

## **Easter People** Colossians 3:1-4

Mustang illustration taken from: "Set Your Mind on Heavenly Things" by Joel Pankow @ SermonCentral.com

One: CHRIST HAS RISEN!  
ALL: **HE HAS RISEN INDEED!**

Do you believe this?

If you believe this it has already changed the rest of your life.

If not, then these are just words, and for you, nothing has changed.

The message of this Easter morning, is that, as promised, Jesus the Christ died for our sins and then has risen again to prove that we have indeed been forgiven by God. That we are indeed now Children of God with a home reserved for us in eternity right beside our Lord and savior. Jesus promised us ...

I will not leave you orphaned;  
because I live, you also will live.  
On that day you will know  
that I am in my Father,  
and you in me, and I in you.  
John 14:18-20

So if this is true for you, then you have become an EASTER PEOPLE!

**Easter People**, kind of a scary title isn't it. It feels like Amway, or Mary Kay People, you half expect some starry eyed individual, selling you enough perfume and hair brushes to earn their pink Cadillac. Well, **you are right about the starry eyed part**, but thankfully we Easter People have nothing to sell. The gift of this day is freely given to all who will receive it. And unlike Publisher's Clearinghouse, your chances of winning are not 1 in 3 billion with a drawing to be held sometime in 2019. Because the God's gift of forgiveness and life, that is offered to you and me as a result of this day, is inexhaustible; there is plenty to go around for everyone who wants it. Our Bible closes out the salvation message by saying *whosoever will may come, let whoever is thirsty drink freely of the water of life.*

So there it is, becoming an Easter person is as simple as praying: **Lord, I'm thirsty ... give me some of this water so that I may never thirst again.**

But ... after that ... living as an Easter person does require a change of attitude on our part perhaps it is better to say a **change of perspective**.

Paul writes ...

**So IF you have been raised** with Christ,  
seek the things that are above where Christ is ...  
Set your minds on things that are above,  
not on things that are on earth,  
for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.  
Colossians 3:1-3

**"So IF you have been raised."** Doesn't that conditional word "if" give you a bit of a pause? It's not that the gift is conditional, God's forgiveness has already been offered, The conditionality is based on whether or not we have claimed it for ourselves.

You are an Easter Person, IF you have been raised with Christ.

And IF you are an Easter person, you should be different.

- The Apostle James writes, *show me your faith without works and I by my works will show you my faith* (James 2:19).
- Jesus warned us of false Christians saying, *by their fruit you shall know them* (Matt. 7:20)
- And his final command was that "Everyone will know you are my disciples by your love one for another" (John 13:35)

The Bible is full of such disclaimers – real faith will have an outward evidence. Since becoming an EASTER PERSON is such an internal and personal thing, the only way that other EASTER PEOPLE (or non-easter people) can find us is through the outward obvious change in our life.

And that is what Paul is writing about here in Colossians.

- if our inward perspective has changed,
- if we have drunk freely of Christ's living water
- If we claim for ourselves the title of "Christian,"
- if we want the world to recognize us as Easter people
- then we should live the rest of our life differently

HOW? And in what ways do we show our new life in Christ?

Pauls says, by **anticipation** and **preparation** for our future **revelation** along with Jesus.

First there is **ANTICIPATION**  
**So if you** have been raised with Christ,  
**seek** the things that are above,  
where Christ is, seated

Anticipation is a wonderful thing, it makes life go a bit slower but usually in a delightfully wanting kind of way. Just think of the month before Christmas, or waiting for you tax refund, or spring vacation; or finally finding that marvelous toy you've sought all your life. And when you finally get what you have truly always wanted – it becomes a joy that lasts for the rest of your life.

April 17, 1964 something unique and noteworthy took place in America... That was the day for the unveiling of the **Ford Mustang**. On that day the following events took place:

1. A Mustang had been chosen as the pace car for a stock car race in Huntsville, Alabama. When it drove onto the track, thousands of people scaled the retaining wall to get a better look at it and the race was delayed for over an hour.
2. A cement truck crashed through the plate-glass window of a Seattle Ford dealer when the driver lost control of his vehicle. The reason: He was staring at the new Mustangs on display there.
3. A Chicago Ford dealer was forced to lock the doors on his show-room models because too many people were trying to get into them at the same time.
4. A Texas dealer put a new Mustang on a lift to show a prospective customer the underside of the vehicle. By the time his demonstration was over, the showroom was filled with people, and he had to leave the Mustang up in the air for the rest of the day.
5. A New Jersey Ford dealer had only one Mustang and 15 eager buyers, so he auctioned it off. The winner of the auction insisted on sleeping in the car to be sure the dealer didn't sell it to someone else before his check cleared.

Why did they do all this?

Why did people behave in such bizarre ways over a simple car?

They did all of this because it was THE car they wanted to see.

It was THE car they wanted to have.

It stood for everything they ever wanted in a vehicle – and having gotten one -- it changed the way they lived thereafter.

I knew a man in his 70's who kept a vintage Mustang in his shed. He drove it ONLY on nice summer days. But otherwise he kept it in the shed... and it was in mint condition. It was the car of his dreams. He had literally fallen in love with that vehicle and his love for that car caused him to behave in ways he NEVER would for any anything else in his life.

IF we truly realized what Easter means for us, we too would live with **great anticipation** that would change the rest of our lives.

- To realize that we have Christ within us as our hope of glory
- That we have a heavenly home kept secure for us – by Holy Spirit

- That we will one day wear new eternal bodies, that will never again grow weak, sick, or tired
- That we will spend eternity working together with our creator and each other for the perfecting of this universe. – all this is so much better than a Ford Mustang.

