

**April 9, 2006 – Palm Sunday**  
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### **Feed Your Curiosity**

#### **Intro Slide, “Feed Your Curiosity”**

How many of you have seen Aaron perform his card tricks? I’m curious, how does he do those card tricks? I have figured out the biting a quarter in half, and some of the others, but the card tricks have got me stumped. Even more, I’m curious as to when he has the time to learn these tricks. Maybe he doesn’t sleep. You know, we are all curious people. In fact, children are some of the most curious of all us. They ask some of the greatest questions. “Dad, how does the hair on your arms know when to stop growing, when the hair on your head just keep growing?” The one I ask is, “What is the purpose of growing hair on my back?” I could do without that whole thing.

**Slide of Star Wars line w/ Jedi** Also, what is up with those people who camp out overnight to be the first to see the next Star Wars movie, are they curious? Now, there are also those who are curious enough to stand in a long line to join them. Why though would someone sleep on a sidewalk overnight to be the first in line? Here’s why. The one’s who sleep on the sidewalk over night have witnessed the first three, four, or five, movies and can’t wait to be part of the experience of the final episode. The rest of us, who aren’t that curious, are just curious enough to see what all the talk and hype is about. Now, how many of you have done any one of these, even though you weren’t quite sure what was happening fully? I have. Just last summer, I walked down the street to watch the fire department put out a fire at 15<sup>th</sup> and Main. I did not know how it started, or who owned the building. I did not know any of the firefighters, or police officers. Quite honestly I was just curious. So were some of the others who were there next to me taking in the action. We were curious.

God has made you and me curious. Think about it. If he hadn’t, we’d still be living as things were back thousands of years ago. Without curiosity, sicknesses would not have been healed and vaccines would not be in existence. We would have never been to outer space, without curiosity. And, without curiosity, we would not have 120 channels of junk to watch on our televisions, whose signals are beamed around the globe instantaneously. Now, you know the saying, “curiosity killed the cat.” It is true, sometimes curiosity can harm us. Curiosity about a new food, that you are unaware that you are allergic to, can harm you. Curiosity about driving fast can harm you. Sexual curiosity can harm you. A child’s curiosity about a loaded firearm can harm them. And curiosity has harmed me. I can remember being curious about what it would be like to be a cool kid as a teenager, who drank and smoked. Then I was curious what it would be like to do drugs, and what it would be like to experience sex for the first time. I was curious, and my curiosities harmed me.

Curiosity is in the Bible as well. Let’s start at the beginning. Adam and Eve had it sweet. They lived in a garden that was created just for them. They had no worries about what to eat, where to live, or what to wear. They had everything

provided for them. They were God's first children. Then Satan comes into the picture. He knows that we are curious, and he feeds those curiosities that would lead us into harms way. He knew that Adam and Eve were curious, and he fed those curiosities. ***(Slide Scripture)*** In ***Genesis 3:4*** He said ***"You won't die. God knows that your eyes will be opened when you eat it. You will become just like God, knowing everything, both good and evil."*** After this Eve is convinced that the fruit looked delicious, and certainly would not harm her. She believed it would make her wise. Curiosity separated Adam and Eve from God. It can do the same to us.

Curiosity can also bring us closer to God as well. Curiosity brings us to ask questions like, "Why I am here, or what is my purpose?" They also ask questions like, "Why Christianity, and not some other religion?" Which is what Aaron will begin to unravel over the next few weeks. Curiosity also makes some wonder what it is inside people who have joy in spite of their trouble, or peace in the midst of pain. It makes some wonder where they can find that joy, or peace, or love that they see in others. It is in those times of curiosity that God puts us in a place to do the single most important thing we can do in our lives. Feed that curiosity.

Today is Palm Sunday. This is the Sunday before Easter where we remember the day when Jesus came into the city of Jerusalem during the Passover celebration. In ***Matthew*** and ***Luke*** we see a description of this day. We see curiosity at work. ***(Scripture Slide)*** Starting in chapter ***21:8-11*** we read ***"Most of the crowd spread their coats on the road ahead of Jesus, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. He was in the center of the procession, and the crowds all around him were shouting, "Praise God for the Son of David! Bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Praise God in highest heaven!" The entire city of Jerusalem was stirred as he entered. "Who is this?" they asked. And the crowds replied, "It's Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."*** There is curiosity in this story. Did you see it?

