



“Jesus is better than those pranksters”

Mark 16:1-9

by Pastor Dave Goehmann

Easter Sunday April 1, 2018

Happy April fools day! No. That’s not a thing. No one says that. Instead someone fools you, and then says April fools! I have to admit, I hate April fool’s day. I hate the fooling, and all the mischief. Please don’t play a joke on me. Please don’t embarrass me.

Other people relish in this weird holiday. They have the best jokes, the best pranks, and the best way of making a fool out of you. One of these geniuses came up with the shaving cream on the hand when your sleeping and then the tickling your nose with a feather.

I remember it was right after Easter one year, that I started a series of pranks. It involved a scary looking bunny. This bunny had piercing red eyes, it stood over waste high with its large ears. There was no doubt. It was creepy. It was watching you.

And so, I had the genius idea to place the bunny in the back seat of my friend’s car. It was a good prank, but sadly I was unprepared for the chain of events that would follow. My friend always had the best places to put the bunny, and I had no more ideas. He placed it in my office chair, my closets, my basement, even my bedroom. Everywhere I went it appeared again, scaring me every time.

Pranks are most often set up as a competition. Who is going to have the best prank this year? Some people even continue the pranks all year long. You pranksters out there. You



always seem to end up on top by outsmarting all of us. We just don't have good enough conniving ideas. And it all ends with the words, "Gotcha!" Ah foiled again!

The experts. The smarty pants. The clever wizards with words. Those people that always seem to have the best comebacks. There experts at trash talk, word games and debates, and some how they can persuade anyone to do anything just by speaking a few words.

We seem to be outdone by the experts. The experts on evolution. The experts on philosophy. The experts on history. The experts on psychology. The experts on archeology. The experts on everything.

And here we are, Christians, accused of looking far into the past with an old story. An outdated claim that Jesus rose from the dead. We can't hide behind Jesus now, we are on the front lines against the experts of the world. We've heard it millions of times. Millions of years ago.....

The disciples must have felt the same way. They were no match for the Pharisees. I picture the twelve disciples hiding behind Jesus every time the Pharisees show up. The influence of The Pharisees was too powerful. Challenging those experts in the Law meant the inevitable result of being disproven, humiliated, and embarrassed.

No wonder the disciples quickly lost hope when Jesus was arrested, tried, and killed on the cross. It was to them a lost battle of wits. The Pharisees, the experts in the Law, the Jewish



leaders do what they have always done. They always have a better word, a better influence, and a better comeback. They always win.

They plotted to kill Jesus like someone plotting to pull the best prank of all. Someone plotting to one up Jesus by trapping him in his words. Although they couldn't go directly up against Jesus, they still connived their way to do the killer prank. How did they do it? By influencing even Jesus followers to yell at the top of their lungs, "Crucify him!"

When the women were without hope, headed to the tomb, to their surprise, to their utter shock, The stone was rolled away. Was this the most awful, awful prank ever? No It's for real. Jesus Rose from the dead!

Jesus has the best comeback of all time. He came back from the dead! For all the challenges that the experts put on the resurrection, the overwhelming evidence is the very same thing, that yes, he is alive. Eye witness accounts can't be denied. Jesus lives. Jesus appeared to all the disciples "Peace be with you." he said. After that he was seen by over five hundred people at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.

1 Corinthians 15

Sadly, that doesn't change the fact that life has become increasingly more difficult to persuade people that Jesus is the true God, risen from the dead! And now that's where we are. We've reached the end. "scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. ⁴They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers



fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.”⁵ For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God,⁶ and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. 2 Peter 3:3-6

All the scoffers who lived in the days of Noah, perished in the flood. All those who would have directly scoffed at Noah building a gigantic boat were effectively silenced. Today the main challenge to our beliefs is simply this, “If Jesus is alive, where is he? We don’t see him.” Long ago the claim was similar. If there is a flood, “where is the water, where is the rain?” I don’t know about you, but I’m not looking forward to God telling all the experts, I told you so, when he returns. God also takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

God the Father, and Jesus had the best idea ever. Jesus would die on the cross with the intention of rising from the dead and forgiving the sins of the whole world. There is nothing funny about that. But there is no better way to bring us all into heaven.

Maybe you are here today to investigate whether Jesus really did rise from the dead. Maybe you are here today to see if the resurrection really does change your life. Maybe you are here today to see if Pastor really will have a good sermon.

Maybe you have doubted whether Jesus is truly here anymore. Maybe you’ve doubted whether it is the truth. Maybe you doubted whether you were right about your own faith.



Every person, even those who speak against him, he can win over with his forgiveness and grace. The really smart atheists and agnostics like Lee Strobel or the brilliant police detectives like J. Warner Wallace turn to faith in Jesus after looking at the real evidence.

Jesus pulled the best prank on everyone. It was letting himself get pranked and be killed. The resurrection revealed God's genius plan. Looking back on Jesus death and resurrection, Jesus can say to every person, Gotcha! He got us, and he got us good. He picked us up out of our sin and brought us into his kingdom, forgave our sins, blessed us with eternal salvation. The persuasion of his love is unmatched by reason. No one can do any better. No one can love any stronger.

Jesus got me again this week. It came through a few Good Samaritan type People... I was stuck on the side of the road. Flat tire. I had everything under control. Yet three cars still stopped just to make sure. It makes you stop and think, "Wait, some people actually care." It was a good reminder that some people, and some men still want to be a hero. Grown men, looking and wanting to be a hero. They weren't Saviors like Jesus. But it was a reminder of how Jesus works in the lives of people.

A few days earlier I was in a coffee shop. Minding my own business, I could help over hear a group of women having a Bible Study. Just like that they were quoting Jesus words. "This is my body, and this is my blood." Just like that I was reminded that Yes, Jesus is here in his



body and blood. And Jesus, Jesus, just appeared, working in my life again. These women weren't Saviors, but it was nice to be reminded that Jesus is.

You can't count on other people to be like Jesus to you all the time. You can't trust everyone to be kind. But you could be like Jesus to someone else. Not their Savior, just loving them like he first loved us.

We all as Christians may not have the biggest brains, but we have the biggest hearts. Maybe that makes us sound like fools, but who cares? We are carrying out God's plan.

"For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 1 Corinthians 1:26-27

We leave the best ideas up to God. He wrote them down in the Bible. And it's his plan to save us, not fool us.

"In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions." "But then it says²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life." Jude 17-21

Maybe April Fool's day is not so bad because it's kind of satisfying to say, "Gotcha!" with the love of Jesus. Ultimately, He will show up for one final time. This will mean the



eternal life we have all been waiting for. Until Jesus final appearing, get each other good with
Jesus Love! Amen