesus was laid. Jesus was buried in that garden tomb. Jesus was **resurrected in that garden tomb.** When Jesus first appears to Mary near the tomb,

she thinks he is a **gardener**.

God is the gardener in Eden. Jesus is buried in a garden, and he appears to be the gardener. John wants us to get that **Jesus has come to reclaim the garden and restore paradise**. Jesus has come **to heal** the brokenness in our world and **create a new humanity** which is restored and can live as God intended human beings to live.

Jesus suffers on the cross and **takes that curse of death** which first appeared in that first garden as result of humanity wanting to be God and have everything. In the resurrection, **Jesus begins the process of changing everything**. By his life, his teaching, his death in his resurrection, Jesus is turning things around. In his death, **Jesus experiences all the brutality that humanity** can offer and he transforms that and brings hope through his resurrection.

John gives us one more clue to the connection between Jesus and the restoration of paradise in this story as he gives us another detail. We read this in Genesis 2:7.

## **BIBLE**

***7 Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person.***

Remember what Jesus said to the disciples in that locked upper room when he first appeared to them? ***"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."*** ***22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.***

Jesus **breathed new life into them, changing them and transforming them from the inside out**. They literally left that room different people who were now willing to let go of the fear and be a part of God's message to the world. They experience the **fundamental reorientation of life** through Jesus Christ and his resurrection in him breathing new life into them. **It changed how they thought** and how

they **saw their lives and what they saw their purpose in life** as being. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus is transforming those disciples so their prayer moves from being, “Not THY will, but MY will be done,” to what we pray in the Lord’s Prayer every week, “**Not MY will, but THY will be done,**” which also is the prayer that Jesus prayed in the garden the night of his arrest.

They begin to see their purpose as a continuation of bringing about the restoration of paradise. They understand that now they are to help repair the broken world in which they live. They are now called to love their neighbor as they love themselves and love God with their heart, soul, mind and strength.

**We are meant to live life differently because of Easter.** One of John’s main objectives is to get us to see that spiritual truth doesn’t mean anything if it doesn’t change our behavior and how we live our lives. **Faith is empty and hollow if all we do is talk about it and think about it.** We are meant to be changed because we are followers of Jesus and this is what Jesus is doing in the resurrection. The resurrection is meant to change our perception. **We are meant to understand the world and our place in it differently.** We are to have a changed heart and a changed mind, which result in changed actions.

We talk about this in the Christian faith as, “conversion.” This is a fundamental change in our lives. The apostle Paul puts it this way in 2 Corinthians 5:17.

## **BIBLE**

***...anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!***

In John 3, Jesus says this to Nicodemus who is a Jewish teacher who comes to him at night.

## **BIBLE**

***“I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see***

*the Kingdom of God.”*

**4 “What do you mean?” exclaimed Nicodemus. “How can an old man go back into his mother’s womb and be born again?”**

**5 Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life.**

We all need to be changed from the inside out, and that comes when we **trust in the resurrected Christ and allow his Holy Spirit** to be breathed upon us. We then are willing to say, “Here I am Lord! Do with me what you want.” We invite God’s Holy Spirit to work inside of us and re-create us, as the Potter shapes the clay. We are meant to allow God to change our values and our ideals, to produce the fruits of the spirit flowing out of his, so we are different human beings. We are part of a new humanity because of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. John is driving home the idea that this is what happens in that room that night, and it is meant to continue in our lives today.

We capture this same idea on **Christmas Eve**, when we turn all the lights off in the sanctuary and it is totally dark because the world can be a dark place. **The lone Christ candle is lit**, the light that these candles represent each time we gather for worship. We remember the darkness, with that one Christ candle shining, that Jesus said, “I am the light of the world.” **Jesus has come to push back the darkness.**

But then we make a shift as we remember that Jesus then said to his disciples, and to you and I today, **“YOU are the light of the world.”**

**GRAPHIC            You are the light of the world**

**“You are a city set upon a hill which cannot be hidden. Let your light so shine before others that they might see your good works and give glory to God.”** It’s now our job to push back the darkness, so we take the lit candle, and **we pass it to all of you** until it reaches every

corner of the sanctuary. As we **finish singing, *Silent Night***, we lift our candles and look around and see how the darkroom has become filled with light. **That's a picture of what Jesus is hoping** for from us, that we are taking his light into the world to push back the darkness.

