

HIGHER AIM WITH DR. CURT DODD

The Gifts Of Easter

John 20:1-21

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

As we celebrate Easter, I want to take the time to point out the many gifts that are available to us as Jesus-followers because of Easter. There are five gifts of Easter that we're going to look at specifically, and I pray that you'll be able to receive each of these this Easter season.

KEY POINTS

1. A New Focus To Develop

Not all things are good, but God works in all things for good. There was nothing good about the crucifixion, whatsoever. But the events of the crucifixion led to the empty tomb, where the good happened. This is a perfect picture of how God can bring a bumper crop to our crop failures when His hand is in it.

Even though it was the worst event to ever occur in history, the crucifixion provided forgiveness for you and for me. When we choose to turn from sin and place our faith in Jesus Christ and allow His shed blood to cover us and pay for our ungodliness, we are forgiven. Jesus did a good thing for us, but it happened through an awful crucifixion. It can be difficult not to focus on the awful things. But looking at the bigger picture of the crucifixion and the resurrection gives us an opportunity to develop a new focus.

2. A New Faith To Process

Jesus had told His disciples over and over again that He would rise from the dead, but they just didn't connect the dots. Do you know why? Because they are men. Sometimes, men could see it and still believe it, but we don't actually connect the dots; it takes a little while. God allows us to process that faith.

Faith is based upon the Word of God. Faith is not a feeling. Faith is not something you work up; it is a gift of God. It took some time for Simon Peter and John to realize Jesus had already told them about His resurrection. They would later recall what He said. They would look in the Old Testament and realize that was exactly God's plan all along.

This is how God wants your faith to grow. He wants you to move from just seeing and believing to standing on the Word with great confidence.

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3. A New Familiarity To Experience

Many of us treat Christianity like a drive-through experience. "Give me a little faith, give me some Jesus fries, and I'm out of here." Many of us miss the familiarity that God wants to have with us because we are in such a rush. But if you will just stay a little longer and wait on Him, you will have an encounter with the Risen Lord. We can have a deep, meaningful relationship with Jesus because of what He did that first Easter Sunday. Let's not miss out on that because we're in too big of a hurry.

4. A New Family To Enjoy

When you surrender your life to Christ, you are part of a new family now because of the cross. You weren't born into God's family. We were born with our backs toward God, wanting to do what we wanted. Instead, we are born again into God's family. When we actually turned from sin and placed our faith in Christ, God then became our Father.

The Bible tells us very clearly that a Holy God cannot have a relationship with an unholy man, woman, boy, or girl. Just because you show up doesn't mean you get the prize. Just because you stand in line doesn't mean that you have actually accepted the gift of God, eternal life through Jesus Christ. You have to make the decision to follow Him and give your life to Him. But once you do, you have a whole new family to enjoy.

5. A New Framework To Embrace

After you acknowledge Christ as Lord of your life, you turn from sin and place your faith in Jesus. The new framework of your life should be focused on and lived from those boundaries. You have a message that Jesus wants the world to hear. You have been sent specifically not only into your community but into the entire world to tell the world that He is alive! There is hope beyond the grave and there is forgiveness of sin, all in the name of Jesus! When you embrace this new framework to live within, you can make an incredible impact for the kingdom of God. NOTES

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- 1. How does the account of the crucifixion and resurrection help you learn how to focus on the good God does, even when our circumstances aren't what we would consider to be "good"?
- 2. Do you find it easy to have faith in what you can't see? Or do you find yourself wanting proof, signs, and reassurance when it comes to your faith?
- 3. Are you slowing down long enough in your time with Jesus to develop a strong familiarity with Him? Or are you constantly rushing around and struggling to make time to deepen your relationship with Christ?

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