

## Practicing the Truth of Easter

Life *After* Easter – Part II

I Peter 1:13-16

### Introduction

A few days ago, I was sent an article from a man in our church. It told the story of a man who was being tailgated by a very stressed-out woman on a busy thoroughfare.

Suddenly, the stoplight just in front of the man turned yellow and he had time to stop, so he stopped. He did the right thing, stopping at that crosswalk, even though he could have beaten the red light by accelerating.

Some of us are prone to accelerate at yellow lights, right? I will never forget the moment when my oldest daughter, who is now twenty, was four years old, sitting quietly in the family van, taking it all in as the light turned yellow at a busy intersection and I accelerated in time to make it through before it turned red. She looked at me, and with perfect innocence asked, “Daddy, does yellow mean speed up?”

I said, “It sure does, honey.”

No, I did not say that, but I was smitten with conviction.

Anyway, this man, who was obviously a much better father than I, stopped at the light. Well, the woman behind him was infuriated – she hit the roof, laid on the horn, screamed in frustration, and shook her fist at the man in front of her for making her miss her chance to get through the intersection.

As she was still in mid-rant, she heard a tap on her window and looked up into the face of a very serious police officer. The officer ordered her to exit her car with her hands up. He put her in the back of the police car and took her to the station, where she

was searched, fingerprinted, photographed, and placed in a holding cell. After a couple of hours, the police officer opened the door to her cell and escorted her back to the booking desk where the arresting officer was waiting with her personal affects.

The officer was extremely apologetic, however, and said, “Ma’am I’m so sorry for my terrible mistake. You see, I was behind you when you were blowing your horn and cussing a blue streak at the man in front of you. I noticed all the stuff on the back of your car – the “Choose Life” license plate holder, the “What Would Jesus Do” bumper sticker, and the fish emblem on the trunk. So naturally, I assumed you had stolen the car.”

What difference does all that stuff really mean to you?

In our last session, I introduced the idea that the church today would say that it is getting the truth of the gospel; it already knows about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In other words, “We already know all that.”

So, what difference does it make?! How can we tell we are really catching the truth of Christ’s life?

I invite you back to I Peter chapter 1, where, in our last session, we discovered that Christians who understand the truth about Easter, understand that there is life after Easter. In other words, there is a lifestyle that should be demonstrated by people who say they know the truth of Christ’s resurrection.

In I Peter 1:3, Peter refers to the resurrection of Christ, and notice in I Peter 1:21, he again does so. For Peter, the living Lord made all the difference in life – in the present tense.

He is writing to effectively tell us that a genuine Christian is not someone who is satisfied with hearing about Easter, but is demonstrating the truth of Easter – that there is life *after* Easter. To Peter, the principle of the resurrection life is not so much what we are doing in here in church, but what we are doing out there outside of church.

## The Demonstration of Life After Easter

Let us build on the first four demonstrations of life *after* Easter from our last session by uncovering several more demonstrations of a Christ-risen lifestyle.

### 5. Demonstration number five, we should think biblically and not get caught napping spiritually.

Notice I Peter 1:13a.

*Therefore, prepare your minds for action,...*

Cranfield translated this, “roll up the shirt-sleeves of your mind.”<sup>i</sup>

Get ready for action!

Your translation might read, “gird up the loins of your mind.”

I personally like this translation because it more woodenly translates the word “*anazosameno* (*αναζωσαμενοι*),” which can be rendered, “gather up; gird up; bind up.”<sup>ii</sup>

This word referred to Middle Eastern men who wore long robes – which were sort of long outer tunics or shirts that went all the way to the ankles. These men would reach down between their ankles and grasp the back of that robe and pull it all up between their legs in the front and tuck it into their belt around their waist. They were ready for work; to run – they were ready for action.

Peter tells the believer, “If you believe in the resurrection of Christ; if you believe He is in fact, alive, then get your mind ready to work; be alert.”

