

## NAME

A Love So Special Audio.mp3

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## START OF TRANSCRIPT

**[00:00:06]**

So this baseball may be familiar to some of you, depending on how long you've been a part of WellSprings or this baseball may be entirely new to you this morning. This baseball has an old story and a new. Story this morning. So this baseball, you'll see it. Regular baseball, isn't it? See names written on the baseball. No. All the names of the 1976 New York Yankees were once written on this baseball. Until I got my hands on it. My dad went to a game in the 1976 World Series. Yankees ended up losing to the the Big Red Machine, the great Cincinnati Reds team in the mid 1970s. He knew I was a Yankees fan, even though he was a San Francisco Giants fan. Brought me back this baseball signed by all the Yankees. And I put it safe keeping safe place. Until. The next spring. And all the baseballs I had had disappeared. You know where this is going. Even you haven't heard the story before. And this is the only baseball I could find. So guess who took it out to play with his friends? This guy. There are no names left on this baseball. And what's really interesting is that. Of the innumerable number of baseballs I have lost in my life. This is the only one I have held on to for decades. I like to refer to it as my mindful reminder of the costs of mindlessness. But the story of this baseball is not really about impulsive seven year old me. It's about the night before. My first Easter. Sunday preaching as an ordained pastor. It's a whole mood up here for me today. His final Easter Sunday preaching before all of you and those of you at home as well. Take you back to 1999, River of Grass Youth Congregation just outside Fort Lauderdale, Florida, preparing with a level of nervousness that I can still feel in part of my body, holding that muscle memory. Preparing for my first Easter. I think I got an hour and a half of sleep that night before. But in that hour and a half. I dreamt of this baseball.

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With no signatures left on it that I had carelessly used. Instead of saving. And in that dream. I saw this baseball. And unlike in real life, in the in the dream, I actually felt a lot of guilt. But then something strange happened. This baseball is actually in real life held up. At the seams seamlessly. But in the dream. I started. To kind of peel the baseball as if it were an orange. First one seam, then another. Then another, then another. There was something underneath. That was calling me, even though I didn't know what it was. And then all of a sudden. After I had peeled this baseball entirely. What did I see underneath the shards that were off to the side? The original 1976 baseball untouched by. My grubby hands. Intact as it was. I even saw the name Chris Chambliss on it. He was the Yankees 1976 first baseman. And all the other names on it. As perfect as the day. My dad gave it to me. And even though I only got an hour and a half sleep that night, I woke up feeling refreshed. And ready to go. Preach my first Easter sermon. That's why I hold on to this baseball. Here's the thing, though. I've been serving you congregations now for almost a quarter century. And in that time, my life has experienced a few changes. Just a few. I actually don't think I'd have the same dream now. As I did then. That brought me so much comfort. And that's what I want to. Talk about today. On Easter. Not just a trip down memory lane. Although thank you for that opportunity. What I don't. Want to talk about is how when things change or grow. Or die. The greatest search that we can encounter is back. Well, I want to talk about today. Is how when things change or grow or die. What I now believe Easter offers us is actually an even better message than just. Restoration to an original perfection. This is what I love about Easter.

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Harry. Put this right here. This is not yours. Safekeeping. The. This is what I love about the Easter story. Especially once, as our tradition invites us to do, to get beyond the very stale, very tired and finally unhelpful, literally stick frame. Did he literally rise or did he not? In the case of literally so. Well, then everything falls from there. And it's the same thing in reverse. If the truth of the Easter experience rests only on whether it literally happened, then yes or no either completely opens you up. We're shut you. Down and move on. But we. I have some different perspectives here. That I think helps us. Really live into what, Easter? You can call us. All to be and how to live. Now, I do want to say Easter is to a certain extent about the transition in religious leadership of a community. And let me be very clear today. Although Jesus and I were both born Jewish. And although we both have the experience of leaving positions of religious leadership, I am not Jesus in today's message. Okay. Can we be clear on that? Thank you. Okay. Also, my ego is not that large, and the job's. Been taken already. This on this Easter Sunday. Is what it. Boils down to for me. This is what Easter invites. And how it invites my heart to open. That someday. This name that I have at least here. Reverend Ken. Will only be known. As a name. And there will be a future Easter in which no one has who is here. We'll have ever. Met me personally. I'll just be a name founding minister a long time ago. And in that there is such peace for me. Because my ministry will have made that day possible. Even if no one particularly. Remembers me personally. This is what Easter is about. It's about how all of us, wherever we are in our lives. Whatever changes we are going through. Whatever transformations are occurring to us, whatever experiences of death and rebirth are parts of our lives.

