

The Essence of Easter Celebration

(Part 1)

“¹ When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. ² Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³ and they asked each other, ‘Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?’” ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶ “Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’” ⁸ Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.” (Mark 16:1-8)

Jesus died on the cross for our sins to give us eternal life. He was buried on Friday, then on Saturday (Sabbath) according to the Jewish tradition no one should do any work. Therefore *Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise* and that is Sunday *Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body*, that also is part of the Jewish tradition. The women they planned to go to the tomb and anoint Jesus body and sure they will cry and shed tear for His death, that all will go according to the tradition that they belong. But there is something else God had planned that will change the prospect of this day and the way we look at it and the way we live our lives unto God.

The women got disappointed when they did not found Jesus’ body, but this is the good news for them, for everyone, and for us today: *‘He has risen! He is not here.’* Great is our joy with such news and now we have hope in reaching God and spent eternity with Him. And today as we cherish that day the day that Jesus rose from the dead and we got the hope and the blossom future we need to respond favourably and positively to this day.

1. Jesus resurrection from the death it should not be only one day Celebration: Everyday we should cherish this occasion and what Jesus had done for us. We should always live in hope looking forward that one day we will be in heaven with Jesus forever.

2. Jesus resurrection from the death it should not be celebrated in a traditional way: At that time the women went with spices to anoint His body. Today people they celebrate Easter in different ways, some they cook boiled eggs and colour them, some they worship early Sunday morning cherishing that Jesus rose from the death early Sunday morning the first day of the week. But what the Scripture teach us how to respond to Jesus resurrection? The young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side told the women the following: *‘But go, tell his disciples and Peter.’* Jesus wanted the women to go and tell the encouraging good news of His resurrection to His disciples who were disappointed with His death. But what was the initial response of the women to the command of the Lord? *“Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone,*

because they were afraid.” They responded negatively to the news of the resurrection; they did not celebrate that as it should be. They were at the turning point to leave their Jewish tradition and follow Christ and live their lives according to His Word. The early manuscript of the Gospel Mark was ended by Mark 16:8, but later on Mark 16:9-20 was added. It is not God’s will to be introvert and aloof to the good news that we hear about Jesus resurrection, we have to tell others about that.

3. The Essence of Easter celebration is to be transformed and respond to the call of God and to go and tell others about Jesus: *“When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping.” (Mark 16:9-10)* Jesus had done great deal to Mary Magdalene; He had delivered her from seven demons, so she needs to be faithful to Him by telling others about the good news. The same for you, Jesus had done great things for you and had delivered you from sin and death and the power of darkness. Therefore you ought to respond to His goodness to you to go and tell those who are mourning and weeping and comfort them.

4. Non responding to the message of the resurrection and the Word of God and the commands of Jesus is a sign of non believe: When the Mary Magdalene told those who were with Jesus about His resurrection, *“When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.” (Mark 16:11)* In response to these news events Jesus would not leave His disciples in their non believe, therefore He did the following: *“Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country.” (Mark 16:12)* When they saw the Lord they believed. But what was the sign of their believe? They went and told others about Jesus: *“These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.” (Mark 16:13)* So what we found here that when we really believe that Jesus rose from the death then the sign of our believe is that we go and tell others about Him. We have to do our part; we have to go and tell others about Him, this is our part. If they will not believe then Jesus will go to them and will reveal Himself to them.

5. Faith without deeds is dead: The rest of the disciples who did not believe Jesus did the following to them: *“Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.” (Mark 16:14)* Jesus rebuked them for their non believe and their refusal to carry the good news to others. Jesus would rebuke us also for our non believe to the good news and our refusal to show our faith and translate that into action. If you truly believe that Jesus died for your sins and had done great things for you and had risen from the death. Then your respond to all that is to be changed and transformed and conformed to the likeness that Jesus wants you to be, and to carry the good news to those who needs comfort and to those who did not yet hear about Jesus and His resurrection.

6. A programmed mission work: *“He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” (Mark 16:15-16)* Our mission is to go to the whole world. The church composed of the disciples of Jesus, and our mission and goals should include the whole world even to the furthest point. And we need to continue to do that till the Lord will come and take us with Him to heaven. We need to go and preach the word of God, those who respond and are willing to follow Christ and His word we have to baptize them. This point should be clear to us in our mission. Christ wants disciples and true followers of Him. And true disciples are not only obedient to the commands of water Baptism but to all the commands of God. Therefore we are not merely called

to preach but are called to make true disciples as Christ command is clear before His ascension to heaven, ***“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*** (Matthew 28:19-20)

7. As disciples and workers for the Lord we need to desire and go forward for The Holy Spirit Baptism: As we receive The Holy Spirit Baptism the following will be manifested in our lives, ***“And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”*** (Mark 16:17-18) Speaking in tongues is the first manifestation of the Holy Spirit Baptism. The Holy Spirit Baptism empowers us to have life of prayer and enable us to speak in new tongues as the Holy Spirit enables us to preach the gospel. The Holy Spirit Baptism open the way for us for more active spiritual evangelism and more miracles to be done in the name of Jesus to convince others about the resurrection of Christ and His true presence in our lives. And as we are filled with the Holy Spirit the following will happen in our lives:

A. Driving out demons: The Holy Spirit is the finger of God and the Holy Spirit Baptism enable us to cast our demons and help the people to be delivered out from different kinds of demons.

B. Spiritual Protection: As Jesus promised, ***“they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all.”*** As a church when we go forward and evangelize and making new disciples we will be opposing the power of darkness that will try to hinder us and stop us to go forward. But Jesus had promised in ***Matthew 16: 18*** the following ***“and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”*** Also when He is sending us He is empowering us with this promise, ***“I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.”*** (Luke 10:19) So Christ for the mission that he entrusted to us to reach the whole world and bring them His word He enable us to overcome devil, demons and power of darkness and all what they might used against us from poisons, witchcraft, arrows of the evil one and sicknesses. So we are armed and well protected by Jesus who had promised us and given to us The Holy Spirit Baptism.

C. Enablement to heal the sick: As we laid hands on those who are sick and pray they will get healed as Jesus promised, ***“They will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”*** This gift of healing given to us to help the sick and relieve them from their suffering. Christ death on the cross not only took the sins but as well as He took the sicknesses as the word of God dictates, ***“He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”*** (1 Peter 2:24) Christ resurrection for us means healing for the sick in our mission.

8. Preaching the word everywhere and Christ working with us is how we to celebrate Christ’s resurrection: ***“After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.”*** (Mark 16:19-20) If we really celebrating Christ’s resurrection then everyone should see clearly that Christ working with us; not our doing but Christ work, performing and confirming His word.

My Dear and Beloved: ***“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*** (Romans 12:2) It is the time now to renew your mind and be willing

to go forward and progress in your spiritual walk and commitment to Christ. Our Easter celebration it should not be in a traditional and one day only, but a life transforming process where we are willing to respond to God’s call and His word to us by repenting from our sins and dedicating our lives fully to serve God and walk in His ways. Let us not only celebrate Christ victory for one day in a year, but let us fulfill the mandate and do what Christ ordained for us from assignments all the days of our lives and let us preach the word everywhere and work with Christ as we agree to pray.

My prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins, who was buried and rose from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord I commit myself to be transformed and to go forward with you to be filled with The Holy Spirit and be equipped with all what you ordained for me in your promises in the Holy Spirit Baptism, preaching the Word, driving out demons, overcoming the power of darkness and working with you till you come and take me with you to heaven, this all I ask and pray in Jesus name Amen.*