

“An Easter Attitude”
Sunday April 12, 2009
By Pastor Edward J. Thomas Jr.

Pastor Thomas challenged each of us to have an “Easter Attitude” that would last the whole year through. In Acts 2:22-28, we see the Easter story told after it had happened.

Acts 2: 22-28

22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

23. Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

24. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

25. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved:

26. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

27. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

28. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

Doubters couldn't keep Jesus in the tomb.

We can see in verse 23 that he was “crucified and slain”. He had spent three years in ministry with his disciples but they still doubted. They were there with him as everything happened, still one denied him, one betrayed him, and over and over through the gospels we see that they were rebuked because of their fear and doubt. But none of those things could keep Jesus in the grave. The same is true today. There are people who doubt Jesus. There are people who deny Him. There are those that are afraid because they can't bring themselves to trust in him. But nothing can change the fact that Jesus *did* rise from the grave. Doubt would not hold him in the tomb 2000 years ago, and our doubt today does not make him any less alive or real. We know that he is alive by what he does our lives and in the world around us.

Death couldn't keep Jesus in the tomb.

As Christians we are able to have a different view of death. It is one of the things that humankind fears most. Death can be very scary and mysterious, but we know from verse 24 that Jesus “loosed the pains of death”. By knowing Christ, we can completely loose our fear of death. We read that on the third day Jesus rose from the dead. He could not be contained, and death had no power over him. Why should we let the fear of death have any power over us?

We know that we are going to die unless Christ returns for us first. For those of us who believe in Jesus and have been baptized in his name, death is just a transition into a world without pain or suffering. The Bible teaches us that the people who die before Jesus comes back are simply waiting to be changed and join Christ.

I Thessalonians 4:16-17

16. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17. Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Even though the disciples were scared and scattered, there were doubters of Jesus who knew what he said he would do. When Mary went to the tomb, her fear was that she would not be able to get into the tomb. Little did she know, that should have been the least of her worries. God had already resolved that problem for her.

Matthew 27:62-66

62. Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,
63. Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.
64. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.
65. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make [it] as sure as ye can.
66. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

Pastor Thomas reminded us that nothing we face in our lives today is bigger than the stone that was blocking the tomb's entrance that God removed. He is still in the business of rolling away stones of worry, pride, shame, fear, or anything else that might plague us in our lives.

Satan could not keep Jesus in the tomb.

Jesus came to Earth to show us a physical example of exactly how we should live. Over and over throughout the Bible we can see how Satan tried to get in the way, but he could never succeed.

In the Garden of Eden, he tempted Adam and Eve into eating the fruit and in the process created a division between man and God. When Jesus was born, Herod tried to have him killed, but Mary and Joseph kept him safe by fleeing to Egypt. Jesus was tempted in the desert after fasting for forty days and nights, but he still stood strong knowing who he was, and what he had to do. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was tried one last time. He did not want to die. We see in Matthew 26 that Jesus says twice "if there is any other way, I'd take it," but in the end it all came down to doing what God wanted. Jesus followed through.

Knowing that Satan did all of those things throughout the Bible, why are we so surprised when we face problems? If Satan did it to Jesus, we can be sure that he will try it with each of us too. That is why it is so important to walk in faith every day and lean on Jesus. He is our strength to get through.

Easter is not a sad occasion. It is about celebration, determination, and resilience. We see this in two things in the way the Disciples responded after the resurrection of Jesus.

1. They were filled with the Holy Ghost.
2. They realized that nothing is impossible

The challenge of this message was to have an "Easter Attitude," so what does that mean?

Having An Easter Attitude

This is an attitude about life in general. No thing can keep us from succeeding if we have a Lord and Savior on our side that didn't give into temptation, and wouldn't be held down by doubt or even death itself. We have the power to overcome anything that might challenge us when we trust God and put it in His Hands.

As Christians we know that death holds no power. No one wants to die, but we have a chance as Christians to have a personal relationship with the one who overcame death. We have to start looking at death as a transition to an eternity that is promised to us that holds no pain or suffering and is full of worship.

By living our lives with an Easter Attitude, we can experience a miracle that is as big as the resurrection in our lives every day of the year.