

But Wait...There's More

Matthew 28:1-10

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“But wait...there’s more!” Who hasn’t been drawn in by that phrase that is the hallmark of infomercials, the bane of late-night television? Endless products for the apparently endless needs we humans have, most needs we never even knew we needed, are hawked on late-night infomercials that promise so much...and usually deliver so little. As the product is displayed and the attributes touted, you can be sure of one thing...these infomercials never seem to come to an end. Just when you think you have heard everything there is to hear about a Snuggie, the thighmaster or some kitchen gadget...just when you think you have heard it all, the announcer breaks in with the famous line, “But wait...there’s more!”

- Who can forget the Robocut vacuum? Robocut cleans your floors, makes short work of your carpets, and even has an attachment for hard to reach corners...with an extension to get the most cantankerous cobwebs...but wait, there’s more...the Robocut can also be used for haircuts!
- The Chop-o-matic chops all your vegetables up perfectly, carrots, celery, cucumbers, and zucchini...but wait, there’s more...the Chop-o-matic even chops your onions to perfection without shedding a single tear!
- Every weight loss, hair loss, thigh slimmer, ab shaper, belly buster, car visor, cup holder, pocket fisherman, George Foreman grill and every have to have deal...comes complete with that famous line, that tag line that keeps you hanging on till the end...But wait, there’s more.

Now what happens to a preacher when he is quarantined for days on end? What happens to a preacher when he has too much time on his hands, or too many thoughts in his mind, or when his mind that is going stir crazy gets a crazy idea about something that he has heard over and over...and over...and over again? What happens to a preacher when he starts to think about that ubiquitous late-night infomercial mantra...But wait, there’s more? Stop! Don’t touch that dial. Don’t change your channel. You are about to hear an infomercial about the greatest story ever told. And once that story gets started, you will find yourself drawn in, unable to tear yourself away, caught up in the moment, because as the story unfolds, there is a constant refrain that goes like this...But wait, there’s more.

The infomercial begins with a bang. This is the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Yes sir, Christ means Messiah, the Anointed One, the highly expected and anticipated One. Royal Blood courses through his veins. He is the son of David. And there is an added twist. He is also the son of Abraham, assuring his reign will reach all the world. What a great beginning to this infomercial.

But wait, there's more. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and...If you have ever wondered how anyone can fill up the thirty minutes of an infomercial, try this, throw in a genealogy. That takes some time. After each name, you almost feel bad saying, "But wait, there's more" because there really is more, 42 generations in all. So, we fast forward this infomercial to what comes next, the birth of this Jesus Christ, the son of David and the son of Abraham. After 42 generations of a seemingly endless genealogy we are desperately waiting to hear that we can move on. The genealogy draws to a welcome close and we hear the words we knew would come, "But wait, there's more!" And boy is there more.

This Jesus is not only the son of David and the son of Abraham, he is the Son of God, he is God come to earth, God incarnate. Born of the Virgin Mary his dad Joseph was told that Jesus would be called Immanuel, which means God is with us. Son of David, son of Abraham, Son of God. That's nice. That's really nice. But wait, there's more. Not only does this Son of God make his start in a manger in the little town of Bethlehem, and not only does he take a 40 day journey to tackle the temptations of that sly old Satan, but this Jesus he jumps into the waters of the Jordan River. Born in a manger, he ain't afraid of the devil and his danger...when the waters of baptism called, he jumped in like a big ol' cannonball. The heavens opened, the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, and calling out from on high God said, "This is my guy." This is my Son whom I love, with him I am well pleased." As we wipe our faces that have been splashed with the waters of the Jordan, you hear a voice saying...But wait, there's more!

Oh, and is there more? This Jesus teaches, and when he teaches everybody asks, "Where did he get this type of authority? Jesus teaches, and Jesus reaches, oh does Jesus reach. Lepers were supposed to hide far away from crowds...quarantines happened even 2,000 years ago...lepers were supposed to stay away from the crowds and cry out "Unclean" to warn others they were coming. But Jesus reaches, and his reach stretched all the way to the withered flesh of the leper, answering the plea of that outcast who said, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Touching his very flesh, Jesus said, "I am willing." And the leper was made clean. The lame got up and walked. The blind could see, the deaf could hear. Jesus teaches and Jesus reaches.

