

# “Making Us All Easter Fools”

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April 1, 2018 (Easter Sunday)

1. Prayer and Introduction
  - a. “May the words of my mouth, and the meditations of our hearts, be acceptable in your sight, our rock and redeemer.” Amen. (Psalm 19:14)
  - b. Sermon Title - Making Us All Easter Fools
2. Intro – April Fools!
  - a. As a child, this was my favorite day of the year. Not Easter, but April Fools
    - i. Annoying 10 year old with 3 sisters
      1. Bucket of confetti, pull cracker, whipper snappers
  - b. Eventually, I realized it was a one sided contest and it wasn’t funny to anyone but me
    - i. Learned about the difference between laughing at someone and laughing with someone
    - ii. So, I started pranking my friends, who found it funny, and would prank me back
3. Easter \ Holy Humor Sunday
  - a. So, this year, Easter and April Fool’s day are the same day
    - i. Greatest prank or trick ever pulled
    - ii. Holy Humor Sunday – celebrate this fact
  - b. Wasn’t just a prank
    - i. Not just vs. Satan or death
    - ii. It was a trick pulled on us
      1. God wants us in on the joke
      2. not to laugh at us, but to get us to laugh at ourselves
    - iii. not as easy when we aren’t in on the joke, or don’t realize it is a joke
4. The Easter Joke – God as human, laughing with ourselves
5. Easter Sunday – the time between the punchline and the laughter
  - a. We know something unexpected happened, but don’t know yet if it’s comedy or tragedy
  - b. Two parts – a disappearing trick and hide and seek
    - i. Empty tomb – not what was supposed to happen
      1. “For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.”
    - ii. Jesus appearing to Mary
      1. Angels and Jesus “Woman, why are you weeping?” -
      2. Then Mary is let in on the joke, and goes off to tell the disciples
  - c. As in the children’s message, we see the empty chrysalis, but don’t yet fully see the butterfly
6. The day my mother lost control of the family
  - a. Divorced when my older sister and I were at college
  - b. Driving down the road, telling a story, and one of us swore
  - c. Mom’s response “Don’t Swear, God D\*\*\*\* it!”
  - d. Had to pull the van over, we were all laughing too hard
  - e. We were all in on the joke, even mom
    - i. The day when our relationship shifted – I no longer my mom expected to have all the answers
    - ii. Saw her humanity – and loved her even more, because she wasn’t so distant from us

7. The point of Easter
  - a. Understanding the crucifixion and resurrection, God's response to a human problem, not divine punishment or sacrifice
  - b. Atonement is to make up for what we've done wrong, and it also means at-one-ment, bringing us back together
  - c. Jesus – as God's son, as the divine, came to show us what God wishes for this world and for God's kin-dom
  - d. Here's the problem – that would definitely conflict with human power structures
    - i. Jewish authorities, Roman authorities
    - ii. He would have to die
    - iii. Yet, this isn't something asked for by God, but asked for by humans
8. The ridiculousness of humanity
  - a. We believe things that are not objectively true
    - i. 80% believe we are above average drivers
    - ii. Every person's child is the most beautiful child ever
    - iii. Our hometown teams are inherently superior to all others,
  - b. Our brains are wired such that we can play tricks on them
    - i. Pictures that you look at and it's either the picture of an old lady or a young lady
    - ii. Or two faces looking at each other, or a candlestick
    - iii. Thought experiment –
      1. What does y e s spell? Yes.
      2. What does e y e s spell? E Yes, or eyes?
  - c. Looking for our keys or other misplaced object
    - i. More times than not, the object is 18 inches of where it usually is
      1. We don't realize how much we don't see, but are filling in from memory
9. Faithful ridiculousness
  - a. We say we treasure connection with the divine, with the meaning of life, yet we keep falling back on looking for easy guarantees of safety, order, and looking out for ourselves
  - b. As was said many times in the Gospel of John, the authorities felt it was better for one person to die, so that order would be maintained for the rest of the people
    - i. Human formulas, not God given
  - c. So here's the joke
    - i. God incarnate is not a ruler, a king, a high priest. He's a nobody.
    - ii. Again and again, he shows us humans how ridiculous we are
      1. Jesus was condemned for healing people on holy days,
      2. for reminding us that our religious practices are not the final authority, but are ways for us to live in peace and draw closer to understanding God
      3. and the same holds true for government and laws, that they are to benefit humanity, not oppress
    - iii. until finally, there's nothing left but to be put to death – the “final solution”
      1. eliminate the leader, and the cause dies
      2. except.....
      3. that's only true, when the cause is based around the leader, and not something more
  - d. When humans demand death, or oppression of another group for our comfort and status, God sacrifices the most precious thing, God's child \ God itself