The word Peter used for “the mind” was a word that referred to more than intellectual activity. It referred to the mental activity that guided and directed the conduct of life.<sup>iii</sup>

This includes: decision making, choices, saying “Yes” to this, saying “No” to that, walking here, avoiding there.

Think biblically!

Paul writes to the Roman believers,

*... be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you might prove [determine] what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:2b)*

In I Peter 3:15b, the apostle Peter will exhort the believer to,

*... always [be] ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, ...*

Get ready for action!

When the Israelites were instructed to eat the Passover meal in Egypt before leaving the land of their bondage, you may remember that they were told to eat the meal with their “loins girded, [and their] sandals on [their] feet.” (Exodus 12:11) They were about to be freed from bondage. They were leaving their old way of life forever. They were to prepare for a new life; new laws; new hope; a new way of living.

If you believe in life after Easter, Peter writes, “Get ready for a new way of thinking and living.”

The fifth demonstration of life *after* Easter is that we should think biblically and not get caught napping spiritually.

### 6. Demonstration number six, we should act with self-control and not be driven by emotions.

Notice I Peter 1:13a again.

*Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, ...*

Stay sober!

This word has a double meaning. First, it refers to someone refusing intoxication; someone free from the effects of wine. Most often in the New Testament, however, the word refers to self-control.

In I Peter 4:7b, Peter writes,

*... be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.*

In I Peter 5:8, Peter adds,

*Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

Literally, the devil is seeking someone to discredit.

Paul writes to Timothy,

*... be sober in all things ... (II Timothy 4:5a)*

To the Corinthians, Paul writes,

***Become sober-minded . . . and stop sinning . . . (I Corinthians 15:34a)***

In other words, “get control of your emotions; your feelings, which may lead to sinful actions.”

“Stay sober” is a warning that means, “don’t determine how you live based on feelings alone.”

Now, do not misunderstand. Peter has already told us that we are to be a people of deep and expressive joy.

***In this you greatly rejoice, . . . (I Peter 1: 6)***

***. . . you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible . . . (I Peter 1:8)***

Emotions are wonderful traveling companions, but they are not good drivers. Make sure they are not behind the wheel, but keep them in the car! Or for the really happy people, keep them in the pickup truck! Do not leave emotions behind, but make sure they are not leading the way.

So, if we are convinced of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; if we are really getting it, then:

- We should think biblically and not get caught napping spiritually.
- We should act with self-control and not be driven by our emotions.

**7. Demonstration number seven, we should remember the future is coming and not get stuck in the past or present.**

Notice the last part of I Peter 1:13.

***. . . fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.***

One of the three supreme virtues of the Christian life is hope – faith, hope, and love.

Hope, ladies and gentlemen, is not nail biting and wishing for the best.

At its basic core, hope is the Christian’s attitude toward the future. In fact, in its essence, hope is the same thing as faith. Faith involves trusting God for the present; hope is trusting God for the future.<sup>iv</sup>

Notice the language of Peter. Peter is actually commanding the believer to exercise hope. It is an act of the will which affects the emotions.

Peter is alluding to the fact that Jesus Christ, the resurrected One; the One who gives us our eternal inheritance and our great joy, is alive and has prepared an incredible future for us all.

So do not get stuck in the past and do not get mired down in the present! The future is on its way!

Warren Wiersbe wrote, “Hope is not a sedative; it is a shot of adrenaline.”<sup>v</sup>

I love that thought.

He goes on to write, “Like an anchor, our hope in Christ stabilizes us in the storms of life; but unlike an anchor, our hope moves us forward, it does not hold us back.”<sup>vi</sup>

Peter well knew his readers were looking forward to terrible persecution at the hands of Nero; he lifts their thoughts to what lies ahead.<sup>vii</sup>

Just remember, the future is coming!

For those who believe in Life after Easter; that Easter ought to matter, not just on Sunday, but Monday; not just on the bumper of your car, but in the driver’s seat, there is an eighth demonstration.

