

New Man for a New Era

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Date: 20 April 2014

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[0 : 00] I invite you to focus with me on the man in the cemetery. On this Easter morning, I invite you to focus on the man in the cemetery on the first Easter morning.

On the man alive after having been buried in that cemetery. I invite you to focus on him, on Jesus. He, after all, is what Easter is all about. I wonder if you had opportunity to read the Easter editorial that was published in Vancouver Sun's Friday morning edition.

It's entitled, Easter Carries Lessons for All, Believers and Non-Believers. So I was intrigued and thought I would read this. Actually, I really enjoy reading the editorials that the Sun has on the Christian holidays.

Easter marks the holiest period on the Christian calendar. The devout pay homage to the events that both founded their religious faith and infuse it with meaning.

[1 : 17] For the many who are not among the Christian devout, indeed, who aren't Christian at all, or maybe not even religious at all for that matter. Easter is just another holiday, the spring-long weekend.

Still, for those who look deeper. And then the editorial goes on to suggest the lessons for all. And they turned those lessons around ideas.

Ideas accessible to any member of a democratic, secular society, whether religious or not. First, the mainstream is not always right. So don't be too quick to judge based on what everyone else seems to think.

In this case, a religious teacher with a dozen disciples was more than a nut on a soapbox. He was the genesis of a movement which would acquire 2.1 billion followers, reconfigure the most powerful political force in the ancient world, and establish foundations for Western culture and civilization. Pretty good. Second lesson, don't put your faith in repressive authorities which seek to stamp out dissenters challenging a prevailing orthodoxy. The Easter story is a reminder how wrong that can go.

[2 : 37] Third, it's a warning to politicians who take the most expedient course, allowing themselves to serve special interests and the establishment instead of the right principles.

This often unleashes calamity for themselves and their governments. Finally, to forgive is not to acquiesce, nor is it to condone.

It is a way to redeem right from wrong, good from bad, and celebrates the importance of striving to enable the rebirth of the world.

Not bad. The rebirth of the world. Now, as you read this editorial, you realize that the author, the writer, who is a very deep thinker and a very good writer, cannot go on to say what is at the heart of what's being said, namely, that this all depends on the man.

It all turns on the man who is in the cemetery. It all turns on the man who is alive in the cemetery and who is alive in a whole new way and who's being alive in a whole new way has huge implications for the entire cosmos.

[3 : 59] So, I invite you this morning to focus with me on Jesus. Oh, how I wish I could have been there.

Let's make sure that we have the storyline clear in our minds. It was a Sunday morning, the first day of the week, a work day.

On the previous Friday afternoon, Jesus had been nailed hand and feet to a cross. The Romans had devised this cruelest of all punishments as a way to declare the power of Rome over any life and as a way to tell about the consequences of anyone who would not conform with the Roman way.

Now, why did Jesus get crucified? He had spent the past three years teaching and healing. Countless lives, countless lives had been given a new lease on life. Countless people had discovered deeper wholeness. Countless people began to experience a peace they had never known, a joy that they never imagined they could have. [5 : 21] Countless human beings had experienced being loved in a way they'd never been loved before. Why crucify Jesus?

Well, the charges ranged from he was going to destroy the Jewish temple to he was going to undermine Caesar's rule to he had committed blasphemy. Now, of those three options, the third is most likely. Because as a matter of fact, Jesus did claim to have been sent by God. He did claim to have come from God, literally out of God. He did claim that God was his father in a way no one ever had. And actually, he did claim to be God. I am he, he said. Before Abraham was, I am. [6 : 19] Now, if that's not true, then he definitely is worthy of the charge blasphemy. So, he was crucified on Friday.

Dead on Friday. Later in the afternoon, some of the religious leaders, two courageous, wealthy, educated men, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, asked the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, for the permission to take Jesus' body off the cross. The governor grants their request. And the two men then climb up on the cross, take the body down. They pack spices into the wounds in the body. They wrap the body in linen cloths. And then they lay the body in the unused tomb of Joseph. They seal the tomb by rolling a rock in front of it. Roman soldiers are posted there to guard this scene. And women who had traveled with Jesus for three years are standing by watching all of this. [7 : 28] Saturday was the Sabbath. So, his disciples rested. And they grieved deeply. I would have spent that day grieving. They had come to love Jesus.

