

Hunting for Easter Eggs - April 4, 2021

John 20:1-18

Throughout our service today, you have seen clips of our Sunday school children sharing and celebrating Easter in all its forms. We heard them singing “Jesus Is Alive” at the beginning of our service and talking about aspects of Jesus’ resurrection as we shared symbols of our faith. What you just saw was a brief video of some of our families Easter egg hunts.

Now hunting for Easter eggs is a tradition that dates back hundreds of years and for good reason. The egg is a wonderful symbol for the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I mean, if you didn’t know what they are, eggs look a lot like rocks, don’t they? Just roundish, lifeless rocks. You might see a pile of them gathered together and think, “so what!” What’s so special about those things?

And by and large, there isn’t very much special about rocks. But we know that eggs aren’t rocks at all. Quite the opposite. For these rather roundish shapes are not dead. Far from it. Eggs are in fact the source of new life and new beginnings. Whether it’s a chicken’s egg, or a turtle’s egg, or even a spider’s egg, eggs, just like plant seeds, generate life when there is little on the outside to show that from them life is even possible.

The children in the video were hunting for Easter eggs, searching all around their yards. But among the Easter eggs they were finding were twelve special eggs. Yes, special eggs. Because inside the special eggs were not candy or money or even something hard-boiled to eat. No the special eggs were filled with various scripture passages related to Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection. Twelve different eggs with twelve different symbols, ranging from a pair of tiny dice to remind us of the soldiers casting lots for Jesus’ clothes to a tiny piece of linen cloth in which Jesus body was wrapped to a tiny stone, representing the stone placed in front of Jesus’ tomb.

But there is one more egg — an egg which is empty. The empty egg stands for, of course, the empty tomb from which Jesus emerged on Easter Day, defeating death and demonstrating all his teaching and healing was true and real.

That empty egg lies at the heart of our faith. That empty egg very neatly and concisely summarizes what it means to follow Jesus Christ and accept him as Lord and Savior.

My friends, all of us, every day, are caught up in the endless activity of hunting easter eggs, aren’t we? We are forever hunting for eggs like the children do. And like the children, within the eggs we seek we expect to find something good inside. Like the children, we seek eggs full of money, because we all need money to live. We seek eggs with sweets and candy, because we all want a

sweet life filled with good thing. And yes, we seek eggs which are hard boiled so we can peel off the shells and eat them — because we all need food.

And in life, we also encounter eggs filled with things that aren't pleasant. Among the children's eggs in their hunt was one with little nails inside. There is no doubt we've had the nails of life's pain driven into us not once, but many times. The children had a egg filled with thorns — and we all have worked our way through many thorny messes, emerging scratched and bleeding sometimes.

The eggs life presents us with are filled with good things and not so good things, don't they?

But the real question of life and living is what happens, what will you do, when you come across that empty egg? What happens after you've searched and searched, looking for that egg filled with chocolate or maybe a 20-dollar bill but instead, finding an egg with nothing inside. Nothing! How disappointing!

But for Christians, that "nothing" is really something, the biggest something of them all.

On Easter we celebrate nothing, because in Jesus' tomb that day, nothing was inside of it. No dead body. No dead Jesus.

Christians can look at something as empty and lifeless as a tomb and instead of being disappointed, are renewed, energized, and recharged. For Christians, nothing means everything!

I wonder how many times we've fooled ourselves and gotten angry with ourselves because we've misinterpreted the many nothings we've found in our lives.

Is it possible, is it just possible, that what we have interpreted as emptiness, defeat and loss, — perhaps losing a job, perhaps ending a relationship, perhaps a decline in our health aren't really defeats and losses at all?

From death, from emptiness, from unimaginable loss, Jesus teaches us that new life and new possibilities are not just possible, they are reality. If Jesus can turn the greatest defeat in history into the greatest victory in history, you, when you have faith, you can too!

On this Easter Sunday, as you hunt for your Easter eggs of life, I urge you to take the empty ones and dare to fill them — fill them with your hopes, dreams, and future. Because that is what Jesus does for us this day and every day! Just keep hunting, hunting for the empty Easter eggs meant just for you!

I say these words in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.