TITLE: AN EASTER STORY

TEXT: Ro. 3:23; Jn. 3:16; 2nd Co. 5:21;

Mt. 26:39; Mk. 15:34; Gal. 2:20

INTRODUCTION:

 This morning I would like to share something that I received through an e-mail a few years ago that I think may really be relatable this Easter morning….

It is Saturday…

The day is over, you are driving home. You tune in your radio. You hear a little blurb about a little village in India where some villagers have died suddenly, strangely, of a flu that has never been seen before.

 It's Not influenza, but three or four people are dead, and it's kind of interesting, that they're sending some CDC doctors over there to investigate it.

You don't think much about it, but on Sunday, coming home from church, You hear another radio spot. Only they say it's not three villagers, but it's 3 villages or about 30,000 people in the back hills of this particular area of India that have died, and it's on TV that night. CNN runs a little blurb; people are heading there from the disease center in Atlanta because this disease strain has never been seen before.

 By Monday morning when you get up, it's the lead story. For it's not just India; it's Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and before you know it, you’re hearing this story everywhere and they have coined it now as "the mystery flu."

 The President of the United States has made some comment that he and everyone in America are praying and hoping that all will go well over there. But everyone is wondering how are we going to contain it? That's when the President of France makes an announcement that shocks Europe. He is closing their borders. No flights from India, Pakistan, or any of the countries where this mystery flu has broken out.

And that's why that night you are watching a little bit of the news before going to bed.

 Your jaw hits your chest when a Weeping woman is translated from a French news program into English: There’s a man lying in a hospital in Paris dying of the mystery flu. It has come to Europe. Panic strikes.

 As best they can tell, once you get it, you have it for a week and you don't know it. Then you have four days of unbelievable symptoms. And then you die.

 Britain closes its borders, but it's too late. The mystery flu strikes South Hampton, Liverpool, North Hampton, and its Tuesday morning when the President of the United States makes the following announcement: "Due to a national security risk, all flights to and from Europe and Asia have been canceled.

If your loved ones are overseas, I'm sorry. They cannot come back until we find a cure for this thing.

 Within four days our nation has been plunged into an unbelievable fear. People are selling little masks for your face for protection.

People are talking about "What if it comes to this country,” and preachers on Tuesday are saying, "it's the scourge of God."

 It's Wednesday night and you are at a church prayer meeting when somebody runs in from the parking lot and says, Turn on a radio, turn on a radio.

And while the church listens to a little transistor radio with a microphone stuck up to it, the announcement is made.

 Two women are lying in a Long Island hospital dying from the mystery flu.

 Within hours it seems, this thing just sweeps across the country. People are working around the Clock trying to find an antidote. Nothing is working.

 California, Oregon, Arizona, Florida, Massachusetts. It's as though it's just sweeping in from the borders.

 And then, all of a sudden the news comes out. The code has been broken. A cure can be found. A vaccine can be made.

 But Its going to take the blood of somebody who hasn't been infected, and so, sure enough, all through the Midwest, through all those channels of emergency broadcasting, everyone is asked to do one simple thing: Go to your downtown hospital and have your blood type taken.

 That's all we ask of you. And when you hear the sirens go off in your neighborhood, please make your way quickly, quietly, and safely to the hospitals.

 Sure enough, when you and your family get down there late on that Friday night, there is a long line, and they've got nurses and doctors coming out and pricking fingers and taking blood and putting labels on it.

 You, your wife and your kids are there, and they take your blood type and they say, "Wait here in the parking lot and if we call your name, you can be dismissed and go home."

 You stand around scared with your neighbors, wondering what in the world is going on, and wondering if this is the end of the world.

 Suddenly a young man comes running out of the hospital screaming. He's yelling a name and waving a clipboard. What? He yells it again! And your young 7 YEAR old son tugs on your jacket and says, "Daddy, that's me." Before you know it, they have grabbed your boy. Wait a minute, hold it! And they say, "It's okay, his blood is clean. His blood is pure. We want to make sure he doesn't have the disease. We think he has got the right type." Five tense minutes later out come the doctors and nurses, crying and hugging one another some are even laughing.

It's the first time you have seen anybody laugh in a week, and an old doctor walks up to you and says, " Thank you, sir. Your son's blood type is perfect. It's clean, it is pure, and we can now make the vaccine." We can make the antidote! We can save the world!

As the word begins to spread all across that parking lot full of people, People are screaming and praying and laughing and crying. But then the gray-haired doctor pulls you and you wife aside and says, "May we see you for a moment?

 The Doctor says…We didn't realize that the donor would be so young, that he would be a minor and we need . . . we need you to sign a consent form.

 You begin to sign and then you see that the number of pints of blood to be taken has been left empty. "H-h-h-how many pints?" And that is when the old doctor's smile fades and he says, "We had no idea it would be a little child. We weren't prepared. We need it all!

But-but...You don't understand. We are talking about the world here. Please sign. We- we need it all - we need it all!

"But can't you give him a transfusion?" "If we had clean blood we would. But we don’t, everyone else is infected…..Can you sign?

Would you sign?" In numb silence you do. Then they say, "Would you like to have a moment with your son before we begin?"

 Think about it? If this were you?

 Could you walk back? Could you walk back to that

room where your child sits on a table saying, "Daddy? Mommy? What's going on?"

 Can you take his hands and say, "Son, your mommy and I love you, and we would never ever let anything happen to you that didn't just have to be. Do you understand that son?"

And then when that old doctor comes back in and says, "I'm sorry we've-we've got to get started. People all over the world are dying." Can you leave? Can you walk out while your child is saying, "Dad? Mom? Dad? Why-why have you forsaken me?"

