

Sermon Preached on
Easter Sunday
(March 27, 2016)
"It Matters"

I'm glad to see so many of you brought Easter eggs to hide for the Easter Egg hunt! All kids are reminded that if they find any plastic eggs fill with chocolate, they should bring them straight to me! Thank you.

Seriously, even though we just have the hunt because it's fun, Easter eggs have been part of Resurrection story since earliest Christian days, starting in Mesopotamia, where colored eggs were already a symbol of death and rebirth. Early Christians saw the connection immediately and started using the hard shell as a symbols of the tomb - something that looks completely sealed - but that on Easter Day was broken open.

Because just as Christ broke open not only the tomb but broke death itself. Oh, and earliest traditions had the Easter eggs dyed red because Christ shed his blood for us.

See, it matters that we understand where these eggs come from. We're not just goofing around.

Actually, so much of what we do today matters because this is the single most important Christian feast there is. Everything about this day matters. If you're a little vague on what's so important about today - or what your parents dragged you here a let's do a quick review.

On Friday, we remembered how Jesus was arrested and killed by being crucified. It actually started long before that when Jesus began preaching a different kind of power than military or monetary. There were terrorists in those days, like Barabbas, who tried to drive the Romans out, though they had little effect other than terrorizing average people. But it was Jesus' radical selflessness, his preaching of the power of love that frightened the rich and the mighty, the Romans, the priests, the Pharisees. So they decided to kill him. They killed him because what he taught mattered - that love is more powerful than might.

Now, when they killed Jesus, it was a horrible death but it mattered that Jesus, the Son of God, died. Not because he was paying some debt that we had run up with our sins and weren't able to pay. But because God is our loving parent, and as any parent knows, you would sacrifice your life to save your children. What we needed saving from wasn't that we do bad things but that we had a bad relationship with God. One where we were afraid of God and thought that we only had value if we were successful and never made mistakes. If we earned God's love. One where, if we thought of God as a father at all, it was as an abusive one. Jesus said, "No. I just love you. Just like a good mother or father. To the death." So, it matters that Jesus died to show us the extent of God's love for you and me. But then Jesus rose from the dead! And that really matters. Because that tells us that it is God doing this, not just some interesting man. It's God making the promise to love us always. God making the promise that death no longer has power over us. Jesus rising tells us that it is true.

Life is stronger than death.

So you see, just like getting the story of the eggs right matters, so it also matters that we understand who Jesus is and what he did on Easter morning.

And you know what else matters? You being here. It matters that we come together to celebrate Jesus' resurrection because it is our single biggest act of hope. Because you and I are the Body of Christ. Because God loves us. Period.

You may not really want to be here today because you have Easter baskets and Easter dinner at home - but it matters that you're re here. Even if you don't know if you believe in God - it matters that you are here because there is something in your presence that will touch someone else.

There may even be words you hear today that spark something in your heart. You never know. And it matters that you're here even if you are the most faithful worshipper in the world because not only do we celebrate, but today we re-dedicate ourselves to God in Christ when we renew our baptismal vows. It is like looking your loved one in the eye and saying "I love you." You've done it a million times - but every single time is important. Love never gets old. It never dies. It is stronger than death. So, it matters that we celebrate.

Speaking of which, remember that egg? Well, there's a word written on it. That's right: Alleluia! It means "Praised be God!" We haven't been able to say that in a while, but today is Easter, and it doesn't matter how many times we say it - it's never too many.

So Alleluia! Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!