

THE MESSAGE OF HOPE

APRIL
'09

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF

EASTER

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For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. (1 Corinthians 15:3)

Paul in the Bible passage above was referring to the different people who learnt credence to the resurrection of Jesus. Peter, the other apostles and even Thomas who happened to be a great critic, scientifically proved Jesus resurrected and much more than that, over five hundred people authenticated that Jesus rose again. Resurrection is the foundation of the Christian faith. It is the fulcrum and the centre piece by which the Christian faith stands.

The first thing you must know is that resurrection authenticates Jesus Christ. He didn't say this is the way, He said, "I am the way". He didn't say this is the life, He said I am the life". He didn't say this is the truth, He said, "I am the truth" (John 14:6). He didn't say look, believe on me and you will get bread. He said, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." (John 6:35). Moreover, He declared in Revelation 1:18 that, "I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen".

Secondly, the resurrection is a proof of the divinity of Christ. In Roman 1:4 Paul said, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead". By the resurrection from the dead, Jesus has stood well above all of His fellows, prophets and all the kings that have lived in the whole universe. Through resurrection, Jesus destroyed the greatest enemy of all times, that is, death.

Thirdly, God used the resurrection of Jesus to give assurance to all men. In Acts 17:31, the Bible says, "Because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead". What kind of assurance do you have? When you look at the cross you think of death, when you look at the resurrection, you think of life. When you look at the cross you think of bitterness, when you look at the resurrection, you think of love. When you look at the cross you think about dark



nights of struggle and pains and when you look at the resurrection, you see the brightness of the morning. In resurrection, God is saying to all men, darkness may exist but it won't be long, the cross may be there but it will surely give way to the crown. You may feel that you have been forgotten by God but one day your dark yesterday will give way to a bright glorious tomorrow. I believe in a sense that God assures us that He will never let us down. Jesus said that He was going to put His body on the ground for three days and he will rise up again (Mark 9:31). If He had not risen, it will be like God let Him down, that God never cared for Him. By Jesus rising from the dead, it proved that God will

never leave us alone. Sometimes, some of us believe that we are left alone. You may be in the hours of your life when you feel so down within you and you feel that you are left alone but Jesus will never leave you alone. He is the only one that will stay behind when all your friends are gone. The Psalmist says, "O LORD, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit (Psalm 30:3)". The Bible says about Christ in Hebrew 13:5, "For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you.

Lastly, the resurrection of Jesus has liberated us from the spirit of fear and death. Hebrews 2:14, says, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil". Jesus has liberated you. Are you still afraid of death? Do you feel that there is no hope for you? I want to tell you that in Jesus you can have victory because His resurrection calls us to a lively hope. Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 14:6), and Job says, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, And He shall stand at last on the earth; And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, That in my flesh I shall see God (Job 19:25). Revelation says that Jesus has the keys of hell and death (Revelation 1:18). Paul said, "But has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior

Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (II Timothy 1:10) and that death is swallowed up in victory (I Corinthians 15:54). The Christian is not looking for a hole in the ground called grave but a cleft in the sky called glory. The sunset of Good Friday can give rise to the brightness of Easter. The weeping that has always engulfed your life can give way to the glorious transformation of joy. As Christians we should believe the resurrection is saying, "no matter what you have done, no matter what you have become, no matter what your life has been, please come back home because it is finished! The stress is gone, your sorrow is gone and Christ has made a way for you". I've experienced it for about four decades that I've been walking with Christ, things may not be rosy, and they may not be beautiful but let me assure you of one thing, God will stand by you. Men thought that the cross was the end but the cross was a transition. Don't look down in misery, and don't look sideways to men but look up, your redemption cometh nearer. God bless you.

This article was extracted from a message by Rev. G.E. Erhabor. You can get the full copy at the Spokesman Resource Centre, Mayfair Shopping Complex, Ile-Ife. All Bible quotations are in NKJV or as otherwise stated.

