

Come Follow Me March 30-April 12

Easter

As I was thinking about this week's lesson, I thought about how most people would respond if asked what their favorite holiday is. I'm fairly confident that the majority would respond with "Christmas". It's easy to understand that initial response because of all that we have come to associate Christmas with; the smell of pine and hot cider, the festive lights, holiday décor, the jolly old guy in the red suit and white beard and then of course the look on those sweet children's faces when they see the gifts under the tree. With all this around us in abundance it's easy to see why the reason for the season; the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, is often put on a shelf; not forgotten, but inevitably taking a back seat to all the hustle and bustle.

I wondered how many would respond to that questions with "Easter". It's certainly not as elaborate of a holiday, but in my opinion so much more important to the future of all here in this mortal existence. It certainly has its traditions; the Easter bunny and hunting for colored or candy filled eggs (where the number found always seems to be just a few shorter than what was actually hidden).

Easter is celebrated on one Sunday a year, but in fact it's a celebration of multiple acts that took several days to complete. From the Last Supper where Christ blessed us with the lesson of taking the Sacrament, to the moment of his ascension where he left us with the hope and knowledge that we all have the ability to ascend to eternal life and one day look upon his face again.

It has been said that this year more than any previous year, is most like the 1st Easter. The 1st Easter was totally unexpected for those who were in the midst of all that was going on. For us in this day, this Easter also is completely unexpected and different than any of us have probably ever experienced before. A year ago, we never would have imagined that we would be in this trying and difficult time, being required to stay in our home, unable to join in the normal festivities, or attend a Sunday church meeting, or that when we watch General Conference, that only the speaking General Authorities will be present. No Tabernacle Choir, no thousands of Saints gathered together in the Salt Lake Conference Center or being able to travel to celebrate the resurrection of our Savior with family and Friends.

On Calvary, our Savior was crucified. A form of death reserved for the lowliest of men. He did this willingly. For the followers of Christ at that moment, it must have felt like a huge defeat and an incomparable loss. To add to the sorrow they all felt, on the morning of the resurrection when the 3 Mary's went to the tomb, the tomb was empty; the Savior was not there. I can only imagine how their hearts sank at that sight.

What happened next is a lesson to us all. The angel tells them, "He has risen" "Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him; lo, I have told you"

Like those women, we may all be in a place of uncertainty, a place of fear with all the dark times and events that have plagued the world recently; Tsunamis, Earthquakes, Horrific fires and Rapidly spreading illness. If you feel as though Jesus is not with you; with us in this moment, then like the angel instructed, go quickly, move forward, just keep going. Keep doing the things you know you need to do, heed the words in the scriptures, heed the words of our prophet and trust that just as in the Atonement, when Christ served the last supper, suffered in gethsemane and on Calvary and rose from the dead; he was preparing the way. Also, he is preparing the way for us now. There is light and hope. If you keep moving forward, He will be there. He will get us through all of this. Because of the Atonement, we will all come out of this dark moment in time. We need to rejoice in this season, in this holiday and let the light and hope of Jesus and the promises he went through so much to fulfill, fill our hearts, minds and souls. He truly is the reason for this season.

I leave my testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel, the knowledge that our Savior endured unimaginable pain and agony so that we would have the opportunity to be saved and one day return to him. The Atonement is real and it is infinite. Trust in the powers of this wonderful gift. Trust in our Savior. He will never lead us down a wrong path and he will always prepare a way for us to get home. Celebrate him and rejoice this Easter in His glory and in His love for each of us. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.