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| PASTOR GREG GRIFFITH

Hey, who's ready to celebrate the good news that the tomb is empty today? Are you ready to have a party? Are you ready at Northwest and at Fremont to say that Christ has won? The victory is done. Are we celebrating? Let's give it up.

Right. And here's the good news. Let's keep shouting and praising the good news and letting Satan know you lost. Jesus won and we're going to shout that until we're done and forever and through eternity we get to celebrate this good news everywhere, every day.

Have you thought about being locked out? Have you thought about things getting locked up? Have you thought about when you have locked your gate, locked your car, locked your home? When we think about getting locked, we realize we're locking something out or we're locking something in.

And then there's a juxtaposition of that as well to be locked in, which means that we are uber focused on something in our lives that tells us we're locked in on this. Nothing else is going to dissuade us. Nothing else is going to persuade us. Nothing else is going to distract us.

Well, tonight we get to continue to share the good news that Jesus is locked in on you to unlock you from the pits of hell. That he has risen over the grave to give you victory today over sin, death, and the devil. And that you no longer are locked out of heaven because he's locked in on you.

And heaven's gates are wide open. And people, you and me and others, are being rescued and ransomed and redeemed and pulled out of the locked gates of hell because the resurrection blew those locks off. And what we know from the Easter victory reality that we celebrate today is that love wins through Jesus.

And love is unstoppable because love won't stay buried in the grave. Love refuses to quit. And love is unstoppable for you and for me and for everyone, everywhere, every day. This is Easter today where we will go from Jesus being the OG of the best burger chain ever in and out to actually being the one who, well, gives us all knowledge.

And N is for knowledge, right? Go Big Red. We know that, right? So here's the knowledge we know from Jesus and the resurrection today. Jesus meets your need. Jesus knows your name. Jesus gives you new life.

So what is the need? Why do we need this love unstoppable for us today? Well, if I asked you a question right now, have you ever done something wrong against another human being, a husband or a wife? Has your husband or wife ever been correctly angry at you?

Have you ever been upset with a child, not because they did anything wrong, but just simply because you had a bad day? I had that happen to me this week. I got mad at my kid. And afterwards, my wife was like, that seemed extreme.

And I said, yeah, I just had a really bad day. That was super extreme. I need to go talk to her. Have you ever done something wrong against a neighbor, a coworker? Have you ever just had a moment of anger and you decided to take it out on a stranger and cut them off or take their rightful spot in the parking lot?

Have you ever just said something flippant to a stranger, kind of figuring at least I can get some frustration out? I think all of us, I know all of us would say, yep, been there, done that, may have done that on the way here.

What about, have you done anything wrong against God? And I think in this spot, we say yes, but we have to remember what the consequences of that are. That because we have wronged God in His sovereignty and in His call and in the Christian faith from the scriptures, we're called that we are to love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind.

And I failed in that. And we're to love our neighbors as ourselves. And we just discovered we failed in that. And there's a consequence for that. And that consequence is that we would be locked out of heaven.

We would be locked out of spending eternity with God because He is perfect and we are not. And so we have a need. Everyone in this room, whether you're a lifelong believer, whether you're an Easter attendee, whether you're a skeptic, or whether you're here because there's brunch at the end of this, you have a need.

Romans 5, 12 through 14, and I want to invite you again, read the red with me. Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, Adam, and death through sin. And in this way, death came to all people.

To be sure, sin was in the world before the law was given. But sin is not charged against anyone's account where there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from a time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.

And so the need is the reality that we are outside of the kingdom of God. And Jesus came to live the perfect life that you and I could not live and to die a sacrificial death on the cross and to carry all of your sins.

He who knew no sin became sin so that you would not be responsible for your sin in being separated from God. And he rose victoriously to meet your need and to give you love unstoppable.

So the disciples, they came on Easter morning afraid, scattered, hiding, because they didn't understand the resurrection yet. And Mary, grief stricken, confused, and without hope also comes to that tomb.

And as Mary looks into that tomb, what does she see? She sees no body in the grave. She sees the cloth lying there. She doesn't understand the hope that is given. And love unstoppable is on full display.

Because the resurrection didn't happen because we were strong and said, no, God, you cannot die. It happened because we were lost. Jesus came to meet the need that you have to spend eternity with him. And Jesus identifies your need.

He identifies your need, which means that he gives you forgiveness, mercy, that the empty tomb isn't one with wrath, but it's filled with love, unstoppable for you.

That now your, my sin is forgiven and the gates of heaven are open for you today. This is the resurrection power that Jesus meets with your need, because he also knows your name.

Jesus knows your name and love unstoppable is to know your name. There's power in knowing the names of one another. There's something that happens when someone uses our name in a kind way.

