

DON'T LET HOME CONFINEMENT BECOME HOME CONFUSION

Remembering the Important Events of Easter

Do you know what today is? Do you know what tomorrow is or yesterday was? I ask because I am finding that while we shelter in place, it can be hard to keep the days in order. I spent two days last week feeling like it was Saturday (one of those days actually was Saturday), and this week I thought Tuesdays was the 30th when it was actually the 31st. Even one of my children commented that it seems like every day is Friday because "Dad is always home." Home confinement is quickly becoming "home confusion!"

However, as I write, I want to remind us of a couple of significant events that are forth coming. They are events that we should not forgot. And they are events that we should look forward to celebrating when they arrive. These events are Easter and the Lord's Supper. Let's consider the former this week and the latter next.

Because it is a floating holiday (unlike Christmas, which is always December 25), Easter is an event that can easily "sneak up on us." Yet it is an event that believers dare not miss because it is at the center of the Christian's faith.

In many ways, Christmas and Easter are opposites. Christmas is a joyous occasion. We decorate the home; we grace our neighbors with good cheer; we give presents and cards to those we love; and we sing carols that remind us that "the Lord has come." Easter, on the other hand, is more somber. Yes, we celebrate because "the Lord is Risen, Risen Indeed," but even those words communicate the very serious reality of our standing before God. Romans 3 tells us that *there are none righteous, no not one* (v10) and that *all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God* (v23). Romans 6:23 informs us that *the payment for our sin is death*. In other words, the Bible tells us that we all stand guilty before God without hope and without a plea.

Yet the Bible also tells us that God knew our plight. He knew that there is nothing within man that could possibly bring reconciliation between the creature and his Creator. He knew that we needed what Luther called an "alien righteousness"—a righteousness that is found outside of anything we could do or say. Therefore, God sent us His Son, Jesus—born of a woman so that He would be human; born under the Law so that He might flawlessly fulfill it. The Lord's coming is the central meaning of Christmas.

When it comes to Easter, our Lord's work on the cross is at the center. Romans 5:8 tells us that Christ's work on the cross is the absolute pinnacle of God's love demonstrated to us as He provided the alien righteousness that we needed. In other words, while we were still in sin, rebels against God, Christ died for us. In 2 Corinthians 5:21, Paul tell us that on the cross, God made Jesus *to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. And as a valid, visible, objective proof that the His sacrifice was accepted, God raised Him from the dead.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul unfolds the beauty of what that resurrection means for us. The passage begins in verse 12, but the driving verse of the discussion is verse 20. From verse 14 through 19, the apostle gives hypothetical negatives, but in verse 20, he turns those hypothetical negatives into genuine reality of assurance. In other words, we note that because of the resurrection...

- >we have a legitimate gospel message that shows people how to be right with God (v14a)
- >our faith in the resurrected Lord is legitimate (v14b)
- >the Word of God is reliable (v15)
- >God offers real forgiveness to all who put their faith in Christ (v16-17)
- >and all who are forgiven are given eternal life (v18)

All through the NT, there is a scarlet chord that reveals this truth: the events of Easter are at the center of the Christian life.

This year, Easter is on Sunday, April 12. I would encourage us to take the time over the next week to read the passages leading up to the crucifixion of Christ. The events begin with the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and they give details to His last week on the earth. It is also known as the "passion week." The Triumphal Entry can be found in the following passages

>Matthew 21 >Mark 11 >Luke 19 >John 12

Pick a book and spend time meditating on the saving grace of God provided to us in Christ. May the Lord use His Word to help you learn to be like Him.

Finally, I would encourage you to celebrate Easter. Many have a special meal, wear a special dress or suit, take pictures with the family, etc. In our present crisis, we may not be able to do all that we would like to do, but we can do something. If you want to take pictures of your "something," feel free to send them to me. We will look into posting them on Facebook so that we can all encourage each other while we are keeping our distance.

Special days are coming, so don't lose track of them. Home confinement doesn't have to lead to home confusion. Let your mind be focused and fixed on the greatest event in history: The work of Christ upon the cross. For in that work we find peace with God.