PRINCIPLES OF WINNING LIFE'S BATTLES:

NUGGETS

- The devil will never let go without a fight
- The battle must be fought and won in the spiritual realm
- The battle is the Lord's
- The battle may be long, but you must never lose heart
- God will never leave you nor forsake you
- God has never lost a battle and He won't start with you
- You are the one that will declare your victory

- It is not how long you wait for something that matters; it is how well the waiting has changed you
- Spiritual warfare is taking a stand and holding on to that stand till the devil no longer has a hold on you
- Stand on faith and you will be stepping on the devil.
- Faith takes no counsel from man; it begins and ends with God.
- God's silence does not signify his absence.

SILOND

TESTIMONY



HOW GOD SECURED AN ACCOMMODATION FOR ME

I lived at the heart of Ile-Ife town for four years. I give thanks to God for His divine protection over our lives during those years, in that we never experienced armed robbery attack despite the fact that the attacks were sometimes very close. The conditions under which we lived in town were not too impressive, no light and water, bad roads and poor security. I prayed consistently for divine intervention for a better accommodation.

In mid-2008, I was allocated a

house in OAU quarters but the house was in a very bad condition. Almost everyone that saw the house advised me to reject the accommodation because the cost of rehabilitating such a house would be too exorbitant. It took me about three months to decide whether to go on with the rehabilitation or not; at the end, my wife and I summoned the courage to go on with the work, it took us about six weeks to eventually fix it. By November 2008, we eventually moved in.

I learnt a great lesson from this singular act as a Christian, many good things can be presented in an unattractive way; it is left to us as Christians to discern and go the extra mile to work it out before it becomes attractive. If we had not taken the step then, we may probably still be living in town today where I had great difficulties in carrying out my official duties.

Praise the Lord!

(Femi Obembe)

THE RICH MAN

There once was a rich man who was near death. He was very grieved because he had worked so hard for his money and wanted to be able to take it with him to heaven. So he began to pray that he might be able to take some of his wealth with him.

An angel heard his plea and appeared to him. "Sorry, but you can't take your wealth with you."

The man begged the angel to speak to God to see if He might bend the rules. The man continued to pray that his wealth could follow him.

The angel reappeared and informed the man that God had decided to allow him to take one suitcase with him. Overjoyed, the man picked his largest suitcase and filled it with pure gold bars and placed it beside

his bed.

Soon afterward, he died and showed up at the gates of heaven to greet St. Peter.

St. Peter, seeing the suitcase, said, "Hold on, you can't bring that in here!"

The man explained to St. Peter that he had permission and asked him to verify his story with the Lord.

Sure enough, St. Peter checked it out, came back and said, "You're right. You are allowed one carry-on bag, but I'm supposed to check its contents before letting it through."

St. Peter opened the suitcase to inspect the worldly items that the man found too precious to leave behind and exclaimed, "You brought pebbles?"

PRAYER: THE MASTER KEY TO OPEN DOOR CONSULTING THE LIVING GOD

Every great man in the Bible had to consult God on every issue of life. David and Abraham are examples. God's will for our lives is the best we can ever get. Therefore, we must consult God on every issue of our life. In this tape, Rev. G.E. Erhabor explains how we can appropriate the instrument of prayer in entering God's will for our lives. If you have any doubt about God's will for your life, then this tape is for you. Get your copy today!

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Poem

Has that trial in your life been going on so long
That everything in you screams, "This is so wrong."

You can't understand, it seems God is far away
As with tears you cry out to Him everyday,

If you read God's Word His truth you will see
That He has a job for you and a job for me,

ONLY BELIEVE! is what He has to say
At His feet this problem you must lay,

In His time and in His way
An answer to your problem will be there one day,

Keep on believing, don't lose hope
He'll give you His grace enabling you to cope,

Keep your eyes on Him as to Him you cleave
He has promised He will never forsake you or leave you.

Give Him time to work it all out
The devil just wants you to worry and doubt,

Praising Him is one thing He's looking for
To bless you is what He has in store,

So no matter what, even when you don't understand
ONLY BELIEVE! that's what moves His hand.

Beverly Shaffer

ONLY BELIEVE

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Hope for the Nations

NTA, Ile-Ife: Sundays 7:30pm
ITV, Benin: Saturdays 3:30pm
OSBC, Osogbo, Tuesdays 7:30pm

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