Moderator's Easter Message 2025

Easter's Promise: New Heavens and Earth—A Message of Hope (Isaiah 65:17)

Transcript of Video Message

Friends, it has not been an easy year for the world. I wanted so badly to share a message with you that echoes the Easter message I wrote for *Broadview* magazine about the importance of investing in children, youth, and young adult ministry. And that is important. It is part of how God recreates the church, generation after generation, always creating and recreating a new thing.

But times are uncertain. We live in a volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous time. In these words from Isaiah that I share with you today, the prophet promises that God is about to create new heavens and a new Earth, that we shall not remember the past.

These words of assurance seem both unlikely and unadvisable. We are seeing history repeat the rise of fascism a century ago in Europe and elsewhere; we are taught that those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it.

The promise of the resurrection, the promise of new heavens and a new Earth, seems at once impossible for the future and too far into the past. So why believe in the prophetic voice of Isaiah? Why believe these prophets who say that there will be no more infant deaths, no more homelessness, no more weeping, no more crying, that God is creating for us a new heaven and a new Earth? Why did these voices, these specific voices, stay in our cannons?

Because the prophets lived through times of social breakdown, conquest, destruction, and authoritarianism. They saw how the compulsion for power and dominance led to complete and utter destruction and they said no more—not in the name of my God. They created hope from a system of hopelessness because they could evoke in the listening ears of their people a memory of social failure and societal collapse.

Hope is productive that way—in a way, the prophets say to us we have to imagine a world that is radically different from the status quo because the status quo does not work. That status quo of compulsion to dominate and competition for scarce resources has never worked, and it never will.

Enter the Messiah, this gift from God who was God born into human form, who walked and talked and taught and prophesied among us. Showed us that death is not the final answer and that resurrection from the very worst is always possible. Jesus, who said by doing what the Godself has told me I have remained in Creator's love, as you walk in my ways my love will remain in you. I am saying this so your hearts will be filled with the same joy I have. To walk the road with me you must love each other in the same way I have loved you. There is no greater way to show love to friends than to die in their place. You are my friends if you walk in my ways and do what I say.

Friends, the answers are there in our book, in our texts. The answers are forgiveness and love and we cannot live in the fear of what is or what was or what is lost—because love is the antidote to fear. When we are rooted in love we cannot keep from building community, from practicing equity and justice, and that will in fact bring about the new heavens and the new Earth. And in this new creation there is a place at the table for everyone.

May it be so. Amen.