And with the death of Jesus, their world had fallen apart. Jesus had become the center of their very existence. And now that he was dead, everything else was up for grabs. The crucifixion meant the end of Jesus. And he could no longer be this living force in their lives, nor in anyone else's life. Then came Sunday. The women rose early in the morning before the city moves into hyper work mode. They go to Jerusalem Cemetery to carry out the Jewish rites concerning the dead. They go to further anoint the body of their dear friend. They fully expect to see the stone still in front of the tomb. In fact, as they make their way, they ask each other who's going to roll the stone away. [8 : 37] They fully expect to see Jesus' body, his corpse. And they fully expect to begin to smell the smell of decomposition setting into the corpse.

To their surprise and to their horror, the stone has been moved. And to their surprise and to their horror, the body of Jesus is missing. That's important to note. The missing body was not initially good news. It was bad news. It was terrible news. It was horrible news. While stunned, two messengers appear. Angels say the eyewitnesses. And they say, Why are you looking for Jesus the Nazarene? He is not here. He has risen. Why are you looking for the living among the dead? The two women run back to where the other disciples are. [9 : 45] And two of them, two men named Peter and John, run back to the cemetery. As they approached the tomb, they noticed that the linen cloths in which Jesus' body had been wrapped are lying alongside the stone slab.

And they noticed that the linen cloth that Joseph of Arimathea had wrapped around Jesus' head had been neatly folded up and set aside. They, too, run back to the other disciples to share this shocking news. And then, to everyone's surprise, Jesus shows up. He who had died shows up. The same Jesus crucified on Friday shows up Sunday morning. On Sunday night, he appears to the group of disciples gathered in an upper room somewhere in downtown Jerusalem. On Sunday afternoon, he appears to two disciples who are making their way to the village called Emmaus. And then Sunday morning, he appears to Mary Magdalene who had stayed at the temple,

stayed at the cemetery.

[10:59] Oh, lucky Mary Magdalene. If there was ever a lucky bum, it's Mary. Jesus shows up in the cemetery to Mary. Oh, how I wish I could have been there that morning.

Focus now on Jesus. Standing in the cemetery when Mary first met him, focus on Jesus. What can we say about him?

Clearly, he is alive. He was dead. He's now alive. Dead, buried, and now alive. So we can call him the living one.

No longer do we say, Jesus was a good man. We say, Jesus is a good man. For the Jesus who taught and healed is alive.

He's still teaching and still healing. Alive. And therefore, he is able to be with us. Jesus made a promise to the first group of disciples.

[12:02] Wherever two or more of you gather together in my name, I will be there among you. Because he's alive, he can be with us. He's the living one.

We can also say that he is the vindicated one. Being alive after being crucified vindicates Jesus' claims about who he is.

Being alive after he was crucified vindicates his claims about what he thought his death was going to accomplish. You see, Jesus didn't think about his death on a Roman cross as someone taking life from him.

He thought of his death on the cross as he giving his life away. No one's taking it from him. He is voluntarily laying his life down so that others might live.

And he thought of his death as doing everything that needs to be done in order for human beings to have a relationship with the Holy God. Being alive on Easter morning vindicates Jesus' claim.

[13:09] It validates Jesus' claim. What he said on the cross is true. It is finished. We can also say that he is the victorious one.

Jesus had triumphed over death. Death had finally met someone it could not defeat.

Maybe you saw the September 30, 2013 issue of Time Magazine. On the front of it, it says, Can Google solve death?

The search giant is launching a venture to extend the human lifespan. That would be crazy if it weren't Google. Boy, more power to Google. But I have good news for Google.

Someone has done it. Jesus has done it. He has solved death. He has defeated death. So, focusing on the man in the cemetery, we can say he's the living one.

[14:19] He's the vindicated one. He is the victorious one. And we can also say something else. We can say that he is the new human.

He's the new human for a new era. This is what the man Paul came to understand about Easter. Paul was originally named Saul. But in light of something that happened to him, his name was changed from Saul to Paul. What we need to know is that Saul hated Jesus.

He hated Jesus. And Saul was doing everything he could to stomp out this new Jesus movement. He was on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus in Syria.