So the anticipation of Heaven should change the way we live. **If you** have been raised with Christ, **seek** the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

On this Easter Sunday, we need to take our mind off of the meal we are preparing for lunch, the new clothes we are wearing, or the guests we'll be having over; we need to clear our heads of all of this earthly stuff - and concentrate on something better.

**WE should set our Minds on Things Above**

And our anticipation will then lead to **preparation**

**So if you** have been raised with Christ,  
seek the things that are above,  
**Set your minds on things that are above,**  
not on things that are on earth

Have you ever heard the expression – *you can do it if you just set your mind to it.*  
**Anticipation should naturally lead to preparation.** If we are going to be moving soon – we might as well get a few things packed up.

I knew in February of 2007 – with 90% certainty - that our family would be moving here to Bedford, to a new pastorate beginning in July (6 months of anticipation!).

But ministers who are planning a move, have to do a strange sort of with their current congregation. The search process can take over a year; the confirmation process another half of a year, But for the congregation being served – it is healthiest for them to only know of your departure 6 – 8 weeks before; which is sufficient time to say your farewells and bring your ministry to a close, without things getting maudlin.

*And not to start any rumors, I am not now planning any move .... You've got me for a good while longer unless you decide to kick me out ... this is just for illustration purposes.*

So ministers and their family have to keep an awkward secret for long while. You want to get things cleaned up, packed up, get rid of the excess – all the while planning and acting as if nothing has changed (*because you want the congregation to continue along*

*that course of direction that you have worked together to achieve; and to continue with all their plans after you leave – your departure being merely a sad bump in their road).*

But for our move here – the “cat got out of the bag” a lot sooner than I had wished, because someone peeked over our back fence to notice that I had not planted my spring garden. About this time in Midway, serious gardeners will have already planted their spring greens (get your peas in by St. Patrick’s day ) And I was a serious gardener.. had quite the victory garden in the back yard. So when the church members didn’t see me working up the beds; putting out the peas, lettuce, onion and carrots – the rumors began to spread.

Thankfully, I don’t know of any other profession that has this necessarily secretive component to career moves (except maybe athletes, confidence men, and the witness protection program – strange mix there). For most **normal people** -- once you anticipate a future move, you automatically begin preparing for it. **Anticipation should lead to joyful preparation**

You clean out the closets, throw away the trash, keep only what you want to take with you. As Easter people, there is a lot of old junk that needs to be cleaned out of closets. In verses 5 -11, Paul gives us just a short list of stuff we need to get rid of...

Put to death whatever in you is earthly:  
**fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire,**  
and **greed** (which is idolatry)...  
Get rid of all such things as **anger, wrath,**  
**malice, slander, and abusive language.**  
**Do not lie to one another,**  
seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices  
and have clothed yourselves with the new self,  
Colossians 3:5-11

Then once you’ve cleaned out a few things, your next step in preparation is to learn some new skills. If moving to another country you might even begin learning another language: like Swedish, New Yorkese, valley speak, or Canadian: eh! You practice working and acting like a citizen of that other country - so that when you get there you’ll fit right in & feel at home. When my Executive Presbyter heard I was moving to Bedford, he handed me a copy of The Bedford Boys and advised me to get read up.

For us EASTER PEOPLE it is the same – If we have become EASTER PEOPLE the anticipation of living in God’s Kingdom -- should cause us to live differently. To get rid of those things that no longer fit with our new life, and to prepare, to act like we are living in God’s Kingdom right now (which we are – it’s just a bit hidden right now)

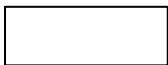
We are to **Set our minds on things that are above.** For EASTER PEOPLE that is not some snobbish attitude – “like we’re moving to the outer banks,” buying a home in Forest, its in trying to imitate our brother – Jesus to get into his mind, to think like he would think, to respond as he would respond. – to work at having “the mind of Christ” in our daily living. To live like children who have been born from above.

Why? Because anticipation and preparation will have us ready for the **revelation.**

Don’t you love all those MAKE-OVER SHOWS that have become quite popular in the last few years. There’s a entire tv channel (HGTV) now dedicated to designers taking over some unsuspecting - but deserving - person’s kitchen, back yard, entire home, and then secretly remodeling it into the home of their dreams. Then, at the climax of the show is the **great reveal** – when the deserving person comes back to be astounded at how beautiful their old home has now become.

Of course the granddaddy of all such programming was Ty Pennington’s **Extreme Home makeover** -- where he rebuilt entire houses in one week while the deserving family vacationed in Disney World. Then Ty would bring them back for that famous reveal: Bus Driver, move that bus!

And that home show was inspired by **Extreme Makeover** where some deserving but – not very attractive – person is spirited away to a secret New York location, where after a month of surgery, clothes shopping, and walking lessons they are brought back and revealed to their loving family as – the prince or princess that they had always been underneath.



WE love reveals, we love to see people or things transformed into something beautiful ... revealed for what they have always been all along.

Well the good news of Easter is that the Son of God – having been raised from the grave and revealed to the world --- promises all us **EASTER PEOPLE** that we too shall rise from the grave and be revealed along with him as the noble people we always were underneath.

Because one day Jesus Christ will return to set up his kingdom here on this earth. And the entire planet will have its long deserved Extreme make over – into a new heavens and a new earth – where there will be no more evil, sadness, or sickness.

And we’ll be there, right beside him – working at the same makeover process. So we might as well start now – the world will only be better because we have begun.

**So if you** have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Easter People, its well past time for you to let your true identity as God's Children to show through. So let's get to work on this today.