



Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

If the Apostle Paul was still here, he'd probably be preaching - somewhere! - every weekend. Ask Paul in to be the substitute speaker, and he'd probably choose his favorite subject to address. *For him, it was "the gospel..."*

Gospel: *the very word means, "good news."* What does it take to qualify as "good news?" If you're one of Bernie Madoff's now-despairing clients, it would be an announcement that you found a chest buried in his Palm Beach mansion back yard, with \$60 billion inside. If you're a Chevrolet dealer, it would be the e-mail from a friend in Washington describing the decision to make the sale of foreign cars illegal, beginning Monday. For the average American homeowner, it would be the declaration that everyone who has not defaulted on their mortgage has just been granted a "bailout" worth the net losses on their 401(k) retirement portfolio. All of those big headlines would satisfy their recipients for a while... until some moment, in the future, when a medical professional hovered over their chilling torso declares that they have been pronounced "dead."

Paul had good news for folks who anticipate life to end with the pronouncement of death. Talk about "good news!" Does it get any better than this? *"Now, brothers, I want*



to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men." (1 Corinthians 15:1-6, 17-19)

You heard it yesterday, if you were in a

gathering that was celebrating "Easter Classic" (*that's the traditional version, not the "here's how to bloom like the lilies and sail with the seagulls" garbage that seeks to con-temporize the packaging while dismissing the essence*). Did you hear about "resurrection?"

Bottom line here, my friend: the ultimate enemy is not *al Qaeda*; it's *death*. You may never experience terrorism, directly... but you'll face-off with death someday, ready or not. With human enemies, you have some odds for success; with death, the odds are 100% that "you lose"...

Until Easter, that is. If Jesus is still dead, you - and everyone you've ever known - are lost; down for the count. If Jesus is alive - if he really did walk out of Joseph of Arimathea's tomb under his own power, never to succumb to death again - then the whole game of life has been transformed.

If the Resurrection is hocus pocus, I'm outta-here. "Christians" without a Risen Christ are pretenders; they're lost. Christians who embrace a Crucified Jesus and a Risen Savior will roll with life's punches... but, ultimately, be the Grand Prize Winners.

Don't know about you, but the horrors of today's headlines don't match in gravity the extravagance of Easter. The big message from yesterday: ***with death on the ropes, what's keeping you from the celebration of this life, on the way to life everlasting... because of the Resurrection?***

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