



**Title: Ever-Flowing Life of Easter**

**Theme: Restoring Spiritual Life This Easter**

“For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

## **Easter is about coming alive**

*When Jesus was crucified on the Cross, and was raised again on the third day, He got victory over sin and death and that purchased the abundant life in Christ which is available to all who will but surrender to His Lordship.*

The Apostle Paul, moved by the Holy Spirit wrote a powerful truth that should govern the lives of all Christians who desire to enjoy the “Ever-flowing Life of Easter,”

Listen as I read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, “For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again.” (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

*I would propose that Easter has a whole lot more for you than just a special Sunday for family meals. Easter is about coming alive.*

The heart that understands what Jesus accomplished on the first Easter births forth a “Life Filled with Meaning,” and “Life Freed by Grace.”

*We live in an area that if we are willing to work hard we can enjoy pleasure, money, acceptance, recognition, position, possessions, and recreation. And compared to many parts of the world, we really do have the good life.*

“The Good Life” has a way of hiding the truth for a while, which is that life that is not supposed to work unless it is Christ-centered. A Christ-centered life is lived by allowing the Holy Spirit of God to move you to live in a way that shows God’s grace upon your life. A Christ-centered life reflects a heart that is concerned about the testimony of Jesus among those who claim His name.

*What is the “New Life” that Jesus offers?* The life that reflects all that Christ purchased for the children of God.

## **Life with Real Meaning**

*The Word of God has some good news. There is an antidote. It is called the "New Creation."* Living as a new man in Christ will enable you to live a "Life with Real Meaning." The greatest tragedy in life is not death, it is to go through your entire life without knowing and living out your purpose.

The Easter Story is God taking a life which was being spent on self, the pleasures of this world and was blinded by the devil, and turning it around to achieve all of His good purposes.

You will find the real meaning of your life as you let the same Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead dwell within your heart. Allowing Christ to be both Savior and Lord of your life literally brings your soul, which was once dead in sin, back to life. The apostle Paul gives us this exhortation, "And if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you." (Rom. 8:11)

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is also for us today, "I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. (Eph. 3:16-17)

One of the secrets to finding meaning in this life that satisfies the soul is to understand what God' means in regards to having Christ dwell in your hearts. To "dwell" (*katoikeo*) means to give Christ full permission to take up full residence by His Spirit in your heart. (*Zodhiates*) It means to literally "house down."

The idea is of letting Christ come into your heart and life that He may be a ruling master, so that He may take every part of your body and life and use it for His Father's purposes. Your first and most important meaning of being created is that you become an inhabitation of the Lord, reflecting the likeness of Christ through all you do. You are created for His glory not your own.

What God is saying, "Let Me tell you what your purpose for living is and then you can start to enjoy your life." This is why the Holy Spirit moved the apostle to write, "And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again." (2 Corinthians 5:15)

Pastor Rick Warren told a story of a couple who knew that their purpose was to serve the Lord in all they did, found real meaning for their lives, and enjoyed the benefits of it. This true story finds its place in Bodaga Bay, just north of San Francisco. In this town was a Christian couple who owned and ran a little deli in a store. There also lived a homeless man, in fact he was considered to be the town tramp, his name was Garland. Garland dressed poorly, acted a little strange and slept in the city park.

Being Christians, Ken and His wife C.J., owners of the little Deli befriended Garland by offering him food and many kind words for a lot of years. When the Deli was broken into, the entire town blamed Garland.

But Ken and C.J. knew that it wasn't Garland, so they prepared a very expensive gift basket for Garland and gave it to him in hopes to assure him of their trust in Him.

The very next morning the police showed up with Garland and the expensive gift basket, feeling certain they had caught the burglar of the store. The police had words with Ken and C.J and after confirming that the basket was a gift from them they let Garland go. A few days later Garland died in the park.

Not long after Garland's death, Ken and C.J. were called to an attorney's office. It seems that Garland had left a will giving everything he owned to Ken and C.J. Garland owned a traveling bag. In the traveling bag was a Bible and there was a placed clearly marked, so that whoever would find it could read these brightly marked Scripture;

'For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited Me in, I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or needing clothes and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and go to visit You?' The King will reply [referring to Jesus] 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.' (Matt. 25:35-40)

Ken and C.J. found and understood the meaning of life by allowing the Holy Spirit of Christ to live through them. Not only did they have meaning in their walk with the Lord, they experienced the blessings of living a life of obedience to their Lord.

In the traveling bag, was a bank book along with a legal will which was used to mark Matthew 5:35-40 which was the Scripture I just read. That bank book led them to savings accounts which held three million dollars and which put Ken and C. J. in great financial position to help many more people like Garland. Garland had hidden wealth that nobody knew about.