- i. And death doesn't have the final say
- 10. God, by becoming human, is laughing with us, not at us
  - a. Talking about our sins, our limits, our foolishness, is not meant to make us feel ashamed, or fearful, or unworthy
    - i. It's to show that God sees these things, and that it doesn't matter
  - b. Going back to my family, or to your family
    - i. At best, our family and friends that are family know us so deeply that our flaws aren't something that drives people away, but endear us to one another even more
    - ii. Shall I ask each of you what one of those things is that you see in other people?
  - c. Not meant to shame us, but awaken us!
    - i. Spiritual practice, Zen koans, puzzles, and mysteries
      - 1. creative frission to make us look at things a new way
    - ii. psychological concept of cognitive dissonance
      - 1. things are not internally consistent
    - iii. healthy self-image and awareness allows us to laugh at ourselves
- 11. God walking with us
  - a. Living life as we do – limited human perspective
    - i. Gets to see how puzzling we are to one another
    - ii. Just because God sees us all as God's children, doesn't mean we look at one another as siblings, or cousins. Or, worse, we do, like Cain and Abel
  - b. Maybe God didn't expect to gain this insight
    - i. We so often don't expect it when we interact with others
    - ii. Charity vs. mutual liberation
      - 1. Our material wealth does not make us better people
      - 2. Sometimes, our desire to maintain it makes us worse people
- 12. Foolishness of Christ
  - a. Holy Humor Sunday next week
  - b. Not a new idea, one of the oldest.
- 13. 1 Corinthians 1:18-25 <sup>18</sup> **the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are being destroyed. But it is the power of God for those of us who are being saved.** <sup>19</sup> **It is written in scripture: *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will reject the intelligence of the intelligent.*** <sup>[a]</sup> <sup>20</sup> **Where are the wise? Where are the legal experts? Where are today's debaters? Hasn't God made the wisdom of the world foolish?** <sup>21</sup> **In God's wisdom, he determined that the world wouldn't come to know him through its wisdom. Instead, God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of preaching.** <sup>22</sup> **Jews ask for signs, and Greeks look for wisdom,** <sup>23</sup> **but we preach Christ crucified, which is a scandal to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles.** <sup>24</sup> **But to those who are called—both Jews and Greeks—Christ is God's power and God's wisdom.** <sup>25</sup> **This is because the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.**
- 14. Lent started on Valentine's day, ends on April fools
  - a. Started in love, ending on a joke
- 15. The failure of us and them
  - a. Our envy, strife, bitterness so often creates our own enemies
    - i. Personally
      - 1. Close friends become competitors
      - 2. The people that most annoy us are, more often than not, ones that are the most like us
    - ii. The way of the world

1. Osama Bin Ladin, Columbian leader, Iran revolution, ISIS grew from war against AlQuaeda
  - iii. War in Afghanistan still going on, 15+ years later
    1. We don't even think about it
    2. Soldiers with PTSD, homelessness,
  - b. Jesus, love your enemies
    - i. Are we God's enemies sometimes?
    - ii. Lessons are easy, the practice is hard
16. Easter – new life to be revealed
- a. So far, all we see is the empty chrysalis
  - b. So far, all we can see is that there's a joke being pulled on us, but we might not see the punchline yet,
  - c. we might not be able to laugh at ourselves yet, because we don't yet know what we've done wrong

## Readings

20 Early in the morning of the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup> She ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they've put him." <sup>3</sup> Peter and the other disciple left to go to the tomb. <sup>4</sup> They were running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and was the first to arrive at the tomb. <sup>5</sup> Bending down to take a look, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he didn't go in. <sup>6</sup> Following him, Simon Peter entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. <sup>7</sup> He also saw the face cloth that had been on Jesus' head. It wasn't with the other clothes but was folded up in its own place. <sup>8</sup> Then the other disciple, the one who arrived at the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> They didn't yet understand the scripture that Jesus must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup> Then the disciples returned to the place where they were staying.

<sup>11</sup> Mary stood outside near the tomb, crying. As she cried, she bent down to look into the tomb. <sup>12</sup> She saw two angels dressed in white, seated where the body of Jesus had been, one at the head and one at the foot. <sup>13</sup> The angels asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" She replied, "They have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they've put him." <sup>14</sup> As soon as she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't know it was Jesus.

<sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she replied, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will get him." <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabbouni" (which means *Teacher*). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "Don't hold on to me, for I haven't yet gone up to my Father. Go to my brothers and sisters and tell them, 'I'm going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene left and announced to the disciples, "I've seen the Lord." Then she told them what he said to her.