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Easter invites us to live more gracefully and more open heartedly. And it's right there. In the Easter story. If we can see it. The things I love about the Easter story is that, yes, in the story, the way that is told, Jesus comes back and he comes back for like all like blink and you missed it amount of time. And then he goes again. You know, the way that we might think a story like this happens is he returns and he stays for a long time. But that's not the way this story occurs. The story has all these amazing reversals, his disciples who kind of had abandoned him toward the end of his life. They are not the ones in this very patriarchal society who find him, who see him first. After the resurrection. It's the women at his tomb who attend to his body. They're the ones who find him. He doesn't come back avenging. He comes back to say this. It's not hanging out for too much longer. But I will be with you. Until the end of the world. How can that be true? Because he's gone. And not. This is the most powerful part of. The Easter story. For me. It's this. Know if you can make that out. It's from the 1400s. That is a representation of the first Eucharist. Communion. But I love. Is that Jesus knowing? This is life was going to end. Said, Remember me this way, not with. Statues. Or words. Or even what. Is written about me. Remember really basic stuff. We would now call the body in the blood. But his wine and bread. The most basic stuff there is. I think Jesus was saying everything. Is holy now. By the way, if you want to look up images of Jesus around Easter time, be prepared to find one of Jesus and John Wayne and Donald Trump all hanging out together. And think, wow, American Christianity is a really interesting parts of it, at least a really interesting tradition. But that's what I love. This. About Easter.

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If we want to look for those we love and have lost. I know this deeply in. My own life right now. Look among the most common things. Look among the most basic ingredients. Because the form. Always will. Change. Even while we're still living. But in the most basic common ingredients of our lives. His father, Richard Rohr of my favorite favorite Catholic contemplative. Is. Today in his Easter message said. As part of the funeral mass. And his tradition. Everything changes. And nothing ends. This is what I think Jesus was inviting us in preparing the people who loved him most. To remember him. In the common things. Not the solid things, not the unchanging. Things. But in how we feed ourselves. Something nourishing. My definition of this. Tradition has always been fairly simple. That there is a love so special. We don't need to be special to be loved. What is. More common? Then bread and something to drink. What is more common than. Bunny ears on a child. What is more common than the breath. The spiritus that unites us all. What is more common than the taste of coffee? What is more common? Then learning. In the face of a pandemic. How to gather. And regather and to be community again. These are not esoteric things. These are so common. And in their commonness. Why is there beauty? And in their beauty lies, their healing. And a memory. Remembrance for every. Day of our lives. That although. Everything changes. Nothing ends. And everything is holy now. It's an incredible. How the most common things. Are really our most holy experiences. This is what. Easter is about. As I go through this time, I've been looking for guides, guideposts and companions of people who are also in the midst of transition. This person is one of them. David Wolpe. He's rabbi of a temple in Los Angeles, California. And he's bringing his time of being the rabbi in the synagogue to a close after, I think, 23 years.

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He got me beat by about six years there, but a long term serving clergy person. You're not going to understand all these words in here unless you understand Yiddish or Hebrew. And we went over that last week. For those of you who are here two weeks ago, you can look up some of these later on if you want to. So this is Rabbi Wolpe. This really speaks to my heart. Want to know how being a rabbi is moving and wonderful. Last night I conducted a Shiva remembrance for David Amsterdam ZL a wonderful member of the shul. I said that sometimes you don't realize you have a ritual until it is gone. David, who passed away in his nineties. She had hearing aids. And each week before the sermon, he would place a small black transmitter on the bima. Pulpit so he could hear. I said, some people use the rabbis, draw you to fall asleep. But David, who used used to lead minyan and never missed shul, actually wanted to hear it. And that was the ritual. The black transmitter each week. I will miss his coming up to hand it to me. After Maariv the evening service. As I was leaving, his daughter approached me and said, You should have this and handed me. Everyone had tears. In their eyes. His granddaughter said he was buried with his hearing aids. You can still talk to him. At such moments, being a rabbi is inexpressible, precious. May his memory. Be a blessing. Hearing aids. Bunny ears, coffee, bread and wine. This life changes. There is no getting around that. And in these connections, I want to offer no false words about spiritual bypassing. Loss hurts. Coming to the end of things. There is sadness and gratitude and. Yearning for more. And a desire to let things rest. I hope none of us. Not just. Here. I hope that none of us want to bypass any of that. See, because if we're moving past that, we're moving past the very. The very symbols that I believe the divine has given us. To call us back to the presence of everything that is holy.

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I have no desire to bypass. Any of this time of transition. Whatever the transitions. Are that we are in the midst of. Easter says, look. Deeply into those transitions. Cherish them. Love them. Listen to them. Argue with them. Cry over them. Cherish them. Because in these things. As a writer once said The hidden and holy heart of our lives. It's always present. I want to conclude today. By remembering tick Nat Hahn, one of our most beloved teachers here at WellSprings. Even though I don't think any of us actually ever met Tay. But still one of our most beloved teachers. You know what he called his birthday? And his death. His continuation day. And a deep and radical way. That is true. Everything changes. And nothing ends. And if we pay attention to that. Our lives can fully live. Thank you for letting me be your minister. I love you. Amen. Now you live in blessing. And by the way, I've got a couple more messages coming up. This isn't the final one, but there was something about Easter today. Would you pray with me? Spirit breath. You teach us every moment. You teach us to remember here and now that everything that ever was and everything that ever will be. Are present and pregnant in this in you. In the breath. In the most common universal thing there is so common that all the traditions speak of. You as breath. We follow your. Instruction. May we remember that we never breathed the same way twice. And that you. You are always here. In this omnipresence. May we awaken? And not seek to get past too quickly. But to dwell in this present. And recognize this. Present. As the deepest presence of love in our lives. Amen.



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