When Jesus hung on the Cross with His arms stretched out, most of those who looked at Him knew nothing of the wealth that He has for the children of God. The Bible says, He was the Creator of the universe, He owns a cattle upon a thousands hills. (Psalm 50:10) The most valuable gift that Christ can offer goes unnoticed by most people in this world which is eternal life and a close personal relationship with Him.

Jesus is also righteous, holy, and pure, and knows the joy of achieving the purpose for which God His Father sent Him. Christ knew all that He was doing had meaning and the apostle Paul knew that meaning as well, for he writes, “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

The price Jesus paid for you on the Cross and the victory He won for us on that first Easter means that we are no longer slaves to sin, rather we are adopted children and are heirs of the Son of God. (Galatians 4:7) Being adopted children of God we are given every spiritual blessing in Christ that we need. (Ephesians 1:3)

For those who will but ask of the Lord, He will show them His will for them. They will know their purpose as Christ knew His purpose and they will enjoy a meaningful life, a life that satisfies the soul. They will hear at the judgment seat of Christ “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!”(Matthew 25:21)

Does your life have eternal meaning? Are you living self, chasing the world and the things in it or are you deceived by the devil? Does your life reflect a heart that is seeking God's will for you? Are you enjoying all the spiritual blessings that are to be found in Christ Jesus?

Christians find their meaning when they allow the Lord to show them their Holy Spirit given gifts and use those gifts through sacrificial love. They sacrifice time, self and the pleasures of this world to develop their gifts and to exercise their gifts for the benefit of the Body of Christ.

## **Freed by Grace**

*A life connected to the “Ever-Flowing Life of Easter” is a meaningful life and it is a life “Freed by Grace.”*

Romans 11:6 says, “And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.”.... Ephesians 2:8-10 says, “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

“Grace” (*charis*) means that we are justified freely by God's own hand, nothing done by us. The application is we have free forgiveness through Christ's sacrificial death on the Cross and thus we have reconciliation to a holy God. (Zodhiates)

Ephesians 2: 8-10 is one of the greatest evangelistic summaries of the Bible.  
(The Preacher's Outline Sermon Bible)

F.F. Bruce points out, this passage is the watchword for the reformation theology: "By grace alone, through faith alone, to God alone be the glory." When we really meditate upon it, God has "Amazing Grace."

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." (John 8:34) Sin is that condition and activity of human beings that is offensive to God, their Creator.

The first book of the Old Testament reveals how human beings were created by God without sin but chose to act in rebellion to His revealed will and thereby caused sin to become the natural feature of all human existence. (Psalm 14:1-3) Sin is revolt against the holiness and sovereign will of God as the result of the condition of the heart and mind. (Isaiah 29:13; Jeremiah 17:9; The International Dictionary of the Bible)

The apostle Paul writes about this sinful nature that wants to rebel against the Lord, "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin." (Romans 7)

It is impossible to achieve victory over sin merely by striving to do things. All salvation is by God's grace. It is unmerited divine help that even causes a sinner to have a desire to want to seek the Lord, to enquire about the Christ and then have the ability to live a life pleasing to Him.

If you know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, or if you have been given the opportunity to consider what you will do with Christ, then it is by God's grace alone. Without Him there would be no drawing to Christ or ability to respond to the gospel and live it out.

He is willing and wanting to give us all grace. The Holy Spirit moved the apostle Paul to write about this powerful truth, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:8)

God's saving grace is available to all who desire to become part of His family. There is a wonderful adoption story that illustrates what Christ did for us on the Cross and shows how He longs to have us be a part of the family of God.

In Thailand there was a Caucasian missionary couple who adopted a child from Thailand. The little boy's parents became so poverty stricken that they were going to sell the little boy into slavery in order to pay off their debts. The Holy Spirit so moved on this missionary family, and they became grieved over the little boy's future, a life bound by slavery.

At great expense they used all their own money and they purchased the little boy. Then they adopted him so he could grow up free and become a very special part of their family. You see the little boy became their son no longer to be sold as a slave.

That is exactly what Christ wants to do for you! On the Cross of Calvary he paid the only payment that could purchase your freedom from the bondage of sin. Robert Lowry wrote a Hymn with this stanza, "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus."

The apostle Paul wrote about this redemptive work of Christ upon the Cross and victory that is available to the children of God through the resurrection of Christ. He writes, "So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir." (Galatians 4:7) Jesus said, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36)

On the Cross of Christ, the price was paid in full for your freedom, so you can be freed from the bondage to sin. There is a Biblical term for this freedom that the Lord purchased for those who have Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The term is "redemption."

