

GETTING TO KNOW HIM



But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary."

John 20:11-16a

In order for what we're doing when we gather to do us any good;

In order for our worship to bring joy to the heart of God;

We need to meet the Risen Lord...

Not as a memory from the past.

Not as a doctrine.

Not as a vague hope.

But the same way Mary Magdalene meet him:

In the power of his resurrection.

Even if we have met the Lord Jesus in this way in the past....

....we need to meet him *afresh* again and again.



So that we can walk out of the assembly knowing that something eternal, something supernatural has happened to us.

You could say that from the first Easter, there have been two kinds of people on this earth:

1. Those who have met Jesus alive from the dead.
2. Those who haven't.

Thousands and thousands of people prior to the resurrection had seen Jesus.

They saw him open the eyes of the blind, make the lame to walk.
They ate supernatural bread from his hands.
They heard him teach.

And yet, their lives remained unchanged.

But now we begin to see some people whose lives will never be the same.

Mary Magdalene.
The eleven disciples.
Two men on the road to Emmaus.
500 believers in one place.

These people encountered something which changed them forever.

They met Jesus in the power of his resurrection...



... and tasted the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

And with this came....

**a freedom,
a boldness.
a love they never knew before.**

Many of these people paid a high price for the gift they received in meeting the Risen Christ. Some of them died violent deaths for their faith. But they had no regrets. Their lives were anchored in heaven.

The glory of God lived in their souls because...

... they came to know Jesus in the power of his resurrection.



And here we are in the 21st Century and what was true on that first Easter is still true.

There are only two kinds of people in this world:

1. Those who have met Jesus alive from the dead.
2. Those who haven't.

Thousands and thousands of people in our churches know all about Jesus

They've been hearing about him since they were children.
They know about his miracles of healing.
They can pray the Lord's Prayer without even thinking.
They've heard the words of The Sermon on the Mount....

..... for years and years.

But like their Jewish counterparts on that first Easter, they are essentially unchanged by Jesus' gospel.

But again, there are people scattered all across this earth right now --- whose lives will never be the same...

.... because they have met Jesus in the power of his resurrection.

They have begun to taste the life of the world to come in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

They have come into...

**a freedom and
a boldness and
a love they never knew before.**

Many of these people will also pay a high price for the gift they received in meeting the Risen Christ.

Some are going to suffer persecution, perhaps even death.

But they know no regrets.

Their lives are already anchored in heaven.

The glory of God is living in their souls because...

... they know Jesus in the power of his resurrection.



What do you mean, they know Jesus in the power of his resurrection? Have they seen him with their eyes?

No.

They've never seen him.

Never heard his voice with their ears.

Never felt the touch of his hand.

And yet, they're beginning to know him.

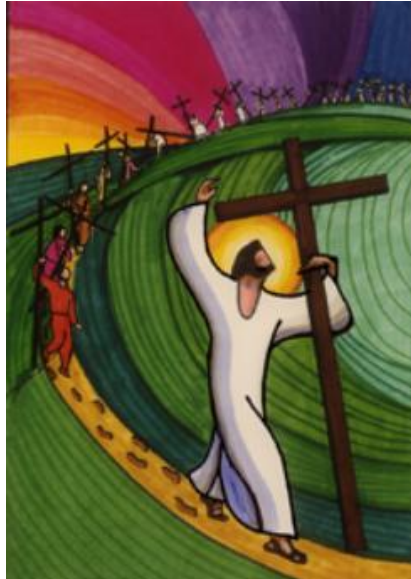
How they know him they could never explain.

They could never prove to another soul.

But they know him.

Deep inside they are hearing his voice.

“My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.”



Once you begin to know Jesus in this way, you also know how much more you need to know.

And you spend the rest of your life getting to know him better.

And you live by his Spirit and you walk by his Word

The apostle Paul, after years of following Jesus, talks about suffering the loss of all things.

***“that I may know him and the power of his resurrection,
and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death”***

Philippians 3:10

It gets deeper and deeper all the time.

The better we know him the more we need to know him better.

Now, whenever we talk about getting to know Jesus in the power of his resurrection, the people who have already tasted this always perk up their ears.... because they know there's more, and they're thirsty for it.

