

makes you free, you

Therefore if the Son



shall be free indeed.

Voice of Freedom

A Ministry of
Cedar Valley Community Church

Prison Ministry Good News Letter

Volume 7, Issue 3

March/April 2009



Both Sides of the Cross at Calvary

by Roger Montz



May the grace, peace, and the love of God our Father be with each one of you. Everything that God the Father gives us flows through His Son, Christ Jesus. A few examples of God's gift of grace are His love, His forgiveness of our sins, His peace and release from His judgment. All of this grace was sent to us through Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus alone saved the world from sin, and He alone reflects both sides of the cross at Calvary.

Lenten season began February 25th, and goes through all of March into April. In April we celebrate the joy of Easter. As I sought the Holy Spirit's wisdom about what to write for each of these events, it became apparent that I could not separate them. Lent looks toward the cross and prepares our hearts for Easter's joy. Easter is for all who will believe in Christ Jesus and in His pronouncement, **"It is FINISHED"** (John 19:30).

Lent is a forty day season in which many Christians choose to give up, or sacrifice, something that they enjoy doing. It is their way of "suffering" and if done in a humble, sincere way, it can help clear the heart and mind so that they can more fully prepare themselves for a better understanding of Christ's sacrifice. Whether or not you "observe" Lent in this way, is not the issue. I believe that God's main concern is whether or not we are preparing our hearts to realize and to understand the depth, the width, and height of His love. All Christians as well as every person who is feeling the gentle nudge of the Holy Spirit saying they are lost and in need of a Savior, are called by God to prepare themselves.

The word *prepare* means, "to set in order; to make ready usually for a specific purpose; to make suitable; and to make receptive." (Webster College Dictionary) I find in scripture that God did extensive preparations: He prepared the earth to receive mankind; He prepared Abraham to be the father of many generations; He prepared a special nation so that they would become His chosen people; He prepared His prophets so that they would proclaim His word; He prepared John the Baptist to be the voice crying in the wilderness declaring that Christ Jesus had come into the world to save it; and God prepared all things so that we might see His glory and grace in Christ Jesus. Since God prepared, we need to follow His example and prepare our hearts in order for the meaning of the word *prepare* to happen.

Just what is the reason we are to prepare? Jesus told us what it is. **"Then the King [Jesus] will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'" (Matthew 25:34)** God prepared the Kingdom (Heaven) before He created mankind to fill it. Heaven is where our holy, righteous and sinless God

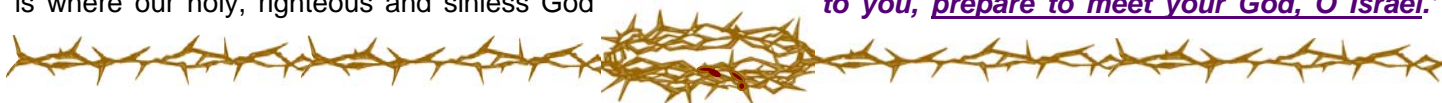
lives. Scripture is clear that things unclean, unholy, or sinful can never enter heaven: **"Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter by the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs and the sorcerers and the immoral persons and the murderers and the idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices lying."** (Revelation 22:12-15)

I believe the word *lying* refers to everyone who does not believe or accept the truth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that no one can be saved without Jesus, that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, that on the third day Jesus rose from the grave defeating death and satan's hold on us, and that Jesus will come again to judge whether or not our names are written in the Book of Life.

Now that we know the reason to prepare is to inherit the kingdom of Heaven, how can we prepare our hearts so that when Easter comes we will be ready to celebrate it with joy and not sorrow?

- (1) To get started we must repent of our sins including all known sins and sins that we do not even recognize as sinful in the eyes of God. This we are commanded to do by Jesus. **"From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" (Matthew 4:17)**
- (2) Next we need to clear our minds and hearts to meditate on why the cross was prepared for us. **"Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which was yours in ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'" (1 Peter 1:13-16)**
- (3) Then we need to put on God's armor and understand where God's peace will flow, **"And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one."** (Ephesians 6:15-16)

If we do these things, and if we truly want to have the meaning of the cross at Calvary revealed to us, we need to come to the cross of Jesus, which God prepared before the foundation of the world. Read Amos Chapter 4 and see God's promise revealed: **"Therefore thus I will do to you, O Israel, [Israel is all of God's children, us too!] because I will do this to you, prepare to meet your God, O Israel."**



If you are not on our mailing list and would like to be, or if for any reason you would like to be taken off, please send a note to *Voice of Freedom*, Cedar Valley Community Church, 3520 Ansborough Av., Waterloo, IA 50701.

For behold, He who forms mountains and creates the wind and declares to man what are His thoughts, He who makes dawn into darkness and treads on the high places of earth, the Lord God of hosts is His name.” (Amos 4: 12-13) God’s promise is that we will meet Him and we will know what His thoughts are when He reveals Himself through Christ Jesus at the cross. His promise is kept when we prepare our hearts for our redemption. From now until the four days of Easter, we are called to celebrate with Christ. Prepare your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

As we end our March preparation it is now time to look at April and Easter with new eyes and new hearts, to the hope of our inheritance. The four days of Easter that I celebrate are:

- (1) Thursday night when Jesus held His last supper and instituted the New Covenant between God and us;
- (2) Friday, the day that Jesus willingly walked to the cross and with love that I cannot even begin to fathom, took all of my sins, all of your sins, and made them His own, and in suffering agony bore the full force of God’s wrath against sin and all who are sinful;
- (3) Saturday, the day that I believe Jesus went to all the lost souls who ever will be in hell, living in eternal death, not to gloat or to say “I told you so,” but to fulfill the complete redemption story. Scripture says, ***“The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23), “but we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.” (Hebrews 2:9);*** and ***“When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, ‘Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and***



behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.” (Revelation 1:17-18). This is one of the reasons Jesus had to die on the cross. Jesus had to conquer death. He needed to enter death and then leave death in order for Him to have the keys to lock or unlock the gates of hell, which is prepared for all who refuse to believe the redemption of Easter;

- (4) and Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the grave and ascended to His Father, to once again sit in glory and honor on His throne, the throne He had left in order to be born a little human baby in Bethlehem. Jesus is waiting now for the day God will send Him back to earth to establish His rightful Kingdom of holiness. It is the day when God’s promise will come true for us,

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”

(Philippians 3:20-21)

Yes, it is in Easter that the words of our Lord and Savior are fulfilled for us: ***“IT IS FINISHED.”***

(John 19:30) Jesus finished the restoration of sinful men and women that they might once again live in the presence of God. Jesus finished the ending of the power of satan to hold us in death. Jesus finished and took away the death warrant that God placed on man:

“and you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made you alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers [satan], He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”

(Colossians 2:13-15)

ICIW Ladies!

Worship with CVCC

Friday

March 20 & April 24

7 p.m.

in the Sacred Place

I encourage all of you to prepare your hearts by looking now at the front side of the cross to see Jesus dying for you for your sins; and when Easter comes, you will see the other side of the cross where Jesus is no longer hanging. **HE HAS RISEN AND IS ALIVE** and calling your name. May God’s peace and love be with you all. - Roger -

Remember to invite friends and new inmates to your Christ-Living Chapel Services and Events.

Mt Pleasant Men!

Worship with

Heart Surrender Ministry

Wednesday Evening

March 18

and April 15 & 29

6-7 p.m. in the Chapel

Prison Ministry
3520 Ansborough Avenue
Waterloo, Iowa 50701

