



It's a joy to be sharing today from our Spring preaching series: **Jesus Headline News**, where we have been exploring **a DISCIPLE'S PUBLIC RECORD**, which is the story we are all writing with our lives. The phrase, "**Headline news**," is not a metaphor we associate with our own plane, quiet, and ordinary lives – but it is intended to **remind us that our public life tells a story to the world**. Jesus' life story in Roman-occupied Palestine gave sightlines to God and His Kingdom! This is **WHO** and **WHAT** Jesus came to make known! That phrase was heard 68 times in scripture, and Kingdom of Heaven 31 times. This was, for sure, Jesus' Headline News. Just as our series theme verse indicates:

**"You know me, and you know
where I come from. I am not here
on my own authority..."
John 7:28 ESV**

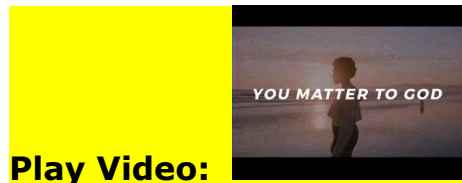


<https://www.learnreligions.com/affirming-swearing-oaths-difference-4589935>

We have all seen pictures of **people taking an oath in a court of law**, with **one hand on the Bible and the other raised up** to declare that what they are about to share is the **"the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God!"** That is legally referred to as **"Sworn Testimony."**

In today's confusing modern world, overly saturated with technology and information, and endlessly filled with 24/7 nuanced soundbites, spin doctors, fake news, and "fine-print-legal-truths" (also known as "Marketing"), one can imagine how difficult it seems, to find a CREDIBLE SOURCE of truth, and a witness that is dependable, both for accuracy and reliability. Welcome to the three titan "C"'s of Consumerism, Competition, and Culture wars.

Sometimes, in the world of **MESSAGING**, it can be the case that the **LOUDEST VOICE** can feel like, or appear to be, the most truthful voice. And far too often, in this broken world, the loudest voices are also the ones conveying displeasure, disdain, disgust, and defeat, for those who were already **lingering on the edge of UNSURE**---if I will ever be found, and find my way back home? From the producers of Rype.tv, comes this two-minute reminder of messaging from the most important voice and witness in all of History. **It is a reflection of history's most important SWORN TESTIMONY.** Let's lift our eyes to the screen, and listen in.



Some of you may be wondering, **where has God ever given legal testimony** about the rescue and acceptance of all people? Well, I'm glad you asked. Let's go to our scripture text for this morning, and hear from the wise old sage, Apostle John.

Read 1 John 5:9-12 NIV

9 We accept human testimony, but *God's testimony is greater* because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. 10 Whoever believes in

the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. 11 And this is the testimony: *God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.'

After a full sabbath day of rest, in which the disciples grieved deeply in lament; overcome with the sorrow of defeat and cast low in utter depression; replaying the tapes of how and why this could have gone so terribly wrong; Received jubilantly five days ago to shouts of "Hosanna," and then mocked on Friday as a betrayer and infidel with shouts of "Crucify Him!" What MADNESS was all this?

Today, Christians around the world celebrate ***the surprise of an early morning visit to His borrowed tomb***. The Bible tells us that when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, and then went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body for proper burial.

"As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "*You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here.* See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

Mark 16:5-7 NIV

RE-birthing life out of death is surely no easy or simple task. That's why true love knows no boundaries. The passionate pursuit of a personal relationship that is PEACEABLE in heart and PARAMOUNT in history is heaven's prized possession! **That's the GOAL and the BIG IDEA behind the Kingdom of God!** It is one of the most sacred and paradoxical truths of life – that the most CREATIVE BEING in all the cosmos, (the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), in pursuit of the highest vision and dream of a fabulous family, does all of his shopping --- in **the DAMMAGED-GOODS BIN OF LIFE!**

That's why I love the statement – the testimony – of the Rype.tv producers in this video about our truest valuation, as the potential raw-materials for making such a family. ***Who you are is not just determined by what you have, where you've been or what you've done, but by who Jesus declares [witnesses, testifies] you to be. You matter to God!*** This is, I believe, God's most important and crucial testimony:

"God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life"

1 John 5:11b-12a NIV

The **BEDROCK BELIEF and TESTIMONY of Heaven is that you and I are worthy of eternal life!** Worthy of being welcomed into the kingdom family; worthy of a second and third and tenth chance on getting life right; worthy of a divine destiny where death is defeated, sin is shattered, estrangement is eradicated, and shame is shredded. Where the testimony of God is experienced to be UNBELIEVABLY TRUE, and the hope of a new story now magically at hand. There are four words I want to leave you with today as evidence of these truths.