***“As the father is sending me, so I am sending you. Receive the Holy Spirit and may it empower you to go and live this way.”*** There are over 1000 of you who will worship with us today. While **some people don't get excited about big church** gatherings, I get **excited when I think about the impact we can have** on the world if we take this Easter resurrection stuff seriously.

I just think about myself personally. I am pretty sure that there are at least **10 times every day when I have a chance to live out this mission from Jesus**, to show compassion and kindness and love and encouragement and mercy and forgiveness. I have a chance every day to **stand up for the weak and those who are voiceless**; to work for **justice and change** that will help the world look more like the Kingdom of God. It can happen in small ways, and it can **happen in great ways**. We **pay attention to the nudging of the Holy Spirit** when we see someone who seems down or seems to be struggling. We stop during our **busy life**, and **we pay attention and we care**, or we send the note or we send an **email or instant message** or do something to try and **encourage and bless others**. We decide to **serve others instead of** always serving ourselves. We decide to **stand up for people** who feel disenfranchised or invisible.

I'm guessing we each have at least 10 opportunities a day. If there are 1000 of you here today at worship that means there could be at least **10,000 opportunities** every day for us to work to restore the garden, to **heal the world**, to bless other people and to change things in our world. That's exciting.

My family saw the movie, “Project Hail Mary,” this last week, the story of a school science teacher, not so subtly named Grace, who is

asked to help save the world by going into space and finding a way for our sun to keep from being destroyed. **At one point, before being pushed to the brink, Grace (played by Ryan Gosling) doubts his ability to put his own life on the line, saying he does not have the gene that would make him brave. Another astronaut retorts, “You just need someone to be brave for.”**

## **GRAPHIC            You Just Need Someone to be Brave For**

That quote applies to how we **understand Jesus going to a cross**, and to us as we seek to be the **presence of Jesus** in the world. I think about the ways we try to do that here at Summit Church. If you live in this community and you **don't have a church home, I hope you come back**. One of the main goals of this church is to **connect with people who don't go to church**, who are **thinking people**, who for whatever reason **dropped out of church** or faith. Some of you dropped out in college or when you were a young adult and some of you have never been around faith or **have been turned off** because of what you saw being acted out by Christians they get captured in the news. Some of you have had **bad experiences with Christians** or some things in the Christian faith have **never made sense**.

Our hope is to be a church where you can **speak our mind** and your **heart and your soul**, and you can be a smart person, who asks serious questions, and still be a follower of Jesus. Once we wrestle with those things in our head, we then maybe can experience things in our heart, and our **hearts can begin to change** as we allow God to work in our lives.

But every week, our goal is to **send you back out in the world** to be the presence of Jesus Christ and live out your faith, hopefully being changed by being a part of this community that we call Summit Church. Being a part of the body of Christ here means that we **see ourselves in mission every day**. We might care for the **poor** or the **elderly** or the young but make the world a better place in some way. That's a part of

living out the mission of Jesus.

Every week in the E-newsletter we **list ways that you can serve**. If we have 1000 people working together in a community of this size, we can do some amazing things. We do that daily, but every year at Easter we look for special projects that we can participate in as a church who gathers to celebrate resurrection hope and transformation. We try to **find places where things don't look like the Kingdom of God yet** and we can step in. We have a team of folks who look at the possibilities, because every year, we give away anything you designate as part of your Easter offering beyond the walls of our church. When you designate your gift as Easter offering, 100% go to these projects right here in our community where there is an urgent need to bring healing to the garden. Let's look at those two projects our Mission Finance Team has chosen for this year.

