

## An Easter Story

Jeremy was born with a twisted body, a slow mind and a chronic, terminal illness that had been slowly killing him all his young life. His parents had tried to give him as normal a life as possible. They sent him to St. Theresa's elementary school. At the age of 12, Jeremy was only in second grade, seemingly unable to learn.

His teacher, Doris Miller, often became exasperated with him. He would squirm in his seat, drool and make grunting noises. At other times, he spoke clearly and distinctly. Most of the time, however, Jeremy irritated his teacher.

One day, she called his parents and asked them to come to St. Teresa's for a consultation. The teacher said to them, "Jeremy really belongs in a special school. It isn't fair to him to be with younger children who don't have learning problems. There is a five-year gap between his age and that of the other students!" Mrs. Forrester cried softly into a tissue while her husband spoke. "Miss Miller," he said, "there is no school of that kind nearby. It would be a terrible shock for Jeremy if we had to take him out of this school. We know he really likes it here."

Teacher sat for a long time after they left. She wanted to sympathize with the Foresters. After all, their only child had a terminal illness. But it wasn't fair to keep him in her class. She had **18** other youngsters to teach and Jeremy was a distraction. Furthermore, he would never learn to read or write. Why spend any more time trying? As she pondered the situation, guilt washed over her. "Oh God," she said aloud, here I am complaining when my problems are nothing compared with that poor family! Please help me to be more patient with Jeremy."

From that day on, she tried hard to ignore Jeremy's noises and his blank stares. Then one day he limped to her desk, dragging his bad leg behind him. "I love you, Miss Miller," he exclaimed loudly enough for the whole class to hear. The other children snickered, and teacher's face turned red. She stammered, "wh-why, that's very nice, Jeremy. Now please take your seat."

Spring came, and the children talked excitedly about the coming of Easter. The teacher told them the story of Jesus, and then to emphasize the idea of new life springing forth, she gave each of the children a large plastic egg. "Now," she said to them; "I want you to take this home and bring it back tomorrow with something inside that shows new life. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Miss Miller!" The children responded enthusiastically – all except for Jeremy. He just listened intently; his eyes never left her face. He did not even make his usual noises. Had he understood what she had said about Jesus' death and resurrection? The teacher wondered if Jeremy understood the assignment?

The next morning, 19 children came to school laughing and talking as they placed their eggs in the large wicker basket on Miss Miller's desk. After they completed their math lesson, it was time to open the eggs.

In the first egg, Teacher found a flower. "Oh yes, a flower is certainly a sign of new life," she said. "When plants peek through the ground we know that spring is here." A small girl in the first row waved her arms. "That's my egg, Miss Miller," she called out.

The next egg contained a plastic butterfly which looked very real. Teacher held it up. "We all know that a caterpillar changes and turns into a beautiful butterfly. Yes, that is new life, too" little Judy smiled proudly and said, "Miss Miller, that one is mine."



Next the teacher found a rock with moss on it. She explained that the moss, too, showed life. Billy spoke up from the back of the classroom. "My daddy helped me!" He beamed.

Then the teacher opened the fourth egg. She gasped. The egg was empty! Surely it must be Jeremy's, she thought he did not understand her instructions. Because she did not want to embarrass him, she quietly set the egg aside and reached for another. Suddenly Jeremy spoke up. "Miss Miller, aren't you going to talk about my egg?" Flustered, Teacher replied, "but Jeremy - your egg is empty!" He looked into her eyes and said softly, "yes, but Jesus' tomb was empty too!" After a few moments when she could speak again she asked him, "Do you know why the tomb was empty?" "Oh yes!" Jeremy exclaimed. "Jesus was killed and put in there. Then his Father raised him up!" The recess bell rang. While the children excitedly ran out to the school yard, the teacher cried.

Three months later Jeremy died. When people came to the viewing to pay their respects they were surprised to see **19** eggs on top of his casket. All of them empty!

That is an illustration of the Easter story. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave is what differentiates Christianity from all other religions. Jesus Christ lives and because He lives all true believers have the promise of eternal life.

Do you have that promise? Are you sure of heaven? If not, check out **FallsCreek Community Church** and find out how you can be sure and have the promise of eternal life!