

# Easter Sunday

## Impartial, Not Indiscriminate, Love

Acts 10:34-43

Easter Sunday/Resurrection of Our Lord

Analysis by Lori A. Cornell

<sup>34</sup>Peter began to speak to [the people]: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup>but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. <sup>36</sup>You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. <sup>37</sup>That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: <sup>38</sup>how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. <sup>39</sup>We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree; <sup>40</sup>but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, <sup>41</sup>not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. <sup>42</sup>He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. <sup>43</sup>All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."



Painting by [Cecco del Caravaggio](#) on [Wikipedia](#)

*"The cross at Calvary testifies to humanities inhuman ability to judge, and God's intolerance of sin and death. God is most definitely discriminating. But God chooses impartiality when God raises his Son Jesus from the dead. God chooses—discriminately—to forgive us sinners and love us back into our humanity."*

## **DIAGNOSIS: Partial**

### ***Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Discriminating, Not Impartial***

The sign outside the church may read "All Are Welcome," but are they? Really? After all, the people on the inside of the church have certain expectations for who should be allowed in—be they mainline or evangelical, democratic or autocratic, gay or straight, Gentile Roman or Jew. Those on the inside and on the outside are simply a reflection of the (for most, upsettingly) diverse culture we live in.

### ***Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): Judge-y***

Our primitive brains warn us against outsiders. Our middle brain tells us when we're uncomfortable or afraid. So our neo-cortex processes those emotions by sorting out who is okay to be with and who's not safe. But what happens when the Easter news gets out that God's Son has been put to death by "hanging him from a tree" (v. 39), and God retaliates by forgiving, and giving life and salvation? Well, we think, "I wasn't the one who killed him!" And, "That sounds like great news for me, but that can't be true for everyone." God must be more discriminating than that. After all, we've made God in our image. (Oops. I mean ... No, I guess that's what I mean.)

### ***Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): Judged***

When we judge others according to our fears, sense of righteousness, religious standards, we put ourselves in the judgment seat. And that seat belongs to God alone. Which means that we are brought before the true Judge of the living and the dead. Not a good place for any of us to be.



Photo by [Keira Burton](#) found on [Pexels](#)

### **PROGNOSIS: Impartial**

#### ***Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): Acquitted (Discriminating Love)***

To say that God, who is judge of the living and the dead, is indiscriminate though, could be sorely misunderstood. God sees

our differences; God knows are righteous rejection of one another; God searches and knows us intimately. The cross at Calvary testifies to humanities inhuman ability to judge, and God's intolerance of sin and death. God is most definitely discriminating. But God chooses impartiality when God raises his Son Jesus from the dead. God chooses—discriminately—to forgive us sinners and love us back into our humanity.

***Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): No Partiality***

That discriminating love means that God knows full well who we are and what we are capable of. But God has chosen to love us with a love that we cannot otherwise give to each other. And that love changes us. It opens our eyes. It makes us rethink not only how we belong to God, but how we actually belong to one another. The very Holy Spirit who was at work in Jesus, is now at work in us.

***Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): Discriminate, Impartial Love***

We are still going to see our differences. Just like Peter knew that he was baptizing a Gentile who had never known the God of Abraham before, we will sit in our pew and see how different we are from the person up the aisle. We will walk out of our church and see the very world Christ died for. But now we will see it with Christ's eyes: Discriminating, yes. But loved by us impartially, nevertheless. Oh, the wonder of it.