

The Rest of the Story

Matthew 6:25-33

INTRODUCTION:

The message you are about to hear will be different than most Easter messages that you have heard in the past. We are all familiar with the message. Christ died on the cross, was buried, and after three days, victoriously arose from the dead.

Christ's death on the cross was the **most important event** that has or will ever happen in the history of mankind. Because of His death, mankind was given the opportunity to be forgiven of our sins, that we are all guilty of, and be made righteous. Not because of anything that we have done to deserve that forgiveness, but because God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son from the glories of heaven to earth to die on the cross for us. Whoever believes in the Son will not perish, but have everlasting life.

That was followed three days later with the **greatest miracle** that has or will ever happen when Christ victoriously arose from the grave. God allowed this miracle to happen in order to confirm that what Jesus had taught and claimed during his time on earth was true. It was God's stamp of approval on all Christ had done.

This...is the news that we normally hear on Easter Sunday.

But, this morning, I would like to go one step beyond the wonderful news of what God did for us that final week and ask the question...

What does Christ's death, burial, and resurrection mean to us?

What **WAS** the message that Christ came to earth to tell us?

What is the REST of the story?

All Stand and Read Scripture

Matthew 6:25-33 (NASB)

²⁵ “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, *as to* what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, *as to* what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and *yet* your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? ²⁷ And who of you by being worried can add a *single* hour to his life? ²⁸ And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, ²⁹ yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is *alive* today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, *will He* not much more *clothe* you? You of little faith! ³¹ Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ ³² For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these

things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ **But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**

Let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

What was the message that Jesus just taught us?

The first thing we should seek for is His kingdom and His righteousness. I read this verse a few years back and I remember thinking to myself, "If Christ put so much emphasis on His kingdom, if we are to seek it first in our Christian walk with God, then maybe I should know a whole lot more about it.

I am sure that many of you remember Paul Harvey. Paul was an American radio broadcaster for the ABC Radio Networks. He broadcast *News and Comment* on weekday mornings and mid-days, and at noon on Saturdays, as well as his famous *The Rest of the Story* segments from 1952 through 2008. Paul died on Feb. 28, 2009 at the age of 90.

If Paul were here right now, he would say "You **know** what the news is...in a minute you are going to hear...the **rest** of the story."

Following is a story recorded in 1965 during one of Paul Harvey's broadcasts. He considered it a modern day parable as well as his annual "Christmas Story", thus the winter scene. But the message expands way beyond Christ's birth. He entitled this story "The Man and the Birds".

[Play the Paul Harvey Audio.](#)

ILLUSTRATION:

The Man and the Birds (Paul Harvey 1965)

The man to whom I'm going to introduce you was not a scrooge, he was a kind decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men. But it was that he just couldn't swallow the Jesus Story. The story of God coming to Earth as a man. It just didn't make sense, and he was too honest to pretend otherwise.

"I'm truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, "but I'm not going with you to church. He said he'd feel like a hypocrite. That he'd much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. And so he stayed and they went to the church service.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound...Then another, and then another. Sort of a thump or a thud...At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window. But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, had tried to fly through his large landscape window.

Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter, if he could direct the birds to it.

Quickly he put on a coat, galoshes, tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light, but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice

them in. So he hurried back to the house, fetched bread crumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted wide open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs, and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. He tried catching them...He tried shooping them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms...Instead, they scattered in every direction, except into the warm, lighted barn.

And then, he realized that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me...That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Because any move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooped because they feared him.

"If only I could be a bird," he thought to himself, "and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to safety....(I could tell them about) the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could **see, and hear and understand.**"

At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. And (as) he stood there listening to the bells he realized that what he was wanting to do for those frightened birds was exactly what Christ had done for him...and he sank to his knees in the snow.

The man in the story thought to himself. "If only I could turn into a bird and walk among them, then I could speak to them in "Birdeeze" and they would understand". But, of course, he could not transform into a bird, nor could he speak "Birdeeze".

Unlike the man in the story, God **was** able to transform Himself into a man through His Son Jesus Christ! He walked among men and taught us how we should live. He told us about HIS warm and safe barn, His kingdom, and encouraged us to seek for it and His righteousness.

BODY:

I. IMMINENT DANGER!

The first thing we should know about the kingdom of Heaven is that we need to be in it. God wanted everyone to know about the kingdom of Heaven. It is a place that shields us from the deadly spiritual storms of this earthly kingdom.

The man in Paul Harvey's story saw the birds outside his window. He knew that they were unprepared for the extreme cold weather that was coming upon them. He saw their imminent danger and just wanted to bring them to warmth and safety in his barn. But the birds did not understand their plight and they could not understand the concern of the man. He was only frightening to them. So they avoided the man and they went about living their life, as they knew it, in the storm. They had no clue that safety and warmth was just a very short flight away through the open doors of the barn.

Man is in the same plight. We live in an earthly kingdom that is saturated in sin. Many live in this earthly kingdom not realizing that they are imminent danger of dying in their sins. They have heard the gospel message, but refuse to be led by it.

II. WARMTH AND SAFETY.

God knew that mankind needed a way to escape this life of sin and be sheltered in his "barn", the kingdom of heaven.

Although the man in our story was unable to transform himself into a bird and speak "Birdeeze", God was able to transform Himself, through His Son, and made Him man. He lived and walked among men. He spoke to us in "humaneeze" (in our language).

This is amazing! Jesus left His splendor in heaven and came to this world to become a man. **This was God in our presence!** He walked with us and taught us not to be afraid of Him, but to let Him remove us from this "cold miserable snowstorm" that He called **sin** and lead us into the shelter of His barn that He called the **Kingdom of Heaven**.

He warned us of our sin and, most importantly, how to escape its clutches.

