

"Easter, are you missing it?" Philippians 2:5-11, 3:4-9

So many of us miss the point of Easter, the most significant weekend of the entire year. On this date some 2000 years ago, Jesus, the perfect Son of God and our Almighty Creator willingly suffered humiliation and death on a crucifix to pay the penalty for our sins, and then three days later triumphantly rose from the dead in victory. Because of what Jesus did on that first Easter we can finally stop striving to earn our way to God, to merit His love, and can simply cling to Christ in faith knowing that His death and resurrection have earned us infinite righteousness and eternal life.

- **Phil 2:5-11...**
- **Humiliation and death – Phil 2:5-8**
 - o Magnitude beyond our ability to comprehend
 - Almighty, infinite, holy, majestic Son of God... willingly left the beauty and perfection and peace of heaven to become a weak, limited, frail human being...
 - But He didn't stop there –submitted Himself to the fist and the whip of godless men – let humans, whom He created, tear that flesh off His back and pierce that flesh with nails... crucifix
 - What humiliation!... No one has ever given up more than Jesus...
 - o **Why did He do it?**
 - **1 Peter**, "and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."
 - **That's the good news of Good Friday**... The Creator Himself took all of our sins...
 - Our sins had to be punished... But in grace, Jesus took our place...
 - **Isaiah 53**, "He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed."
 - o But the events of Easter don't end on Friday...
- **Resurrection & exaltation – Phil 2:9-11**
 - o Verses 9-11 presuppose something – that death did not have lasting victory over the Creator...
 - o Three days later, on this day, Easter Sunday, Jesus did something remarkable...

- o **Acts 2**, "But God raised Him up again, putting an end to the agony of death, since it was impossible for Him to be held in its power."
- o On Easter Sunday, we celebrate not only His resurrection, but also His exaltation – Phil 2:9-11...
 - He who humbled Himself is humbled no more.
 - On Good Friday He died a cursed criminal; on Easter Sunday He arose a conquering king – defeated sin, Satan, and death.
- o That's why we're worshipping on this particular day of the week – Sunday
- o because He conquered death, we now have hope
 - What does the world fear above all else? Death.
 - But we no longer need to fear death.
 - **1 Corinthians 15**, "But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."
- o The resurrection of Jesus is a promise and a sign to us that we too will be resurrected....

- **Summary:**

- o So what is Easter all about? the humiliating death and victorious resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- o Those are the two most significant events in all of human history...
- o because of Easter forgiveness and eternal life are possible.

- **Sadly, most of the world doesn't realize that...**

- o The great majority of human beings do not realize that Jesus' death and resurrection have earned them forgiveness and eternal life. Instead, they're out there day in and day out trying to earn it themselves...
 - Islam, Judaism
 - Even Christianity – good works, praying, giving to the poor, church attendance
 - Perhaps that describes you – trying to become a little more worthy of God's love...

- **That's a belief Paul knew well. Turn to Phil 3.**

- o Before Paul came to know Jesus – Paul sought to earn God's favor - did better than 99% of us!

- **Phil 3:5-6**

- o Excellent heritage – his qualifications by birth:
 - circumcised the eight day
 - of the nation of Israel

- of the tribe of Benjamin (very honored tribe in OT)
 - Hebrew of Hebrews – summary, not just a Jew, but the best of the Jews
 - o Astounding human achievement – his qualifications by effort:
 - as to the law, a Pharisee – education; scholars of the OT, most educated in it
 - as to zeal, a persecutor of the church – believed that nothing could be as offensive to God the Father as worshipping as God a carpenter who was shamefully hung on a Roman crucifix, so faithfully persecuted Christians
 - as to the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless
 - he’s not saying he wasn’t a sinner
 - he’s saying that in regards to the 613 commands – blameless – didn’t knowingly break any of them
 - o Summary: if you’re trying to earn your way to God, Paul probably had you beat!
- **But then Paul met Jesus...**
- o On his way to arrest more Christians
 - o Met resurrected Jesus
 - o In that instant, realized the truth and the significance of the events we celebrate on Easter...
 - no mere man
 - didn’t die because He was a criminal
 - not rotting in a tomb
 - o And that realization changed everything for Paul
- **Phil 3:7-9**
- o “gain” – accounting term for “profit”
 - o “loss” – accounting term for “loss” or a “liability”
 - o When Paul comes to understand what Jesus did on first Easter weekend...
 - all his amassed achievements and merit are worthless
 - Furthermore, they’re a liability because they had blinded him to his desperate need for Jesus
 - o So Paul makes a life-altering decision – forsakes all of his striving, abandons attempt to earn his way to God... chooses to cling to Christ alone...(reread v9)
 - o Summary:
 - Before meeting Jesus – the most righteous man among us in terms of what human effort could achieve
 - Yet, in view of what Jesus did, counts all of that to be nothing but rubbish – clung to Christ alone.

- **What does Easter mean to you?**
 - o If you are still trying to earn your way to God...
 - Easter means that your striving is finished – Jesus has already earned infinite righteousness for you. All you have to do is simply believe...
 - o And what about the rest of us?... What should we do in response to the events of Easter?
 - Do whatever it takes not to miss the point of another Easter
 - There's so much to distract us...
 - So take time today to do whatever it takes to reconnect with the true meaning of Easter.
 - Scripture – Phil 2; Isa 53
 - Get alone on your knees in prayer
 - Get with family, friends to discuss the meaning of Easter
 - Journal