There's something that happens when we break down a wall by sharing a name, whether it's our waiter or waitress, or whether it's a grocery cart attendant, or whether it's a person passing us in the hallway.

No one likes to be called, hey, you. No one likes to be said, hey, buddy. We want our names used because in our name, it becomes relational and personal. And Jesus knows your name.

In John 20, the power of the name comes as Mary stood outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and she saw two angels in white seated where Jesus's body had been, one at the head and one at the feet.

And they asked her, woman, why are you crying? They have taken my Lord away, she said, and I don't know where they've put him.

And at this, she turned around and she saw Jesus standing there, but she didn't realize it was Jesus. And he asked her, woman, why are you crying? Who is it you're looking for?

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, sir, if you've carried him away, tell me where have you put him and I will get him.

And Jesus said to her, Mary, Mary. And she turned towards him and cried out in Aramaic, which means teacher.

Jesus said one word to her and he called her by name, Mary. Notice this though, he used just her first name and I think he said it in this kind of like Mary, in a voice that she would have recognized and she would have heard in a name that would have come with love and tenderness and kindness.

Notice what he didn't say as she was wondering, where is this Jesus who he had told that he would be risen on the third day and that she didn't understand it.

He didn't say to her, Mary Elizabeth, wife of Joseph of Nazareth, right? Like use her full name of trouble, right? When our parents do that to us.

No, Mary, in this tenderness and this kindness. And notice, notice here that he doesn't correct her theology. He doesn't chastise her for why she would be looking for his body where she knew and had been told it would be gone.

He doesn't rebuke her. He doesn't give her any instructions. He just says, Mary.

The very first sermon on Easter Sunday wasn't long. It wasn't the entire counsel of God. It was simply saying a name. It was one word.

Now I know some of you are thinking, hey, Greg, maybe take a hint from Jesus. A one word sermon, not a bad idea.

Let me put your minds at ease. I'm not Jesus. So I need more than one word.

But he says a name, tenderly and lovingly, caringly. And in saying that name, he fills her with peace and hope and calmness and a reality that it's going to be okay.

Can I tell you today that Jesus knows your name intimately? Not your social media handle. He doesn't care about that.

He's not enamored with your likes or your follows or your platform. He doesn't love your quippy little sayings.

He doesn't love the video. He doesn't love your food reviews. He doesn't care about that.

He's not interested in your Sunday best and what you show up here like. He's not interested in the pomp and the circumstance and the walking in.

No. He knows your real name, the real you that you carry every day.

He knows you completely. Your name, your thoughts, your desires, your inward being.

And here is the good news. Don't let that scare you today.

Because what that means for you is this. What it means is the reality and the truth that because he knows your name, that you are not a failure to him.

That you haven't gone too far to be outside of his care and his love.

That he's not disappointed in you or your decisions that you've made.

The empty tomb tells you today the resurrection power of Jesus knowing your name right now and every second of the day tells you that no matter who you are, no matter what you've done or where

you've been, that the empty tomb is an intimate love, unstoppable given for you because no one is insignificant.

No one is forgotten. No one is a failure. No one is lost.

The resurrection of Jesus says to you today that everybody is a somebody and he loves you intimately.

Amen. And that's the good news of Easter. And that's why we celebrate Easter not on one day, but every day we live in this Easter reality.

And Jesus identifies you personally to receive love unstoppable.

So never think that God's grace is for anyone and everyone, but not you.

Because it is individually for you.

No matter what doubts you carry, no matter what wonderments you carry, no matter what baggage or skeletons are in your closet, his love is unstoppable for you.

And what does that do? When you know someone has met your need and knows your name and cares about you intimately, it changes our lives for how we relate to them.

Now put on the reality that God almighty has met your need completely and loves you completely and has met all your needs to live everlasting and eternally and knows you intimately.

How will that change you?

Love unstoppable means that there is a new you. So let's discover what the new you looks like. Because it is a tremendous gift.

Paul wrote about this in Ephesians, right? In Ephesians 2, he said this, he said, but because of God's great love for us, he who is rich in mercy has made us alive with Christ.

Even when we were dead in transgressions, that's how much he loves us.

It is by grace you've been saved.

And that God has raised us up with Christ and seated him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus in order that in the coming ages, he would show the incomparable riches of his grace expressed in the kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

For it is grace that you have been saved through faith.

And this is not from yourselves, but it is a gift from God.

The gift of God is yours.

And now what do we do? We use it. We use that gift.

We live every day in this reality of a new life.

That grace moves us, changes us.

We don't do the things of God in order to receive the merits of God, but because we've been given the grace of God.

And so it flows out of us naturally.

Love unstoppable isn't just about you.

It flows through you.

John kind of wrapped up his gospel chapter of the resurrection account in this wonderful way.

