

## **Saturday – 3-31-18 – Easter Cantata – The King is Coming**

Here we are somewhere between Good Friday and Easter Sunday. Jesus suffered and died (no dispute). He was then secured in a tomb (no dispute). So what about His promise to rise again?

What were the followers thinking during this time? He told them plainly. He didn't hold anything back. He was to go to Jerusalem, suffer and die for the people. That's exactly what He did. Now they were stuck in a place of unbelief and anticipation. Unbelief that their leader, who they thought would be Messiah and King, would die as a criminal of the state. Unbelief that, if He was who they thought, why didn't He get Himself out of this jam – surely he could.

Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem was magnificent. He came in on a donkey of peace. The people gathered and spread their garments on the ground for Him to ride over. He entered in victory, or so they thought. He was their King – promised by prophecy from of old. The people had waited for their Messiah for generations, and now He was here among them – or was He?

How could this crowd of “fans” suddenly join forces with the other side and shout, “Crucify Him?” But they did shout. And Jesus was crucified. What would they do? How could they get their brain around this turn of events? Why were they surprised?

Jesus never held anything back from His disciples, yet they wouldn't let themselves believe what He told them...

***Luke 18:31-33 - Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus said, “Listen, we’re going up to Jerusalem, where all the predictions of the prophets concerning the Son of Man will come true. He will be handed over to the Romans, and he will be mocked, treated shamefully, and spit upon. They will flog him with a whip and kill him, but on the third day he will rise again.”***

It is also recorded in Matt. 20:17-19 and Mark 10:32-34.

But now that He was dead, what were they to do? They ran in fear. Their hope was gone; their dreams were shattered. What would they do now? How would they exist in this very volatile environment without their Master? He was their only protection; their only hope. He promised redemption, deliverance, freedom from oppression. How could He die and leave them like this? There must be more. They put their trust, their lives in His hands. What now?

The only thing they could lean on was His promise that he would come back for them. They started to think about the things He said that they should have realized at the time but didn't. He would return and take them to be with Him in a new Kingdom.

Jesus never intended to leave them or us in the lurch, behind a veil of secrecy. He told plainly what was/is going to happen.

**Lk. 21:25-28 - “And there will be strange signs in the sun, moon, and stars. And here on earth the nations will be in turmoil, perplexed by the roaring seas and strange tides. <sup>26</sup> People will be terrified at what they see coming upon the earth, for the powers in the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup> Then everyone will see the Son of Man coming on a cloud with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup> So when all these things begin to happen, stand and look up, for your salvation is near!”**

The story wasn't over at His death and burial. There was more to come. He told them, but they could hear it then. How can you understand a resurrection when you can't get your brain around a death? Jesus told them everything that would occur. He tells us today the same thing. He promises to return and take us to be with Him. If we die along the way, we have the promise of a resurrection into His presence for Paul said...

**2 Cor. 5:8 - Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord.**

Jesus gave His followers hope, and He gives us hope today, for the same promise is still in effect. He will not leave us as orphans, but He will return to us.

**1 Thess. 4:15-18 - We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. <sup>17</sup> Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup> So encourage each other with these words.**

Of course the disciples wanted to know when these things would happen; when would He come back for them – WHEN?

**Mk. 13:32-33 – “However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows. <sup>33</sup> And since you don't know when that time will come, be on guard! Stay alert!**

We have to understand by Faith that His promises never fail. If He said it, we can be sure that it will happen just as He said. In this we have hope going forward. Listen to Paul's encouragement...

**1 Cor. 15:51-53 - *But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed!* <sup>52</sup> *It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.* <sup>53</sup> *For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.***

Here again is the promise of God to us all. This life is not the end. We have so much more to be thankful for and to await. Jesus will be raised from the dead. Jesus will be exalted to the highest place on God's right hand. Jesus will keep us until that great and glorious day. Jesus will return to fulfill His promise to us and to take us to be with Him forever.

We have so much to be thankful for this holiday season. As we anticipate the celebration of His resurrection, let us rejoice in His promises. That's all the followers had to rely on back then. It's all we have to rely on now. It allowed them to forfeit their very lives in the hope of this promise. What about you? Are we so committed that we would dare give our lives for this goal? I pray that I will be that committed if the time comes, but I'm not really sure – are you?

While we wait to celebrate Jesus' resurrection together tomorrow, we still reflect on His passion and death that we looked at yesterday. Holy Saturday is kind of a waiting day. While we wait, we can think not only about tomorrow's celebration of Jesus rising from the dead, but we can also think ahead of His return. The King is Coming! Amen!