When Christ was among us it is important to note the emphasis of His teachings during His ministry.

Matthew 4:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

It is also important to understand how Jesus described His kingdom. Pilate was questioning Jesus just before the crucifixion and asked Him about His kingdom.

John 18:36 (NASB)

³⁶ Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

Jesus came to tell us that we are living in a worldly kingdom. There is a spiritual kingdom that is not of this world. He wants us to enter His kingdom. We are to be citizens of His Kingdom even though we are presently living as foreigners on earth.

When we understand what it means to seek the kingdom of God, we will passionately seek God's kingdom and His righteousness.

III. PASSIONATE SERVICE.

The following illustration will help us to understand the passion that we should have when we seek God's kingdom and His righteousness.

ILLUSTRATION:

Do you remember the TV show named Early Edition that ran from 1996 through 2000? It featured a man named Gary Hobson. The premise of the show was that he received tomorrow's newspaper a day early. He doesn't know how. He doesn't know why. All he knows is when the early edition hits his doorstep, he has twenty-four hours to set things right.

Let me ask you this question. What if you could start receiving tomorrow's news today?

There would be only one stipulation. You will continue to receive the paper as long as you do not act upon any of the information that have you learned from it the next day. You would be allowed to act one time on only one event. The moment you do the rest of the news would become unreliable and the paper would quit coming.

You had observed the newspaper making accurate revelations day after day and knew it to be reliable. One day the newspaper told you about a penny stock on the stock market that currently is only worth one cent per share. But it reveals to you that if you invest your penny today, tomorrow that penny is going to be worth one thousand dollars. **For every penny that you invest today, that penny will be worth \$1000 tomorrow!**

You are so convinced that you become willing to invest everything because it was the most valuable revelation that had ever been presented, so you decide to take advantage of your unique knowledge.

Now that you were committed and knowing that the newspaper would never come to your doorstep again, how many of your pennies would you be willing to invest in that stock today? All of them right! As many as you could find. As many as you could get your hands on. You might start selling all of your possessions for pennies on the dollar to anyone who would buy them. You might sell your car for \$10 because tomorrow that \$10 dollars would be worth a million dollars! You might even try to take out loans, even with high interest. **You would do everything humanly possible to invest in that stock!**

Time is of the essence! Those stocks MUST be bought before the stock market closes.

You see the whole thing comes down to a passionate focus. Jesus said...

Matthew 13:44 (NASB)

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Let's talk about passion for a moment and see how it can direct your life.

Once you were convinced that the penny stock was going to greatly increase in value everything that you had planned for the entire day VANISHES! Your plans just evaporate away. You realize that everything else going on in your life just became unimportant.

- Every thought about going to work.
- Every thought about going to the coffee shop to visit with your friends.
- Every thought about repairing your car.
- Every thought about mowing the yard.
- Even every thought about eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner on time was no longer a priority.

All previous priorities have gone away!

Now, all of my attention is on getting my hands on every cent that I can accumulate and invest it in that penny stock before the stock market closes.

That is what happened to this man that found this treasure.

All of a sudden he saw something of unfathomable value. He probably had many loves in his life. He probably had many trinkets he called treasures. He probably bothered himself with all sorts of vain activity. But the moment his eyes were cast upon THAT treasure absolutely everything else in his life became of no value. The only thing that he could think about was what his eyes had seen.

In order to do anything in the Christian life, it is motivated by PASSION. Not by sheer will. Not discipline. **It is motivated by passion!**. And that passion grows and matures the more we know about God and the more we set our minds on the things above.

Romans 8:5 (NASB)

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Most of us would have to admit, that the focus of your life, the thoughts of your day and night, are more given to the things of this world?

You may say, "But, I have to work hard in order to have food to eat and pay my bills".

Listen! Most people are not working this hard in order to have something to eat. They are doing it to pay off a house that they should never have bought in the first place. They have to work to pay for the boat that they just "had to have". They have to work to pay for the vacation home they purchased on the lake so they could **use** the boat that **now** sits at a rented dock on the lake. They have to go to the lake frequently in order to justify the money they are spending on the boat and the vacation home on the lake. It never stops!

God knows our real needs. He does not guarantee earthly riches or physical health. But He does guarantee spiritual protection, if we but trust and follow Him.

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

CONCLUSION:

The moment you get a glimpse of God's glory and understand how putrid this world is, you will joyfully give up your shiny trinkets in order to serve your master and inherit the treasure of his kingdom. When you finally understand that Christ came to this earth to offer us a treasure of **eternal** salvation nothing else will matter.

Jesus in essence is saying that the kingdom of heaven is like that penny stock that is going to increase overnight one thousand times. It is worth everything that we hold dear in this world. The penny stock is just money. It is temporal. We cannot take it with us when we die. Salvation is eternal!

Is the kingdom of heaven worth everything to you?

God's great treasure is salvation. Our salvation comes from Christ, Who died on the cross for our sins.

It is a treasure much more valuable than anything that we can imagine and it will never go away. He only asks that we diligently seek for His kingdom and His righteousness.

Are you still walking in the cold, miserable, snowstorm of life? **Now...**you know that there is a safe warm barn that you can turn to! Are you seeking God's kingdom? Do you want Him in your life? We are promised that we can find His eternal treasure if we but try!

Matthew 7:7-8 (NASB)

⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, **and he who seeks finds**, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

You must believe that Christ died for you and ask Him to forgive your sins. Then be immersed in the waters of baptism where your sins will be wiped away, through the grace of Jesus. When you do, the Holy Spirit will dwell within you, marking you as one of His own in His kingdom.

This is the gift of salvation that has immeasurable value.

John 3:16 (NASB)

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

and NOW...you know...the REST of the story!

He is Lord!