

## Death Turned Backwards

### I. Slide#1 Intro:

- A. **Prayer:** Lord, we lay out the **welcome mat for You**, in front of our hearts, for 2014. You are giving us a **new set** of 12 months, should you tarry.
- B. **Slide#2** I like **new years**. To me it's like that feeling you get when you get to **clean off** your **work desk...or** clean your **garage**.
1. We get to seal up 2013 with a bow.
  2. **Maybe** it was a great year for you. **Or**, maybe it was a year to forget **or** put behind. **Maybe** it was a year of failures. **Regrets**. Even poor choices **relationally**, **or** bad investments **financially**, **or** you felt it was unsatisfactory **spiritually**.
  3. **2014 clean slate** :) New beginning. New year.
  4. **As we look into 2014 in sports...**we don't know whether it is going to be **too cold** for **The Superbowl** this year in **Jersey**. **Or**, **too warm** for the winter **Olympics** in **Sochi**. **The Boston Marathon** will be the 2nd largest in history w/36,000. **Brazil** promises to be ready for **the World Cup**, **but** they're asking can its infrastructure handle all the tourists?
  5. **But what about our spiritual life in 2014...will it be status quo Christianity?** **Or**, off the charts cool things **partnering** with God?
- C. Well, we just celebrated **Jesus' birth**, which we get to do each year.
1. But our topic this morning is one to be celebrated **every day**, cuz **it is always Easter**.
    - a) **Slide#3** "**Easter morning** was the Father's audible **Amen** to all the claims of Jesus Christ." George Matheson
    - b) Christ has **died**, Christ has **risen**, & Christ **is coming again...maybe in 2014?** :)
- D. Let's start by watching a clip from, **The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe**. **King Aslan the Lion(rep/Jesus)** has been brutally killed by the **White Witch**, leaving his body on the stone table. **Lucy & Susan** are dejectedly mourning the loss of the great king. Turning to walk away, the ground shakes & they hear the sound of stone cracking. The girls turn & see **Aslan's body** is gone.
1. **Slide#4** Susan said, "**But we saw the knife...**"? But her question was cut short by **Aslan's** response. He explains the **Evil Witch** did not understand the true meaning of **sacrifice**. **Aslan** proclaims, "**When a willing victim who has committed no treachery is killed in a traitor's stead, the stone table will crack and even death itself will turn backwards.**"
  2. **Slide#5** Our **Title** this morning - **Death Turned Backwards**

- E. This is the story of **Transformation**. It's a story of **Victory**. *New beginnings. Fresh starts. Refreshed purpose. An Invigorated life. Revived faith. Restored hope.*
- F. **God** has a **Word** for each character in the Res story...& a **Word** for each of us this morning.
- G. **Slide#6 Outline: A Word of Victory** for the **Ladies**. A Word of **Encouragement** for **Peter**. A Word of **Direction** for the **Disciples**. And, A Word of \_\_\_\_\_ for you.

## II. **Slide#7 A WORD OF VICTORY FOR THE LADIES**

- A. (4) When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away - for it was very large.
- B. **1st**, a couple words about the resurrection.
1. The religious leaders jeered, **Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe.**
    - a) Well, Jesus had one better for them...How about instead of **down** from the **cross**...I come **up** from the **grave**?!!!
  2. *All 4 gospel accounts end with the resurrection story. Yet some get worried about the different accounts.*
    - a) Well, they are 4 different individuals, giving 4 different perspectives.
    - b) *If the police call in 4 eyewitnesses, & they all give the exact-same-story, it is usually not trustworthy because most likely they have collaborated.*
- C. (1) The same Love that brought these ladies to the **cross** brought them to the **tomb**.
1. **They must not have expected His Resurrection.** For they brought spices to **complete** the anointing Joseph & Nicodemus had begun.
- D. **Brought spices** – ἀρώματα(aroma) perfumed oils.
1. Since *embalming* wasn't a Jewish custom, these **aromatic perfumes** were poured over the body to counteract the stench of decay.
  2. But this was also done as an expression of **loving devotion** (as we bring **flowers** to the grave today)
- E. (3,4) **What surprises these ladies faced:**
1. **Slide#8 The stone was already rolled away.**
    - a) The heart pound. **Did someone steal it? Is someone defiling it? Would they be denied this last act of devotion?**
    - b) Once the large stone was slotted in the prepared groove, it was far harder to remove.
    - c) Of course this not to let Jesus **out**, but to let them **in**.
    - d) **Great Lesson:** It is interesting that when we are **worried** about how something is going to work out, *i.e.* vs.3 **who will roll away the stone?**...we just need to **Look up** (4)
      - (1) On reaching the place of the resurrection...they found their difficulty gone!

