

# SEEK AND FIND

## EASTER SUNDAY



Catalog No. 20220417  
Various Verses  
Easter Message  
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April 17, 2022

### *Various Verses*

Happy Easter! It is so great to be here with you!

Some of you were here yesterday for our Easter Eggstravaganza. It was so fun. We must have had over 1000 eggs that were hidden and found. It got me thinking about things that we look for. What are some of those things?

It seems like we spend a lot of our lives looking for something. We enjoy looking for some of those things. Some of them are not as much fun to look for. Even many of the games we play have to do with finding something hidden.

While seeking can be fun, I think the finding makes it all worthwhile. I hate looking for my lost keys. But when I find them, I'm happier than before I lost them. Why is that? This morning, we will reflect on what it means to seek and find.

Most of us have played Hide and Seek. This game is played widely across many different cultures: French, Spanish, Nigerian, Korean, Romanian, and South American.<sup>1</sup> In reality, it's more than a game. It's an important part of child development.

When an infant is born, they don't understand that something they can't sense still exists. All they know is what they can sense: see, touch, smell or hear. So we teach them by playing games with them. Peek-a-boo is the earliest version. We hide our faces and then reveal ourselves.

Through peek-a-boo, children learn a critical truth about the nature of the world. Their parents continue to exist even when they can't be seen.

But it goes even deeper than that. Children aren't just learning a principle of the world. They are forming bonds with people. As soon we come into this world, we begin learning to trust. That trust is formed by a kind of cycle that happens. Think about what that infant feels when

they believe that their parent has ceased to exist—not just hidden their face, but stopped being in their entirety.

That is a rupture in the relationship. The infant feels completely alone in the world. Abandoned. But then the hands are removed from the parent's face, and a miracle has occurred. The parent has magically reappeared. Imagine the joy and celebration in that infant's heart. The relationship has been repaired. Everything is back to normal, but more than that. It's better than before the rupture occurred in the first place.

Out of that cycle, the bonds of trust are formed. Psychologists call that attachment. The infant and parent are connected through an intimate cycle of grief and celebration. This process occurs hundreds and thousands of times as a child grows up. Rupture. Repair. Attachment.

If you were with us two nights ago, we observed a powerful part of the Easter story. Jesus Christ, the man who is God and had come to earth to deliver his followers, died on a cross and was hidden in a grave. From all appearances, he had ceased to exist. Jesus Christ was no more.

What made it worse—as if it could have possibly gotten worse—was that a group of women went to a garden tomb looking for his body on this morning. They expected it to be there. But to their surprise, his body was gone. The rupture was complete. Jesus had died, and his body was missing.

This morning we are going to talk about what happens at that moment. What happens when we look for Jesus? You are here in a church on Easter morning. Maybe you are looking for something. Perhaps you are looking for a church. Maybe you are looking for a soulmate. Maybe you are on your phone looking for a good place to have lunch. And maybe, without even realizing it, you're looking for Jesus.

## Created to seek

We have observed that we spend a lot of our lives looking for things. The Bible offers a simple explanation that we were created to seek. In the book of Acts, we hear about a sermon that the apostle Paul gives to a group of Greeks. He tells them that each of us was made to look for God. Read how Paul explains it in Acts:

**Acts 17:26-27:**

**And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, 27 that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,**

The apostle claims that God made different cultures to inhabit the various parts of the earth in different eras of history. But one thing unites all those various cultures: each of us, wherever and whenever we were born, was created to seek God.

This is a fascinating idea. Paul doesn't just say that we were created to know God or be known by God. He doesn't say that we were created to worship God or serve God. He says that we were created to look for God. We were meant for the search.

I have heard people complain that God seems hard to find, hard to believe in, far away, and distant. "If God were real, why doesn't he make it more obvious?" "If Christianity is true, then God should just appear and tell everyone." "Why is faith so difficult?"

Maybe the answer to those questions is that we were made for the search. We were created to look for God.

There is one other thing we need to know about looking for God. The Bible says that if we look for him, we will find him. If we seek God, He will be found.

Read what one of the prophets says:

**Jeremiah 29:13:**

**You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.**

Centuries later, Jesus himself echoes the same idea.