GOD **SEES ME**

One of God's names is El Roi – the God who sees me. God is witness to your life and mine. In times when we are weak, failed, inferior, and unsure; when we are hopeless, empty, stuck, and struggling – these are the life passages we would prefer to keep underground, and off social media. But God comes to us, in our own places and passages of desolation, and Abram's wife's

servant, Hagar (the mistress of Sarai) experienced great reviving hope when in her lowest place in life (Genesis 16:13), she lifted her eyes to discover somebody was actually looking, and somebody actually cared.

"You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now **seen the One who sees me.**"
Genesis 16:13 NIV

Have you seen the One who sees you? Do you know He is with you and for you? Your life is not invisible to the One who created you.

GOD **NAMES ME**

Your name and my name are integral to our grounding identity. It's perhaps one of the largest parts of who we are. Among everything else that I am---I am always -DAVID! I am my name! Names matter. To be named is to be identified, cherished, claimed, and valued. Your name is supposed to remind you that you are a somebody in the eyes of God:

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you; **I have called you by name, you are mine...you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you...**"
Isaiah 43:1b, 4a NIV

There are four names in scripture that stand out for us in association with our creation and resurrection: We are named as "the **DELIGHT**" of the Father's heart (Isaiah 62:4); the **APPLE** of His eye (Psalm 17:8); the **CHOSEN** people of God (1 Peter 2:9), and **SAINTS** (holy one's) (61 x's in NT). These biblical names are to be a sacred reminder of our worth and dignity in the eyes of God. They describe not what we've done, accomplished, or deserved, but **WHO GOD IS**, and the **HEAVEN'S VALUATION IMPARTED** into our lives.

GOD **CALLS ME**

The *gospel* story (means = "Good News") is all about our redemption and restoration. For those who have surrendered control (title to their soul and life), they have been purchased out of our slavery to sin, and are now under heaven's new ownership. Followers of Jesus are being fully renovated from the inside out. In **HGTV** language, God intends each of us to become an **EXTREME HOME MAKEOVER!** The image scripture gives of God calling is the body posture of a parent waiting for a child to run into their arms: "**All day long I have held out my hands --- to an obstinate people**" (**Isaiah 65:2**). This is what God's body language is saying to us, day and night — night and day! Jesus put it this way: "come unto me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

"God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

1 Corinthians 1:9 NIV

GOD LOVES ME

To say that **GOD LOVES ME**, is not supposed to be a SELF-CONGRATULATORY statement of personal pride. It is not, for instance, to say that God is always in agreement with me, or that I am always behaving myself the way he intends. But it is to say, that despite my best efforts to ruin my life, shipwreck my hope, stray off the rightful path, and perpetually choose lesser loyalties that lead to lame and lamentable outcomes for myself and others---despite my undeniable track-record of back-turning rejection and renunciation---GOD STILL **CHOOSES** ME! GOD STILL **YEARNS** FOR ME! GOD STILL **WAITS** FOR ME! I am His beloved. No wonder history's most famous Bible verse is **John 3:16: "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."** From the very beginning, it was this way:

"I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness."

Jeremiah 31:3 NIV

You and I are **seen, named, called, and loved**. This is the great hope and joyous news of Easter---even while our life stories are still a scrambled mess waiting to be untangled and restored. Which brings me to my closing story.



<https://broadwaygrandrapids.com/dear-evan-hansen>

Back in 2015, the Broadway hit "Dear Evan Hansen" (focusing in on the very complicated and nuanced world of teen suicide, anxiety, social pressure, taboo relationships, truths, untruths, and pretense) hit the stage as a musical to portray the true story of Benj Pasek, and his experiences in High School.

As we all might have cause to remember from our own High School days, things like compounded insecurities, fears, anxiety, lies, edited stories, half-truths, pretense, winks, and a multitude of misdirection's can all add up to a story that **lands us stuck, isolated, broken on the ground, unseen, unheard, invisible, and DESPERATELY ALL ALONE!** And how shall we climb out of such a deep, dark hole as that?

My friends, this is precisely where Jesus shows up to be the hero of our failed stories. All can be new again! Know these truths deeply before you leave today:

- (1) YOU ARE NOT ALONE!
- (2) YOU WILL BE FOUND!
- (3) SOMEONE WILL COME RUNNING FOR YOU, AND TAKE YOU HOME!
- (4) AND THAT SOMEONE IS JESUS!