**8. Demonstration number eight, we should resist the pull of society and not revert back to our old ways.**

Notice I Peter 1:14.

***As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance,***

In other words, do not get pulled back into a lifestyle that you now know is foolish and ignorant, even though at the time, you thought you were right.

Literally, “Don’t fashion your life after lusts.”

The word “lusts” is “epithumia,” meaning, “forbidden longings; sensual impulses; evil longings; unrighteous motivations; fleshly desires for things that do not belong to you”.

One swelteringly hot summer night, exactly thirty years ago this July, New York’s power supply broke down and the city was blacked out. Immediately, tens of thousands of people poured from their apartments and homes to loot and burn the city. Roving bands of men, women, and even children pulled down steel shutters from storefronts, shattered plate glass windows, and hauled away everything they could carry. Some even took the time to rent a truck to haul off the loot. Fires were started all over the city. Firemen fought over 1,000 fires and received nearly 2,000 false alarms to decoy them and the police away from the looting. Thieves even robbed from each other. One lady complained to friends that some guys had offered to help her carry some clothes and radios she had stolen and had then run off with them. She said, “That’s not right . . . they shouldn’t have done that to me.”

When it was over, only a fraction of the looters were arrested. Many of them showed no regret, except at having been caught. One young woman said, “It was really sort of beautiful. Everybody was out on the streets together. It was like being at a party.”

It was an expensive party. More than 2,000 stores had been damaged and plundered, at a cost of more than one billion dollars – all because the lights went out and it was dark.

What are you like when the lights are out? What are you like when the lights are on, but everyone around you belongs to the darkness?

Paul wrote,

*. . . you are no longer children of darkness, but now you are . . . children of Light (Ephesians 5:8 paraphrased)*

Now live like it.

Peter writes, “Don’t get pulled back into your old ways.”

Watch out for the undertow of your world; it is relentless; it is powerful; it is destructive.

If anyone knew the power of this pull, Peter did.

A few weeks ago, my wife commented to me how far Peter fell in his denial of Christ. Marsha is studying the disciples and noted that Peter was the one who made the incredible declaration of Jesus Christ’s deity.

The Lord, according to Matthew 16:13-15, asked His disciples, “Who do men say that I am?”

They answered, “Some say You are Elijah or John the Baptist.”

Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?”

Peter replied,

*. . . “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:16)*

“You are the Son of God.”

Then, a few days later, by a warm fire, in front of an inquisitive servant girl, Peter denied knowing Christ. However, it was more than that. Peter said, in Matthew 26:72,

*. . . “I do not know the man.”*

Then another servant girl came and said, “Your accent gives you away.” (Matthew 26:73)

We read of Peter,

*Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man.” . . . (Matthew 26:74a)*

The word for “man” in this verse is “anthropos (ανθρωπος),” which could be translated, “I do not know that human!”

Peter knew all about the pull of temptation; all about falling back into his old ways.

He writes with the pain of personal experience as he says to you and me, “Follow the risen Savior. Don’t get back into fashion with the ways of the old world.”

### **9. Demonstration number nine, we should pursue holiness in everything and not make excuses for sin.**

Notice I Peter 1:15-16.

*but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;*

*because it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*

John Phillips connected this thought with the prior verse when he wrote that we are to exchange the former lusts for the family likeness.<sup>viii</sup>

While this is true that the genuine believer is never satisfied with anything less than holiness, and sin becomes a grievous thing; the word “holy” means, “separated or set apart”.

The holy of holies in the Old Testament was separated from everyone except the high priest who could enter once a year.

Our bodies have become the sanctuary of God – the High Priest Himself indwells us – and we are now separated unto Him.

We could render this, “marked off”; that is, “designated for God”.

We use the word for “holy communion” – a time of celebration specifically marked off; set aside for the special purpose of remembering our Lord’s death, burial, and resurrection.

This idea shows up in our use of the phrase “holy matrimony”. It is a ceremony that marks off a man and a woman unto themselves. Holy matrimony means that man is separating himself from the affections of any other woman; that woman is marking herself off from the affections of any other man.