**Matthew 7:7:**

**"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."**

If we seek Jesus, we will find him. If you want to find Jesus, he will lead you to himself. But you have to look in the right place. When those women went looking for Jesus in a grave, they were corrected by an angel who asked them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5).

If Jesus isn't in the grave, where is he? This morning, I want to suggest three places where you can look for Jesus.

## Seek the Scriptures

If God really created us to find him, then it makes sense that he would give us some help in the search. And that's exactly what he did. This book—the Bible—is more than a collection of ancient stories. It's more than a compilation of ideas about God. It's more than a holy document. This book is the primary way God has chosen to reveal himself to the world.

So the first place we look for Jesus is in the Scriptures. I think of this book as a treasure map.

We love the idea of a bold explorer following a detailed map through many dangers and wrong turns to eventually discover a treasure of great worth. That is how I think of this book. It is a carefully constructed guide. If you follow its leading, you will discover Jesus. You will find a Jesus of such infinite beauty that he will take your breath away.

That is what happened to David Brooks, the *New York Times* columnist and best-selling author. After living most of his life as an atheist, he began a spiritual quest that led him to the Bible. Here's what he said,

*So I kept going back to the [biblical] stories, wondering if they were true, or, more precisely, letting the stories gradually sink into this deeper layer inside that was suddenly accessible. And I think what changed, in the most incremental, boring way possible, is that at some point I had the sensation that these stories are not fabricated tales happening to other, possibly fictional, people: They are the underlying shape of reality.<sup>2</sup>*

Brooks now calls himself a Christian. In the Scriptures, he found Jesus.

I promise you if you seek these Scriptures, you will find Jesus there. Start with one of the gospels: Mark is the action book. John is great if you like deep philosophy. Next week I will kick off a series where we get to know Jesus through what he says about himself. Come back and join us.

If you want to look for Jesus, look for him in the Scriptures.

## Seek in the church

Here is how God works: He does not just use a book. God uses people to reveal himself to others.

At one point during his ministry, Jesus notices some people looking for something. He asks them, "What are you seeking?" They tell him they want to know where Jesus is staying. So he invites them by saying to them, "Come and you will see."

Today, the place where Jesus is staying is the church. In the Old Testament, it was said that the temple was God's dwelling place. He lived there. But after the ministry of Jesus, the New Testament says that the community of those who follow Jesus are the new temple. God's dwelling place is the church. He lives here.

This is what happened to me in high school. I had grown up attending church. I knew all the right ideas. But it was when I became part of a community of people who loved Jesus, that I saw those ideas in practice. Through the people I met, the words of this book became real. I saw Jesus in them. I saw Jesus in the way they treated each other. I saw Jesus in the way they treated me. I saw Jesus in the way they treated people in the community.

If you are not a regular part of our community, I invite you to seek Jesus with us. We aren't perfect, and if you hang out with us, you will figure that out very quickly. But I think you will find that there is something special here. It is not just a social club. We are drawn together by something deeper than affection. In this place, you will experience plenty of brokenness. But you will also experience Christ. Sacrifice. Generosity. Humility. Kindness. Reconciliation.

This is how God works, for better and for worse. He is found here. And you'll definitely find other stuff. But if you look for Jesus here, you will find him.

## Seek in your life

If God created us to look for him, it makes sense that he would give us multiple ways to find him. We seek in the Scriptures. We seek him in the church. The last place I'll mention is closer than you think. The apostle Paul alluded to it in that sermon from Acts. He said, "yet he is actually not far from each one of us."

We can find Jesus in the stories of our lives.

This is one of the most mystical ways that God works. He puts things in your life like breadcrumbs that you can follow to find him. Our joys. Our sorrows. People we encounter. Stories that lodge themselves in our hearts. God is working in each of your lives, leaving you clues that point to Him.

Christian Wiman is a poet and author. He grew up without faith, but he experienced such powerful emotions in life that he needed to find their source. He became a Christian after marriage and cancer, and life had dealt him twists and turns. This is how he tells it:

*My old ideas simply were not adequate for the extremes of joy and grief that I experienced, but when I looked at my life . . . through the lens of Christ, . . . it made sense. The world made sense."*<sup>3</sup>

I have heard many people say that the world doesn't seem to make sense anymore. I think many of us get to a place in our lives where we can't put all the pieces together. Why is life so hard? Why is the ocean so beautiful? How can I feel such strong love toward another person? How can the world be so broken by hatred and violence?

