



We Welcome Glad Easter

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him . . . so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.
(Hebrews 12:2-3 NIV)

I wonder if we could just as easily spell Easter “H O P E”? Or could we spell Hope “J E S U S”? Do Easter and Hope and Jesus speak to and for each other? Without Jesus we would have no Easter. Without Easter we would have no Hope. Without Hope, we live our lives in vain.

Soon after Easter a few years ago I was speaking in a single parent retreat in New York just across the river from Manhattan. It was attended by mostly young parents of divorce trying to gain some footing for “what now.”

There was one professionally successful young man who had full custody of his two girls, ages five and seven, who came out of pure desperation. He said he was stuck in traffic on a New York street when he heard on the radio an invitation to something for single parents and thought he could sure use some help. As he told his story he shared that he had been trying his very, very best to keep all the balls in the air and all the plates spinning at work and at home. And he just wasn’t sure he could do it any more.

He said that on the Easter Sunday – since going to church on Easter is what you do even if you attend sporadically the rest of the year – he wakened his girls, dressed them in their cutest outfits, and went to church. He was sitting there thoroughly discouraged and feeling defeated when something the preacher said caught his attention and he actually started listening to the sermon. “Then”, he said, waving his hands as if awe-struck: “that Easter thing started making sense. And I knew I didn’t have to do this alone. I need help. I need God’s help. And I need your help.”

“That Easter thing” became the core of all our work for the whole weekend. We would delve into hurtful issues, anger that was creating prisons, fear of the future, worry for the children, and much self-doubt. Then we would say, “About that Easter thing. . .”

E A S T E R

J E S U S

H O P E

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