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Export date: Fri Oct 30 3:50:29 2026 / +0000 GMT

Christian Perspectives: The joy surrounding Easter time

Spring is here and as everything is coming back to life. Let us remember what Good Friday really means to us and celebrate Christ's resurrection.

May we enjoy this Easter by taking time to reflect on the power of the Cross and keep our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).

Jesus, who had no sin, took our place on the cross in love and paid the penalty for sin. Satan, who is the author of sin, causes eternal death in Hell to anyone who does not live in Christ. Jesus suffered death for us so that by His grace, meaning by the work of the cross, there is no reason for anyone to taste the death of being separated from God (Hebrews 2:9). Jesus' heart was completely focused on the joy of knowing that we would be His since He tasted death on the cross for everyone.

Jesus was fully man and fully God and He was the sacrifice. If we lean on our own understanding in our sinful fallen state, without being born again by the Spirit of God, we are not able to comprehend what the Scriptures tell us about this week of Passion. It is only by the power of the blood of Jesus that the wages of sin can be removed from one's life. One must believe in the finished work of the cross. The prophet Isaiah writes that Jesus experienced all of life's sorrows such as pain, rejection, oppression, judgement, grief, scorn, bullying, temptation by Satan, hunger, hatred, punishment by God, and yet He never allowed one word of complaint to come out of His mouth. He was pierced for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities so that we could be at peace with God. It is by His wounds that we are healed and restored.

It was God's will for Jesus to go through this suffering because His life was the offering for our sin. His endurance of the agonizing pain, suffering, and humiliation of being a condemned man by Caiaphas, the high priest, and the religious leaders and then by the Roman governor, Pilot, was all part of God's plan. The soldiers brutally beat, scourged and mocked Him beyond recognition. Satan hated Him and did everything in his power to kill Him, but no man was permitted to take Jesus' life. It was the will and plan of God for Jesus to lay down His life for everyone. Jesus said in John 10:18, ?I give no man consent to take my life, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This is the command of my Father.?

The soldiers made a crown of thorns for His head and covered Him with a purple robe, bullying Him and slapping Him in the face, saying over and over again, ?Hail, King of the Jews.? When Jesus was brought to Pilate again, the chief priests cried out, ?Crucify Him, for He has claimed to be the Son of God and Caesar is our only king.? Pilate then ordered Jesus to be crucified by his soldiers.

Jesus was forced to carry His cross to the site of the crucifixion which is called Golgotha. His hands were nailed to the crossbar with nails that were five to six inches in length and His ankles were nailed to the beam that was probably already positioned low into the ground. They had removed the purple robe, so He hung naked on the cross where passersby could add to the agony by mocking Him. His death on the cross fulfilled the punishment of our sin. Jesus said, ?It is finished.? Praise the Lord! Death had no power to keep Him in the grave for He is the resurrection and life. He is waiting for all of us to come to Him.

Jesus' obedience to His Heavenly Father and His love for us caused Him to obtain joy so that he could endure the suffering death on the cross. Instead of the joy one would experience of not being crucified, Jesus willingly did all of this to obtain joy! So, let us remember that joy comes when we are obedient. Joy motivates us to walk with God in wholehearted obedience. The joy of the Lord is our strength and salvation. Happy Easter!

Pastor Carol McLean,

Jehovah Jireh Christian Ministries