And he says that as he was traveling along the road, a bright light shone and he was knocked off his horse. He says to the bright light, to the presence, who are you?

[15:28] And he hears, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. Jesus shows up again. Jesus loves the man who hates him.

And Jesus shows up. And Saul becomes Paul, one of the greatest thinkers in world history. And Saul becomes Paul and spends the rest of his life living for Jesus.

A few years after this, he writes a letter to the followers of Jesus in the city of Corinth. We read from it earlier. And in the letter, he tells us what he has concluded about the man in the cemetery.

Jesus is the new man. He's the new human. You see, it turns out that Easter morning is not just the first morning of a new week.

It turns out that Easter morning is the first morning of a new creation. It turns out that Easter morning is the beginning of a whole new era for the universe.

[16:39] Easter morning turns out to be the decisive moment in world history. The man who had hated Jesus came to see that standing in the cemetery that morning on the first Easter is the new Adam.

Standing in the cemetery that morning is the prototype of a new human race. Standing in the cemetery that morning is the progenitor of a new human race.

And so, Paul, who once hated Jesus, can announce the Easter gospel with joy. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ the new Adam shall all be made alive. Those are earth-shattering words. Those are history-altering words.

That's why Paul goes on. The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

[17 : 51] He continues, the first man was from the earth, earthy, made of dust. The second man was from heaven. And then Paul declares, just as we have borne the image of the earthy, so we shall bore the image of the heavenly.

The man, the man we meet in Jerusalem Cemetery, the living, vindicated, victorious man, is the new Adam, the last Adam, the new human.

And just as the first Adam was the prototype and progenitor of the first human race, so the new Adam is the prototype and progenitor of a new human race.

Now, I don't know about you, but all I can say to that is, wow. And this is the news that belongs on the front page of the Vancouver Sun and Time Magazine and McLean.

The need for the new beginning is obvious enough, is it not? Something's gone wrong with we humans. And something's gone wrong with the physical universe in which we were created to live.

[19 : 04] In the beginning, God made a garden and He created man and woman to live in that garden. And a splendid garden it was.

Adam and Eve had it made. They lived in harmony with each other every day. Imagine that. They lived in harmony with their inner selves at all times.

Imagine that. They lived in harmony with the earth. They lived in harmony with God. They knew God intimately. They delighted in God's love for them. And God pronounced over that garden, very good.

This is wonderful. But then something happened. Something went terribly wrong. It all fell apart. A fact with which we are all too painfully aware. God had given the first Adam and the first Eve everything they needed to live fully human and fully alive.

[20 : 05] And God said it was all contingent upon one command. Just one. Just one. Do not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.

Now that's a Hebraic way of saying, Adam, I'm going to give you only one command. Do not aspire to the kind of knowledge that makes you think you can live independently of me.

I've created you in such a way that only as you remain in a dependent relationship on me that you truly live. In the day that you try to go it alone you will die.

I will not kill you. I will not need to kill you. You will die. You are the creature. I'm the creator. You be you. I'll be me. But in the day that you try to be me to be your own God to be the master of your own ship you're going to die.

In trying to be me you're going to become less than you are. You're going to die. And in that garden so rich and full the first Adam and the first Eve disobey.

[21 : 18] God's word becomes true. it all falls apart and they begin to die. And they lost that first harmony. They no longer trusted one another.

They became suspicious of one another and began to use one another. They were no longer in harmony with themselves. This break with God was now experienced as a break within their personhood.

The ground no longer worked the way it was supposed to work. and they were afraid of God. The slightest rustling of wind in the bushes made them go and hide.

The garden that was to be paradise had become a cemetery. Oh in the spring it can look like it's a garden but when all is said and done it's a cemetery.

In Adam all die. And then came Easter morning. Standing outside that empty tomb in that cemetery is the new Adam the new human the prototype and progenitor of a whole new human race.

[22 : 35] Dig deeper for a moment. Why is he the new human? Of all other humans why is Jesus the new human?

Because although he is fully human he is not merely human. And here we come at Easter morning through Christmas Eve.

Remember Christmas Eve? Remember what happened on Christmas Eve? When Jesus was born into the world remember what happened on Christmas Eve?