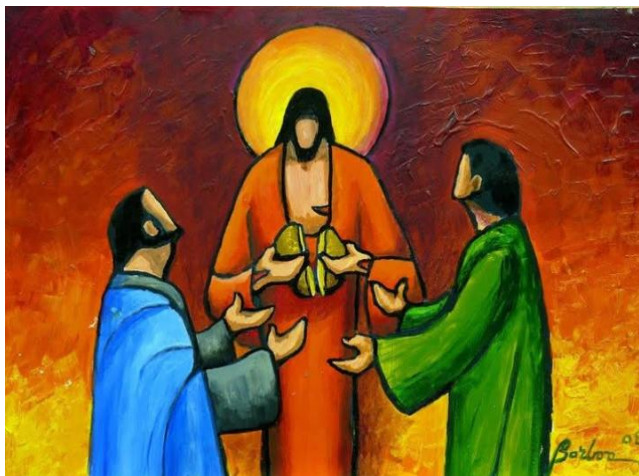
And the people who have never tasted this fall into two groups;

1. Those who have that thirst in their hearts for the life of the Risen Christ.
2. Those who are bored with the whole idea, offended by the suggestion that they might be lacking something.

So the question that the Spirit of God asks each of us is,

“Has this Easter thing happened to you?”

Have you encountered Jesus as Mary Magdalene did on that first Easter? Or as Saul of Tarsus did on the road to Damascus? Or as the disciples breaking bread with him in Emmaus?



It's not a matter of visions or voices or high emotions.

It's a matter of a door opening deep inside you and receiving him as your guest.

The Lord Jesus has different ways of knocking on that door.

Sometimes gently,
Sometimes violently,

--- but he knocks....as he's knocking now.

“You've heard my gospel for years and years, but do you know me”, he says.

“You've known about my healing power, but do you know me?”

All it takes is for us to trust him enough to open that door deep inside and say, “Lord, I want to know you in the power of your resurrection, even if I have to experience the fellowship of your sufferings. Yes, and even become like you in your death.”

“He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God; who are born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”

John 1: 10-13

We've all been taught his promise that when two or three are gathered in his name that Jesus is

there. But in what way is he present when we gather? And for what purpose?

Jesus is present in the same way he was with that first little fellowship of believers on Pentecost.

Invisible to their eyes,

Inaudible to their ears,

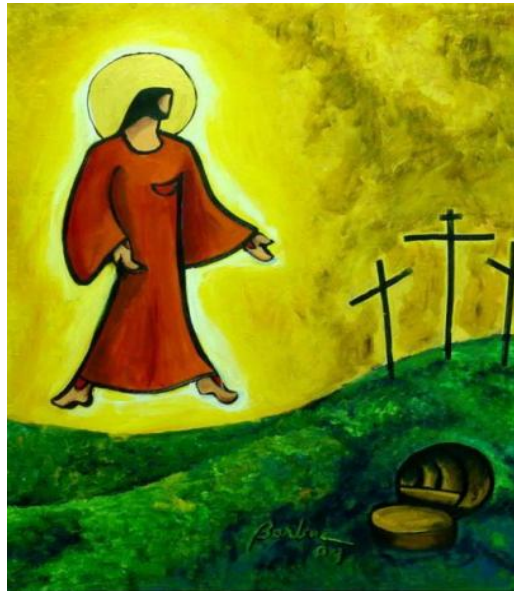
...yet with such power that, when they opened their hearts to him in prayer, it was like a spiritual explosion in each of their lives.

And suddenly, they knew Jesus more deeply and more truly than they had ever known him during his days of flesh and blood.

If you already know him in this way, you'll be the first to confess with Paul that you want to know him better

If you haven't tasted this, would you like to know this Easter thing has happened to you the next time you are able to gather with other believers?

The Risen Lord visits us for no other reason than to make himself known to us....



...to ignite faith in our hearts.

***“Behold, I stand at the door and knock;
if anyone hears my voice and opens the door,
I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.”***

Revelation 3:20

I will come in and eat with her and she with me.

Open your heart now and invite the Lord in for a fresh visit.

“Speak to me, Lord, I want to listen.

Command me, Lord, I’m here to obey!”



And when you enter the assembly next time, come with a prayer...come with the door of your heart open wide.

*“Here I am, Lord. I’m presenting myself to you in this place.
Offering my life to you, for you to do with as you please.
I’m asking you to visit me afresh with your resurrection life, that
I may walk in your will, and live in your Spirit for the rest
of my days here on earth and in the world beyond.” (REB)*

Prayer: Yes Lord, this Easter we want to get to know you afresh, to know you in the power of your resurrection. We need to experience the freedom, the boldness, the love that you promise us. We need to know what it is truly like to meet you alive from the dead. Help us to know you, to thirst for you like never before. Ignite our faith once again. Come in. Eat with us. Speak to us. Open our ears and hearts. Wrap us in your love. Amen.

Message: Richard E. Bieber Easter 2004

Featured Art: Francisco Borboa (Pancho) 1923-2025. He created 187 murals in 11 countries and 51 cities around, including Mexico Spain, Macau, China, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, Taiwan, and Hong Kong

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WHO WAS SLAIN
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN