

Scatter the Darkness



A fresh Easter hymn is hard to write and difficult for congregations to accept into their once a year hymn repertory; but here's one that does the trick. Fresh is a good word for Easter, and this hymn contains many fresh images and expressions.

An un-eclipsed sun shining into an empty tomb is a good place to start our exploration of this hymn. Start at the source of darkness if you're going to scatter it. Start in the tomb. Light at the source of darkness, joy at the source of sadness; watch the employees of death scatter. And this is our hope for today and all tomorrows. Doubt and dread, themselves, are dead. Christ has risen.

Death and the grave still "sting." Let's not deny that. But, that's all they can do now, just "sting." They cannot capture us and imprison us. Death and the grave cannot own us or defeat us. They cannot rule us, or even steal life from us. They can only "sting." Death and grave, where is your sting? Your sting stands alone, ineffective and overcome, defanged and defeated. That's where their sting is, and all it is; only a sting.

You don't want to declare victory too soon. Those still fighting tend to take offense at such pronouncements. But, it's safe now to unfurl the banners that declare death dead and Jesus alive. It's safe now to tell the world that they only have to die once and that eternal life awaits them on the other side of the door marked "grave." The way has been secured. The promise is true. The Redeemer is risen and walking around in the body of the Church, telling and demonstrating the Good News. Look at the darkness scatter!

The Church up on its feet and no longer frightened of death scatters darkness like nothing else. A frightened Church is a needless tragedy.

Well, if all of this is not enough, "Scatter the Darkness" is set to a dance tune...yes, a dance. While darkness is scattering, light is dancing. It's a folksong; the people's good news and the people's dance. "Crying and sighs give way to singing" and limping and stumbling give way to dancing. What a sight!

The Church must not keep real Easter to itself. Neither should we keep real Easter confined to a single Sunday or even a season. Easter should be our way of life. The Christmas dance should give the Easter dance a little break for awhile and then step back out of the way. We are the Easter people and we don't have to give darkness a chance. But, people who dwell in darkness can be invited out onto the floor. Church, risk inviting the loved unlovely to dance; darkness will be devastated.

It's hard to adopt a new Easter song. But this one is worth the effort.

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