But wait, there's more! Jesus preaches. Jesus preaches words of blessings, to the poor in spirit, to the ones who mourn and to the meek, to those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, to the merciful, to the pure in heart, to the peacemakers, and even to the persecuted. Jesus preaches. Jesus preaches about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus preaches about love. Jesus preaches about loving your neighbor. And then Jesus preaches about a love that stretches us beyond what we ever thought loving would mean. Jesus preaches and tells us to love our enemies. Who in the world loves their

enemies? But wait, there's more! Regarding that love of enemies, there is more, and we will wait...that loving your enemies type of love gets revealed at the end of the life of Jesus, when he makes his way to Jerusalem, when his enemies put him to death...but wait...and we will wait, we will wait till Jesus reaches Jerusalem. For now, Jesus preaches about blessing, he preaches about love, he preaches about forgiveness, he preaches about a kingdom where the greatest will be the servant of all, he preaches about the kingdom where the poor, the hungry, the weak, the stranger, the alien, the prisoner, and the sick...all have the greatest value, the greatest worth. He preaches and says whatever you do to the very least ones in this world, you have done unto me. Jesus preaches. You thought the Ginsu steak knives had a nice little jingle with, "It slices, it dices..." Well, let me tell you, Jesus teaches, Jesus reaches, and Jesus preaches. But wait, there's more.

Jesus sees the future. He tells his disciples, "I'm making my way to Jerusalem." That sounds good. If you have a kingdom, go right to Jerusalem and crown yourself as king. But when Jesus talks about Jerusalem, the shine starts to come off this infomercial. Jesus is not selling some get-rich scheme or some health and wealth in a basket. Jesus says when I get to Jerusalem I will undergo great suffering, I will be rejected, I will be arrested, I will be tried, I will be convicted, I will be condemned...but wait, there's more...I will be crucified. Teaches, reaches, and preaches makes a whole lot better script for an infomercial than convicted, condemned, and crucified.

Sure enough, when Jesus gets to Jerusalem, he is betrayed, arrested, beaten, he suffers, he is shamed by merciless accusers, ridiculed, taunted, and when his trial comes he is convicted, he is convicted and condemned...but wait, there's more...God's Beloved Son...God's Beloved Son...is not only convicted and condemned, he is crucified. He is crucified, dead and buried. Back in the early days of television, when you turned your tv off it sort of died out, slowly going to black, the light fading into darkness. Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried. The lights go out, leaving only darkness. The television is off. The infomercial is over. We wait...but there is no more. Jesus dies. Some good friends take his body and put him in a tomb. But he is dead. Friday, he dies, and we wait. All Saturday yields is another day of death. That tomb is shut tight. We stare at a blank screen. The lights are off. The show is over. The infomercial has ended. All the hopes and dreams, the promises, the expectations, that came with Jesus, like so many infomercials, it feels like Jesus overpromised and underdelivered. The screen is dark. The tomb is sealed shut.

I wish I had the courage as a preacher to just wait...for 30 seconds, for a full minute, for ten, twenty minutes, for an hour...for 24 hours, for 48 hours...as many hours as those hopeless disciples had to wait 2,000 years ago. I wish I had the courage to wait as long as those brokenhearted followers of Jesus had to wait 2,000

years ago. I wish I had the courage to let us all experience that long pause that was filled with nothing but fear and sadness and sorrow. I think you know what happens after that long night of gloom and doom. After a long night of gloom and doom, something amazing happens at the TOMB. Maybe this is overstating what happens, but I think not. After a long night of doom and a long night of gloom, something happens at the tomb, and all of the sudden death goes BOOM! It's gone. Jesus rises from the dead.

This is what I'm talking about...Jesus suffered and died and was placed in a tomb. But wait, there's more. Have those words ever sounded so sweet? He suffered and died, crucified on a cross. But wait, there's more. The stone is gonna roll and the angels are gonna stand on that rock and proclaim, "He is not here. He is risen from the dead, just as he said." In other words, "He is alive!" In other words, "He is risen! He is risen indeed!"

If the infomercials of life have left you feeling empty, if they overpromised and underdelivered, if salvation did not come through a Ginsu knife or a kitchen appliance, an ab buster or a thigh master, or who knows what other offers are out there...if they left you feeling empty, unfulfilled, alone, searching, longing for something that can really change your life, know that Jesus is so much more than an infomercial. He is real life. He does not hide behind a screen. Jesus comes out and he meets you face to face. Jesus wraps you in his arms. Jesus even enters right into your heart where he promises to live with you forever. And when Jesus enters your heart, well, it doesn't get any better than that? Or does it? Could it be even when Jesus enters our heart, there is still room to hear those words one more time, "But wait, there's more"?

You guessed it. You see, when Jesus enters your heart, he comes with a guarantee. It is a guarantee that is spelled out three times in the Old Testament and once in the New. This is the guarantee that God gives to his children. "I will never leave you, and I will never forsake you." That promise finds its fulfillment in Jesus. As Paul wrote in Roman 8, there is nothing that can separate us from the love of God that he has given us in Jesus Christ. There you have it.

What can separate us...death or life...NOTHING! Angels or demons...NOTHING! The present or the future...NOTHING! Any powers? Any height? Any depths? Anything in all creation? Can anything separate us from the love of God that has been given to us in Jesus Christ? ...NOTHING!

All that is left to do is open your heart and receive Jesus. He said, "Behold I stand at the door and knock." Open the door. Let him in. Let him in. Let him in. Oh, just let him in. Let him in, because he loves you, and when he lives within you, it does not get any better than that. Amen!