Would a man marry a woman who said to him, “Listen, you can have 90% of me.”? Would a woman marry a man who said to her, “Listen, I love you with 85% of my heart.”?

Holy matrimony means giving 100% of yourself unto your wife or husband. What husband would ever say, “Honey, I’ll be faithful to you eleven months of the year.”?

Would you hire someone who said, “I promise not to steal from this company on the first day of every month.”? We would not let anyone get away with that!

If we were happy with the government getting it right on our taxes 99.9% of the time, then we would not mind if they lost two million tax returns every year.

One article reported that if the government is one tenth of 1% off, the IRS will misplace two million documents every year.

If the hospitals got it right 99.9% of the time, they would give twelve newborn babies to the wrong parents every single day. Pharmacies would write 21,000 incorrect prescriptions every single day.

How happy are you with 99.9% of their effort?

Circle the word “all” in I Peter 1:15b,

*. . . be holy yourselves also in all your behavior;*

This is 100%. Do not cut corners and do not make excuses.

We do not tell God,

- I love You with 85% of my heart.
- You can have 90% of my life.
- I’ll be an honest Christian 60% of the time.
- I’ll do the right thing and pursue holy living 5 times out of 10.

For those who believe in life after Easter, it is, “Lord, You can have all of me, all the time.”

## Conclusion

During an edition of “60 Minutes,” Jack Welch, the outspoken former CEO of General Electric, was being interviewed. This was a man at the top of his game – a best-selling author and high paid business consultant. At the end of the interview, Jack Welch was asked, “What’s the toughest question you’ve ever been asked?”

“The toughest question I’ve ever been asked is, ‘Do you think you’ll go to heaven?’”

When asked how he had answered that question, Welch continued, “If it’s about caring for people; about giving it your all; about being a great friend . . . I’m in no hurry to get there and to find out any time soon, but I think I’ve got a shot.”<sup>ix</sup>

My friend, if you take a shot at heaven, you will miss it.

We get into heaven:

- Not because we were a good friend, but because Jesus Christ is the Friend of sinners;
- Not because we gave it our all, but because He gave His all for us;
- Not because we have done enough good things, but because He paid the penalty for everything;
- Not because we took care of people, but because He took care of us;
- Because everything about our sin we repented;
- Because everything about His sacrifice, we received.

Those who have received Christ, Peter writes, “live like it.”

- We should think biblically and not get caught napping spiritually.
- We should act with self-control and not be driven by emotions.
- We should remember the future is coming and not get stuck in the past or present.
- We should resist the pull of society and not revert back to our old ways.
- We should pursue holiness in everything and not make excuses for sin.

This is the way we are to act – not in here in church, but out there. This is the way we are to live – not in church, but in the world.

By the grace, of God, and the surrender of our lives to Him, may we talk and walk and think and plan and interact and work and . . . even the way we drive – oh, that is painful to say – yes, even drive in a way that lets people know that Christianity is more than a fish symbol and a bumper sticker and an Easter outfit.

It is a God pleasing,

future looking,

Bible thinking,

hopeful living,

joyful speaking,

holiness practicing life!

This is what matters – *this* is life *after* Easter.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 4/8/2007 by Stephen Davey.

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<sup>i</sup> Scot McKnight, NIV Application Bible: I Peter (Zondervan, 1996), p. 85.

<sup>ii</sup> Rienecker and Rogers, Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament (Regency, 1976), p. 747.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid., p. 747.

<sup>iv</sup> John MacArthur, I Peter (Moody Press, 2004), p. 62.

<sup>v</sup> Anders and Walls, Holman New Testament Commentary: I & II Peter (Holman, 1999), p. 2.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>vii</sup> John Phillips, The Epistles of Peter (Kregel, 2005), p. 65.

<sup>viii</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>ix</sup> Jack Welch, interviewed (CBS, 60 Minutes), Wednesday, April 30, 2005.