



# SOUTHSIDE

## MIDWEEK NEWSLETTER

### 4.8.20

#### The Nerf Car – Barrett

I worked my entire shift at Trader Joes yesterday while wearing a mask. In addition, all of the employees were encouraged to thoroughly wash their hands at least once an hour. And by thorough, I mean it was recommended that we say the ABCs twice while we scrubbed them. During this season of wearing masks and washing hands, we have all been encouraged to think about ways we might make our world a safer place. I have often thought through the years that our world would be a lot safer if we made our cars out of the Nerf material. Isn't that a good idea? Wouldn't you feel safer on the road, knowing that if you had an accident, your Nerf car would just bounce off and retain its shape? I've been thinking a lot about my Nerf car idea recently as I have been teaching my oldest two children how to drive.

My brother and I both wrecked our cars when we were learning how to drive. Unfortunately, we wrecked our cars into each other in our driveway! Yes, you read that right. I know it's hard to believe and to this day my parents are still not sure how it happened. Basically, my brother was pulling into the driveway and thought I was going to stop, and I was reversing out of the driveway and thought he was going to stop. Well, to put it plainly, we both eventually came to an abrupt stop. Only if our cars had been made out of Nerf!

As we live in this time of trying to make our fallen world into a safer place, I am reminded of the words of Mr. Beaver in CS Lewis' classic children's tale *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. Lucy asks a great question about the Jesus figure in the story, a lion named Aslan. She asks, "Then he isn't safe?" Mr. Beaver replies, "Safe? Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good." The takeaway from Mr. Beaver's wise words is that safe and good are not always synonymous. This is true in the case of my Nerf car, it is a safe idea, but it's not a good idea.

*"Safe? Who said  
anything about safe?  
'Course he isn't safe.  
But he's good."  
Mr. Beaver*

As we prepare our hearts for Good Friday, the cross reminds us that the two words are not synonymous. Jesus death on the cross was for the good of mankind but nothing about it was safe for him. The cross shapes my motive for staying at home during this time. My primary motive for staying at home is not to be safe. Instead I believe that I am making this decision primarily for the good of others. I think it's very important to state it this way because the two words are not always synonymous. And during this unique time, let's be encouraged to always do what is good for others knowing that it may not always be what is safe for me.

## Books About Jesus

Growing up, my family spent a lot of time in a church building. I sat through hundreds of Bible classes and sermons. I ate cookies at VBS. I helped put on puppet shows for kids. I remember my parents giving me the new, cool Bible translation called Reach Out, the cover of which looked like it was designed at Woodstock. I didn't take advantage of all these spiritual resources for many years.

Then in college everything changed. It's not that it all began to make sense. More truthfully, it all finally began to matter. I began to care – about who God is, what Jesus taught, who I was and who I was becoming, who I was created to be and to do, where did I fit into God's story.

Somewhere along the way I became more interested in reading about Jesus – his life, his ministry, his teaching, his style, his mission, his leadership. I have more books about Jesus on my shelves than any other topic. I have taught more from the gospels than any other books in the Bible. The books about Jesus which I've taken the time to read have helped him to become more real to me. I believe what I read in the gospels about him actually happened. I believe John when he tells me that when we see Jesus we see God (John 1:18). Jesus takes the mystery out of knowing what God is like. I appreciate that.

I don't know if you'd consider yourself a reader or not, but I have a suggestion for you either way. While you have a little extra time on your hands, read a book about Jesus, along with spending some time in the gospels. Pick up a book focused on Jesus. Below are a few of my favorites. If you want to talk about which one you might get the most out of, touch base with me. I can give you a little more direction so your reading time will be invested wisely.

Lynn Anderson - [The Jesus Touch](#), Michael Card has a commentary series called the Biblical Imagination Series - one for each gospel, John Eldredge - [Beautiful Outlaw](#), Philip Keller - [Rabboni](#), John Ortberg - [Who is This Man?](#), Judah Smith - [Jesus is](#), Frank Viola and Leonard Sweet - [The Jesus Manifesto](#), Rich Wilkerson - [Friend of Sinners](#), Philip Yancy - [The Jesus I Never Knew](#)

Kevin

## A Shepherd's Prayer – Richard

This coming Sunday is the day that we celebrate Easter. Although it's always fun to watch children and grandchildren hunt Easter eggs and eat chocolate bunnies, those things don't in any way capture the real importance of what we celebrate on Easter. For Christians, Easter is when we celebrate the culminating event following Jesus' trial and death on the cross. Easter is when we celebrate the resurrection of Christ. Jesus rising on the third day following his death on the cross is important because it proved Jesus was who He claimed to be. It also proved that He can do for us what He promised – raise us from the dead!

With that thought in mind, here is my prayer for us this week: Father, we give praise and honor to You for all the wonderful gifts and blessing that you have given us, but most especially we give thanks for the gift of your Son. Father, through your great mercy you have given us a new birth through the death and resurrection of your one and only Son. Because of that we praise your great and wonderful name. It is only through this redeeming act from Your Son that we can enjoy relationship with you. And not just any relationship, but one where You have made us joint heirs with Christ. We fully recognize that this gift is not something we deserve, nor is it something we can earn. It is something you simply give us. So Father, all we can say is thank you for loving us enough to give us this great gift. And Father we pray that you will empower us daily to live lives where your Son shines through our speech and actions in ways that draw others to you. We pray this through the saving name of Jesus. Amen.