April 13, 2026

Resurrection is about Morality: Deciding between Life and Death, Good and Evil

Rev. Anne preached a fine Easter sermon, about being a "Resurrection Person." I could not be at church (and have not been since Thanksgiving) due to Bobbie's dementia and her need to sleep 14 hours a night, but I thank God and St. Andrews for the streaming service. What her sermon did for me was to prepare me for reading the Sunday NY *Times*, that I receive every day on my computer. I could not believe how many articles there were in that newspaper about Resurrection People.

There was a discussion between a religion reporter, Ross Douthat, and Bart Ehrman, a Christian atheist who is a popular professor of Biblical Studies at Rutgers University. It was about how we should read and understand the four differing Biblical accounts of the resurrection of Jesus. There was an article called "Resurrection Is Everywhere" by a politician convicted of corruption and now out of jail. He says, "Coming out of prison I chose a new and different life, realizing that what I wanted most to do was to be of service to others, loving my neighbor, offering a hand to those in need." His message: "Marriages can die, careers can die, reputations can die, dreams and aspirations can die, your very sense of yourself can die. It is scarry to face these forms of death, but letting things die so they can be resurrected is necessary." He talked about medical resurrections of people whose heart has stopped beating; about people who have recovered from addictions that brought them to suicide and how they found meaning in life; about dead marriages that come alive with joy and purposeful relationships. It reminded me of my own experience of being told by a nurse when I was bringing Bobbie home from the hospital after her heart attack that she would probably not live more than 2 or 3 years, and now waking

her up each day 7 years later and seeing her smile at me when she opens her eyes. She is my favorite Resurrection Person.

But the most gripping article was called: “Is America Losing its Morality?” It reminded me that Christianity is really about morality, about what is good and what is evil. It reminded me of the hymn that was removed from our new hymnal because it was too “Unitarian”:

> Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
> In the strife of truth with falsehood, For the good or evil side.

This is one of my favorite hymns for personal reasons. It was the hymn sung during the counting of the ballots while I was being elected Pastor of the church in Cleveland Heights that I had served for 7 years as Youth Minister, and went on to serve another 22 years. One third of the congregation voted against me because I had asked the Session to endorse a policy of “open housing” (show black people houses in white neighborhoods) to all the real estate agents in the city. I had said to the congregation (900 members attended that morning in June, 1970) the same thing Dr. Ehrman said in the *Times* article: “If people claim to be followers of Jesus, they ought to follow his teachings. And his teaching is that you should care for people who are not like you, as in the parable of the good Samaritan.” Dr. Ehrman’s new book is entitled, *Love Thy Stranger: How the Teachings of Jesus Transformed the Moral Conscience of the West.*

The article calling into question America’s loss of morality points to remarks by the Secretary of War and the President, saying, in effect, we no longer support the Geneva Convention or care about how many civilians we kill in a war. Promoting war crimes is a sharp departure from U.S. policy over the past 100 years.

Jesus was executed and resurrected because of his moral integrity. He stood for what is good, true and right. So for what do we 21st century Christians stand as followers of Jesus? The church needs to speak out strongly for what it sees as good, true and right and condemn the evil that surrounds us. For each of us, as Resurrection People, this is a moment to decide.

~Written by Ned Edwards

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