

Easter Hallelujahs

"Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John 20:30-31

The magnificence and significance of Easter will be lost if it is seen as one day in history and then we move back to what we were doing before. Jesus called his disciples to leave their former ordinary lives and do something great. To do anything less is to deny Easter. To live life without the risen Lord Jesus is to go back in the tomb where Jesus is not, roll the stone back over the door and seal ourselves up in darkness.

Easter, to become what God wants it to be, must become a verb rather than a noun. It must become something that is done, not something that simply is.

When God Easters a situation, he brings light into it. He works salvation. He brings hope where there was none before.

When we Easter the world, we partner with God to bring light into it. It is a process which takes what has become a secular holiday of eggs and peeps and shopping and travel and returns it to God.

One of the songs which is beginning to transform the world is the Hallelujah song. It was written as a secular song and has a haunting chorus with the word hallelujah repeated again and again. The word hallelujah is Hebrew in origin, and literally means "praise ye the Lord." It is spiritual and religious in origin, and used as an element of worship.

Over 300 versions of this song have been adapted and performed in various settings. A Christmas, then an Easter version has been written. Finally it has returned to its original purpose, a moment of simple worship of the risen and living God.

Far from the complicated and rousing chorus from Handel's Messiah, the Easter Hallelujah is quiet and meditative, sometimes almost too slow for a frantic and busy world. But it will be sung in churches and watched on Face book and YouTube. It will resonate in Christian hearts forever because it is of God, and the very act of saying or singing the word.

If we read the gospel of John chapter 20, the resurrection, miraculous appearances of Jesus, and amazement are everywhere. Then in chapter 21, seven of the disciples decided to go back to fishing, like they had before they met Jesus.

Incredible! And not in the good sense.

They had met the risen Jesus. They had seen the fulfillment of thousands of years of prophecy which had happened just for them. They had been in the presence of Jesus their savior for three years of ministry.

And they still didn't get it. They went back to work. They were taken in by the allure of the world. They basked in the familiar, where they had been in charge and there was no room for Jesus.

They were not Eastering. They were fishing.

Now there is nothing wrong with fishing. It is a great pastime for people in the world.

But to live in the world and forsake Jesus? Ninety percent of Americans believe in God. There are over three hundred million residents of this country, so you do the math.

You don't want to be one of those three hundred million who believes in God, but doesn't serve him. They have gone back to fishing. Seventy percent of people are home, at work, or somewhere else other than worship on Sunday morning. And they have missed the point God made on Calvary. Easter is a day, not a verb.

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than going to a garage makes you an automobile. But it sure makes things run better.

Easter gives us hope. It breaks chains, brings light out of darkness, gives perspective. It is indeed, like God's word, meant to be a daily happening, a process which brings ever changing and everlasting results. It is catching multitudes of fish as we fish the "other side" with Jesus.

Pope John Paul II said it clearly. "Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song."

"Who can say," writes Frederick Beuchner, "when or how it will be that something easters up out of the dimness to remind us of a time before we were born and after we will die?"

Easter is most of all about eternity. But if we put it off in this world, and show our children that faith is an afterthought, it may be that for them as well.

Eastering, being resurrection people is about walking with the living Lord Jesus in this world, being amazed at what he does, and offering worshipful hallelujahs in those moments.

It is not limited to one day a year. It is a lifetime of hallelujahs.