

**Easter Weekend**  
**April 7-8, 2007**  
**Rev. Scott Carlson**

### **What A Difference**

Have you ever been disappointed with how life is turning out?

A fellow had been suffering from a string of bad luck when he stumbled upon a magic lamp. A genie sprung from the lamp and promised to grant him three wishes. He was so excited.

First, he wished for a big fancy sports car. Poof. He got it.

Second he wished for \$100 million dollars. Poof. He got it.

Then, he wanted to think about his third wish for a while. As he drove along in his new sports car, he began to sing along with a radio commercial, "Oh, I wish I were an Oscar Meyer wiener . . ." Poof.

No, life doesn't always turn out like we plan.

I heard a story recently of a woman who became so fed up with the bugs in her house. She had had it up to here. She decided on all out warfare. She closed the windows and then emptied the contents of 15 cans of insecticide spray on her crawling little enemies.

A stray spark ignited the fumes, causing an explosion that literally, blew the roof off her house and it blew out every one of her windows.

No, life doesn't always turn out like we plan.

**We know what it is like don't we. For whatever reason, life throws us a curve and we feel let down.** Life doesn't always go the way we plan. But we are not alone. The disciples felt that way too.

Today we are celebrating Easter. It is the Holiest time of the year for us as Christians. It is time to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus.

This day of celebration can quickly lose its power if we forget how the first disciples felt let down. Just a few days before the disciples were with Jesus. They were celebrating the Passover, in Jerusalem. Expectations were high. Some thought that Jesus was going to be a mighty ruler and overthrow the Roman officials.

Then it all happened so quickly. He was arrested. The disciples were afraid. They ran away. Before they knew it Jesus was condemned in a shotgun trial and he was crucified

the next day. They watched in horror as the one they followed, the one they left everything for, was killed in the distance.

They felt let down by God for allowing this to happen to him. They felt let down by each other as they all ran away and didn't do anything to protect their leader. They felt let down and the wind was taken out of their sails.

Life was not turning out as they had had planned. Where would they turn now? What about you? Where do you turn when life doesn't turn out as you plan? What do you do, when you feel let down? What do you do, when you feel the wind taken out of your sails?

It isn't easy. For some in this room, you are facing that dilemma right now. Life has been tough. Marriages have ended or are ending. Work is a challenge or has been a challenge. For some in this room, relationships with family members aren't going well.

And for us as people of faith, this has been a tough year. Some feel as if the basic beliefs of our faith have been challenged and even overturned through such popular things like the DaVinci Code, which is a terrific book of fiction. And most recently with the findings of some bones in Jerusalem. Although I suspect that grave marking 2000 years ago wasn't quite as clear as it has been the last couple of hundred years. It has been a tough year for Christians. No, life doesn't always go the way we plan or expect.

What do you do? How do you respond to the challenges of life? Do you let them defeat you? Do they cause you to turn and run and hide? Do you go on ahead, trying to make sense of it all? And how are you letting God be a part of your journey?

**If this Easter celebration means anything to me, it means that no matter how tough life gets, no matter how overwhelming life can be, God is there.** God is there to offer us hope. God is there to offer us life. God is there to show us a way through. Even though that way may not be easy.

When life doesn't go the way we plan, instead of giving up, we can turn to God. We can allow God to guide us into the future, even though we may not know what that future will look like.

Dr. Richard Selzer tells a story of God's love as he witnessed it in the love between a husband and a wife. He writes, "I stand by the bed where a young woman lies, her face postoperative, her mouth twisted in palsy, clownish, a tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth, has been accidentally severed. She will be thus from now on. The surgeon had followed with religious fervor the curve of her flesh, I promise you that. Nevertheless, to remove the tumor in her cheek, I had to cut the little nerve. I got the cancer. But I severed the nerve.

"Her young husband is in the room. He stands on the opposite side of the bed and together they seem to dwell in the evening lamplight, isolated from me, private. Who are

they? I ask myself, he and this wry mouth I have made, who gaze at and touch each other so generously, so greedily? The young woman speaks."

"Will my mouth always be like this?" she asks.

"Yes," I say, "It will. It is because the nerve was cut."

She nods and is silent. But the young man smiles. "I like it," he says, "It is kind of cute."

"All at once I know who he is. I understand and lower my gaze. One is not bold in an encounter with a god. Unmindful, he bends to kiss her crooked mouth and I am so close, I can see how he twists his own lips to accommodate to hers, to show her that their kiss still works."

(Pause)

That my friends, is what I believe God is like. God is a lover, telling us quietly, gently, that we are loved and accepted as we are. With the twisted features, and the broken hearts because life is different from what we expect.

That for me is what Easter and the resurrection are all about. Death, pain, suffering are not the end. To be sure, we have to face them and walk through them. But when we do, trusting in the one who made us, we will come out on the other side.

With hope, with healing, with the life and love that God offers us. So I wish you happy Easter today. May we discover the joy of God even in the unexpected twists in our journey.

Amen.