

Uncontainable Good News
Matthew 28:1–20
Sunday, April 5, 2026 (Easter Sunday)
Lenten Series: Tell Me Something Good

Let us pray: Risen and ever-living Lord, raise up your word in us, that it might lead us to new life, in Christ. Amen.

Have you ever had good news that you had to contain?

Like when you or someone close to you finds out that they're going to have a baby, but you can't *tell* anyone yet. Your kids tell you that you're going to be a grandparent, "But don't tell anybody yet!" You want to tell *everyone*, and it is so hard to contain that good news.

When you find out about a new job, but it's not official yet. I remember when I was called here 13 years ago. We had the meeting where you voted to call me, and we were all *so excited*, but we couldn't *tell* anyone yet, because I still had to go home and let my other church know first. So we had to sit on it for a week. I wanted to tell *everyone*, and it was so hard to contain that good news.

The other week, my best friend in Tennessee told me that he is coming up here to visit in a couple of weeks. My kids absolutely love him, but he said, "Don't tell the kids. We should surprise them." Well, forget that! My best friend is coming to visit! I went and told them right away! Because that good news was just too hard to contain.

When the cancer goes into remission or you find out good news about a medical situation, and you want to tell *everyone*, but you have to wait to tell certain people first, because if they found out from *someone else*, they'd be upset that you didn't tell them.

An engagement, or when you know you're *going* to propose to someone, and you want to tell everyone, but you *can't*.

A birthday or Christmas present that you know someone is absolutely going to *love*, and it just eats you up not being able to tell them about it.

There are so many other examples of times when you have this really *good news* that you just want to share with *everyone*, but for whatever reason you *can't*. It is *so hard* to keep that inside, because *good news* is not meant to be *contained*.

Throughout the season of Lent, we have talked about where the *good news* is in Lent, a season of repentance and self-denial that can be so somber that it feels like a season of *bad news*. But Lent has been building up to the greatest *good news* of all, that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, conquering the powers of sin and death and evil, making it possible for us to live new lives with God and with each other, now and forever! We finally *get* that good news today, and what's the first thing that *happens*? They try to *contain* it.

The guards who were at the tomb and witnessed the angel coming to tell Mary Magdalene that Jesus was alive, they go to the Jewish religious leaders and tell them what happened. And the religious leaders say, "Here's some money. Don't tell anyone about this. Tell them that his disciples came at night and took his body while you were sleeping." Someone who was *dead* is *alive* again! That seems like *good news* that you would want to tell *everyone*...unless you were the ones who had him killed.

Well, obviously, it didn't work. Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples, and then Jesus tells the disciples to go tell *everyone*, all the nations of the world. And here we are today, because that good news could not be contained. *Jesus* cannot be contained, by a *cross* or a *tomb* or *death* or *lies*. He cannot be contained in *us* or in a *church building* or in a *denomination*. He is *alive* and at work in the world, breaking free from all that which tries to contain him, and breaking *us* free from all that which tries to contain *us*.

The world still *tries* to contain him. The powers of sin and evil and death, in a last gasp attempt to *hold on* to their power still try to contain the good news of Jesus, not just with *money* or cleverly devised *lies* or stealing his body. They try to contain him (and *us*) by stealing our *hope* with *bad news*. We are bombarded with so much bad news every single day, that it starts to make us think, "What's the point? Things are so *bad*, and the problems are so *big* that *I* can't do anything about it. So why bother?"

But *good news* cannot be contained. *Jesus* cannot be contained. He is *alive* and *loose in the world*. We just have to *look* for him. Like when it says at the beginning of our readings how Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. They weren't just going to have a look around. The Greek word there for *see* is *theoreomai*, and it's about looking *intently*, *purposefully*, like you are looking for something *specific*. It's about looking, not just with the *eyes* but with the *mind* and the *heart*. They are *trying to see something*.

We have to *try* to see the good news in this world. We have to look for it intently, not just with our *eyes* but with discerning hearts and minds. And that is *hard*. But that's what I did this past week. I said, "Where is the good news of Jesus' resurrection alive and at work in this world," and then I intentionally went looking for it, so that I could share it with you. At first it was really hard to find. It was just story

after story of war and violence and sickness and suffering and hatred and death; greed and injustice. But the more I looked for it, the more I started to see it. And here's what I found:

An autistic coffee shop employee had \$20 in tips stolen from the tip jar. It absolutely broke his heart, not that he lost money, but that someone was mean and selfish enough to *do* that. When the word spread, customers responded by giving him over \$1,400 in tips, overwhelming him not with *money* but with *goodness*.

A 78-year-old retired man had to start working as a Door Dash driver to pay for his wife's medication. A customer saw him one night and talked to him and learned his story, and then she started a GoFundMe for him and his wife that has raised almost one million dollars.

A grocery delivery driver got into a car accident. But the fire fighters who responded to the scene helped him deliver the rest of the groceries.

A 22-year-old college student in Austin, TX was skateboarding when he swerved to miss a car and ended up breaking some bones. He knew he couldn't afford an ambulance, so he called an Uber to take him to the hospital. That Uber driver, who was an immigrant from the Congo, saw how much pain he was in and found out that he didn't have any family nearby, so he took him to the hospital and sat with him for six hours. Gave up six hours of work, in which he did not earn any money. The skateboarder had been struggling with the death of his younger brother, and he said, "That one act of kindness helped me see the good in the world again. Having him spend his entire day with me – a complete stranger, for no other reason than the goodness of his heart – helped me to put things into perspective. He absolutely changed my life."

