April 10

Greetings, DGCC Family.

Today is the day after Easter. Jesus has died. Jesus has risen. He has appeared to the disciples and the women closest to Him. For me, the question always is, now what?

Sometimes I think that we who are followers of Jesus tend to think of Easter as a one-time event. “Awesome. Jesus rose from the dead. His work is complete.” In fact, nothing could be further from the truth or, shall I say, the Truth. I think it’s important to remember that as followers of Jesus, His death and resurrection is not the end of His work, but the beginning.

As we continue this week with our walk through the Bible with a look at Paul’s letter to the Colossians, I’m reminded of his words to this church that he held so dear:

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains” (4:2).

In these words, written twenty-five or so years after that first Easter, Paul articulates two important truths that teach us today. Here’s the first one: it is not by our will, or our persuasiveness, or our knowledge, that people are open to the Gospel message. It is by the power and the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Our job is to pray that the Spirit opens hearts, just like He did for the centurion who proclaimed on Good Friday, “Surely this man [Jesus] was the Son of God” (Mark 15:39).

Second, it is we who carry the message. It is we who proclaim the message. It is we who live out the message. God is the One who opens the door, and chooses which one, and when to open it. But it is our job to step up to the door and to then step through it.

So let me return now to my original question: Easter is over, now what? Here’s the answer: look for the open door. Maybe it’s open just a crack. Maybe it’s wide open. Maybe it’s been open for a long time, and maybe it’s been open only since yesterday. In any case, walk up to it and go ahead, step inside. The person on the other side is waiting.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
April 11

Greetings, DGCC Family.

Recently, after a year-long break, I reactivated my Facebook account. Not sure if that was a good thing or not. In any case, whenever I look at it, which I admit is not really all that often, I’m more often than not reminded why I took a break in the first place. Here are some posts I have observed recently:

• Scripture promotes the 2nd Amendment (after all, Cain used a rock to kill his brother, and we don’t blame the rock. [In fact, nowhere in Scripture does it say that Cain used a rock. Just sayin’.])

• Scripture promotes gun control (after all, Cain used a rock to kill his brother, and if mass shooters used rocks, innocent people would be alive. For the rest, see above.)

• The early church was socialist in nature (Not true, but I will deal with this another day.)

• It’s OK for us to HATE the ideas and thoughts of others, as well as the people who articulate those thoughts and ideas. In fact, those who disagree with me must HATE themselves.

I could go on, but you get the idea. This is not to say that people don’t post positive messages, genuine expressions of faith, and so on. But it is to say that we who are followers of Jesus could learn something from, well, Jesus. This is how the apostle Paul, who personally encountered the risen Jesus, says it:

“Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone” (Colossians 4:5-6).

So, to paraphrase the words of Sergeant Phil Esterhaus from the old TV show “Hills Street Blues: “Let’s be gracious out there today.”

IHS,

Pastor Lou
April 12

Greeting you in the name of the risen Messiah.

Paul wrote his letter to the Colossian church in 60 AD when he was under house arrest in Rome, a short twenty-five years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. When you don’t have TV, radio, live streaming, the Internet, or social media, let alone even a printing press, that’s not a lot of time to start a new church across the known world. So, Paul used the only known means of mass communication: letters. And boy, did it work.

Paul's letter to the Colossian church was really a letter of concern. False teachings had begun to creep in, as they do even today. Questions like, “Who was Jesus? Man or God? How could He be both?” “What’s the relationship between the soul and the body? And, “If Jesus will forgive us, why not just keep sinning?” To answer these, false teachers taught that Jesus wasn’t really God, the body is impure, and go ahead and keep sinning. Might as well have a little fun along the way.

These teachings disturbed Paul and so while imprisoned he wrote this letter that survives, and teaches us, to this day. The central message of Paul’s letter is this:

“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (1:15-17).

I find especially meaningful Paul’s statement that “In Him all things hold together.” This means that Christ permeates all things of Creation. He is in the farthest stars. He is in the beauty of a sunrise and the joy of a baby’s laugh. He is in the ER on a lonely night and the graveside of a loved one’s funeral. He is in the hospital room, the operating room, and the unemployment office. Most importantly, when we place our eternal trust in Him, He is in you. And He is in me.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
April 13

Grace and peace to you this day.

When I was in business life, golfing was a primary means of connecting with clients and potential clients. Golf was a means to develop relationships, get out of the office, and win new business.

Frankly, I really dislike golf. Probably because I was terrible at it. It also involves one of the things I least like in life: looking for stuff. For a guy who can’t even find the mustard in his own refrigerator, looking for a little white ball in foot-high grass (for me, a regular occurrence), was not my idea of a fun afternoon. As someone once said, “Golf is a good walk spoiled.”

So, whenever there was a golf outing, I took a pass. But whenever I declined, it usually came with some admonition. I remember one of my colleagues sayin, “Man, I live for golf.” And that he did. Expensive clubs, country club membership, lessons, the whole package.

All of this comes to mind as I read these words from the apostle Paul in his letter to the Colossian church:

“When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” (3:4).

In this one sentence, Paul assures us of Christ’s return and our eternal life with Him in glory. He also says that as followers of Christ, He is “our life.” That means that He is everything to us, in this life and the next. No need to look for Him, as with my errant golf ball. He has already looked for and found us as His “lost sheep.”

Scripture teaches that when we follow Him, Christ is our life. He is everything to us. And let me say in this week after Easter, in turn, He went to the cross, because we are everything to Him.

IHS,

Pastor Lou
April 14

Greetings, DGCC Family.

Here’s your musical devotion for the week. A little Southern Gospel sent along by our friend Dave Pluister. Turn up the volume and enjoy!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xONo9o39Wxk

IHS,

Pastor Lou