

# The Pastor's Report

Happy Spring long-suffering, winter souls,

Folks, I am going with a weird one this month (but go with it we will). Easter is upon us, don't you know, so while one would think the Pastor's Report would be given over to talk of resurrection, hope, grace, and a rousing chorus of "Hallelujahs!" I would, instead, like to speak with you about "Skin Bracer."

50 years ago, in the early 1970's, there was a product call "Skin Bracer" sold by a company called Mennen. This was a men's after shave that promised to close pores, tighten skin, and leave one's face feeling and looking healthy such that it was a great way to *face* the day. Those of a certain (old) age will remember the commercials owing to their catchy phrase, "*Thanks! I needed that!*" which was uttered following a quick slap of the product to each cheek. The company maintained that, "America wakes up with Skin Bracer." ([Here](#) is a link to a video of one of the commercials.)

I am sure that most of you who are reading this are saying, "Ok Mike, great, but what does this have to do with Easter?" A fair question, to be sure. My answer is that while there is no greater soul-soother in the world than Easter, it is also the biggest head-scratcher we will ever encounter. Yes, it would be nice to think that one could simply read the Pastor's Report, or listen to the sermon preached on Easter morning to fully grasp the ramifications of Easter. The truth, though, is that Easter is such a massive mystery and considerable concept that one only begins to unravel

and understand it through a lifetime of prayer, thought, contemplation, worship, feeling, and fellowship. I could shout Hallelujah from the rooftops, and expound on the concepts of resurrection, hope, and grace until I'm blue in the face (and we will) but at the end of the day the best we can hope for is simply a place to begin, with "Skin Bracer" being just as good as any other. It isn't so important where we start, but what we do once we set out on the faith journey.



By way of an opening statement, "*Thanks! I Needed that!*" is spot-on. Gratitude will *always* the first step in *any* understanding of Easter. Gratitude for the love God has for us, the gift Christ has given us through the Cross, and the comfort the Spirit ever provides us.

Such gratitude begins with the recognition that it is this particular "I" who both *needs* and *receives* such blessings of our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. These blessings, though, aren't just for "us." They are for the whole world, and the entire cosmos. Also contained in this simple statement is the realization/belief/conviction that *that* (the cross, empty tomb, and resurrection to new life) has *already* happened. We are just trying to catch up to the gift of grace already given. Our task, now is to fully receive it.

While certainly a comfort, Easter should also serve as something a bracing slap in the face that God so loved the world. Yes, the "Soul Bracer" that is Easter is great way to start, and face, each and every day.

May your soul be soothed. - Rev. Mike

"In great mercy God has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." - I Peter 1:3