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Title **The Good News of Easter**

Good News from 1 Peter 1

Things with me there in chapter one.¹ The price that was paid for us was a precious price. Peter says, “knowing that you are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, that's the stuff of this world, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers.” The world around you, your own parents, everything in this world taught you how to sin and how to live on your own. But you were redeemed “with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” That's the precious price that God paid, not silver or gold, but the blood of Christ.

It says here that “he was-- indeed, he was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for us.” You have to read this truth in the word of God to understand that Jesus didn't come as a late thought on God's part or as the, let's say, plan B because man sinned. Before the foundation of the world, before God created anything, he had already decided, knowing all things, knowing that he would create man, knowing that man would sin, knowing that man would be eternally separated from him because he's a righteous God, his love provided a way. In his love, he conceived this wonderful plan for our redemption. In his love, he knew it would require one of the persons in the Godhead to become a savior.

And people say, why couldn't he be an angel? Why couldn't he just be a man? Because first, he did have to be a man because that's what we are. But he couldn't be an angel because, you see, an angel could only elevate us to the level of an angel. In fact, Hebrews chapter 1 tells us that Christ did not take on the nature of angels. There is no savior for angels. They don't need one. They were all created holy. And those that went their own way have got to suffer for their choice to follow Lucifer, now known as Satan. But they all had holiness. None of us had it. We are born of sinful stock, going all the way back to our parents, Adam and Eve. They alone had started with holiness and then lost it in their choice to rebel against God.

¹ | Peter 1:18-20 Observe text “manifest in these last times for you” plural is key

We need a savior. So before the foundation of the world, God had a plan. And the Son of God submitted himself to be the one to come to this world at God's own time, to come to this world to suffer for us to die, to be buried, and offer up himself as our sacrifice, that we might be declared righteous through him, through his righteousness. That's what it was all about. And it tells us here in verse 21, "Who through him believe in God, who raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." God received that sacrifice and raised him in glory, and raised him up from this earth to glory, and restored, as he prayed in John 17, that glory to him. He restored that glory to him which he had before the world was, the glory he wants us to share with him forever. The resurrection from the dead is the proof of his victory. Christ suffered for us. "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit and sincere love of the brethren, love one another intently, fervently, with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed."

Good News From 1 Peter 2

You don't get your new birth into the family of God by being born of what is called corruptible seed. That means human beings. Your human birth doesn't bring you into the family of God. Not born of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, sinless, God's own spirit brings about the birth. In fact, the command is very clear in John 3. "Ye must be born again." You must be born of the spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who brings about the new birth.

Remember, he doesn't provide it. Jesus provides it through his death. The Holy Spirit just takes what Jesus provides, and he makes it work in us when we receive Jesus as our Savior. He brings that life into us, makes us God's child, makes us a new creation, gives us eternal life. Yes, he suffered for us. He was sinless. He was sinless. In 2 and verse 21, it tells you this, "For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow his steps." Look at this verse. "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in his mouth."² He didn't do anything wrong. He didn't say anything wrong. He lived in word and in deed. He lived a sinless life. Nobody else has, on the face of this earth, from Adam on, has ever lived a sinless life except the Son

² 1 Peter 2:21, 22 The text was spoken and transcribed, it was not written first.

of God. Why did he have to live a sinless life? Because he was going to offer it to God as a substitute for us. Your substitute cannot be a sinner.

If you want to be righteous like God, you need a perfect, righteous, sinless substitute to stand there before God in your stead. Jesus did that. He paid a high price for it. "Who, when he was reviled, did not revile again. When he suffered, he did not threaten, but committed himself to him who judges righteously, who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree."³ The tree is the cross. (*Jesus*) Didn't die and bear any sins for himself because he was sinless. But he willingly took upon him the sins of us all on the tree. That we, having died to sins-- in other words, when he died on the cross and he stood for us as our substitute before God, that was saying we died. If we take him as our Savior, we're saying, God, I want what happened to Jesus to be put to my account. When he was on the cross, Lord, put me there. Put my sins there on him. When he died, Lord, count that as my death. That's what a true substitute means. You died. If you receive Christ as your Savior, you died in his death. Your sins were upon him when he died. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. That we might live for righteousness.

