

**“After Easter”**  
**By Brother Parrish Lee**  
**Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

What an awesome, wonderful time to gather together, look at each other, and say, “This is the day that the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.” (Psalms 118:24) Who is like unto our God?

As you see, our Scripture verse for the month is from the Book of John, chapter 14, verse 6:

**John 14:6** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

Amen. I’m actually going to defer some of my time this morning to my brother Mike Alford. I would like him to come up and just bring us some words to just bring us into the message, but, before he does, I’d like to have a word of prayer. Lord Jesus, we do come before You and thank You, God, because You have been so good. You’ve been better to us than we could ever be to ourselves. Lord, You save us at the times we’re not even thinking about it. How many bridges, how many troubled waters have You brought us across? How many healings have You dealt out? How many answers, how many understandings, how many problems have You worked out? Lord God, You continue to pour out blessings, manifold. Day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment... we can only come before You and thank You and praise You at this time for all that You have done. We ask a blessing on the message part of the service today, as Brother Mike Alford comes to lead into... Lord, we thank You for all Your good and perfect gifts. May Your Word restore, may it fill, may it nutritalize, may it feed; may it do exactly what You have sent it to accomplish in our lives. We pray and claim in Jesus’ name, and everyone said, Amen.

MIKE ALFORD: Morning, everybody, it’s good to see everybody here. The week, I was over at the Hilton Hotel; we had a workshop for work. I got there early, and I was just walking through the building. It was nice; first-class hotel. The bathrooms were even nice. but, I was thinking, Heaven’s going to be first-class, and I won’t have to go home. I live in a nice house, but Heaven’s going to be first-class. The lesson for the month is, “**I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.**” When I was growing up, we didn’t go to church much. My mom raised us with Christian values—she washed out my mouth with soap when I cussed, spanked me when I said the wrong thing... My favorite music was, “Stairway to Heaven.” There was a couple of lines that said not everything that glitters is gold. Not every religion, not everything that talks about God is the truth. You know, there’s a lot of false things out there. There in the Bible it says that there are two ways you can go. It says in Matthew 7:13-14 “**Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**” Broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many—many!—will go that way; few there be that find eternal life. Jesus is the Way. Jesus is the Way-Maker; we sang that song. Parrish was sharing about blind Bartimaeus, and Lazarus, and how it was only God—Jesus—Who did those things. He made a way for them, but, even us, today, living our lives, we’re out there on our jobs, and sometimes we seem like it’s us against the world, but Jesus will make the way for us. As far as the truth, Jesus said in John 8:31-32 “**Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**” We’ve got to continue to study the Word of God, and that’s where the truth is. In John 5:39, Jesus said, “**Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.**” He was talking to the Pharisees; at the time, they were the rulers and they thought they were serving