This Palm Sunday story has similar elements to how curiosity and crowds work. We have the same types of people in this story, as we do in the example of the Star Wars movie. We have the people who have experienced what Jesus had done, and who he was. These are the people who are laying down palm branches and coats for him to enter the city as a king. They were rolling out the red carpet for Jesus. Then there were others who were present because something was going on, but were unaware of what it was. Those were the one's saying, "Who is it?" They were curious.

So are you curious yet? There is more to Easter than just the Sunday in which we celebrate it. You see, we began the build up to Easter a few weeks back with Ash Wednesday. This time of year is referred to as Lent. No, not Lint, like the stuff you find in your dryer or your bellybutton. Lent is the 40 days prior to Easter (not counting Sundays) where many Christians give up, or sacrifice, something to remind them of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, made on our

behalf. For some of us, the sacrifice is external, while to some, the sacrifice is more internal or personal. Lent is also a time for curiosity.

Let's just say that for the Lenten season you have given up coffee. I know this is a harder sacrifice for some of you. You may now be asking me, "Ben, what has this got to do with curiosity?" Here's how. When you give up something; in this case, coffee, there something different about you for 40 days. After a little while, those who you work with, or have breakfast with, will begin to notice that you are no longer drinking the beverage that gives so many people life in the mornings. They'll notice something different, and they'll be curious. They'll ask you what you're doing, and in their asking, is curiosity. Do you see it? It's in that moment that you can simply share that you are making a sacrifice and why. Or at least you will have the opportunity to. Curiosity leads to questions, and questions lead to answers.

Some of us are great at giving up, or sacrificing, one or more elements of our lives through the Lenten season. Some of us have a harder time. Some of us make sacrifices that are as openly visible to the public, while others make changes that are less easy to see. I am the type of person who gives to God those things which are the most personal and internal. This year I have chosen, among other things, to give to the God the desire in me to make everyone happy. Or put another way, I have chosen to give God the fear I have of failing others. This may seem silly to you, but to me it is difficult, because I am a victim of fear.

In what I do from day to day, I work with many different people, with many different opinions and ideas. They have expectations of me, and I have expectations of myself, that sometimes can never be realistically met. This bugs me from time to time. I so desperately want to be liked, accepted, and be loved that I sometimes convince myself that I can do all things for all people. I want everyone to be happy with me. In fact, I have lost sleep over the worry of what people may think or what they may want from me. These people are family, friends, you out there, and even myself.

This fear harms me. This fear separates me from God, and from his plan for my life. And over the last few weeks, those closest to me may have noticed a change. I know they have. They are curious. They are curious to hear that I would do something as simple as cutting my long hair out of obedience to what God wants me to do. To give to God one element of something I like to control. Some don't understand fully, but they are curious.

You see, this is the time of year when many people will visit a church for the first time, or for the only time in a year. They may do it because family members or friends have invited them to, or because they are curious. Plus, there is just something going on around Easter. Just as there was something going on in the story of the first Palm Sunday. Remember, the scripture says that the crowds were "stirred". Other translations say they were "jubilant" or "moved". In fact, in the account in **(Scripture Slide) Luke 19:40** Jesus is asked about the crowds reaction to him and he says, even **"If they (the crowds) kept quite, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!" (NLT)** Yes, there is something about Easter.

And by the way, that something has nothing to do with the Easter Bunny. People are more receptive to the idea of attending a service on Easter. Some are just waiting for an invitation. So, invite people. Invite your friends, family, co-workers, even those who you don't like too well. Because something is happening and they may be curious.

And you may be here tonight, curious. You may have spent your entire life in a church, and don't feel like you have that relationship that others seem to have. You may be curious as to how to get that relationship. Feed your curiosity. Get involved in a small group, prayer group. You may also not know for sure what this relationship with Christ is all about. You may feel like someone standing outside a house fire observing to see what would happen next. If that is you, don't leave here tonight without getting the details to any questions you may have. If you are curious, let us feed that curiosity. Let us share with you the experience of what a life in Christ is all about so that next year you are like those who sleep out on the street to be the first to see the new Star Wars movie. Let God satisfy your curiosity.