

“Captive No More”
By Brother Kenneth Ray
Easter Sunday, April 8th, 2012

Captive: Taken or held prisoner.

Today is a day when people around the world gather together, much as we have, to celebrate Jesus having victory over the grave. Many will point out that Jesus rose on the third day. This is true. Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the human race and He was in the grave for three days and then rose, the grave not being able to hold Him.

Would you believe me if I were to tell you that it is so much more than that? It was much more than a man who was crucified; first God became a man. Easter should not be just a celebration of events. Let's take a step back and take a look:

Luke 23:34 ...Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do...

So here is Jesus, looking down from the cross, and seeing His raiment (His clothes) being parted and lots cast, and he prays for their forgiveness.

Luke 23:43 ...To day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.

Luke 23:46 Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit...

Now let's fast-forward: We know what took place, but what did it do? Ephesians gives us some insight.

Ephesians 4:8 ...when He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.

One of the gifts that He gave us was understanding. Not just understanding Scripture, but understanding the bigger picture.

2 Corinthians 2:11 Lest Satan should get an advantage over us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.

He opened up their understanding.

James 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

1 John 2:16 ...the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

The human condition is in opposition to us. Our adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8).

Our national symbol is the eagle. Can you imagine if someone took that eagle, and locked it in a cage. There would be some pretty upset people, wouldn't there? Satan's devices attempt to do that to us.

When Jesus was about to stand trial, what did the Pharisees do? They stirred up people's emotions. They didn't have any legitimate arguments against Jesus' teachings, so they stirred up people's emotions, got the crowd to demand Jesus be crucified. We have an adversary, and there is a struggle for our well-being; there is a struggle for our soul.

John 8:36 If the Son therefore shall set you free, ye shall be free indeed.

This is accomplished by the blood of Jesus being applied to us through faith in operation, being baptized in Jesus' Name for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Colossians 2:12 Buried with Him in baptism, wherein ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God...

Romans 6:4 ...even so, we also should walk in newness of life.

So we are free to live life in Christ, but still be pursued as saints and soldiers.

2 Timothy 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

You are still pursued by the roaring lion. He hasn't died. If you remember the movie, The Lord of the Rings, riders would pursue the ring, and never stop looking. Satan is trying to reclaim you.

Jesus gave us the Word of truth to defeat the Father of Lies. We will ever fight against the old man that will try to come back and overtake us.

The enemy is not dead. The arrows are still coming in. These things have not changed. John said that He must increase (John 3:30). I have to receive the gifts. What if I never study? The Bible tells us that we are more than conquerors. So, how do we win the battle?

Two words: "A new."

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another...

Jesus was accused of going against the teachings of Moses and long-standing traditions. These people were not ready to let go of the old, and embrace the new covenant. Hate holds us captive. Holding a grudge holds us captive. Being prideful holds us captive. Discontent holds us captive. We are free.

Romans 8:37 ...in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Revelation 3:12 ...I will write upon him My new name.

There's much more. We do not celebrate in understanding. We do not celebrate in knowledge. We celebrate in obedience. Not in what He did, but in what He still does.

Ephesians 2:10 ...we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.