God, but Jesus was right there in front of them and said, "They're speaking of Me!" Even today, we've got to search the Scriptures and make sure that we're right with God. Otherwise, we're going to be just like those Pharisees. They thought they had eternal life. There's many religions out there, but a lot of them won't get you to Heaven, unfortunately. You've got to follow—Jesus said, "I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Even in Matthew 7: 22-23, it talks about many will say in the day of judgment, haven't we done all these wonderful works in Your name? And He'll say, "I never knew you." You've got to look at the foundation of our lives, of our Christian walk. It's like when John's disciples came across Paul, he asked if they had received the Holy Ghost, and they said, "We've never even heard of the Holy Ghost." The first thing he went to was, "How were you baptized?" That's the foundation. You've got to believe, but, you've got to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, or you're not going to Heaven. As far as the life, Jesus is the Life; He came to give us life, and all of our lives, the Spirit of God is dealing with us. You see in the cartoons, you've got the devil on one side, and the angel on the other side—that happens throughout our lives. If you don't listen, eventually, well, it might pay now, but the thing is, it says in John 10—Parrish was talking about this last week—it says, "My sheep know My voice." Well, we listen to the Spirit of God and listen to that, and it says, "Another they will not follow." We learn to affirm, to recognize the voice of God, and then that will keep us on that strait and narrow path. John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." *Should* not perish; we've got to follow the way that God has for us. One of those stories reminds me that, when I went to join the Navy, first you go to the recruiter's office, and they run a background check. Then you go down to the MEPS station (the entrance station), and they do a physical, and then, finally, they say, "You're good." You swear in, you promise to uphold the constitution, and defend your country, and all that stuff, then, at that point, you're in the Navy. Before that, you can put on the suit and everything but you're not in the Navy. Jesus is the Way the Truth and the Life; until you get baptized in Jesus' name, your sins have not been remitted. Even after that, you've got to go to bootcamp, and keep on going... You can get out of the Navy but to be in Christ, you've got to be faithful to the end. I've got one last statement that I'm just going to throw in there: In 2 Peter 2:5, it says that Noah was a preacher of righteousness. He didn't have a church where he was preaching on Sunday; he was building the ark. We're out there at work, and people are saying, "What's different about your life?" and we've got to tell them about Jesus Christ; preach righteousness as we go.

Thank you, Brother Mike Alford. Well, you see, he basically took up about half of the message, so this message isn't going to be very long.

Giving honor to God, who is the Head of our lives. Giving honor to those who have gone on before us: those who have stood in the pulpits, those who have made up the hedge, those who have stood in the gap; those who have showered their protection with their prayers and their dedication. Giving honor to all of those: Our founding pastor and his family, our general pastor and his family, and all those who have stood in the pulpit, elders, and preachers, and leaders. Giving honor to all of y'all, who present yourselves before the Lord that He might feed us accordingly, for that is the reason that we show up, to receive what the Bible calls our daily bread.

As we said, our Scripture theme for the month is from John 14:6, and you cannot get enough of this. You can't do it. You cannot get enough of this. It falls right down. When they said, "Show us the Father?"

**John 14:6** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

I'd like to start off with our Scripture for this part of the message:

**Acts 1:1-14** *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, **ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.** When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.** And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, **Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.** Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a Sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.*

So, here we have it. The disciples are gathered together, because they were there with the Lord, and we've talked about this. We had the first message of the month, and that was about Jesus Christ being the Way, and Brother Chris Ulrich told us about Him being the Answer. This is the answer. We went to Palm Sunday, which would have the next Sunday after that in this month, and we talked about Jesus Christ being the Truth. When we talked about that message, we talked about the journey of the Lord; where He had been before he got to the place where they had strewed out the palm leaves, and they cried out, "Hosanna! Hosanna!" the great cheering. Before all that, He reached a place called Jericho. In Jericho, he did several great things. He ministered to Zacchaeus, and He saw the dispute that the disciples had.. He healed a man, blind Bartimaeus, who was by the wayside, showing that this is what God does. The next thing, still before He got to Jerusalem, He was on His way, He got a little bit closer; He got to Bethany. It was only fitting that He would get to Bethany, before Passover. You see, Jerusalem was somewhere around twenty-five to thirty thousand people at that day. It was the religious hub, but, at Passover time, people knew that, "If there's ever a time that I'm going to get my sins away, now is the time." They came from all over at Passover time. "I've got to get my sins on that list to get taken away, because there's no other way, outside of this great sacrifice." That town, that was normally twenty-five to thirty thousand people, swelled to three-hundred to three-hundred and fifty thousand people. They didn't care that it was going to be inconvenient; they just wanted to get their sins taken away. So, when He got to Bethany, before the Passover, before going through the gates of Jerusalem, He healed, of course, Lazarus. This was really, really, a big deal. That was such a big deal that the religious leaders said, "That is going to outshine what we've got. We've got to get rid of Him." Then just a little while later, He does get to Jerusalem. Yeah, they were all ready They had heard of His fame. His works had gone out. "Hey, who is this guy that heals blind people? Yeah, that's pretty good. He feeds thousands. Yeah, that's pretty good. But have you heard the latest? That guy can raise the dead! Now, this we've got to see!" So, yes, they strewed out the palm leaves. They sang, "Hosanna! Hosanna!" They were waiting for Him. So, Jesus, He gets to Jerusalem. And then, yes, the whole Easter

