

The Other Story, of Easter Key Ideas for Sermons

By Will Small - <http://www.otherstory.com.au/about/>

Regardless of what we believe, we all understand 'the gap'; we can easily imagine a good, beautiful and just world in our head, even though it does not match the injustice and destruction we see played out in reality. The gap points us to how things once were in the beginning and reveals our longing for future restoration.

Significantly, the Christian narrative does not start with bad news; it begins with the good and beautiful creation and a humanity bearing the image of God. The gap emerges when humans reject the ways of God, failing to bear the *image* of God, and begin the downward spiral of sin and destruction. As things become increasingly chaotic and 'undone', God enters the neighbourhood in Jesus and begins to restore things to their original state of goodness. This 'Other Story' video aims to visually capture the movement from beauty to brokenness to restoration and renewal.

The climax of the Easter story reveals both the extreme extent of human sinfulness and the radical extent of God's redeeming love. It is hard to imagine any greater evil than trying to murder the creator God who gave us life, and yet the Easter story paints a picture of humanity conspiring to do exactly this. It is even harder to imagine this same creator God forgiving humanity after this ultimate act of rebellion, murdering the 'skin and bone God-man', and yet this is exactly what we see in the story as Jesus conquers death and extends forgiveness. The resurrection is the moment in most human stories where the character who has experienced injustice would take revenge (and we would cheer them on)! This is the most confronting, subversive and unbelievable part of the gospel message – the 'enemy-love' of God. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."* (John 3:16-17)

The gospel is a good news *announcement* – but it is also an *invitation* asking for a response. The invitation of the gospel is to turn from our ways to God's ways (repentance), acknowledge our need for God's forgiveness and receive it through Christ, and begin to live new lives submitted to Christ as King. We can continue to live in cycles of sin, destruction and death, or we can experience forgiveness, renewal and life in Jesus.

