

# This Changes Everything

**H**ave you ever seen someone do a J-turn in the movies? You know when the car is speeding down the road backwards, and you think they will never get away. Suddenly the car goes into a slide, comes around and races down the road forward. You think to yourself, "Wow, this changes everything."



Well, here's the scoop. You need to be going about 20 mph in reverse. Release the throttle and whip the steering wheel clockwise a half turn and hold. Hit the brakes to lock the front wheels and the clutch and take it out of reverse. The car should be in its skid. As the front comes around, put the car in first gear, whip the steering wheel back counterclockwise to straighten out the car, hit the throttle and release the clutch, and speed away.

Now, you're probably wondering why your pastor knows this. We are taught this in Local Pastor's School under skills needed relating to Staff Parish Relations meetings. (Just kidding. I found it on the internet, and don't try this in your car. This is for skilled professionals only.)

However, I think I have seen some senior citizens try this in Wal-Mart's parking lot.

Where is this leading?

Well, as Easter approaches, I began to think how drastically things change through the resurrection.

In this one instant in time our whole perspective of life, faith, death, prophecy, promise; even of God's self do a 180 degree turn around. It's like God's J-turn.

Suddenly Jesus' teachings: the first will be last and the last first; if you lose your life for my sake you will save it; and blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth, begin to make sense.

The truth is that the whole of the good news that Christ was born to bring us hinges on the truth of the resurrection.

The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:

*"And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain... But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep... So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. 'O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' ...But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

One might say this changes everything.

The resurrection transforms us into an attitude of hope. The hope anticipated in prophecy; received in a baby born in Bethlehem; demonstrated in Jesus. The hope sealed in his death, now is assured in his resurrection. Hope became a reality.

Hope is a relevant message for our world today. We all need hope. Contemporary theologian Jergen Moltmann spent the later years of World War II as a POW, and says, "I saw men give up hope and just lay down to die. In the camps... I experienced both the collapse of those things that had been certainties for me, and a new hope to live by, provided by the Christian faith."

Later he writes, "Christian hope is in fact not an abstract utopia but a passion for a future which has become a real possibility thanks to the resurrection of Christ. ... The resurrection gives substance to hope"

Do you have this confident assuring hope that God will supply what you need? That he desires for you, and will lead you to a better future. In scripture he promises that he will.

And as he has kept his promise to raise Christ from the grave, so will he keep all his promises if we will but turn 180 degrees from the ways of the world to the ways of God.

God said through Solomon: *"If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

This applies to us individually as well as to a community or nation.

Throughout lent we have been focusing on those things which distract us from God: sin, ungodly mind sets, temptations and busyness. Maybe we all need to do a little J-turn toward God in some area of our lives.

This Easter season give your life to Christ. Reconnect with the church. Deepen your commitment. Seek a deeper passion.

Allow the power that raised Christ from the grave dwell in you and renew your hope.

In Christ our Hope,

Pastor Duane