

## ~ Pulpit Ponderings ~

Yes....Yes....I know! Easter is over. Or, is it? I don't think so. I think Easter should be on our minds all year long. So....in that light, I will share with you what is on my mind right now.

In preparing my "Ponderings" I got to thinking about just last Easter Sunday and seeing 102 bright and shining faces looking back at me. What a day that was when our congregation was resurrected to great numbers. Thinking about this I began to remember other Easters of my past.

I recalled many memorable Easter services in my life. I remember sitting in a pew, next to my daddy (my little brother had to sit on the other side next to mother) as we attended Easter services in our best attire. I remember sitting outside in athletic field bleachers, on an unseasonably cold spring morning in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, anticipating a sunrise service. I remember another sunrise service as an adult and soldier sitting among the faithful in the morning coolness the Church of Scotland compound on the banks of the Sea of Galilee. I remember the beauty of a deep, solo voice singing, *"The Trumpet Shall Sound!"*

I remember an Easter morning when the alarm clock did not go off, and our family was almost late for the morning service. I recall a family leaving the church on Easter morning because there literally no room for them. I recall Easter morning visiting my grandparents' church in East Texas and thinking about all the people in attendance and wondering where they had come from – and later where they had been – and, of course, where they went to until Christmas time when they came visiting again.

These are just a few of my Easter memories. I recall them in order that you might engage in your own recollection: moments that were filled with hope or grief, surprise or order, fullness or emptiness, death or life. In a way, Easter ties all of this together.

- There is grief: *"Why do you weep?"* Jesus asks.
- There is hope: *"Christ is risen,"* the disciples confess.
- There is surprise: *"He is not here."*
- There is order: *"This was to fulfill the scriptures."*
- There is fullness: *"Did not our hearts burn within us?"*
- There is emptiness: *"Do not cling to me."*
- There is death: *"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"*
- And there is life: *"I will not leave you comfortless . . . I am coming to you."*

I invite you to enter deeply into the truth of Easter. Immerse yourself in the Scriptures. Consider the creative possibilities. Put yourself in the place of those who rarely attend worship, except perhaps for this Sunday. Trust in the authority of the story itself. Be aware of those who grieve, but not as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13). Remember that resurrection is God's act, God's miraculous act of life in the midst of death. Pray for a resurrection experience this Easter, and for Fifty Days of Resurrection Living, beginning with Easter and culminating on the Day of Pentecost.

Now, having experienced our latest Easter, I invite you to reflect and answer the question: ***"What does Easter mean to you?"***

As we journey with sincere and diligent prayer, reflection, penitence, and Bible study, we will be prepared at the end of the journey to join those voices who will proclaim that “*Christ is risen; the Lord is risen indeed!*”

*His Peace and Blessings to all of you, as you continue to believe, have hope, and do the work of the Lord.*

*As Always – In His Grip ...*

*Shalom Aleichem (Peace Be Unto You) and Happy Easter Every Day of Your Life*

*Pastor Buddy*

*“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’” – Isaiah 52:7*