



BELIEVERS EASTERN CHURCH

Office of the Metropolitan, Synod Secretariat, Thiruvalla, Kerala, India.

SHEPHERD'S LETTER

April 2018

✠ Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Hallelujah, He is risen! Hallelujah, Jesus is risen! Hallelujah, Christ is risen indeed!

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! ... He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

What a joy it is my dear brothers and sisters to write to you as we celebrate Easter and the hope it brings! The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the single most important event in history because He defeated the last enemy, death and thus also defeated the one who holds power over death—the devil (Hebrews 2:15)! The resurrection of Jesus also gives us eternal hope and the assurance of life after death. Therefore, let us not only celebrate Easter, but also live out the story of Easter in our lives.

In this letter I would like to focus on what Easter means and how we can live the meaning of it in our lives. As you all know, Easter is the day when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our saviour, from the dead. But why is it so important? To understand the significance of that, we have to step back a bit and see why Jesus had to die in the first place.

God created man for a close fellowship with Himself. But because of sin, humanity became broken beyond repair and lost all hope of being brought back to fellowship with the creator. In order to be reconciled with God, our sins had to be atoned for; a sacrifice had to be made. No one could become that sacrifice—save God himself. In order for God to become sacrifice for our sin, He had to become one like us. Thus, Jesus, God's only son, was born of the Virgin Mary, without sin. By becoming man, He

qualified Himself to die for us, but since death has power only over those with sin, death could not kill Jesus. Therefore, He chose to lay down his life (John 10:18 and John 3:16) and take upon Himself the sin of the world and become sin for us, and thus endured the death on the Cross (Hebrews 12:2). But death could not hold Him in the grave and thus on the third day, He rose again! His resurrection became the answer to ending death itself and overcoming the one who holds power over death—the devil!

What that means is that, **we do not have to fear death!** We have been freed from the fear of death. (Hebrews 2:15) Death has been swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:54b)! Praise God!

But more than that, **we also don't have to fear the devil** himself! His power has been broken forever on the Cross of Calvary and by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We need not fear witchcraft, evil schemes, sorcery, or any plans made by the enemy to destroy us or our families!

Easter also gives us **hope of life after death**. As St Paul says, “if only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitted more than all men” (1 Corinthians 15:19). The Bible says that, since Jesus himself was resurrected from the dead, they that believe in Him also will be resurrected from the dead.

“We want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died ... For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died” (1 Thessalonians 4:13–14).

Oh, Praise God! What hope Easter brings to us! Because of Easter, we do not have to fear death or the devil and we have hope of life after death! That's the reason we believe that it is the greatest single event in the entire human history!

Now how can we *live out* Easter or how do we *practice* what Easter means in our lives? We can do that in the following three ways.

1. **Recognising the power of the Holy Spirit which lives in us.** The Bible says that the exact same power which raised Jesus from the dead is also working in us! In Ephesians 1:19–20, Apostle Paul says, “I also pray that you will understand the

incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead.” This passage is talking about the power of the Holy Spirit which is working in us, believers in Jesus Christ. That’s an incredible truth.

2. **Recognising the purpose of that power.** But what is the purpose of this power? The purpose is to help us to overcome sin and live a life led by the Holy Spirit—thus helping us to live a life that honours Jesus and represents His nature to those around us (Romans 8:11–14).
3. **Making the choice to live by that power, daily.** But remember, allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us is a choice we have to make; daily. It’s like saying, we have a light bulb in our house; but the choice to switch it on and allow the light to shine, and thus live by that light, is entirely ours! Even if it’s the most expensive light bulb, if we choose not plug it into the socket and switch it on, it will not give light! The power of the Holy Spirit is available for all of us, believers in Jesus Christ. All we need to do is to ‘plug’ into the Holy Spirit and allow the Holy Spirit to lead our lives.

When someone abuses you or spreads rumours about you—you have a choice. Are you going to abuse them back, or will you, by the power of the Holy Spirit, resist paying back evil for evil? Rather than saying bad things about that person, will you allow the Holy Spirit to help you to pray for them and love them? Although it’s humanly impossible, by the power of the Holy Spirit living in us, you can! When someone cheats you, in your finances or relationships, you have a choice to forgive that person, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Dear brothers and sisters, it is not enough to celebrate Easter—you and I need to live it. We may be the only gospel our neighbours will ever see and read in their lives. Let them see Christ’s nature in us; let them read God’s love in our lives. May we live such lives by allowing the power of the Holy Spirit to work *in* and *through* us.

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.✠

✠Dr K.P. Yohannan Metropolitan