

**“Let the Easter Miracle Keep Going”, John 20:1-18 (04/04/21)**

**(Slide 1)** Have you ever heard about the aphorism “YOLO”? Actually, YOLO is the acronym of "You Only Live Once". It is along the same lines as the Latin "carpe diem" which means "seize the day." Although no one really knows about the origin of “YOLO,” it was popularized by the Canadian rapper Drake in his song “The Motto.” Anyway, YOLO is a call to live life to its fullest extent, even embracing behavior that carries inherent risk.

Several years ago and still nowadays, "YOLO" became a staple of music and youth culture, being a subject of graffiti, pranks, tattoos, music, television shows, merchandise, and hashtags on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Indeed, YOLO is a staple culture of the young generation. Since our time and our life are given as a gift from God, I think we all have a responsibility to enjoy making it more meaningful. In this sense, calling to live life to its fullest extent is good, but if the reason for this was because you only live once and death is the end, I can't agree with the YOLO lifestyle. Some of you may think that YOLO sounds quite new to you, but the concept of YOLO – you only live once - already existed in most people's life, even Christians who are the Easter people.

Although we love to worship God and to follow the way of Jesus Christ, if we encounter some mysteries of faith, such as creation, virgin birth, and resurrection, we try to understand them based on human reason and experience though these things are beyond the human understanding, so we become confused and doubtful.

**(Slide 2)** Maybe, today's gospel story, “the resurrection of Jesus” would be one of the most mysterious stories and the most difficult to understand. Not only for us – the current Christians, but also for the disciples of Jesus Christ, whom were living and serving together with Jesus, understanding and accepting the resurrection of Jesus was the issue. If you read the gospel of Matthew thoroughly, Jesus foretold his death and resurrection three times.

In Matthew 16:21-28 “he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.”; 17:22-23 “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised.”; and 20:17-19 “the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised.”

However, the disciples did not understand its true meaning and even they did not recognize him when they saw him after the resurrection. This was firstly because when they were going to Jerusalem, they were just expecting that the kingdom of God would come very soon, so they did not expect Jesus’ resurrection after his death. Secondly, they lost all their expectation and hope in faith in front of the tragic reality that was the crucifixion of Jesus. Thirdly, they only believed in the resurrection on the last day. Therefore, even though they were talking and meeting with the resurrected Jesus, still they were doubting.

**(Slide 3)** Actually, as the pastor, I have heard a lot of questions about the resurrection, such as, “I only believe in spiritual resurrection, because bodily resurrection is impossible. Then what about the cremated bodies and organ donators? How are they resurrected?” Jesus clearly said in John 11:25-26, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” And he said in John 14:19, “In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.”

Also, in the Apostle’s Creed, which is the Christian basic confession of faith, in the very last sentence, it says, I believe in “the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting.” God who created this world out of nothing can make everything possible. Indeed, how you understand death changes how you face your current life. Think about how your belief in resurrection will bring you a new insight and a better understanding of life and death. Since death is not the end, you will find hope in life. Your belief in resurrection does not hold you only in the present without a future. Even

though you might be facing adversity and suffering, it encourages you to go forward to the hopeful future. Also, it helps you to be more faithful and more responsible in your everyday life. Eventually, belief in resurrection will lead you to fully enjoy your life not because “you only live once” but because you live forever with God.

**(Slide 4)** Still, do you want to close your eyes and your ears to all the benefits and blessings of believing in the resurrection? In the end, you make a choice to believe it or not to believe it. It is up to you. But please remember that your choice to believe the miracle of Easter will bring you a real peace and hope that this world can't give. The Easter miracle of Jesus will let you live in peace, love, and hope by liberating you from the fearfulness, bondage, and servitude of death.

**(Slide 5)** Today is Easter Sunday, and also it is the first Sunday of April. Every first Sunday, we remember the love of Jesus Christ by sharing the Holy Communion. And whenever we join in Holy Communion, we confess that “Christ has died, Christ is risen, and Christ will come again.” This confession of faith reflects how we believe and how we understand of resurrection. Also, as one body of the United Methodist Church, we clearly confess that “we believe in the resurrection of the dead” according to our book of discipline. “Christ is risen, he is risen indeed.” He conquered death by rising again. And because he lives, we also will live as he said. Let us share this good news with our neighbors. This is the most important mission of Easter people.

**(Slide 6)** I'd like to share with you a good example of mission as Easter people. You may remember that we had the time to pray for the people who struggled with severe weather in the Texas area. The church and some of the church members supported to them through UMCOR (United Methodist Church of Relief). It was not a big amount, but we offered it with prayers. However, I was so surprised and challenged when I saw this Facebook posting from the school that our church kids fundraised money for them at school. When they saw on the news the lack of food & water and the housing issues residents were facing due to the cold temperatures, they wanted to do something to help. The Brodhead School

District was able to raise \$860 or 2,580 meals that will be donated to the Houston Food Bank. We think adults are better than children and youths and we often treat them as if we need to teach them more about what they need to learn for going out into the world, but it is true that Brynn and Brant are better than adults and gave us many challenges about what Christian's reactions are. I am so proud of their missional work as faithful Christians, Methodists and dedicated community people and honor their parents, teachers, Sunday School teachers and many supporters who support and encourage their amazing works. Let's applause loudly for our amazing youths.

**(Slide 7)** While wrapping up today's sermon, I want to encourage you to do one holy homework to think about Easter. It is not a big thing like Brynn and Brant did but will be a meaningful and thoughtful step for us. You may receive two small gifts from the church. First thing is an Easter Candy bag and the other is a M&M Easter poem. Please, keep one of them for you but share another one (or you can make simple Easter goodie bags which I mentioned in the April Newsletter) with your family, friend, or neighbor who doesn't know Jesus or who is now far away from him. You don't need to be afraid to share some details about Jesus, church, Easter, etc. After praying shortly in your mind, share it with a person while smiling and saying, "Happy Easter and we love you in Christ! I want to share this small gift with you".

**(Slide 8)** Again, I am saying to follow last week's message that it is a small step, but God definitely works through your small actions and good attitudes. The Easter miracle leads us to live life in hope. And I hope and pray that those who receive this good Easter attitude from you will also live life in hope. This simple but powerful action will save their life as Jesus saved your life. Let the Easter Miracle keep going! "Christ is risen, he is risen indeed." Let us praise him! Alleluia! Amen!