

# Easter Changes Everything

Has Easter changed you? Do you look and act differently from when you first met Jesus? Change is necessary for the Christian. It is a byproduct of knowing the living, risen, Lord Jesus. If we are the same person we were a week ago, a year ago, a decade ago, then we have not grasped what God truly offers in the beauty and wonder of Easter.

The cross, before Jesus, was an ugly, dark symbol. Criminals and enemies of the state were hung on a cross until they died, and many times remained long after, as a symbol of the power of the state over the people. When people saw the cross, they would recoil, and turn away in horror.

The Romans hung Jesus on a cross to die so they would be rid of him. He suffered a terrible and painful death and worked eternal life there. He rose from the dead three days later to triumph over death and the cross.

Now, the cross is a symbol of life and eternity. It is a thing of beauty, of inspiration to new life in Christ. That change is a reminder to all of us that must bless us and others.

On one occasion Michelangelo, the great artist, turned on his fellow artists in a spirit of indignation. He said: "Why do you keep filling gallery after gallery with endless pictures on the one theme of Christ in weakness, Christ on the Cross, and most of all, Christ hanging dead? Why do you concentrate on the passing episode as if it were the last work, as if the curtain dropped on Him with disaster and defeat? That dreadful scene lasted... a few hours. But to the unending eternity, Christ is alive; the stone has been rolled away and He rules and reigns and triumphs!"

Some remain at the tomb, wondering what has happened. We are afraid, sad, or discouraged, even though we are disciples of Jesus.

The tomb is empty, for Jesus has risen. As we approach Easter this year, let us examine ourselves to see if we are still at the tomb, or walking with Jesus in life and miracle. The change God wants to work in us is spectacular and wonderful, just as he change the Cross, the Tomb, and billions of other Christians.

Perhaps one way to change is by seeking to be like Christ. We can seek to love the unlovable, to forgive the unforgivable, and to do the impossible. The more we do this, and the more God works in us to accomplish these heavenly wonders, the more we become like Jesus.

A story is told by Fredrick Beuchner called "The Happy Hypocrite." It is a story about a man who was born with an awful facial deformity. He grew up alone and lonely. When reaching adulthood, he decided to move from his town to begin a new life. On his way he discovered a beautiful mask that fit, making him look handsome. At first the mask was uncomfortable and he was afraid that people would find out who he really was, but he continued to wear the mask

every day.

In his new hometown, he made many friends and fell in love. But one day a wicked woman from his old home came to his town and discovered this man's true identity. In front of his friends and fiancé, she forced him to remove his mask. When he removed the mask, it revealed a handsome face. His face had conformed to the mask.

Becoming like Christ is like this. Put on Christ, as the scripture encourages us to do, and eventually look and be more like him.

Change is a layman's look at the doctrine of sanctification. The definition of the long word is simple. It is the process of being made or becoming holy.

Day by day, God wants to take the bad things out of our lives and replace them with good. The process of sanctification begins the day we meet Jesus, and continues till the end of our lives. This is why, if we are stagnant, or still the same after a period of time, we must seek the presence of our Lord in practical and life-changing ways.

Early in his life, Benjamin Franklin penned his own epitaph:

The Body of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,  
Printer,

(Like the cover of an old book its contents torn out  
And stript of its lettering and gilding)  
Lies here food for worms;  
Yet the work itself shall not be lost,  
For it will (as he believed) appear once more  
In a new and more beautiful edition,  
Corrected and amended by  
The Author.

Easter means we don't have to wait till the end of our lives to be made better. It can begin right now. After all, the biggest change of all was Easter. It changed everything. And God wants to do the same in us.