**Shall We Preach?**

 I heard a story about a guy who asked his neighbor if he was planning to attend worship this coming Easter morning. *“Probably not this year,”* the neighbor replied. *“I go every Easter, and the sermon always sounds the same to me.”*

 It’s one of the challenges of preaching on the most important day of the entire church year ‒ making the scripture story of Easter morning sound different than it did one year ago. I’ve had folks ask me why I don’t just repeat a sermon from several Easters past. It’s because I’m aware that some people only come that one Sunday morning, and I must try to reach them with God’s Word for them.

 So, this year, I will ask for your help. If you understand that preaching the Word is vital, if you recognize that preaching on Easter morning means preaching the life-changing *good news,* if you expect to hear the same message you heard last Easter, only different, then I need you to help me to preach it.

 I found a blogger’s information with some ideas. If you like them, then I’ll ask you to implement them. This Sunday would be good. Every Sunday would be better. Easter Sunday would be outstanding! His name is Carey Nieuwhof, and here’s what he says about the listeners (that would be you.)

“Critics. Got to love ’em. And we’re all critics. And that’s because somewhere along the way many of us have bought into the lie that we need to evaluate a church by what we get out of it.

That’s not Christianity. That’s consumerism. You get out of a message what you put into a message.

Lean in. Listen. Look for God. Confess. Apply. If you can’t find anything to apply in a message, it’s because you didn’t put in enough.

And remember that criticism is a form of lazy arrogance.”

 This year, Easter comes early. That means that Palm Sunday comes early. Holy Week comes early. And, ready or not, the Easter sermon on that Sunday morning needs to be ready, just like every Sunday, only different. So, I need you to listen. Not for my mistakes, though they may be many. Not for where I’ve fallen short, though I undoubtedly will. But lean in. Listen for the *good news.* Look for God. And, if you hear the message – even if you’ve heard it before – then apply it, like you’ve finally heard it for the very first time. Apply it, like it is vital to who you are. Apply it, like it’s life changing.

 Then, model a changed life. Not changed by me, not by my sermon. But by the story of Easter morning. A story you’ve already heard. But you *gulp it in* this year. And let the world know that Easter sermons are a tool that can be used to spread the Word. And your life can be a tool, too.

He is *risen!*

Candice

But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said.”  ***‒*** *Matthew 28****:****5-6*