### **VIDEO            Easter Offering**

These are examples of the kinds of things that Jesus is asking us to do when he says, **"As the Father sent me, so I am sending you."** You have a chance here today to **make a difference** in the lives of the children and adults who all will benefit, **not just with the money** today, but by **what we do on a regular basis** when we volunteer our time and our talents. We have people who go out every single week and serve the community in many of these places and others to try and heal this community and help our community **look more like the garden** God intended. That's part of what we are about as a community of faith.

I want to leave you with an image from a story I heard from one of our new members who joined the church a few weeks ago. When we have dinner with the pastor, we ask each person to share something interesting about themselves, and he shared that he was on a train in Europe with the daughter of a friend when she took this video of what was heading their way.

### **VIDEO            Avalanche in Zermatt**

They were then thrust into total darkness as their train cabin lost all power and they were entombed in that car for more than two hours. They wondered if this was going to be how they would die. They probably wondered how long they would be able to breathe!

Finally, some light began to come in through the window in the door. The door flew open and two very large men were standing on the top of the car asking if they were alright. When they said yes, these very burly rescue workers pull them up one at a time and thrust them into the light and onto the snow. It happened quickly and they came out of that snowy grave. The part of the story I enjoyed the most was that the very next day they took the train again! Who does that? You must have an adventurous spirit to do that.

When I heard their story, I asked them to use it today because it's such a powerful image of being in a tomb and living with fear, anxiety, and many of the other difficult emotions we experience in life. Some of us may feel as if we are living in a dark tomb right now. What tomb do you find yourself in today that you need to step out of, or be tossed out of?

I hope you will remember on this Easter Sunday that **death no longer has power** to keep you enslaved to fear because Christ has risen from the dead. **Evil, hate, sin and darkness no longer have the final word** because Christ is risen from the dead. We have a **mission to fulfill**. The Holy Spirit longs to **fill us and empower us**, guide us, lead us, and bring us peace. How we face death and how we live our lives is different because Christ is risen. The resurrection changes everything, if we believe it, if we trust it and if we follow the risen Christ.

I tell you most years that people often ask me, "Seriously, Pastor Jeff, you are relatively intelligent person. **Do you really believe this resurrection story?** Do you really believe that Jesus was dead and that then he came back to life and walked out of the tomb? Do you really believe that he just showed up in the middle of the disciples behind

locked doors in a room? Do you really believe that he showed them his hands and his side and he was alive after something like a crucifixion? Do you believe that after we are dead, something else happens to us and there is more? Do you really believe this stuff, or are you just trying to sell me a bill of goods?"

I share with them the same answer that I share with you several times each year. I not only believe it, but I'm also counting on it! **And I want you to count on it too!** Because when we count on the resurrection, we **find the peace of Christ**. We find the **joy** of Christ. We find life in light in his name. Let's pray.

**SLIDE**                      **Prayer**

If you are willing, would you bow your head and close your eyes? I would invite you to pray, rather than simply for me to just pray on your behalf. I will share some words you might want to say, but you can say whatever you like. I hope you will talk to the risen Christ, the one who promises that he will never leave us nor forsake us. He promised to go and prepare a place for us and that he will come back for us and extend his hand. He's the one who said, "As the father has sent me, so I'm sending you." I would love for you to simply whisper under your breath these words or speak to God in your own words.

*Lord, I believe... I trust that you died for me...*

*I trust that you were raised from the dead...*

*Thank you, for your love and mercy...*

*Fill me with your Holy Spirit...*

*Send me on your mission... To heal the world...*

*In your holy name, Amen.*

## **April 4-5 Order**

1. Countdown
2. Ryan and band begin playing with “He Arose.”
3. Ryan welcomes people and invites them to stand in body or spirit.
4. Song – “Goodbye Yesterday”
5. Song – “Glorious Day
6. Jeff welcomes and shares:
  - A. QR Code
  - B. Invites people to greet each other.
7. NO Announcement Video
8. Sermon Video Intro
9. Sermon
10. Offering (Easter Offering)
11. Med Moments
12. Song – “How Will I”
13. Prayer and Lord’s Prayer
14. Promo for Gospel on Broadway Series
15. Care Ministers
16. Closing Prayer