(2) The stone rolled away by an unseen hand.

(3) **Our you facing any terrible difficulties?**

(a) *We imagine difficulties which God has already solved for us.*

F. The stone was rolled away from their hearts.

1. **Slide#9 Joy** rested. **Salvation** completed. **Holiness** was assured.

2. *The Christian church is built on an empty grave.*

### III. **Slide#10 A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PETER**

A. (7) **Tell the disciples and Peter.**

B. **Slide#11** There is **restoration**. There is **forgiveness**. There is **amnesty**/pardon.

1. In spite of **Peter** denying our Lord, **Jesus** never denied him.

a) See, He had plans for Peter. **And when you have returned to Me Peter strengthen your brethren.**

b) **And backslidden brethren, He has plans for you.** For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace & not of evil, to give you a future & a hope.

2. **Peter loved Jesus**, & even if his loved **failed**, **it rose again**.

### IV. **Slide#12 A WORD OF DIRECTION FOR THE DISCIPLES**

A. (7) **Go, tell His disciples...that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him.**

1. Or, as Mt.28:6,7 writes it **Come and See. Go and Tell.**

B. **He's going before you -**

1. **Where do you need Him to go before you? Where would you like to be assured that He'll be there waiting. Where do you need to know He's been there first?**

C. **Slide#13 According** to The Proceedings of the U.S. Naval Institute:

The USS Astoria (CA-34) was the first U.S. cruiser to engage the Japanese during the Battle of Savo Island, a night action fought 8-9 August 1942. Although she scored two hits on the Imperial flagship Chokai, the Astoria was badly damaged and sank shortly after noon, 9 August. **About** 0200 hours a young midwesterner, Signalman 3rd Class **Elgin Staples**, was swept overboard by the blast when the Astoria's number one eight-inch gun turret exploded. Wounded in both legs by shrapnel and in semi-shock, he was **kept afloat by a narrow lifebelt** that he managed to activate with a simple trigger mechanism.

**At** around 0600 hours, Staples was rescued by a passing destroyer and returned to the Astoria, whose captain was attempting to save the cruiser by beaching her. The effort failed, and Staples, **still wearing the same lifebelt**, found himself back in the water. It was lunchtime. Picked up again, this time by the USS President Jackson (AP-37), he was one of 500 survivors of the battle who were evacuated to Noumea.

**On board** the transport Staples, for the first time, closely examined the lifebelt that had served

him so well. It had been manufactured by Firestone Tire and Rubber Company of Akron, Ohio, and bore a registration number.

**Given home leave**, Staples told his story and asked his mother, who worked for Firestone, about the purpose of the number on the belt. She replied that the company insisted on personal responsibility for the war effort, and that the number was unique and assigned to only one inspector. Staples remembered everything about the lifebelt, and quoted the number. *It was his mother's personal code and affixed to every item she was responsible for approving.*<sup>1</sup>

1. 71 ago, a mother's unheralded diligence in an anonymous wartime job made sure her soon-to-be **shipwrecked son's hope of survival**.
2. **But how much greater** are the stakes in **eternal matters**, and **how much greater** is the challenge to diligence in eternal matters. "We desire/long for each one of you," says the writer in verse 11, "to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to **make your hope sure.**"

D. Heb.6:19,20 **Forerunner** – This spoke of the men or troops which were sent to explore before the advance of an army.

