

Permanent Wave

1 John 1:1-2:2

Pastor Bill Mosley Doss/Cherry Spring 4/11/2021

A man was driving along the highway and saw the Easter Bunny hopping across the road. He swerved, but sadly the Easter Bunny jumped wrong and was hit.

The driver pulled over to render aid. But the Easter Bunny was dead. He felt so awful that he began to cry.

A woman saw the man crying and pulled over. She asked what was wrong.

"I feel terrible; I accidentally killed the Easter Bunny."

The woman said, "Not to worry." She pulled out a spray can, walked over to the limp body, and sprayed the rabbit.

The Easter Bunny came to life, jumped up, waved its paw at them and hopped down the road!

Ten feet away the Bunny stopped, turned around, waved at them again, hopped another 10 feet, turned, waved, and hopped another 10 feet, turned and waved and did this again and again until it was out of sight.

The man was astonished! What miraculous substance could be in that spray can? He turned to the woman and asked, "What was in your spray can? What did you spray onto that rabbit?"

The woman turned the can so he could read the label.

It said: "Hair Spray - Restores Life to Dead Hair - Adds Permanent Wave." 211 words

I know most folks think Easter was last Sunday & all the Easter clearance sales are over, but in the church we're still in the Easter season. The grave couldn't hold

Jesus & one Sunday can't hold our celebration of his resurrection. It's not one Sunday, it's more of a permanent wave.

All the epistle readings for this Easter Season come from John's first Epistle. John once asked Jesus for fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village; no wonder he was called a son of Thunder.

But his experience of the forgiving love of God, the theme of his letter, caused him to mellow. He says, "We love because he first loved us." themes of the letter are Confession, forgiveness, cleansing and the loving intervention of Jesus for our sins.

Robert Brusick compares 1 John to a River Ride like the one at Six Flags. You're floating in a gondola down a stream of rapids. "The gondola twists, dips, and turns, carrying riders over a series of drops beneath the surface. Water circulates under the vessel and splashes the riders from behind and in front. Yet, in spite of the soaking backwash, the pull of the stream is always toward the goal. In the end the riders emerge, drenched but satisfied, having been immersed, propelled, and surprised by both visible and invisible forces." (Word and World, Luther Seminary, 17/2. 1997, p. 213)

1 John has a similar unsettling effect. "We, the readers, experience the fast forward movement as well as the unexpected backwash in the sequence of readingswe were carried along by the swell; but we also had the repeated experience of being unexpectedly drenched by the waves of ideas." (ibid.)

It's like you're driving along and something terrible happens and you're in all the stages of emotion, denial, anger, grief, bargaining, and someone comes along with a miraculous spray that restores life and you don't really know how it happened, but you're really happy it happened.

John speaks to our denial. "IF we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." Worse, we even make God a liar. The son of Thunder hasn't lost his bluntness; he points out how hopelessly funny we really are.

And how we want to deny the reality of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ. He asks the very real questions of what you believe about Jesus, and presses the issue further: **what difference does it make THAT you believe?**

Jesus really lived, died and was raised in the love of God. How do you live, how will you die, how will you be raised?

Dr. David Zersen, President Emeritus of Concordia University at Austin said in a sermon on this text:

One of the people in our century who more than most refused to settle for nothing less than real living was Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the anniversary of whose death we remembered on April 6. In prison, awaiting his ultimate sentence, he filled his days with writing poetry, the draft for a novel, sketches for his writings on ethics, not to mention a voluminous correspondence with this fiancée, his family and his friends. He could not escape the judgment of the state, the inhumane treatment of the Nazis, nor his ultimate execution. They were his lot in life at that time. Inwardly, however, he wrestled with who he was and what he was to become. Whether he was a cowardly weebegone weakling or a confident representative of the resistance others would have to judge. For him, knowing the full power of a

resurrection faith, it was enough to confess that whoever he was or wasn't, he was God's! That was and is the basis for real living in fellowship with a real Jesus.

Such a conviction is our emboldening faith as well. We cannot avoid life's problems or challenges, but knowing whose we are, we have enough strength for the day to meet each challenge. And, as John himself might have said, we consider it a privilege to meet our challenges with a resurrection faith, for they make our joy complete (1:4). (245 words)

Lent was 40 days & 7 Sundays long. Many of you committed yourselves to a Lenten discipline to prepare for Easter by fasting, praying, special devotions, or good works.

Easter is as long as Lent, & more joyous. Take on an Easter discipline to Celebrate your salvation, to rejoice in your baptism. Let me suggest reading the Epistles of John. There are three & they are short.

1 John is a kind of summary of the ideas in the Gospel of John. It's only five chapters long and doesn't take long to read.

Commit yourself to read it straight through once each week these next six weeks. Look for the waves of ideas, and make the love of God a permanent wave in your life.

Second and Third John are only a page apiece. You could memorize 2 John and have a fine summary of John's thought.

Celebrate salvation! Rejoice in your baptism into the resurrection of Jesus!

That your joy may be complete.

Lord, you have risen so we can say no to whatever makes it more difficult to say yes to you. 1093 words