**Hillside UMC Sermon Prep Sheet**

***Pastor Chris Neikirk***

**Date: Sunday, April 5, 2015 – *Easter Sunday***

**Sermon Title: How He Loves: To Hell and Back for You!**

**Scripture: John 20:1-23 *(New International Version)***

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” 3So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. 11Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” 14At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” 16Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). 17Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” 18Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her. 19On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

**Call to Worship: (8:30 only) – Based on Psalm 118 & Romans 5**

Leader: Give thanks to the LORD because he is good, his faithful love lasts forever!

**People: God’s people proclaim, “The LORD’s faithful love lasts forever!”**

Leader: Hear the Good News! Jesus Christ died for us while we were yet sinners proclaiming the unconditional love of our God!

**People: Hear the Good News! Jesus Christ died so that we could live!**

Leader: Hear the Good News! He is risen!

**People: He is risen indeed!**

 **Basic Theme: *During this Lenten season, we explore the theme 'How He Loves.' We know the culmination is Jesus' sacrificial death for our sins, the ultimate sign of His love for us. However, Jesus' life teaches us what love looks like in action.***

**Sermon Snapshot (Key Points): Jesus’ radical teaching and great compassion attracted all sorts of people: from the devout and holy to the sinful and ashamed. Dying Christ destroyed our death. Rising Christ restored our life! There is no price too great to pay so that God can prove his love to you. Receive the peace of Christ. Oh how he loves you!**

**So What? Do you understand the depths of God’s love for you? Do you believe that Jesus Christ went to hell and back for you? The love of God is free to you, but it is not without price. Have you embraced the love of God by accepting his only son, Jesus?**