story. He chases out the money-changers. He goes to clean out His temple. He answered all their questions, and, yes, our Lord is handed over to the chief priest. He is betrayed and delivered to them to be crucified. There He is; He gets crucified, and He dies up on the cross. Crown of thorns on Him, raiment stripped from Him, hands hung high... our Lord. Three days later, as the song says, early Sunday morning, they went down there—the women—went down there, and they saw that he was not there.

You know, I really like that whole Easter story. I really like that whole Easter time, and you know when Easter time comes, usually I get this little thing in, because I'm going to see all the special shows. You know Charlton Heston, he's going to step up and say, "Let my people go!" You're going to see that one, and there going to have a Moses one in there. They're going to have the other ones about the disciples, the Passover... My favorite, of course, is, "The Passion." I can't get enough of that. I have to watch it; it brings me closer, as far as any of the media things go. It really touched my life, and really gave me a touch. I want to feel more of Jesus, so, that's one of the little cinematic things that help. But this year, they had a couple shows that really surprised me; I was really taken a little aback. Every year they have one about Barabbas. Why do they make such a big deal about Barabbas? I don't know. They make a big deal about Barabbas. I watched part of that show on Barabbas this year, and they talked about how Barabbas wasn't that bad of a guy; he just got caught in a situation; kind of like a bum rap. He was caught between a rock and hard place, and what was he going to do? They go into the story of his life, and they talk about how, you know, the people despised him, when it really wasn't his fault. The movie wanted you to sympathize with Barabbas; I couldn't watch that whole thing. I ain't got nothing against the guy; I just couldn't watch it. Then there was another one; I'd never seen this one before. This one was the story of Judas. Judas! They took the account that Judas was a conflicted guy. One the one hand, he had these temptations, and on the other hand he was trying to follow the Lord... I want to make sure I cut this... The story goes on to say that he, too, was between a rock and a hard place. It reached the decision that Judas really did the will of God. He was the "best" disciple; he made the sacrifice. Somebody had to betray Him so that all the world could be saved. The story of Judas. I kind of got a little Rrrrrrrrrgh! Kind of a little bit on edge. I was, "Just you ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-ch! I've got to do something about this!" I couldn't watch the whole thing. When somebody talks about somebody you love—you know, somebody you love—if a man loves his wife, and somebody starts talking about his wife, you know what? he just finds his forearm muscles restricting and contracting, and it's kind of loaded, you know? When somebody talks about a child, the mother of that child is like—you can see it all in her eyebrows; you can see it on her lips, "You better get off my child, I tell you! You don't want to do that!" When somebody provokes, r insults, or talks about somebody you love, you can't go on not feeling it. It affects you. I was affected. I was like, "I'm going to fire off an e-mail. I'm going to call some people. I feel it swelling up in me. You know, Lord, it shouldn't be this way!" God had to tell me, "You're not the only one that ever felt like that! The disciples felt like that! When He went to certain city, and they didn't receive Him. They laughed Him to scorn; they kicked Him out, James and John looked over and said, 'Hey, we don't have to put up with this? Shall we call down fire from heaven and consume them all? That'll show them!' And the Lord said, 'Ye know not what spirit ye are of.'" And it didn't stop with James and John; when they came to grab Jesus, Peter pulled out his ninja sword and hi-yah! chopped off the High Priest's servant's ear. Sometimes I kind of think I missed my calling there. I could get some of that. And the Lord went over to the High Priest's Servant, and said, "Suffer ye thus far." God was showing me, as He shows us, we've got to know what spirit we are of. We've got to know—it ain't about revenging, it ain't about taking up arms and fighting—oh, yeah, there's a time, there's a time—but there is more the time for love. If it came down to being destroyed—before I got saved, I was one of those people. If it came down to people fighting against Jesus, I was Muslim; I was a Muslim man. If you said you were Christian, you, to me, were a target. I would have had both ears and my head lobbed off. But, the Lord said, "Suffer ye thus far. Let him get to the place where he can hear

