

Easter Perspective

April 18, 2021

Psalm 116: 1-4

I Peter 1: 17-23 CEB

One of the blessings of medicine is good eye care. I have worn glasses and/or contact lenses since I was 10 years old and fell over a boy's foot sticking out from his desk in my 5th grade classroom. I don't remember what he looked like ... but I'll always remember his name ... Neil Foote. Somehow, the eye doctor surmised my optic nerve was damaged by the fall.

Most recently I've had the challenge of beginning glaucoma - under control with eye drops currently and cataracts that are borderline whether or not medicare will pay for the surgery. My uncle was totally blind with glaucoma at age 55 and his sister (my aunt) legally blind in one eye from it. I monitor vision changes carefully, mindful of my family history.

When our vision becomes compromised by age or disease, we are fortunate to be able to go to the ophthalmologist or optometrist and take care of the problem. Often the doctor prescribes new eye glasses, contact lenses or further evaluation to correct our vision so that we can see clearly. Good vision gives us the right perspective and enables us to function well. However, when we first try out a new prescription or eye drops, we may find that it takes a little while to get used to the corrected or better vision. At first things may seem a little strange, as though we are not seeing clearly. Gradually, our eyes adjust to the correction of the lenses or perhaps surgery and we are able to see well.

The Easter Season is a time of adjusting to a new vision. God has done an incredible work. The tomb has been emptied. Death has been defeated. On the Sunday of the resurrection, our hearts filled with joy and our voices soared in the Sunrise parking lot service with the hymns of a new life. A new world has been born, a new vision given, and a new way of living has been prescribed. The church is invited to wear its Easter lenses as it looks out upon the world and responds to the challenge of living in the light of the resurrection.

We live from the perspective of Easter. Perspective is important. God has won the victory over death. The worst that can happen to us has been overcome by God taking Jesus from the tomb. That is our perspective. This vision challenges us to live boldly and daringly. "You have been given new birth - not from the type of seed that decays but from seed that doesn't. This seed is God's life-giving and enduring word." I Peter 1: 23. In other words you have a new perspective. Live from this perspective. Dare to "love each other deeply and earnestly" vs. 22

The early church had to get used to its Easter lenses. It must have seemed strange to live from the perspective of love in a world that was used to living in alienation. It must have been disorienting to include the outcast and marginalized in the fellowship of the church. But - this is what the Easter community did and its witness was powerful. The world stood in awe as it watched a community of love live its life with redemptive acts of service and inclusion. Such a community was a new reality that embraced a way of living that others had never imagined.

The story continues as Easter people put on their new lenses and dare to live the way of love in a world of alienation and hurt. We are people of new perspective. We have seen what God has done in Jesus Christ. We no longer live in fear; rather, with radical love we go forth to practice the perspective of love as we follow the way and example of our risen Lord.

The church has to put on its Easter glasses and see life from the perspective of the resurrection. We are the people who dare to live the hope that other people believe can never be realized. From the Easter perspective, we live the “AS IF” principle. That is we live “as if” the world has more love than it does, “as if” there is more hope than people are willing to embrace, “as if” the Kingdom of God can reign on earth today.

Our Easter glasses also give us the holy boldness to ask “WHAT IF”?

- What if every child had a warm, safe place to sleep?
- What if there was food for every person on this earth?
- What if we all lived from a sense of abundance rather than scarcity?
- What if the murders in Ft. Wayne and killing around the world stopped?
- What if everyone eligible got a Covid vaccination so that we could all feel safer?

It all starts with vision, with perspective

From my story file

A little brother and his sister were shopping with their mother in a large department store. The mother needed some time for her shopping so she took them to the snack bar, bought them ice cream cones and told them to stay there until she came back. Well, the children had been fascinated by the elevator and could not resist the temptation to ride it one more time. So ... while the waitress who promised to keep an eye on them had her back turned, they slipped away with ice cream cones in hand.

They were enjoying their up and down rides - but the little boy’s ice cream was melting faster than he could eat it. It was dripping down his hand. At one floor the elevator stopped and an elegantly dressed woman got on. She stood in front of the children waiting to go down one floor. The little boy kept looking at his melting ice cream. Seeing the back of the lady’s fur coat, he gently began to wipe the melting ice cream on her coat. His sister said: “Billy be careful, or you will get fur in your ice cream!” Now that illustrates perspective. What is a solution to one is to another a damage to an expensive coat. It’s all in perspective.

Have the right perspective and you live the right life. Our perspective is Easter. “Through Christ you are faithful to God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory (I Peter 1: 21). We are the people of Easter whose vision has forever been corrected by God and what He has done through Jesus Christ. Act today like you believe that message. Will Calvary UMC once again be a community of love that reaches out in service and inclusion?

Amen