And then next week, when they have the ceremony to honor your son, and some folks sleep through it, and some folks don't even come because they decide to go to the lake instead, and some folks come with a pretentious smile and just pretend To care.

 How would that make you feel?

 Would it make you want to jump up and say, "MY SON DIED! HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR YOU! HE DIED SO THAT YOU WOULDN’T HAVE TO! DON'T YOU CARE?"

 When I first read this story several years ago it really touched my heart. And I thought, thank God that this is just a story, that it’s not true! It has not really happened!

 And then, almost instantly it hit me….This is not just a story, a piece of fiction….It actually did happen!

 Years ago a disease hit this world! It was a disease that proved to be 100% fatal and it infected the entirety of the human race!

 All who were infected were doomed to die and there appeared to be no possibility for a cure….

 This disease that infected the entirety of the human race was the disease of sin.

 And sense all men were infected there was no possibility of man coming up with a cure….No one’s blood was pure enough to provide an antidote because all were infected with the disease…

Scripture says…

Roma 3:23 (NIV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God…

 All have sinned; all were infected, so all would eventually die from this disease!

 God saw the dilemma that His creation was in…..

God has a tremendous love for us! A love that defies our human comprehension or our finite understanding…..

 There was a need for someone with pure blood, clean blood, blood that wasn’t tainted, wasn’t infected with the disease of sin to come so an antidote, a cure could be made….

Jn. 3:16 FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON THAT WHO EVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHALL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE!

 God new that all of mankind’s blood had become infected with the disease of sin…A disease that would lead to our ultimate death, not just physical death but spiritual death as well…. Spiritual death being eternal separation from God in a place of condemnation, a place of damnation called hell…

 So God gave His son to come and die in our place!

 Jesus had the right type of blood to provide the cure, provide the antidote for the disease of sin!

2Cor 5:21 (NIV) God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

 There was a need for pure blood to provide the vaccine, the antidote for the disease of sin and when it came time to give that blood …all of it was needed!

 It would require that the Son of God would need to give His life in order to save ours!

 We see the Son cry out to the Father as He comes to realize the price that He is about to pay to redeem and save mankind.

 Matt 26:39 (NKJV) "O My Father, (Daddy) if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me….

 The Father, tears in His eyes, wants to reach down and snatch up His beloved Son but knows that all of mankind will die in their sin if He does so he can’t grant His Son’s request….

 The Son is truly one with His father and understands… Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me….Yet not My will but your will be done….

 We hear the Son Cry out again to the Father as He is hanging on a cross and His life’s blood is being poured out as a ransom for many….

Mark 15:34 "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

 The Father’s heart is literally breaking as He has to turn His eyes away from His Son…

 For now the sin of the world has come upon His Son as He takes your sin, my sin upon Himself…

 God, in His Holiness cannot look upon sin is any fashion so in that moment He has to turn away from His beloved Son…

 It is a dark moment for the world….

The sun turns black and darkness covers the earth as the Son of God takes away the sin of the whole world.

 The darkness that covered the earth in that moment I believe is but a picture of the hurt in the Father’s heart at that moment… As The Father is giving His Sons life to save Humanity.

 The Son cries out to the father once more, Father, forgive them for they don’t know what they do and then after saying; It is finished, gives up His spirit! And all of creation trembles, the earth quakes and the rocks split as the Son of God gives His life to bring us the cure that we so desperately need…..

 What a somber mood there must have been in the realm of heaven at that moment…Most probably mixed emotions among the angelic hosts…

 The Son of God has died so that mankind might live!

 The Father grieves the loss of His Son but rejoices in that the cure for man has been provided…..

 But what a price He had to pay! What a cost for the cure for sin!

 He who knew no sin became sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God!

 God paid the price of our redemption!

 God, the one sinned against willingly paid the price, paid the penalty, and provided the cure for the ones who had sinned against Him!

 And then when it comes to the day of memorial, the day God has set aside to remember what the Son has done….

 Many don’t come…many will go to the lake or stay home to watch a ball game or just sleep in instead… Many who do come, come but remembering what Jesus has done is the farthest thing from their mind….Many will come with a pretentious smile but they really don’t care….

What do you think?

Does it make God want to jump up and say to us…"MY SON DIED! HE DIED FOR YOU! HE DIED SO THAT YOU WOULDN’T HAVE TO! DON'T YOU CARE?"

 This Easter morning I would like to pose a question?

 Do you care? Is what Jesus did on the cross of Calgary important to you?

 How has His supreme act of love and sacrifice for you impacted your life? How is it impacting your life today?

On that Friday the antidote was made! On Sunday our cure was ready for mass distribution!

 On Sunday the tomb was found empty! Jesus has risen! The cure could now be distributed to all of mankind!

 Scripture assures us that “all who will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved!”

 Have you called upon the name of the Lord this morning?

 Have you asked Him, allowed Him to come into your heart and be the Lord and Savior of your life?

 Have you then allowed your life to become a living memorial to Him?

 Have you come that the place of saying:

Gala 2:20 (NKJV) "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the [life] which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

This is how we live our life as a living memorial to the one who gave His life for us so that we might pass from death into life and that life being eternal, never ending life in the glorious Kingdom of God!

 Is any response other than this good enough for what Jesus did for us on the cross?

 Jesus paid it all…all to Him I owe…sin had left a crimson stain…He has washed me white as snow!

 How have you responded to what Jesus has done for you?

 Have you made your life, are you allowing your life to be a living memorial to Jesus Christ?

 This is the only adequate response for what Jesus has done for us on that cross…

Prayer

SHARE COMMUNION TOGETHER…….