My words.” And I’m not alone. I am not lone; that message has gone down through the ages. Our message here, from the Book of Acts, specifically, starting at verse seven and eight,

Acts 1:7-8 And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

After our whole Easter story is done, you shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you. Something is going on here. Let’s go back there, because, you see, right after that, the Lord was taken up, and they saw Him taken up into the clouds. Now, how do you suppose the disciples must have felt? The angel said, “Why stand ye here gazing? Don’t you know He’s going to return in like manner?” but how do you think they felt? Now, Jesus was not going to be there. “You know what? Jesus was taking the brunt of all these questions when we didn’t have the answer. When there was somebody that needed to be healed or touched, or when a situation needed to be resolved, the Lord was always there. When people needed food, He was the one that showed forth God’s power, and now He’s gone. Which kind of means it’s left up to us. That means it’s our turn. Can we do all that stuff that the Lord did? Can we do it? Because we will receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon us.” Power to do what? Power to do what? Power to read and understand the Scriptures, power to fellowship, power to have greater love, power to pray—real prayer, where you know who you’re praying to and expecting an answer. I was at the men’s prayer meeting—we were at Brother Mike’s house—and, while we were there, Mike said, “Let’s start off with a song,” and God just started blessing. I had a little program, “We’ve got to do this, and we’ve got to do that, and, sometime during the night, we’ve got to...” but I never got a chance! I was like, “Lord, how are we going to do these things if we don’t talk about them?” What lack of faith that was, because them there men of God there in that little room in that house, everything, they either prayed for it, or they said, “Let’s do this...” everything in my little infantile mind, my little infantile agenda, they did it all and plus. They prayed, and they talked about requests, and where else should requests go, other than to men and women that’s going to pray. That’s the power that the Holy Ghost has come upon us.

So, when we receive this power, well, Brother Mike, you mentioned something, we have to share this: see, Jesus, the Bible says, when He was baptized, the Bible says he came straightway up out of the water, and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and they saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove (Matthew 3:16). When we get baptized, saints, when we follow Jesus in his baptism, the Heavens become open to us. Not that we have everything in Heaven, but that we have access to the things... What do I need more of? “What do I need more of? You know what I need? I need encouragement.” Pray it down. “I need more understanding; I’m going through something, and I just need to understand why.” Pray it down. “I need more anointing.” “I need to be able to go through God’s word.” “I need to see more souls saved.” Pray it down. We have access to the things which are in Heaven. And, lo, the Bible says, He saw the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, coming, and lighting upon Him. That is how we follow the Lord. That is how the Holy Ghost is given to us. We have to say this part of it: The power that the Lord gives is not the—whenever you say the word, ‘power,’ certain things come into your mind. The power that the Lord gives is not so that any would become lord over God’s heritage. It’s not to walk around with a bigger spiritual club and say, “Hey, look at me! Look at what I can do! Look, look, look, look!” It’s not for that. The power that we receive is—for the Bible says, “Freely we have received; freely give.” (Matthew 10:8)

Next to the last Scripture—we’re almost done.

