

Sermon for 4-4-10

Wear Your Nikes on Easter

John 20:1-9

Today is Easter. One early Sunday morning, the famous Russian poet, Pushkin, went for a walk in his neighborhood and met an old lady who was sweeping her front yard with a broom. He greeted her, "Good morning, madam!" The old lady replied with a joyful face, "Good morning, Mr. Pushkin!" "You seem so happy this morning. What makes you so happy?" Pushkin asked. The old lady replied, "Is this not Easter morning? "He is risen!" Except this, what could make us that happy?" "Yes, indeed!" Pushkin admitted with nodding, and thinking deeply, "Yes indeed!"

"Christ is risen!" is the best news in the world. There are three reasons for this news to be good news. First, it relates to me as good news. Second, it is news that gives life. Lastly, it is the worthy news. The Easter News is the best news for everybody. Unfortunately, however, this news has become the exclusive good news for Christians. Without, faith it cannot be good news.

There are three kinds of philosophy of human beings.

First, Greek Philosophy of human beings: There are many gods which have supernatural power in the world. By accident or by gods' struggling, human beings occurred into the world. Human being is consisted with two elements; matter/material and mind /soul. When a man dies the two elements which composed as a human divided into the two and returned to original element; matter goes to ground and soul goes to the air and the soul floats on the air. That's it.

Second, Buddhism: Human being comes from nature and the nature is moving and mutating constantly. When a man dies and the body is buried into ground and returns to nature. Human being mutates constantly. When a man dies he will be mutated again according to how he had lived. If he lived bad life then he could be mutated as a miserable animal or a trifle. If he lived good life he could be mutated as another human.

Third, Christian believing: Christians believes that human being is a historical being. Arnold Joseph Toynbee, the worldly famous nineteen century historian once was asked , "What is history?" Then he answered, "History is "His story." His" means God; God's story about human and world; Human being was created by God. Because of sin, disobeying God, human being was fallen into the destiny of death. But God gave humans chance to regain eternal life. Through the crucifying of the Jesus Christ our Lord human being has chance to live eternal by faith. Human being is eternal being. That is the third philosophy about life.

Today's worship is designed by the His story, Unfolding drama, the Bible.

Bonnie Carley asked me after she heard my sermon title for today is “Wear your Nikes on Easter.” She asked, “Are we going to have a race on Sunday?” “Yes, we will have the most real race that we have ever had!” The race I mean is the victorious race for the rest of our lives.

Early on the first day of the week, after the Lord died, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”

Then, Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple out ran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then, Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then, the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture that he must arise from the dead. Then, the disciples returned to their homes.

I think from that point there was some racing among the disciples. Peter ran to Andrew, Andrew ran to Thomas. Thomas ran to Nathanael. While John ran to James, James ran to Phillip, and Philip ran to Bartholomew; Twelve disciples to seventy disciples. Seventy disciples, from Jerusalem to Galilee, Galilee to Judea, Judea to Samaria, They all ran. Ran and ran and ran. They had to run and run and run without delay.

Like our church’s prayer chain which engaged in marathon calling from Donna Cool to Cheryl, Cheryl to Berneice, Berneice to Bernadine, Bernadine to mom Donna, mom Donna to Ilene, Ilene to June, June to Bonnie, Bonnie to Connie, Connie to the other Bonnie, the other Bonnie to Jeanene, Jeanene to Mary, Mary to Thelma, Thelma to Jean, Jean to Linda, Linda to Shirley, Shirley to Elaine. They call and send messages. At that time there was no telephone line, so the running was the best way to send the message quickly.

So, the Easter early morning the races started in every street, side-street and alley. They ran through short-cuts and knocked on doors and delivered the great news of victory.

The world’s most famous race is the Olympic marathon. Its story dates back to 490 B.C. when the first battle for democracy was fought on the Greek plain of Marathon. The war between the Persian Empire and Greeks had broken out. The Greeks won the war. The Greeks sent their fastest runner, Pheidippides, who ran about 25 miles, from Marathon to Athens, to announce the Greek victory with one word, “Nike” (pronounced “NEE-KAY”), the Greek word for victory. The Greek letter “V” is called “Ni” in Greek, and sounds like an “n.” So, the checkmark on the side of all Nike shoes is a stylized Greek letter “Ni” and stands for the Greek word for victory. Nike tennis shoes comes from this

marathon story: shoes for running to deliver the news of victory, which we deserve to wear on Easter!

We have Good News to deliver and now it is our turn to run for our life. The best news in the world is this news we each have. And, this news relates to each of us personally. If the news did not relate to us individually, it would not be so attractive, even though it seemed great.

The Bible tells us that you and I were included in God's ultimate plan. That is the good news. "Christ lives so you and I live" is the greatest message of Easter, because the Lord of resurrection includes you and me. You and I are included in God's chosen, calling and sending. That's why we need shoes to run—run to deliver the great news of victory. We run for the Lord who will award us on that Great Day. We run for the honor and glory of God.

Saint Paul pronounced, "I have run the great race, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith, and now the prize awaits me, will award me on the great day." Take the shoes of Easter. Be ready, get set and go for the greatest race that we have ever had.

May the greatest news reform you and transform your life!