Think about this for a minute in John 20, Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which aren't recorded in this book.

So there's a lot of miracles we don't even know about, but these are written.

The ones that are there are written so that you would believe Jesus is the Messiah, the son of God.

And that by believing in him, you would have life in his name because he has met your need and he knows your name.

And now you have new life.

You and I, we get to live eternally because what we know is the resurrection isn't just something that Jesus experienced.

It's something that you participate in every day.

You get to live the resurrection story every single day.

You are a living witness of his love.

And when you know who you are, a name known by God, with all your needs met by the resurrected and risen Jesus, you know why you're here.

And this is where the resurrection takes hold.

Because the good news is that this resurrection power, this risen reality, the empty tomb was not for the 12 to savor.

It wasn't just for the women to rejoice in.

It wasn't for the people of Jesus' day.

It was for all human beings for all time going forward, for the generations to come.

The resurrection isn't just a private salvation moment for you today.

It is a public proclamation for you this day.

And that's where I want to have you and I take seriously the good news of the Easter reality in our lives.

To identify those who right now don't know that Jesus has met their need, that Jesus knows their name.

You see, I think we all would say if someone asked you, would you say, should you tell people about Jesus?

We'd all say yes.

But if you don't know who you're going to tell, then who will you really tell?

And that's why we have to identify those who need to know Jesus.

Because if Jesus rose for you, then he also rose for those who he's placed around you.

And it's important for us to know who needs to know the good news of Jesus today, right here, right now.

It's important for us to identify those people who are what I like to say are far from God or fans of God.

These are the people that you know them.

They're in your circles.

Maybe they're a coworker, maybe they're a neighbor, maybe they're a friend, maybe they're a family member.

Maybe they're a neighbor.

You know them.

They're the ones that you would say, I don't even, you don't even believe in Jesus.

They're the ones that on Easter Sunday, they're sitting at home.

They're the ones that are saying, give me thoughts, potentially.

I need good wishes.

And so what I want to challenge us to do as Easter people who know the good news of Christ with us is to identify four people who are far from God or fans of God.

And this is called the My Four.

And you'll be able to identify them and to write their names in them.

And I want to tell you something.

I've been doing this in my personal life as I've been preparing for this message.

I've been doing this.

And I got to say today that one of my four, I actually get to replace.

Because a while ago, I talked about Jesus and they said, I want to know more.

And they came to know who Christ is.

And so now I have another name that I've put there.

Because what happens when we identify those four people, and all I'm going to invite you to do right now is just pray for Jesus to give them faith, to open the door.

I'm not telling you to call them on the way home, maybe if God's leading you to do that.

But all I'm calling you to do is just pray for them.

Pray that the Holy Spirit would give them the same faith that is spoken about in Ephesians 2, that they would be unlocked from the gates of hell.

And they'd realize that the gates of heaven have been opened up.

Because what once was locked away for all of us, love has rolled away through the empty tomb for us today.

And so what I want to invite you to do right now is to pray to God, who are the four names that you would fill on your list that are fans of God, meaning they like Jesus, but they don't necessarily believe, or they're far from God.

That today, they're still behind the gates of hell, locked away.

We're going to take a moment and I'm going to invite you to just pray to the Lord to give you those four names right now, and identify those.

So right now, I just want to invite you to pray over four names right now, who are the four that are fans or far from God.

Now, at your campus, there are locks.

And there are fences at your campus in the front.

And we want to invite during this last song across all campuses, Living Hope, to come forward and to take a lock.

And if you have your four names that you are going to be praying that God would unlock them from the gates and the pits of hell, and you have those four names identified, and I'm going to invite you to place that lock on the fence at your campus and to lock it in, that now the gate of heaven is open for them.

And we're going to illustrate across all campuses, the four names of people that we are praying for that would know the resurrection power and would spend eternity with us.

And if you don't have four names, then you're going to take a lock and you're going to take it home and you're going to pray.

And then once God gives you those four names and you've identified those four names, then you're going to bring your lock back with you and all campuses will have those fences still up at whatever week it may be.

And you're going to lock it in.

And we're going to see the gates of hell released open and the population of those who are going there will be depleting and the population of heaven will be growing because the Easter victory and the Easter story today is a story that opens up the gates of heaven for all people everywhere because everybody is a somebody and love is unstoppable today through Jesus working through you.

So get on your feet at all campuses right now, and as we prepare to sing living hope, come receive a lock, place it on, lock it in if you know the four, otherwise be praying about it because Jesus called Mary by name, he'll call these by name, he's defeated death, doubt and the stone is rolled away, removing whatever stands in the way of your four names knowing the unstoppable love.

Let's sing the living hope and let's release the gates of hell to open for the good love of Christ.