

Thought for a Wednesday

March 10, 2010

How are you planning for Easter? Can you believe in just 4 weeks we'll be celebrating the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ – What?! Yeah, I know, it's really hard to believe that Easter is just around the corner again here at New Life – I'm excited because this will be the second time we get to celebrate this awesome event with our New Life (in Saratoga) family. Admittedly, last year seemed a blur because I think we were still unpacking boxes and trying not to get lost when going to the grocery store! This year, I'm looking forward to being able to drink deeply from the reality of just what Easter means to my relationship with God – I hope you're looking forward to it as well...

But, back to my original question: **How are you planning for Easter?** Because like most holidays, there's usually the tendency over time to shift the emphasis from the original meaning and purpose, to concentrating on something completely different. It happens with Christmas and even more secular holidays like Independence Day, Labor Day, Memorial Day, which seems to have lost the emphasis they were originally designed for.

Easter is a season loaded with great meaning for followers of Jesus Christ. The week leading up to Resurrection Sunday is undoubtedly the most holy week for Christians. The event that changed the course of world history took place when Jesus died on the cross for the sins of mankind and He rose from the dead 3 days later!

So, **how are you preparing for Easter?** I have few suggestions that might help us over the next four weeks to preparing individually as well as corporately, and issue you a challenge as well...

- 1) Fasting/praying through the Wednesday lunch hour (and that doesn't mean eating before or after). But use it as a time to go deeper in your relationship with Jesus Christ, asking Him specifically to reveal Himself in some new ways in your life.
- 2) Read the Gospel accounts leading up to the Cross and Empty Tomb and each week, read it from different translations. You'd be amazed at how alive the Word of God can become when you reference other translations of the Bible (my favorites are New Living Translation, Contemporary English Version, Amplified and Good News Version)
- 3) Attend Jubilee the weekend of March 27th & 28th. One way you can prepare for Jubilee is to fast and pray day before you come (Friday or Saturday) asking God to do a fresh work of grace in your life.
- 4) Attend the Silent Communion Service on Good Friday. A personal time of reflection, prayer and participating in the Lord's Supper as we remember what Jesus Christ has accomplished for us.
- 5) Invited someone with you to our Easter Service on Sunday, April 4th – There's no better time to invite someone who is not yet a believer, or who doesn't have a church home where they have any meaningful, spiritual relationships. Pray and invite someone to come with you!

So, **how are you preparing for Easter?** Use these weeks to pray, to study and meditate upon the truth that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

Be strong... Be courageous... Be fearless...

Christ is All,
Pastor Mark