

## **“WHAT EASTER MEANS TO ME”**

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A few years ago the day before Easter, the *Wichita Eagle* ran an article entitled, “A Faith Reborn.” The story chronicled four persons’ recent return to faith and church. In keeping with the Holy Day, each person shared “what Easter means to me.”

Each story told of a journey in some far-country, away from faith and faith’s family, and how circumstances, usually tragic, brought them to their senses, and back “home.” The stories were inspiring and, no doubt, a reflection of God’s amazing grace. Easter, they said, means “I can start over again,” or “I can come back to life, after a devastating, death-like trauma.” Amen!

Still, however, as wonderful as their testimonies were they left me mildly troubled.

Not that Easter has no meaning. God forbid the suggestion! And not that the meanings they cited were wrong—not at all. Rather, what troubled me was what seemed to be the starting point, which was their experience. As though, this special day does have meaning, after all, because I or we had this experience and the story of Easter speaks to me or us in view of our human experience.

Certainly the death/resurrection of Jesus has deep meaning for all persons, whether they recognize it or not, and whether they have had experiences that make this meaning clear to them.

That is, when Jesus rises from the tomb, the world received notice. The world—originally created by this Word-made-flesh, and sustained by his power, though subject to bondage in view of human sin, the world that groans for the full redemption of the children of God, the world even now passing away, but destined for recreation—the world receives notice that this recreation has begun. The reign of death and decay that dooms the first creation is broken! The doom of the old signals the dawn of the new. The first fruit of the New has appeared in Jesus Christ. Wherever death’s icy grip once held us tight, Life’s warm embrace now engages us.

New Start? Yes, indeed, but more—a whole new order of existence. Not simply a new start at the same old games, but a new game, called LIFE-INDEED. A new life under new management, empowered by the Spirit of the Risen One. A new life to develop patterns—ways of thinking, feeling, acting—that reflect the ever-living One; to live in the primal image, matching the blueprint of our first creating. A new life of fresh relations with our Father and with our family in His household. A good preacher could go on and on!

My point is that Easter has meaning because it has meaning, because something real, objective, outside me and my wretched human experiences, occurred. Yes, that real meaning makes all the difference in the world for me—or, rather, makes the world and me altogether different—NEW!