

March 25, 2018

Why Easter?

The Law of Sin and Death:

"And the Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take of it. And the Lord God commanded man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die!"
Genesis 2:15-17

"There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 3:9-6:23

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature, objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions..."

Ephesians 2:1-5



In this season we call Easter we focus on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But why do we celebrate these things? Why should the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus two thousand years ago matter to us today.

In his first letter to the Christians at Corinth the Apostle Paul wrote, *"Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved...For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared..."* I Corinthians 15:1-5

The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the gospel or good news that brings us salvation. At the beginning of his letter to the believers in Rome the Apostle wrote, *"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..."* (Romans 1:16) God saved us from the consequences of our sin through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, but how does that work?

To fully comprehend the full meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ I am convinced we must first understand the reality of what Paul calls the **"law of sin and death..."** In the beginning God established this fundamental law that equally applies to each and every one of us. When we sin we earn the consequences, the wages of our sin, and those wages are eternal condemnation; death.

For centuries we have falsely believed that doing good works would somehow rescue us from that deadly, eternal condemnation. But good works cannot do that. Why not? Think of Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden. God had commanded them not to eat of the tree of the **"Knowledge of Good and Evil."** He had clearly warned them of the consequences of breaking his commandment, but they chose to break it anyway. They were condemned. Why? Because no matter what they might do they could never undo what they had already done. Being super obedient from then on would not erase the reality of what they had already done.

In the same way, none of us can, by doing good works, erase the reality of a single sin. We cannot earn our way into heaven by doing good works. We cannot off-set the consequences of our sin by balancing good works against our sins. Under the **"law of sin and death..."** we are condemned by one sin, or by thousands of sin. No matter how hard we try to be good and to do good, nothing we do can rescue us from God's law and our eternal condemnation. Paul concludes the seventh chapter of his letter to Rome, **"What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!"** (Romans 7:24-25)