

## Pastor Jamie's Sermon

**Good Shepherd Church, April 5, 2026 – Easter Sunday  
“The Good News Is... Alive in the World”**

### The Message

I want to begin my sermon today by sharing a story with you, but it's a story that my sister would probably be angry with me for sharing, so let's just keep it between us... ok?

My family was on vacation, heading back home to Wisconsin from Yellowstone National Park. We'd been in the car for a long road trip, and we were getting weary (and probably just a *little bit* sick of each other).

We stopped for breakfast at a Perkins (kind of like Denny's for those of you who aren't familiar).

The host seated us at this strange little booth in a secluded little area of the restaurant, and there was no one else around.

We ordered our food and had just gotten our drinks.

My sister – ever the “fidgeter” – was playing with one of those little plastic creamers. It had a miniscule hole in the bottom of the plastic part, and she was squeezing the cream out onto the table and writing something with the cream.

My dad and I both took a swig of our drinks, and at that exact moment, the top of the creamer packet popped open and the cream that was left in the packet splatted right into my sister's face. It was a slow motion cartoon! My dad and I both spit our drinks out and went into fits of laughter, while my sister sat there stunned.

My mom was horrified and embarrassed.

The server stopped to take our food orders, not having seen any of what just happened.

All she saw was a table full of creamer, hot chocolate, and soda, and half of us unable to breath from laughing so hard.

My mom apologized profusely and the server said, “don't worry, it happens all the time.” As she walked away, I managed to say “I bet this exact thing doesn't happen all the time” in between fits of laughter.

We went on to have an uneventful rest of the trip.

But, the point in sharing this story is to say that mealtimes tend to be one of the favorite settings for us to create and share memories and stories.

Many of you will probably be heading off to various family meals after church to celebrate Easter.

When we gather at tables and relive shared family memories, we create links between past and future. We pass these stories on from generation to generation.

Likewise, part of the Christian identity was formed around the table – particularly in the breaking and sharing of bread.

The last meal that Jesus shared with his disciples was a Passover meal – a ritual meal of celebration and remembrance.

The purpose of this meal was to remember God's mighty act of leading Israel out of slavery and into freedom.

However, by the time Matthew's Gospel was written, Passover was becoming what it is for Jews today: an in-home celebration retelling the story of God's deliverance even in the face of disasters and defeat.

And we of course hear many different stories in which Jesus shares meals with his followers and disciples.

Always, at the centre of the shared meal, are four gestures:

Jesus *takes bread*. He *blesses it (or gives thanks)*. He *breaks it*, and he *gives it* to them.

Much like we still practice during Holy Communion today.

Whenever we eat bread, we are to remember that we do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from God.

And when we eat bread and share a cup in remembrance of Jesus, we are to take in the mystery of God's amazing grace and self-giving love.

We get to experience this grace today. And, we get to remember that there is so *much* for us to be grateful for as we receive this grace.

Even in a world that sometimes feels like it is crumbling around us, we have much to be grateful for.

And, on today of all days, we get to experience this meal in community. Not only do we get to receive God's grace, but we are also reminded of Jesus's sacrifice for us, and his resurrection.

The concept of the resurrection is not always easy for us to wrap our heads around.

We could have an entire sermon series (or an entire academic lecture series, honestly), on the resurrection. But today, let me try to put it as simply as possible:

Resurrection is something we can see and know in this world.

It is a family that stays up all night after a death, keeping memories alive as they share stories and laugh over old jokes.

It is the power behind social movements and activism and protest, where people name and claim that injustice and oppression and death will not have the final word but that life exists just on the other side.

It is the grace of a loved one returning from the brink of death by the miracle and love of God.

And resurrection is the power of remembering that we are deeply loved, and Jesus proved that love to us over and over again.

It is the power of knowing that we serve a purpose here in this world, that our time is limited, and we get this time here to live into the gifts God has given us out of tremendous love for us, exactly how we are in this moment.

So, as we come to the table today to receive Christ's grace, we come just as we are, and Christ meets us there.

May we seek to live as resurrection people in this world that knows so much death.

May we be resurrection people of hope, of compassion, of justice and,

Above all,

May we be resurrection people of *love*. Amen.

Let us pray:

Living God, who came to this world and entered human pain, come and be in every painful place in our lives, be in every painful place in our world.

Living God, who in the secret darkness rose from the grave, come and be in the secret, dark places in our lives, be in every secret, dark place in our world.