

Dear Friend,

**Here is a story of both Hope and Power for you to consider on this Easter Sunday, 2004.**

Easter is a time for us to remember the fact that we are in need of a Savior because we have sinned and failed to live in holiness before God. We are reminded in Psalms 103:10-12 that God has not dealt with us according to our sins nor according to our iniquity, but according to His Love, Grace and Mercy. We are also reminded in the same passage that God has removed our sins from us as far as the east is from the west, to be remembered no more. What a wonderful story of Hope! He was willing to suffer for us in the form of His Son, Jesus, so that we might be accounted righteous through faith in His finished work on the cross.

Yet in all of the wonder of the Easter story we realize that we are both unworthy and priceless. What is man that God is so committed to providing us with salvation? Why does God care so much? Part of it is because in Genesis 1:26-27 God tell us that we are made in God's Image, so therefore we all carry the precious image of God within us.

**I believe that something else also makes us precious. God has thoughts and plans for us and we have the power within us to delight God and to bring Him Pleasure! What a privilege it is that each one of us can participate in it!**

David said in I Chronicles 29:17, "I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness". We are also told in Proverbs 15:8b, "...But the prayer of the upright is His (God's) delight".

The promise of God's plans for us is found in Jeremiah 29:11. Even though this verse was originally written to the Israelite people when they were in captivity, these same words from this same God can be read by each one of us and applied to our lives. It says, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." We all need to always remember that God has promised us a Future and Hope! **Jesus' death for our sins was necessary and it is His resurrection that makes our Future and Hopes come alive through Faith in His finished work on the cross.**

A wonderful promise from God to all who Wait Upon Him can be found in Isaiah 40:31, "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Psalms 27:13-14 encourages us when it says, "I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord and He shall strengthen your heart, wait, I say, on the Lord."

Another mind stretching passage from Psalms is found in 147:11 where God tells us that He takes pleasure in those who fear Him and in those who hope in His mercy. As we spend time in prayer and meditation about these things, it can bring us to a point of both humility and exhilaration knowing that we are precious to God and that we have the opportunity to bring Him delight and pleasure. What a blessing, joy and hope it is for us the Clay, being able to bring blessings of delight and pleasure to God, the Potter!

**God takes pleasure in those who live uprightly and that is an awesome privilege. The thought that a finite unholy human being is able to bring delights and pleasures to an Infinite and Holy God is a mind-boggling thought indeed. It is a fact that Easter reminds us of and empowers us to employ as we live in Faith.**

**William C. Fordham**

**4-11-04**