We realize that we need a story to wrap it all together—something to make sense of the intricacy of my heart and the complexity of the world around me. Maybe you know what I mean. Maybe you have felt it for a while now. Perhaps you have been denying it and focusing on the near term.

When you find Christ, this is exactly what happens. Through the lens of Christ, it all makes sense. The world makes sense.

Is there something within you that points you to God? Are your old ideas not able to pull it all together? Look for Jesus in your life.

## God is seeking too

Let's get back to those women on a chilly morning outside Jerusalem. They didn't find Jesus at first, but he appeared to them later that day. And like that infant who discovers that their parent still exists, they were overjoyed. Jesus was raised from the dead! Their Savior lived.

This is the cycle we talked about earlier. Jesus was hidden, and the relationship had been ruptured. Then he rose from the dead, and it was repaired. That process gave rise to a bond of attachment.

This is the Christian story of the gospel but with a twist. You see, it wasn't God who ruptured the relationship. That infant longs to know that their parent is there. But when she learns to speak, I know what her favorite word will be. She will say "no" to that same parent.

There is something within us that turns against, that rebels. That insists on choosing our own way. We are the ones who have created the rupture between God and us. Jesus is the one who offers repair. He accepts the consequence of our selfish independence. He fights the battle against sin and death. Jesus offers us forgiveness and declares ultimate victory.

We create the rupture, and Jesus offers the repair. And we are welcomed into the kingdom of God. An eternal attachment. A life of peace and freedom which begins here and now and extends into eternity.

You need to know you aren't the only one seeking.

Curt Thompson is a medical doctor who wrote a book called *The Soul of Shame*. He offers a different observation about infants. He says, "Every newborn comes into the world looking for someone looking for her."<sup>4</sup>

When that baby is trying to find her parent, she isn't just looking for anyone. She is looking for someone who is looking for her.

We like to find things, but I think that what we like better is to be found.

I remember one time playing hide and seek in high school. I found a great hiding place. It was perfect. So I crammed myself in and waited. And waited. And waited. Eventually, I thought, maybe this hiding place

is too good. I started to get lonely. Did they forget about me? Give up on finding me? The game had very quickly stopped being fun.

I wonder if the reason some of us stop looking for Jesus is not that we don't think we will find him. We are afraid that he will not find us. Psychologist D.W. Winnicott says, "It is joy to be hidden, but disaster not to be found."<sup>5</sup>

Some of us are not sure that Jesus wants to find us. We think maybe he has given up looking. We've experienced that rupture, and we believe it cannot be repaired. No one wants to play hide and seek if the seeker has given up on the game.

You need to know that Jesus hasn't given up on you. The good news—what Christians call the gospel—is that if you are willing, you will be found. Jesus will find you.

God says this in Ezekiel 34:16, "I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed."

Jesus says this in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

We were created to look for Jesus. He came to earth to look for us. When both those things happen, it's a miracle. That's what we celebrate today. When Jesus rose from the dead, the rupture in our relationship was repaired. Jesus is alive. He is looking for you. Seek him. And let yourself be found.

## Endnotes

1. "hide-and-seek game," *Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hide-and-seek-game>.
2. David Brooks, *The Second Mountain: The Quest for a Moral Life* (New York: Random House, 2019), 212, 241, 251.
3. Christian Wiman, *My Bright Abyss: Meditation of a Modern Believer* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 90.
4. "20 Quotes from Curt Thompson's *The Soul of Shame*," jordanthelevite, <https://jordanthelevite.wordpress.com/2016/07/22/20-quotes-from-curt-thompsons-new-book-on-shame/>.
5. "D.W. Winnicott Quotes," *goodreads*, [https://www.goodreads.com/search?q=DW+Winnicott&search%5Bsource%5D=goodreads&search\\_type=quotes&tab=quotes](https://www.goodreads.com/search?q=DW+Winnicott&search%5Bsource%5D=goodreads&search_type=quotes&tab=quotes).

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