

“LOCKDOWN” AT EASTER - A DISAPPOINTMENT OR AN APPOINTMENT?

Easter greetings and blessings in the name of our resurrected Lord and Savior – Jesus Christ.

It is now a known fact that the 2020 Easter celebration in most parts of the world is being done under a “lockdown” condition due to the threats of the Corona virus disease. The situation in Plateau is not different. We are not meeting as church congregation (family) as we used to do, but each person to their tent (home)! No two families or neighbors have the luxury of meeting together. This seems strange and disappointing considering the fact that Plateau state does not have one known case of a person infected as at Easter Sunday. The common thought or feeling is that we should have been allowed to commemorate the all important event in history – the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and use the opportunity to thank God for the situation on the Plateau and further seek his face and continued intervention together in our congregations. Unfortunately that is not the case. The situation has even forced many Churches to go on-line as inconveniencing as it is to many.

It is difficult to understand why some things happen this way, but if they do, it is because God allows it and it will be for our good, even if we do not understand why.

Romans 8:28 tells us, ***‘And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose.’***

For Christians therefore, the situation may at best be more of a blessing and an opportunity for a on-on-one appointment with the Lord than a disappointment. God is able to work out his plans and purposes in our lives even under “lockdown” situation.

Throughout generations past and present, the devil (accuser) has always invented and re-invented the same old story lines of doom and gloom. With it he attacks individuals and families to the point that far too many have come to believe and accept

defeat and live in a depressed and fear-based mentality. With this, he lures them into spiritual apathy and eventual backsliding! The whole world now feels surrounded by the Corona Virus and they are full of anxiety and fear. For children of God however, there is the need to remember that God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity but of power, love and sound mind (2Tim 1:7). We are to know, understand and believe that God has surrounded us by his Spirit. Yes, you are surrounded by the Corona (circle) of God's glory! His protection is all around you. His presence, power and protection is wherever you are at right now (not only when in church with others) if you are surrounded by His glory – the glory of the risen Lord and Savior. Fear is not from God.

God knew there would be chaos and times of uncertainty in the world such as this. But when life hits like a tornado and we are confronted with life threatening situations like this, where do we go? When we're anxious about the future, to whom do we turn? Over thousands of years, God's people have faced setbacks, even disasters. Their experiences show us ways we can respond and how our faith in God can remain intact—and even get more real. We are to turn to God and his word like they did. God always gives us a relevant word, for every situation and for every generation! He is still in control. He has not forgotten His people. His plan for this world is still to draw the hearts of all people to himself. Let's not allow this time to be a time of decrease, but a time of increase in our relationship and walk with Him – even in our stewardship! The “lockdown” situation presents us with opportunities to search God's mind through his word as a family that you are and be encouraged to continue as God's faithful people in a faithless, idolatrous and corrupt world! It is an appointment with the Lord who is never tired of the prayers, praises and persistence of his people. He is never locked down or shut out but is present with his children wherever and whenever they seek him. He is the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God!

We might be stuck inside our homes but that doesn't mean we should not celebrate Easter in our families. No matter what you

are facing, Jesus' resurrection means that evil doesn't win – even when you find yourself surrounded by darkness! Let us not allow the present difficulties rob us of the joy of Easter and deprive us of being filled anew with the resurrection power! The fear about COVID-19 pandemic is that if one is infected, one may die. Remember that Jesus Christ is stronger than death and the course Corona virus has taken. Whether we are infected with corona virus disease or not, it is certain that we will die one day (if Christ tarries).

Hebrews 9:27 says, ***'And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment'***

But when we die, it will not be the end of our story, That is why we are celebrating Easter. For a Christian, there will be resurrection to life eternal.

1Cor 15:20 tells us, ***"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep"***.

The term "first fruits" refers to the first or early part of any harvest which, came before the main crop. Seeing the early fruit was a promise of the fuller harvest to come. It was a happy day when one offered the first fruit because it meant that there was a bigger harvest to come. That's why those who offer theirs usually dance and wave them before the Lord, thanking Him for this promise of a later harvest.

Even so, the resurrection of Jesus is God's way of saying, "One day all my children will rise from the dead." Not one of them will be left in the grave. The reality of Easter is that Christ has conquered death and given us immortality. We are made for eternity. Every Christian who dies in Christ will wake up on the resurrection morning to be with the Lord, but the wicked, the unbelieving, the liar, the immoral, the corrupt, the liar, etc shall rise to be condemned to eternal fire! It is therefore essential that he, who has been living in any kind of sin, turn to the resurrected Lord today for pardon and cleansing. No sinner shall rise to live with Jesus in eternity! Check yourself.

Those whose future is guaranteed are those who are born again and are being controlled by the Holy Spirit. This assurance is

sufficient to make you rejoice and celebrate with your family the resurrection of Christ from dead.

Because he rose, we too shall rise.

Death will not have the last word.

The grave will not win in the end.

Jesus' resurrection means that evil doesn't win and will never win. By his resurrection we have been released from the chains of fear, sadness, mediocrity, hunger, hopelessness, suffering and even death. His resurrection has opened for us doors of paradise, a place without corona virus without hatred, bitterness, enmity or unpaid debts. Yes, he opened for us a homeland of love, peace, joy, tenderness and happiness.

I am glad I know the resurrected Lord and Savior lives today in my heart! To know that He lives in you is more wonderful than anything else you'll ever experience or freedom to worship and celebrate with friends, neighbors and other families.

How about you? Do you know the risen Lord? Does he live in your heart?

If you don't know him, then I invite you to meet Him personally today. He will receive you, save you and prove to you that He really is alive! He is in your home and closet to meet with you and to come into your heart if you allow him. If you are willing to do so, pray this by faith right now:

Lord Jesus, I want to meet you right now. Thank you for dying on the cross and rising from the dead. I put my trust in you as my Savior. Come into my life this morning. Forgive me all my sins. Wash me and fill me with your Spirit. Be the Lord of my life and lead me henceforth. Thank you for saving me. In your precious name I pray, Amen

Let the lockdown be an appointment for you with the Lord and not a disappointment.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be all honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Have a blessed Easter celebration.

-----Vicar