The manager of a First Watch restaurant in Florida gathered all of the employees to tell them that their holiday party had been cancelled. The reason it had been cancelled is because one of the employees was trying to adopt a baby with his wife, but they couldn't afford it. So the restaurant took all of the money they would have spent on a holiday party and gave it to them. When the CEO of First Watch heard about it, he not only gave money to the couple for adoption, but he paid for the restaurant's holiday party.

A 78-year-old man in Pensacola, FL (my hometown) eats at a restaurant called The Shrimp Basket every single day, sometimes twice a day, because he lives alone, and it's his main social outlet. One morning he fell in his home and couldn't get up. The restaurant employees noticed when he didn't come in. They went to his home, but there was no answer when they knocked until they heard a faint cry coming from inside. They broke in the door, found him, and got him to the hospital. He spent two months in the hospital and rehab, and they brought him food every day. Then the manager of the restaurant found him an apartment right next door to the restaurant, so that he could walk over or they could easily check on him every day. And the president of the restaurant company announced that they are offering customers a free cup of gumbo every Monday for three weeks as a gesture to "inspire more acts of kindness between neighbors." The first day, they gave away almost 1,000 cups of gumbo. And they are giving that man free gumbo twice a day, every day, for the rest of his life.

A bakery in Charlotte, NC owned by Colombian immigrants gives birthday cakes to homeless people in the city, because they say everyone deserves a birthday cake. They have given away over 300 of them.

The owner of a pizzeria in Minnesota saw homeless people looking for food in the restaurant's dumpster. So he put a sign on the door that said, "Please do not eat out of our dumpster. Nobody deserves that. If you are that desperate for food, please come ask. If you are too embarrassed to ask, find a way to call us and ask if there is a way to leave a small cheese pizza outside the back door." In the past few months,

they have fed around 100 people and raised thousands of dollars for a community organization that helps the poor and homeless.

A small town in South Korea celebrated the birth of its first baby in 17 years. The first baby born there in a *generation*.

Scientists in England have developed a drug that has drastically improved the lives of thousands of children suffering from a rare, treatment-resistant form of epilepsy.

A tech entrepreneur in Australia had a dog that was diagnosed with cancer. So he sequenced the DNA in her tumor, entered it into ChatGPT, and asked it to develop an RNA vaccine. For around \$3,000, he was able to get the vaccine produced, and within a couple of months, it had reduced the dog's cancer by 75%. Scientists started saying, "Wait a minute. If we can do that for a *dog*, why can't we do it for *humans*?"

Other scientists used Artificial Intelligence to develop glasses for people with dementia that project visual prompts into the lenses, reminding them what certain things are called, and even telling them what to do if they can't remember a particular step in a process. Like if they're making something to eat, reminding them to turn off the stove.

And remember Punch the monkey that I told you about a few weeks ago? The baby macaque in a zoo in Japan that had been rejected by its mother, so the zookeepers gave it a stuffed orangutan from Ikea to comfort it. He would take that orangutan everywhere he went. He would sleep with it or just hold its hand, and he would run to it if the other macaques scared him or were a little too rough with him. When we left off the story a few weeks ago, the other macaques had just started to accept him and include him

in their grooming habits. Well, here's an update. Punch has a girlfriend now, and she looks just like the stuffed orangutan!

There is *good news* in this world, because *Jesus* is alive and at work in the world. We just have to *look* for him. And it isn't always stories about miracles like water being turned into wine or the blind being healed or the dead being raised. It isn't always stories about people being converted or having amazing spiritual experiences. Sometimes it's as simple as a school bus driver in Louisville, KY, who noticed that one of the kids he picks up, a 7-year-old boy named Levi, was sad. He asked him what was wrong, and Levi said he didn't have pajamas to wear for PJ Day. So after he dropped the kids off at the school, he drove right to a store, bought two pairs of pajamas, and brought them to the boy at school. The boy was so overwhelmed that he hugged the pajamas and cried. When news of the story spread, the local news interviewed the boy, and he said, "Mr. Larry is nice, and his heart is filled with joy. When he got me the pajamas, I did a happy cry."

All *love* comes from God. All *kindness* finds its source in God. All *joy* finds its source in God. All *generosity* finds its source in God. All *healing* finds its source in God. All *hope* finds its source in God. Because all *life* finds its source in God. And all *good news* finds its source in the *greatest* good news of all – the good news that Jesus Christ is alive and at work in this world, and his life and love and power cannot be contained.

The good news is that we don't have to be afraid, because Jesus is alive.

The good news is that we can be kind, because Jesus is alive.

The good news is that we can be generous, with our time and our resources and our love, because Jesus is alive.

The good news is that we can forgive, because Jesus is alive.

The good news is that healing is possible, because Jesus is alive.

The good news is that we can find freedom from addiction, because Jesus is alive.

The good news is that today can be better than yesterday, and tomorrow can be better than today, because Jesus is alive.

The good news is that sin no longer has any power over us. It may try to convince you otherwise, but its time is *over*, because Jesus is alive.

Death no longer has any power over us. It may try to convince you otherwise, but its time is *over*, because Jesus is alive.

Evil no longer has any *real* power in this world or in our lives. It may try to convince you otherwise, but its time is *over*, because Jesus is alive.

The good news is that we can live new lives, with God and with each other, now and forever, because Jesus Christ is alive. He is risen from the dead! He is on the loose and at work in this world, and *he cannot be contained*. You just have to look for him. Let us *live* in that good news and *share* that good news and *be* that good news in his name. Amen.