

**The Easy Button**  
I Peter 1:2-9  
Ypsilanti First United Methodist Church  
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*Note: I began this sermon by pressing a big cherry red, plastic dome shaped button with the word easy emblazoned across the top. "That was easy."—it says loudly.*

That was easy.

This is an easy button—it was a gift to me from Teresa Rawson and I keep it in my office. It is fun to press the button and hear the voice tell me how easy things are.

The Easy button is the trademarked company slogan of Staples, the rising star among office supply megastores. When it comes to meeting our office supply needs, Staples has us covered. Piece of cake. No problem.

The ad campaign for Staples has won industry awards for its creative spots containing This Easy Button. This cherry-red, plastic, dome-shaped button with the word "easy" emblazoned across the top looks like it should be in front of a game show contestant rather than in front of an office cubicle. But the concept of this magic wand device is that with just one click of The Easy Button — POOF! — Staples fixes any problem that comes up in the office. (Press the button one more

time)

Through the magic of the Internet, The Easy Button translates from commercial prop to desktop tool. Business clients can download their own Easy Button — it's the fast track portal for sending in orders, requesting deliveries, getting tech support, handling rebates, outsourcing print projects, etc. And get this--It's actually pretty easy to do! <sup>i</sup>

So I want you to think with me now of all of the life situations — where we could use an Easy Button fix.

Those college final exams. Asking someone out for the first time. Getting the house clean and the laundry done. Getting the kids to bed. Bigger bills than income. Strep throat. Dying parents, raising teenagers.

Or how about using the Easy Button to fix our economy, immigration issues, the home mortgage woes or the housing market, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the global AIDS crisis, or rebuilding homes and businesses after Katrina.

I wouldn't mind an Easy button for sermon preparation, finding volunteers, meeting the church budget, or for doing the dishes after social hour is done!

Staples has an Easy Button. Life does not.

Staples says, "That was easy." Life tells us—"it's not so easy" In fact, sometimes life is downright difficult.

Our scripture today, reminds us of the truth—that life is not easy.

Life is difficult.

We live in a world which worships the quick fix and the magic of easy buttons. And this world tries hard to convince us that our problems, our difficulties and life itself can be quickly remedied by the push of a button, the snap of our fingers, or an economic stimulus package which arrives in the mail.

Our scripture today reminds us about the truth. Real life involves waiting and working on a long term solutions. Real life is not easy, but rather involves difficulties and sufferings. To really live, we don't need an easy button, we need our faith—in a risen Christ who is here with us in the midst of our difficulties and in a risen Christ who is helping to make a real, whole and new life for us.

Obviously there are things in life and the Christian journey that are hard. And if we're honest, we all want God to make things easy for us. Last night at our dinner table we played the game three wishes—as in, what would you wish for if a genie came out a lamp and gave you three wishes. But it doesn't work that way. Life and faith are often bumpy roads.

Everyone wants an easy button out from hard knocks. But real faith and real life mean walking through suffering, not around it. And the easy button, as great as it might sound, is just not real. Sure the commercials make it look good, but it doesn't address the real issues of our difficulties—and it doesn't respond to the underlying causes of our sufferings.

The truth is that life isn't easy. It is difficult and there are rarely quick solutions that really make a lasting difference. Rather, life takes hard work, commitment, endurance, blood, sweat and tears. Faith is about perseverance.

Have any of you been watching the NCAA tournament? In our house we filled out our brackets and hoped that at least one of the Big Ten schools would make it into the final four. The March Madness tournament is nearly over. Today the last two of the final four will be

decided and next weekend in San Antonio we will find out who wins it all. But whoever wins, the entire university community will rejoice with the team because their victory was the well-earned product of sacrifice, practice, sweat, training, endurance and perseverance. And when the winner is holding the trophy the one thing they will not say is "That was easy." More likely they will say "This was hard, this was difficult—it took a lot out of us." But at the podium, at the trophy ceremony, they will also receive great glory and much-deserved praise.

My point here is not to glorify suffering, but rather to point out that what is called for is our commitment to the long haul, the long run, to keeping the course and to keeping the faith and to understanding that it is not at all easy.

I like the following quotes from Mother Teresa. She said "I do not pray for success, I ask for faithfulness." She also said "I know God will not give me anything I can't handle. I just wish that he didn't trust me so much."<sup>iii</sup>

While we long for the easy button, life is not easy. And anything we work on that matters from raising children, to building a business, to building relationships, to building a church and community is not easy,

but with God , we are promised a future and new life, through our Easter faith.

John Wesley was the founder of the Methodist Church—His new religious movement was not always welcomed.. here's a bit from his diary:

Sunday, A.M., May 5 Preached in St. Anne's. Was asked not to come back anymore.

Sunday, P.M., May 5 Preached in St. John's. Deacons said "Get out and stay out."

Sunday, A.M., May 12 Preached in St. Jude's. Can't go back there, either.

Sunday, A.M., May 19 Preached in St. Somebody Else's. Deacons called special meeting and said I couldn't return.

Sunday, P.M., May 19 Preached on street. Kicked off street.

Sunday, A.M., May 26 Preached in meadow. Chased out of meadow as bull was turned loose during service.

Sunday, A.M., June 2 Preached out at the edge of town. Kicked off the highway.

Sunday, P.M., June 2 Afternoon, preached in a pasture. Ten thousand people came out to hear me.<sup>iii</sup>

Life is not easy. But our Easter faith tells us that Jesus is with us, here and now and that because Jesus lives, we will live also. Our Easter

faith tells us that because Jesus rises, we too will rise. So whatever you may be facing today, don't reach for the easy button, but rather the faith button—press it to hear Jesus say to you—“I am with you” “New life is yours” Trust and believe and keep the faith.—

Amen.

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<sup>i</sup> Google Search “Easy Button” or go to [Staples.com](http://Staples.com)

<sup>ii</sup> As referenced on [Homileticsonline.com/illustrations/suffering](http://Homileticsonline.com/illustrations/suffering)

<sup>iii</sup> IBID “This Might Hurt” Sermon Ideas