The creator had become one of Adam's rapes. On Christmas Eve the creator had become one with the first Adam and the first Eve and all their children.

Give him the name Emmanuel. Mary's child Jesus is the creator become one of us and one with us. [23 : 39] and then in solidarity with the first Adam the creator now in our flesh lives human life the way it was supposed to be lived.

Jesus God with us now lives on the planet a dependent relationship as son of God he lives in dependence upon God the father.

As one scholar puts it Jesus repeats history the way it should have gone. Jesus is humanity the way humanity was created to be.

God so wants humanity to be all he created it to be that God becomes humanity he wants it to be. and then Jesus takes it one step further and here we come at Easter morning through Good Friday afternoon God with us enters into total solidarity with Adam and his race Jesus takes on the sin of the first Adam and the first Eve Jesus takes on the full consequence of the first Adam's disobedience and in solidarity with Adam and with his race Jesus follows Adam's footsteps to the only place those footsteps go all the way to the grave the creator enters into Adam's grave and then Easter morning he burst a hole in the coffin and he emerges as the new human who will never die as one leading

[25 : 31] New Testament scholar puts it at the point where the first Adam came to an end the grave the last Adam takes over the man the God man the God man standing in the cemetery the living one the vindicated one the victorious one is the new human for a new era of the human race well what does that mean for us today for you and for me what does it mean for us tomorrow and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday just as we have inherited the legacy of the first Adam we can now inherit the legacy of the last Adam in Adam all die but in Christ the last Adam all shall be made alive made alive today and tomorrow and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and on that day when he comes in all of his glory all of us by virtue of our birth are in

Adam we all have a relationship with Adam we are all connected to Adam we all therefore inherit Adam's legacy we repeat and we live Adam's disobedience Adam's disintegration Adam's bondage and addiction Adam's judgment and we inherit Adam's death but all of us by virtue of a new birth can be in Christ we can have a relationship with Christ we can be connected to Christ and we all therefore can inherit the legacy of Christ he has undone Adam's legacy and invites us now to live in his legacy in Jesus obedience in Jesus integration in Jesus freedom in Jesus righteousness in Jesus life in Jesus eternal life I heard an amen I should have heard a whole bunch of amens many theologians since the first

Easter have put it this way the last Adam became what the first Adam fell to by his disobedience so that the first Adam might become what the last Adam rose to because of his obedience Paul who once hated Jesus actually puts it so much simpler in Adam all die but in Christ shall all be made alive and made alive as he is alive the legacy we inherit in Jesus includes his body his resurrected body his body on Easter morning turns out to be the prototype of the body we will one inherit once in one day inherit just as he came into the world and took on the form of our decaying body so in relationship with him we began to take on the form of his transformed body

I mean what a legacy that's why Paul goes on to talk about different kinds of bodies he speaks about a natural body and a spiritual body the word translated natural is better translated soulish he speaks about a soulish body and a spiritual body meaning the body we have in Adam is animated by the soul by the human soul the body we have in the new Adam in Christ is animated by the spirit the spirit the spirit of God I mean can you handle that in the old Adam our bodies are animated only by our human soul but in the new Adam in Christ our bodies are animated by the creative spirit of God and the good news is we do not have to wait until we die and go to heaven to experience this the good news is that even today we can begin to live the legacy of the new humanity in fact living in this new legacy is what being a

Christian is all about living in this legacy is what being the church is all about together as the new humanity in Mary and Mary is the living one the vindicated one the victorious one the new human the prototype and progenitor of a whole new human race this is why for 2000 years now the church of Jesus Christ has maintained that he is the most significant figure in history and that's why early on people were wise enough to divide history into

[31 : 29] BC and AD before Christ and Anno Domini the year of our Lord because the man alive in the cemetery where he had been buried is the beginning of the rebirth of the world where do you stand with the risen Jesus today by birth we are all in Adam by a new birth we can be in the new Adam by birth we inherit Adam's legacy by new birth we inherit Jesus legacy so I think we could do this focusing on Jesus alive we say to him something like this I do not understand it all but I do like what I hear Jesus

I welcome you into my life whatever being in you involves I want it I want to be connected to you I want to belong to you I want to live in Adam all die but in Christ shall all be made alive alive forever happy Easter appreciation it fuck the beginning baby in room such