



Easter 2014 "The Brevity of this Life, the Eternality of the One to Come"

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Sunrise Service

I Cor.15:19, then v.32b; If I really believed that this life is all there is, why wouldn't I get all of the pleasure I possibly can from this life?

The truth is I know deep down within me that this life is not all there is, and I know it because the Creator placed that within me. And He didn't do it just for me, he did it for everyone (Eccl.3:11). The Bible says that each one of us will live forever somewhere, and that somewhere is one of two places. One is a place of eternal punishment and forever separation from the God who created us. The second is a world where God dwells among us, and everything will be made new (read Rev.21:1-5). The deciding factor that determines our eternal destiny is what we do with the person of Jesus Christ.

There is a fascinating accounting of Jesus standing before a governor named Pilate. See John 18:33-38; 19:4, 6-12, 16; Matt.27:19; God speaks so clearly to Pilate, but he was afraid of what he would lose/what it would cost him, if he followed the conviction of his conscience. Pilate was moved by the Lord's words, convicted by the H.S., but he was also moved by the crowd, and what it would cost him to make the right decision. Pilate's final act was an attempt to rid himself of responsibility (see Matt.27:22-25). Luke 11: 23 "He who is not with me is against me..." I think there are lots of people in the world like Pilate. They are not against Jesus, but they have never made the decision to really be for Jesus.

The decision I make regarding Jesus Christ determines my eternal destiny.

This life is brief; James 4:13-16; Read Ed Norman obituary; We do not know the day of our death (Hebrews 9:27).

Resurrection is something we will all experience one day (John 5:24-26; Daniel 12:2; Matt. 25:46, context).

Invitation: Hebrews 3:7, 15; 4:7

Saturday and Sunday Regular Services

“Resurrection Life”

(Show pics of grandson.)

Intro: An Amish boy and his father were visiting a mall for the first time. They were amazed by almost everything they saw, but especially by two shiny silver walls that would move apart, then back together again. The boy asked his father, “What is that father?” The father, never having seen an elevator, responded, “Son, I have never seen anything like this in my life. I don’t know what it is.” As they both watched, marveling at these mysterious doors, suddenly an old lady in a wheelchair rolled up, then pressed a button beside the doors. A moment later the doors opened, and the lady rolled between the doors and into a small room on the other side. The doors then closed, and the boy and his father watched small circles of light with numbers above the wall light up. As they continued to watch, the circles began to light up in reverse direction. When the last number at the bottom lit up, the doors opened, and a beautiful young woman stepped. The father turned to his son and said, “Son, go get your mother!”

The Bible has tremendous promises for those who have put their faith in Jesus, and one of the greatest is a yet future transformation from mortality to immortality (see I Cor.15:35-44a, 50-55). Revelation 21 promises a day when God will make new heavens and a new earth (read Rev.21:1-5).

While every Christian should certainly look forward to a coming day when we will be immortal, and live in a perfect world, let’s not forget that heaven’s power to transform, even to resurrect, is available here and now (see Eph.1:17-21).

The power to **forgive our sins** and make us alive (Eph.2:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 7:36-50).

Acts 13:38-39 I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the Law of Moses.

Col.1:13-14 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Col.2:13-14 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.

The power to transform us inwardly, and as a result **set us free** from the slavery of sin, and the power of the devil (II Timothy 3:1-5a).

- The Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1-13; II Tim.2:23-26); Only Jesus can free us from hell’s hold upon our lives.

- Mark 16:9 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.
- Why was Mary Magdalene up so early? Mary was not the kind of lady who was normally an early riser! She once had seven demons! She walked on the dark side of life. The devil loves the dark. Evil thrives under cover of darkness. What was she like back then? Maybe she was a drug addict; or perhaps a prostitute; a child who had grown up in very unloving home, possibly with a step-father whom she never had a good relationship with; Maybe she was an abused child; or perhaps she just was curious and began to dabble in the occult. If she lived in our day, she may have been a woman caught in the awful world of human trafficking. God did not choose to record for us any further details about Mary's past. But somewhere along the path of her life, she lost control. For an unknown period she was given over to seven demons that loved possessing her, controlling her life, robbing her of the life God intended for her when he created her, a life full of peace, of love, of joy, and of course, of eternal hope for the future.
- Mary one day met a man like no other man she had ever known (and she probably had known a few men in her life on the dark side!). This man was not out to take her to bed, to take advantage of her, to use or abuse her. This man's intentions were totally pure, absolutely unselfish. This man intended to deliver her from her life of bondage and give her life that she had up until this time only dreamed of (and now probably thought was impossible!). And deliver her He did!! She became a new person, she was now free from the old life, free from the bondage hell once had on her. Once delivered by Jesus, she became one of his followers, a disciple. But (back to the question), WHY is she up so early on this particular morning? Mary most likely could not sleep. It is quite possible that she has been up all night. You see, her Savior, her Deliverer, has been crucified. And now, all the hopes she once had seem to have been dashed. She is perplexed, she is bewildered, she is mourning the loss of the one that loved her like no one ever loved her. Jesus had told the disciples clearly what was going to happen. He had repeatedly revealed to them that He would be crucified, and on the third day be raised from the dead. But in real life, no matter how many times we've heard it, when death comes, resurrection seems so "unreal." But now Mary sees him! What that moment must have been like!
- Later when Jesus appears to the apostles, Thomas is not there. When he is told by the others that Jesus is alive, he refuses to believe, unless he can see him, unless he can touch where they pierced his body. Not long after this, Thomas did see him. Let me read the account (John 20:24-29).

The same Jesus that set Mary Magdalene free is waiting to set some free today. The same Jesus who said to the paralytic, to the sinful woman at the dinner party, "Your sins are forgiven, is waiting to say that to some today. The same Jesus who said to his disciples, "I am going away to prepare a place for you, and will come back and take you to be with me where I am. Is that you? Will you believe, even though you have not seen?"

INVITATION