"Redemption" (*apolutrosis*) here means to let go free for a ransom. (Zodhiates; Vines) There are many forms of this word for "redemption" in the New Testament.

(*lutroo*): One is "The recalling of captives, referring to sinners from captivity, the bondage of sin, by the payment of a ransom for them through Christ's death. (Zodhiates)

It is important to note that in a least four passages of Scripture sin is presented as slavery. (John 8:34; Romans 6:17,20; 2 Peter 2:19)

Another form of the Greek word for "redemption" (*lutron*) means "Deliverance on account of the ransom paid" as spoken of the deliverance from the power and the eternal consequences of sin which Christ purchased by laying down His life as a ransom for those who believe. (Zodhiates; Vines)

Redeemed (*lutroo*) by the highest cost possible, through the shed blood of Christ. Redeemed, (*agorazo*) literally set free from the slave market of sin, death, and hell. Redeemed (*exagorazo*) literally delivered out of the enslavement to sin. (Practical Word Studies of the New Testament)

The child of God has been set free and is at liberty to live a life of real meaning, freed from the sinful passions that destroy fellowship with the Lord and devastates lives.

In the first century whenever the Greek Word (lutron) for “redemption” was used, people would naturally know that it was referring to the price being paid to free slaves. (Vines; Rick Warren)

Angel Share News Letter, ran the true testimony of a couple who came to understand the price paid by Jesus Christ for the redemption of lost souls. This couple writes;

*“Eleven years ago we were losing our home and our marriage and our children were so sad that no one would ever see them smile. We needed Jesus in our life but did not know how until we went to church after a dear sister kept on pestering us to go. My husband sat on one side and I on the other. We were both so mad.*

*God showed us that night His power and just how much He loved us. He gave the pastor a message on true Biblical love.*

*We received Jesus that night, we were delivered from drugs and alcohol and today we walk with Him daily. Our marriage is truly one made in heaven as we love each other more than the day we got married and our children are saved happy and secure.*

*We have been blessed since then with 3 adopted children and desire to raise them according to God’s Holy Word and help them to walk with Him. Without the Lordship in both of our lives and marriage we truly would not be here today.”*

What the world needs to see are Christians who are connected with and living out “The Ever-Flowing Life of Easter.” Christians need to be seen as the redeemed living like they know that they have been purchased at a very high price. When the world looks at the church, they need to see a people who were once in the bondage of sin, yet now have been set free to live a life that is pleasing to God. They need to see a people whom express a life that has been freely given a new life in Christ.

Have you accepted God’s free Gift? Jesus Christ is God’s gift to you.

It must be noted that a gift is not yours until you take it and receive it. Suppose I hand you this Bible and say, “Here, this is yours, I give it to you as a free gift. Take it, it is yours.

What is necessary for the Bible, the gift, to become yours?

You have to believe it is yours and reach out and receive it. You could say, “No thank you” or “I do not believe you!” You can deny its existence or say “I do not want it, I do not have the time to use it.”

If this is your attitude, what happens to the gift? It never becomes yours. In my mind and heart and in truth I gave you the gift, yet you never received it. You never had the faith to receive the gift I offered you.

The Holy Spirit is saying clearly, it is by grace you must be saved through active faith. (Ephesians 2:8-10) God, in wisdom and out of His heart of compassion has given the Gift, Jesus Christ. He is not a Gift until He has been received into the heart of a repentant sinner.

Have you reached out and truly received God's gift of grace found through Jesus Christ? Have you been freed from the from the guilt of sin, redeemed, literally set free from the bondages that can keep you out of fellowship with God, with Jesus Christ and walking in step with the Holy Ghost? Can people look at you and just know that you are one of the redeemed?

The Bible says, "...if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit, who lives in you." (Romans 8:11) Easter is about coming alive.

Your life can be an expression of the truths of the Easter Story, a life that reflects the "Ever-Flowing Life of Easter." Let the Holy Spirit restore a spiritual life within you this Easter.

Let your life reflect its own Easter story, one that reflects a life that has been redeemed by the blood of Christ, a life that is born again, a spirit that is dead to sin but now alive to Christ. Choose to live a life that has given Jesus Christ full permission to take up full residence through the Holy Spirit within your heart.

The death of Christ is the redemptive price. Those who have connected to the "Ever-Flowing Life of Easter live a "Life full of Meaning" and have a "Life Freed by Grace," God's call for you is simply, live no longer to please self, but live a life that reflects the truths of Easter, God's redemptive work in your life.

Let us Pray!