1. **Jesus** was our **forerunner**, **our trail blazer**, **our pioneer**, **our guide**, **our scout**, **our leader** who opened up **The Way**.

E. **Slide#14** I see the image of Jesus as **the lead climber**(**forerunner**) w/a mountain climbing team.

1. He "goes ahead" & anchors the **pitons**/<sub>pee-tons</sub> (the metal spike w/eye for rope) into the rock [**or nuts or camming device**]
  - a) **At salvation** we clipped our carabineer, onto His rope of salvation. **And we follow behind progressing onward & upward w/faith & patience**(12).
  - b) **Faith** = This is when He anchors to a place **out of our sight**. [Picture up over the rock where you can't see]
    - (1) Jesus has gone 1st through the veil, into His Fathers presence, & though we don't see it yet, we're climbing close behind.
  - c) **Patience** – you can't be in a hurry when you're climbing. Every step & grip better be calculated.
2. We are anchored, w/**His** pitons, so we can make progress.

## V. **Slide#15 A WORD OF \_\_\_\_\_ FOR YOU**

- A. **Which do you need?** Victory, Encouragement, or Direction?
- B. **We** are part of this story. It is **unfolding** right before us.

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Kent Hughes, Hebrews, pg.168,169. Commander Eric J. Berryman, "Strange Things Happen at Sea", Proceedings, U.S. Naval Institute, June 1989, Vol. 115/6/1036, p. 48.

1. **We do not tell a completed story.** At the beginning of the book of Acts, Luke says that in his first volume he recorded **all the Jesus began to do.** The history of the Church is what Jesus **continues to do.**
  2. We look back at the first disciples, Mary or Cleopas or Peter. **Our role is to *live as consistent characters* in line with the unfolding story.**
- C. **Slide#16** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
1. **What is old in your life?** sin, sickness, pain, suffering, grief, heartache...**but** Christ has opened to us the path to what is **New**.
  2. **What is new in Christ?** Forgiveness, salvation, eternal life, a new creation. New birth by faith. New nature, new heart, new life, new hope, and a new task. **Finally,** a new body in a new home called Heaven.
    - a) **Slide#17** Now God is giving us a New Year. This means a new start for some as they have not done well in the old one. **Not lived for God as they should.** Chance for a new start. New hope.
    - b) Maybe you dreamed certain things would happen in the **old year,** but dreams can become **reality** in the New Year of 2014.
  3. **Let's make Jesus our everything in 2014.**
- D. **Slide#18** Jesus is our everything:
1. To the **Artist** He is the One **Altogether Lovely.**
  2. To the **Architect** He is the **Chief Cornerstone.**
  3. To the **Astronomer** He is the **Sun of Righteousness.**
  4. To the **Baker** He is the **Living Bread.**
  5. To the **Banker** He is the **Hidden Treasure.**
  6. To the **Biologist** He is the **Life.**
  7. To the **Carpenter** He is the **Sure Foundation.**
  8. To the **Doctor** He is the **Great Physician.**
  9. To the **Educator** He is the **Great Teacher.**
  10. To the **Farmer** He is the **Sower and Lord of the Harvest.**
  11. To the **Florist** He is the **Lily of the Valley** and the **Rose of Sharon.**
  12. To the **Geologist** He is the **Rock of Ages.**
  13. To the **Horticulturist** He is the **True Vine.**
  14. To the **Judge** He is the **Righteous Judge.**
  15. To the **Juror** He is the **True Witness.**
  16. To the **Jeweler** He is the **Pearl of Great Price.**

17. To the **Editor** He is the **Good Tidings of Great Joy**.
18. To the **Oculist** He is the **Light of the Eyes**.
19. To the **Philosopher** He is the **Wisdom of God**.
20. To the **Printer** He is the **True Type**.
21. To the **Servant** He is the **Good Master**.
22. To the **Student** He is the **Incarnate Truth**.
23. To the **Toiler** He is the **Giver of Rest**.
24. To the **Sinner** He is the **Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world**.
25. To the **Christian**, He is the **Risen Son God, the Savior, the Redeemer, and Lord of Lord's and King of Kings!!!**