



Easter: The Game-Changer

Something has gone awry in our culture when we begin to tell the Resurrection story from a narrative of “The Good Guy Wins.” We love seeing the good guys “kick ass.” We celebrate rugged heroes like Jack Bauer from the hit TV show 24, even when they kill. We chuckle at the Avengers movie when Hulk (Good guy) flings Loki (Bad guy) back and forth like a toy with his brute strength. We laugh at violence because the good guy wins. We’re so steeped in what Walter Wink calls, “the myth of redemptive violence,” that we have subsumed the Easter Story into this framework.

When Christianity becomes the dominant power, the resurrection of Jesus becomes the triumph of the victors. The way “Jesus is Risen” is proclaimed, it sounds like bragging, one-upping those who disagree with us by saying smugly: we win. The problem? Easter is then used as a trump card to threaten people into joining our side.

Again and again, the Church tries to grow by dominating: passing laws to discriminate against others, fighting legal battles in the courts, using money and clout to sway people into a certain ideology.

Easter celebrations at mega-churches get bigger and jazzier every year. We are like the disciples who just don't get it, arguing over who among us is the greatest.

We need to tell a different story. More important, we need to live a different story. *The Resurrection is not one where the Good Guy wins; it's a story where nobody wins and then everybody wins.* When the world, like Rome, is organized around dominant systems preserving power through oppression, or structured, like the Temple establishment, by religious gatekeepers drawing lines in the sand between us and them, the end result always looks like violence and death—like the cross. When Christ bore all our violence and was raised from the dead, God snatched us out of the old story and put us in a new era.

The resurrection ushers us into a better way. A way of love and forgiveness, a way to serve, a way where everyone wins. *The Resurrection is not a trump card in our game, it's a revision of the rulebook.* It was a game-changer to ensure everyone wins.

Yet as we speak, lurking in the dark shadows of our society are people who bear the brunt of the ways we play our game. Greed for better and cheaper products drives the economy on the backs of slave laborers. Our lust to dominate the bodies of women sustains a demand for rape. Our apathy ignores the plight of millions in crushing poverty. Our need to be right keeps us busy making enemies instead of loving them. *We call ourselves followers of Christ but use his name to keep playing the same game.*

This cannot be. Easter demands we rip apart the old rules and start seeking out every person we have crucified because of our greed, lust, and self-righteousness. By the power of the resurrected God, we forgive, rescue, restore and redeem.

Easter exposes the “Good Guy Wins” narrative, and offers an alternative ending. We cease to play by the rules of the empire because the game was over when Jesus cried out, “it is finished!”

On that glorious Sunday morning, Jesus rose to say “no more!” to hate, violence and dividing lines. No more us vs. them. No more good guy/bad guy divide.

We lay down our swords and fight on the same team with weapons of love, justice and beauty. Every day we labor to ensure everyone knows they have already won the game.

We do not have to be activists with X-number of Twitter followers to be resurrection people. The risen Lord entrusted his alternate rulebook to those on the bottom rung of society on that first Easter Sunday. *He put justice in the hands of the ordinary.*

All it takes is what Kathy Escobar calls “pockets of love”—small revolutionary acts defying the prevailing Empire narrative.

With every breath we subvert through radical inclusion, uncompromising dignity for all and transformative justice by way of peace. *With every act of love we reenact the Easter story, a piece of hope to patch up the gaping wounds laid bare by our vicious cycles of hate. With every word of forgiveness, we release the floodgates of heaven to overflow dark pits hollowed by bitterness.*

You and I have the alternate rulebook: let's go change the game. □