



BECAUSE OF JESUS

Part 1: Introduction

Hope Restored – Being and Sharing Good News

As we move towards the Easter season, I want to invite you to reflect afresh on the good news that through His death, resurrection and the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, Jesus defeated the powers of sin and death and gave us the hope and power to live a full, redeemed, and a productive life that will extend beyond our earthly existence. The easter story declares that for those of us who follow Jesus, nothing can separate us from the love of God. Hallelujah! This is fantastic news. Of course, the natural response to such good news is to celebrate and rejoice. However, in addition to rejoicing the Bible is clear that we are not to keep the Easter good news story to ourselves. We are to share this good news by the way we live out our lives and through proclamation. In fact, the Bible makes it clear that being and sharing the Good News is to be our mission in life.

In Luke chapter 4 Jesus clearly explained his mission. You know this passage well. Jesus goes into the synagogue in Nazareth, he stood up to read the Scriptures and was handed the scroll that contained words from the prophet Isaiah,

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the
prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

At the end of reading the scroll, Jesus handed it back and said, today this Scripture is fulfilled in your presence. In other words, this is Jesus’ mission. Throughout the scriptures Jesus practically illustrates his mission through his many miracles and acts of compassion, love, mercy, and justice. The blind are given sight, deaf, hearing. Dead are raised, hungry fed and oppressed set free. With Jesus, it was always word and action, preaching and deed. Jesus mission was a mission of hope to the hopeless, freedom for those in bondage, fullness of life to those who merely existed. It was good news!

While Jesus specifically says this is his mission, that he is the fulfillment of the Scripture, we know from passages like Matt 22:39 that describe the great commandment, or Matt 28’s declaration of the great commission or Acts 1:8 where it talks about Jesus disciples being witnesses throughout world, that those of us who are filled with the Spirit and claim to be disciples of Jesus, share in this mission. We partner with the resurrected Christ in his ongoing redemptive work in the world.

Well, what does this look like in our churches and individual lives? I have no doubt the programs we run in our church can form part of the work of bringing hope to our communities. Therefore, I think it is always important to be auditing our programs and physical assets and ask are they being used to serve our mission, are they bearing fruit?

However, in addition to our property and program assets, there are other assets that we have at our fingertips, that I think are the keys to sharing the Good News and providing hope to our communities.

And they are what I would call, our spiritual assets - Our spiritual assets are the tools given to us by God to impact this world-

the fruit of the spirit. Spiritual assets refer to the qualities that enable us to do what is right and good – for ourselves and for others. Like Jesus mission springing from the words read in the synagogue, they are the actions that manifest from our words and convictions, they are our faith in action, the Spirit at work through us in the world.

Spiritual assets that are particularly important to being and sharing Good News and bringing hope to our communities include:

- Being generous towards others – word, deeds, and resources.
- Showing compassion – caring for those in our street who may or may not have others to care for them.
- Offering Forgiveness and reconciliation – lifting the burden of guilt.
- Providing Appreciation and gratitude- a friendly word, a smile, praise.
- Sharing Hospitality and inclusion – to neighbours even strangers who are in need.
- Advocating justice- speaking out and not remaining silent when a community members rights have been violated.
- Providing Patience and Humility- sharing credit, elevating others.
- Showing tolerance and acceptance

These are the spiritual assets that spread Good News and provide hope in our community. .

Friends, right now, our world needs hope. Our world needs Good News. And we, not only have the message of hope, but we have the capacity, the power the spiritual assets to meet that need and spread hope.

I sincerely hope, I pray, that Easter will be an enriching season for you as you reflect on its message. I pray it will be a season of contemplation leading to repentance,

gratitude, and celebration. But I also pray that it will prompt us to be and share the Good News. That we will be re-enthused to engage in our mission to advance the Kingdom of God, the ways of Jesus, our mission to bring about justice, mercy, grace, salvation, righteousness and forgiveness, our mission to bring positive change in our society, our mission to spread hope in our communities.

Questions for reflection or discussion

- How can you not only reflect on the implications of Easter for yourself, but fan into flame the passion to be and share the Good News with the broader community?
- What spiritual assets do you possess that you think will benefit your community/ neighbourhood and inspire hope? Why?

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