

## 4.4.2021 Easter Day

I remember reading a story about a boy who built a model sailboat. He worked on it for weeks, and when every part of it was just right, he took it to a lake near his house to sail it. The boy was having a great time until a strong wind blew the boat out of his reach. He waded out into the water as far as he could, but the wind kept blowing, and the boy who'd worked so hard on that boat watched it sail out of sight. He was heartbroken.

Days later, he was walking by a secondhand store and saw his sailboat in the window. He immediately ran inside, picked up the boat, and told the man at the counter, "I made this boat. It's mine. Look, it even has my initials on it!" The man replied, "I'm sorry son, but I paid someone for that boat. If you want it back, you'll have to pay for it." The boy was mad, but determined to get his boat back. So, he worked every job he could find, until finally the day came that he'd raised enough money to buy back his boat. The boy walked into the store, put his money on the counter, and took his boat from the window, and as the boy carried his sailboat home, he said to it, "Now you're mine twice. I made you the first time. I bought you the second."

Easter is a celebration of the truth that we are God's twice, He made us the first time and bought us the second. When I thought of God making us the first time, I was reminded of an article that I read recently which was written about the probability of any one of us being born. The article began with the way Buddhists often speak of the unimaginably narrow odds of you or I coming into existence. Their way of describing the miracle that occurs when a particular individual is conceived goes like this: Imagine there was a donut shaped life preserver floating somewhere in some ocean, and in all of the oceans that cover this earth, there is just one turtle swimming underwater. A Buddhist would say the probability of you being born is about the same as that one turtle sticking its head out of the water and into the middle of that life preserver - on the first try.

People who study these things have done the math connected to that explanation and have calculated those odds to be about 1 in 700 trillion. Now if you're wondering, like I was, if that number could possibly be close to the

truth, you may be surprised to hear that many scientists and mathematicians believe the odds of you being born are not nearly that good. When you consider your parents and grandparents, their parents and grandparents, and the parents of their parents and grandparents, and all of the diverse events and circumstances that formed your particular family tree, the odds quickly go from 1 in 700 trillion up to a number with so many zeroes after it that it's simply impossible to calculate. In the end, experts will tell you that the odds of you being born are essentially zero, yet here you are today because God made you the first time.

In the Garden of Eden, He breathed "*the breath of life*" (Genesis 2:7) into our first parents, He personally formed every member of every generation that followed them, and He made you. The psalmist declares, God, "*You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb*" (Psalm 139:13). These words describe the intimacy we shared with God at the moment of our creation. It was God who formed us and protected us in our mother's womb. It was God who created and loved and cared for us before anyone even knew we existed. It was, and is, and will always be God, and God alone who against all odds makes every unique person in His own image and likeness.

The miracle of your birth, the astronomical odds that our Omnipotent Creator simply brushed aside when He brought you into existence is a miracle beyond comprehension, yet as astounding as it is, on this Easter Day we celebrate an even greater miracle. The miracle that the One, True God, who made you the first time, chose to send His only-begotten Son into the world to buy you the second. The things we've considered so far all provide us with a peaceful picture of the love and infinite power of our Creator, the One who made us the first time, yet when we consider the love and power that God manifests as our Redeemer, the One who bought us the second time, instead of a peaceful picture, we collide head on with the sacrificial love of God at the Cross of Christ, and His complete power over sin and death at the empty tomb.

At the Cross, there is a beautiful collision in which we're struck by "*the height, and depth, and breadth, and length*" (Ephesians 3:18) of the love of

our Savior, and the love of the Father who “*spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all*” (Romans 8:32). At the empty tomb, we stand in awe of the power of our Redeemer, who through the Spirit freely laid down His life, and with authority took it up again on Easter Day (John 2:19;10:18). This sermon began with a story about a boy who was so easily forced into a position where his only option was to work every job he could find until he’d earned enough money to buy back the boat he loved. Clearly, God is not at all like that boy. Instead, God is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving. He is the Creator of all things visible and invisible, the Sustainer who “*upholds all things by the word of His power*” (Hebrews 1:3), the Redeemer, who, with every option on the table, freely chose to buy you the second time not at a bargain price, but at an infinite cost. God chose to redeem you, His beloved, by giving up that which He values most. He paid an infinite price when He gave His one and only Son for your redemption, and He did so, to the end that you would never again question the depth of His love for you.

The God of Heaven and Earth has revealed His heart to us. In the breathtaking miracle of our creation, in the infinite cost of our redemption, God has both perfectly, and painfully expressed His unceasing desire for intimate communion with His people. God yearns to abide with you. His will is to dwell in you, and the good news of Easter is that when our Lord rose in victory over sin and death and all that held us captive, He made that possible. He tore down all the barriers we had constructed that were separating us from Him. He paid for all of those things that kept us stuck on a shelf, collecting dust in a secondhand store instead of out on the water with Him.

Easter is a celebration of the truth that we are God’s twice. He made us the first time, He bought us the second, and as people who live in a culture where the winds of change are blowing in a thousand different directions, we pray that the One, True God, to whom we belong, will always be the *mighty rushing wind* (Acts 2:2) with which we fill our sails.