

BEAUTY

Text: Genesis 3:20-24, John 19:38-42, John 20:1-18

The Plain Truth:

"Easter is God's Radical _____!"

What was taken back....

- 1) _____ with God restored.
- 2) State of _____ was restored.
- 3) Our _____ was restored.
- 4) Our _____ was restored in Jesus' Resurrection.

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Personal Study for Week of March 27

Just this week while volunteering to help out in my granddaughter's kindergarten class, my heart was convicted while sitting crisscross applesauce with the little folks during story time. After reading a book about the Easter Bunny, the teacher then asked the children: "Now tell me, what does Easter mean to you?" Many little hands went up, and several of the children said it was about a visit from the Easter Bunny, coloring eggs, hiding and hunting for eggs. Some mentioned family eating a big dinner, peeps and chocolate bunnies. But then one little fellow raised his hand and after being called upon to share, he simply said: "It's about Jesus dying on the cross, then rising from the dead on Easter." The teacher beamed and said, "Yes, that is what Easter is really all about!"

Amidst all the secular thoughts that surround me – none of which are really bad or evil, just off-point – am I willing to raise my hand and speak truth like the little boy in the class? When faced with secular ideology, I may *think* the truth to myself, but do I speak it aloud for others to hear? The little fellow wasn't mad or dogmatic when he was called on to speak, but simply shared what Easter meant to him with simplicity, sincerity, and a sweet expression on his face.

Once when religious leaders tried to quiet children singing praise to Jesus, He said, "Haven't you ever read the Scriptures? For they say, 'You have taught children and infants to give you praise'" (Matthew 21:16b). Another time when the disciples scolded some parents for bringing their children to Jesus, He declared: "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it" (Mark 10:14b-15). The story of Easter is about people of all ages being restored as God's children.

Because of sin our relationship with God was broken. But because of Easter, intimacy with our heavenly Father is restored. Because of sin, our innocence before God was spoiled. But because of what Christ did for us on the cross, we can be innocent again like a little child. Because of sin, our physical, mental, and emotional well-being were fractured. But because Jesus bore our infirmities, we have peace of mind and the promise of a new body. Because of sin, immortality was destroyed. But because Jesus rose victorious over death, everlasting life is inherited by every man, woman, boy, and girl who trusts in Christ.

Easter is the great take-back. God gave His Son so that we could be forgiven of sin and rescued from this broken world. Have you received this wonderful gift of love? Close by reading John 19:38 – 20:18. Perhaps like Mary Magdalene and the little boy in the classroom, the Lord is calling you to share the message: "I have seen the Lord!" Who is the Lord putting on your heart to speak truth in love? Are you willing to share with sincerity and simplicity what the cross and Easter mean to you?

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