**Matthew 20:1-7** *For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.*

And, yes, when I first read this Scripture, I thought—if we were go on and read this, we would see, at the end, that they all get the same reward, but the ones who showed up early, the ones who did more work, it says they got the same pay as the ones who showed up at the eleventh hour. I kind of got to thinking, “Lord, that just don’t sound right. If I’m doing a whole lot more work, I get more credit, I get more money.” I don’t know if any of you have ever worked at a place where somebody is trying to get out of work, but they’re collecting the same paycheck. That really gets up under my craw. I fell like if I’m working, everybody up in here need to be working. If I’m working, and somebody’s in a hammock drinking tea, I have a problem with that. If somebody is snookering up to the boss—I better leave that alone. I don’t know if you’ve ever felt like that, but I did, because I’ve been there. So, I was wondering, “Lord, how can that be?” I had to get a little understanding on that.

To paint the picture just right, I was on a job many,, many, many years ago, and they were rewiring some things and they had moved a certain power supply. I needed to isolate something, and when I asked the resident electrician, “Hey, where’s the switch to isolate this? I need to locate that so I can get some work done.” He said, “I’ll go find it for you.” He went, and he came back, and said, “Okay, the power’s off.” I said, “Okay, great.” So, I did my work, and I told him I was done, and he went and turned the power back on, and I said, “Hey, where’s that switch at anyway?” You know what this man said to me? “Job security.” I said, “Job security? That means every time I need to do that, I need to come to you?” That’s what that means. “I don’t want you to know everything that I know, because then they won’t have as much use for me.” That goes on in churches, too. Yeah, it does! Yes it does! The Scripture is really to make sure that if you’ve been around for a while, if you’ve been around for a long time, and maybe you’ve studied and you’ve prayed, and God’s been blessing you... Hey, I’ve been in the Message for thirty years. Maybe I’m thinking after thirty years, I’ve got me a little bit of knowledge, a little bit of understanding, a little bit of clout. Then I see some of these young Christians, they come in all fired up, it they seem to just pick it up just like that. “Hey! It took me years to learn that! Hey! Hey, God, Why? Why couldn’t You give it to me like that?” This has been an age-old situation for Christians. In the flesh, we think that everybody needs to go the path that we have gone. “If I’ve had to struggle, you should have to struggle. If it took me ten years to learn this certain lesson, and I just spurt it out to you, and you learn it in a day, you know what? you’re going to pass me pretty quick, and you ain’t going to have a lot of use for me.” The whole emphasis behind this Scripture, I realized it wasn’t just talking about salvation. It was just talking about the things of God. So, when he said that you will receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, that makes a very powerful point, but that isn’t *our* power, it’s power given to us by the Lord. If He gives to one however much, and to another however much; it’s not about getting jealous and saying, “I’m more than this one,” it’s, “100% to You, God. Be all honor and glory and magnificence. We can all do more for You.” I don’t want anybody thinking, “They’re catching up to me. I’m an old man, and they’re doing at twenty what it took me ‘til fifty to do.” That’s not the case. That’s not the case at all. I’m closing, and our last Scripture is going to be from Hebrews 6:10.

The disciples thought about that, too, and the disciples said, “Lord, we have left all to follow You, so what is our reward?” (Mark 10:28) The Lord said, “There is none that has left, or sacrificed, or

dedicated, or come closer to Me at some sort of loss that will not receive a hundredfold.” God does keep—I don’t know if you want to say tally—but He remembers every single sacrifice, every benefit, every offering, every single dedication, everything that we do for Him. He remembers every one of them, and He says, “You will receive an hundredfold more and in the life to come.” (Mark 10:29-30) Eternal life. But our last Scripture, from Hebrews 6:10; for all that think that somebody’s going to pass you up, and all your works will just be put in a crowd, and you won’t have the clout or the prestige or claim, role, title, that you think you’ve labored for...

**Hebrews 6:10** *For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love...*

Every single thing, saints. Every one of them, every word shared, every cup of water, every cup of coffee, every mile driven, every prayer prayed, every time you move something out of the way, you work something for the Lord, every single one; He is not unrighteous to forget every single one of them.

**Hebrews 6:10** *For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

Amen. Can we give the Lord a praise?

