



*April 2018*

*Celebrate Good Times Yoo, Hoo!*

As the preparations for celebrating Easter are ever closer with each passing day of the Lenten season, we can look forward to the greatest event, not only in human history, but for those of us who call ourselves Christians. Yes, it is Christ's death on the cross, but not only the death of Christ which makes the difference for Christianity; but the resurrection that solidifies this historical event.

We engage the wonderful festivities of this time of the year with reflection, questions, joys, sadness, longing, and an overall anticipation of meaning it has for you and for me. Much less to what it means to the Christian community.

We can find ourselves joining with all of the people gathered at Jerusalem as Jesus rides into the city demonstrating His authority as a King. Not an earthly king that we think; but our heavenly King. A King who shows His love for us by dying on a cross for each one of us.

This crowd that is gathered are many who were there when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. The gospel of John says in 12: 17-18: ***"The crowd that had been with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet Him was that they heard He had done this sign."***

Here many of those waving the palm leaves and shouting Hosanna's to Jesus have seen Jesus raise Lazarus from death and were changed by what they had seen. Even though we did not see the actual crucifixion and resurrection with our own eyes we believe what Jesus has done because of the actual eye witness testimony there is from the Bible.

In order to believe the words, we read and hear, God gives us faith in Him by the power of the Holy Spirit to cling to the words. Especially the words of promise that break through our own little self-satisfying world to proclaim victory over it. We are able to understand the importance of a new-life in Christ and what it means to believe and know the hope that goes along with the promise of God, through Jesus.

This is what those who were at Jerusalem waving the palms and shouting Hosanna's understood. They "continued to bear witness" about what they had seen and heard. In the same way we are able to celebrate through the times of Lent and into Holy Week and culminating in the celebration of Easter.

Often, as the anticipation builds toward Easter and Easter arrives, and if we are honest with ourselves, it's almost a relief for Easter to be done so life can get back to normal. Unfortunately, when we look at it this way we are denying the life changing effect Easter should have upon us. As the people celebrated Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem they knew their lives were changed forever, thus they celebrated their King riding into their hearts.

As our bulletin says: "Welcome to Worship! We are told each Sunday is a mini-celebration of Easter..." Yes, Sunday's are a celebration, however, each day Christians should celebrate the life-changing, mind altering, and spiritual awakening that comes with Easter and its purpose. Not just Sunday's, holidays, and special services at church.

These people who were celebrating their King's arrival were also caught up in their own self-satisfying worlds until God broke into their worlds through His Son, Jesus Christ, to reveal to them that life doesn't consist in all of the things going on around us in the world, but that life is celebrating the gift of God's love through the death and resurrection of Christ in order for our lives to be changed and priorities to become spiritual.

Celebrate the truth of who you are in Christ Jesus. You have been given new-life. A life focused on the spiritual and heavenly in order to understand the promise God has given to you for eternity. The difference between a little celebration and a huge celebration can be found in your humbleness and receiving what God has done for you.

In Christ' Love & Service,

*Pastor Rich*