That's a gift. He went ahead and in his death took our sins so that we would not be before God, would not have sin. That we might be what God calls righteous. That's what he had in mind before the world was created, a way to bring us before God and to bring us there without sin, to bring us there as righteous. And so when we receive him, our sin is upon him. His death is counted as our death. But his life, his life from the dead is counted as our life as well. It's a promise to us that in him we have eternal life. We have that same life that he had when he rose from the dead. He bore our sins in his own body. They're gone. We are now living unto righteousness.

The Good News From Isa. 53

And it says this little added thing, and it's from Isaiah 53 in the Old Testament. But Peter uses it. And he says, "By whose stripes you were healed." I don't know if you've seen the film, *The Passion of the Christ*. I got to watch it again this last week. It's been on one of the cable channels several times. It's very, very hard for me to watch that. I know it's a Hollywood production, but it

³ 1 Pe. 2:22

brings to mind the real event. And it makes me see what Jesus went through for me, especially in the scenes where they whip his body over and over and over and over again. The standard was that when they whip somebody, they would whip them 39 times. They believed that if they struck them the 40th blow, they would kill them. And so they only struck them 39 times. But they struck them with whips that had bits of glass and pottery tied in little lumps at the end of each thong so that when they hit the flesh and pulled it back, it would tear at the flesh.

One scripture even says that all of his bones were visible. I think in Psalm 22. And I don't think it's just because he was thin. I think it was because of the whipping, tearing away the flesh until the very outline of his rib cage could be seen. It's hard to think of, but through his stripes, I was healed of my sin. He suffered that I might be clean from my sin. And then he adds something else, Peter does from Isaiah. He says, "for you were a sheep going astray."⁴

I don't know if you know about sheep, but if you just take a bunch of sheep out on a hill and just let them go wherever they want to go, they all just kind of nibble their way off into never never land. They don't stay together as a flock. They're just seeing about one foot in front of themselves and just eating the nice grass there and then going another few feet and eating their way along. And pretty soon, they look around and there's no other sheep around them. You know, that's what we're like. We go our own way. We tend to what we think is for our good. And we wake up sooner or later to realize we're far from God. We're far from God. And we don't know how to get home.

The shepherd has come looking for us. He calls himself the good shepherd. And Peter says, "we are returned to the shepherd." When you receive Jesus, that's your way home. When you receive the one who died for you and rose from the dead, it brings you to your shepherd. It brings you home to the place that you wandered from on your own. I think I'm just going to read those two verses in Isaiah. So you see, the apostle Peter picks them up.

Here they are, Isaiah 53, verse 4, "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." Listen, folks, you can't blame God for what happened. God willed it. That's true. God was willing to go through it. That's true. But the reason it was necessary was because of us. We are what sent Jesus to the cross. Our sin is

⁴ 1 Pe. 2:25

what sent him to the cross. Our sin is what made him come to this earth and live a life and offer it up as a sacrifice. It's only of God, because God in love wanted to provide it for us. But we're the ones that caused it to be necessary. We're to blame. "He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon him. And by his stripes, we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

Is that possible that God would lay on him the iniquity of us all? Listen to what Peter says about that. I'm telling you, I think Peter was reading right from Isaiah 53 when he wrote this. He said this, "Who himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness by whose stripes you were healed." Yes, it was for us. He died. John 3:16, the great verse that we all love, tells us what it was in God that made all this happen. It was love. "For God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish." That means should not die and go to hell. Perish does not mean die and cease to exist. No human being will ever cease to exist because he's made as a very special being. We have what is called a spirit. We and the angels have spirits. We're not like a beast. We have a spirit, a part of us that is meant to be able to fellowship with God, to love God, to walk with God, to enjoy God. And God, out of love for us, sent his son, that whoever believes in his son would not have to perish under God's judgment, but would have everlasting life and be with God forever. That's how great God's love is.

Good News of the Cross and Resurrection

There are those who look at the cross. They don't understand why it was necessary. They can't even reason what value it is or what it proved, why Jesus should go through such terrible, terrible pain. He suffered so. Why was that even necessary? And could it accomplish anything? Those who look at the cross and don't understand, they say, what good could it do if he was truly the Son⁵ of God? What good could it do to have him actually die that way? Is it possible

⁵ In my editing I don't always capitalize words referring to God's deity. There are pronouns and like here Son that was transcribed in lower case. As you follow in your bible not the editors use of capitalization referring to God. In the early Greek manuscripts contain our modern editing.

that he could overcome death? Is it possible that there's any proof that there is even life after death?

Some think that because there are people that say they've had experiences on the operating table, when they left their body or they floated around and they went to heaven or wherever, went into some bright light, or some even say they went through gates into glory, and they come back and they tell their story. And some people say, now, that's proof that there's a life after death. If that's all I had, I don't have anything. I wouldn't want my eternity to hang on the truthfulness of what somebody thinks they experienced sometime after whatever happened to them on the operating table. Could it happen? Suppose it could happen.

But God has given us a sure answer to this whole matter. And he did it in resurrecting Jesus, his son, from the dead. Those who look at the resurrection, who have never really had an answer for why Jesus should die on the cross, suddenly can see the answer. If he's alive, then there is a life after death. You don't need anybody else to give you some story about what their experience was. Here's the Son of God, alive from the dead. Alive, not even in the same kind of body that we have, but with a kind of body that can go into a room with the doors locked, a body that was sitting down with some men-- this is Luke's account-- at a table eating with them, and then vanished from their presence, a body that isn't restricted by this world, yet a very real body, because they could feel him. He's even said to them, feel me. Where a spirit doesn't have flesh and bone, as you see me have, he didn't say blood. He could eat in their presence, but he wasn't limited by this world.

Suddenly, there's your proof that there is life after death. There's your proof that he has victory over death, that his death did accomplish something, that he can give eternal life to those who put their faith in him. It's available. God doesn't make anyone believe in Christ. Don't you ever say that God made you believe in Jesus. Trust him. Put your life in his hands. God never did that, nor ever would. You see, it has to do with love. God wants to be loved. Love is a choice. You cannot be made to love. If you want to love, you must choose to love. And so it is with your receiving Christ.

If you want Jesus as your Savior, you must choose to have him, because God wants your love. He wants you to receive his son. He gave you this offer of free salvation. And proved it in the resurrection from the dead. I'd like you to pray with me. If you would like to receive the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you're

going to have to say it from your heart right to God. I can't do it for you. Nobody else can. But you can say in your heart. You can do it without words, out from your lips. But it must come from your heart.

Oh God, thank you for loving me. I don't know why you should, but I thank you for it. Thank you for sending Jesus to die in my place. I realize that I am a sinner. I've gone my own way with my life. And I need your forgiveness. Have mercy on me, Lord. Please forgive me. Let Jesus' death count for me. Give me the righteousness of Jesus. Make me your own child, please. I mean this with all my heart.

If you prayed that prayer or something with those ideas in it to God, and you meant it with all your heart, let me tell you, by God's word, whoever calls on him shall be saved. That means delivered from your sin and made a child of God. That's God's promise. And God does not lie. He gives to you right now, not when you die, but right now, he gives to you eternal life and makes you his child. Jesus was born from the dead on Resurrection Sunday morning. If you've prayed to receive him as your Savior, you are born again in your spirit into the family. Into the family of God.

Thank you, Lord, for those that have prayed. Thank you for those that already know the joy of salvation and can sing praise to the Savior this morning and hallelujah for his resurrection. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for such love. We love you with all our hearts, and we can all say amen. Can you say it with me? Amen. Amen. Amen.