

CONNECTIONS

The Importance of Easter

A few weeks ago I was watching a late night talk show on TV, and specifically, a segment devoted to the Easter season grabbed my attention. The host walked around town and interviewed random people with this simple question: "What do you know about Easter?" Some people talked about the cross and Jesus, but the majority of the people that were interviewed talked more about the Easter bunny and whether or not it really laid eggs. I'm sure that the show's intention was to get some laughs from the viewing audience, which I have to admit, it did from me. However, it also made me think about my own attitude towards the Easter Season. I knew my heart wasn't completely immersed in the true meaning of Easter.

Some of you who have grown up in the church, are familiar with the *busyness* of the Easter Season, and this year was no different. We devoted Holy Week, or Passion Week, for early morning prayer at 5:30 (when it was still dark outside); we had our Good Friday service; an all-Dallas EM Sunrise service on Easter Sunday; and the launch of our Second Service that same Sunday morning. It was an extremely *busy* week for our ministry. And in the midst of all the



events, I found myself at times going through the motions of the season rather than really reflecting on the true meaning of Easter. Maybe it was all too routine for me, or maybe I was just too focused on the success of the programs and events.

But then I was reminded, in the most unlikely ways, about the true significance of Easter...of Jesus Christ.

The first occasion happened during our Good Friday service when we showed a video clip entitled, "The Crowd or the Cross." The clip emphasized the importance of listening to what the Cross calls us to do, rather than following the pressures of the Crowd. I had previewed this video numerous times, but one line really hit home with me on that evening

- "The CROWD says do...The CROSS says done." As I read that line on the screen, I was reminded of the power of the Cross, and what Jesus did in washing away all my sins. God further reinforced this through another video we showed during our Easter Sunday service entitled, "Because He Lives." As I listened to the words of this classic hymn, I was again reminded that life is indeed "worth the living just because He, Jesus Christ, lives."

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Want to learn more about Binnerri English Ministry?

Check us out on the Web at www.binnerriem.org. For general contact, please e-mail info@binnerriem.org.
1301 Abrams Rd. Richardson, TX 75081 | 972-238-9305

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Through these two videos, God brought me back to the heartbeat of the Easter Season. It's not about programs and events, it's about Jesus Christ and His willing sacrifice for us. It's about the hope we have in the One who has overcome death to bring us into a right relationship with our heavenly Father. It's about denying the demands of the crowd and humbly kneeling before the cross of Christ. And here's the important thing... it's not something we do once a year, it's something we celebrate all year round.

May the true meaning of Easter resound in our hearts throughout this year.

P. Andrew ❖

Invest and Invite

Last month, Pastor Kye reminded us of the importance of investing in relationships with the people in our lives who don't come to church, and inviting them out on Easter Sunday. One of our congregation members did just that and invited a few of her friends to come out to the launch of our Second Service. She shares with us her experience and how it all paid off.

One of the girls I invited, I met at the gym. We were in the sauna one night, and I remember a strong urge to talk to her. For the sake of being polite, we started talking and I found out she was a student at UTD. I asked whether she had found a church or a community in Dallas. She then told me that someone had recently told her about a man named Jesus who she'd never heard of before. She said she wanted to go to church, but after school ended because it kept her so busy. I told her about our Second Service launch and told her to come and check it out. Because it was two months in advance, she said she'd love to go and told me she'd pencil it in. When she came to the Easter service, she even brought her camera and was taking pictures. She was in awe because she had no idea what to expect. Afterwards, when we went out to lunch, she told me that she definitely wants to come again.

My other friend and I are in grad school together. She grew up in the Catholic Church. One day after class, she started crying because she was so overwhelmed with everything that she was dealing with. She was so frustrated and was venting about everything she had to do. I was in the same position, but because of my faith in Christ, I still had peace. I thought, "perhaps she was lacking something spiritual?" I invited her to church, and she seemed eager to go, but said it was too early. Then I told her about the 11:30 service and she got very excited. She came out and was really paying attention to the sermon. She said she almost teared up because it spoke to her about her situation, so she really connected to the message.

They were both so eager to come out, and the timing worked out perfectly for both of them. It was almost as if it was all set up for me. I really didn't do anything extraordinary; just invited them to come out. ❖

Upcoming Events

4/29: Pathway (Singles) Gathering, 7:00 PM

5/9: Men's Prayer Meeting, 6:30 AM

5/16: Women's Prayer Meeting, 6:30 AM

5/16: FamilyLand Service, 7:00 PM

5/17: One Family Celebration at Richland College, 1:00 PM

5/23: Sun Synod Volleyball Tournament

For more detailed information on our upcoming events, visit our website: www.binnerriem.org/news.

Common Misconceptions of the Church

Self-righteous. Preachy. Hypocritical. Holier-than-thou. Mention the word “Christian,” and these are some of the negative thoughts that others may have. Not without reason; there are several extremists out there that make it hard for the rest of us to keep in the world’s good graces. However, it is important to understand what these misconceptions are and realize why they are mostly false. Here, we’ve gathered five common misconceptions of Christians and the church and offered explanations as to why they aren’t true.

1. “Christians are hypocrites.”

Being a Christian means you have to follow what the Bible says and try to live a righteous, pure life. But because we are humans, it’s hard to obey all the rules and be good all the time. We all struggle with sin and we make mistakes. However, thanks to God’s mercy and grace, we find forgiveness through faith in Jesus Christ. Most Christians aren’t trying to be hypocrites, we’re simply humans trying to reach for a higher perfection who may err along the way.



2. “Church is so traditional and boring.”

Church worship has become so much more modern and cutting-edge. We now have the option to choose a traditional or more contemporary style of worship. Modern praise songs can be sung along with the classic hymns, and the environments can be adjusted to accommodate various styles and senses as well.

3. “It’s too early to get up. I like to sleep in on Sundays.”

Most people like to sleep in on weekends to catch up on valuable sleep that was missed during the work week. But now, you can sleep in and still make it out to church on time. Our second service starts at 11:30am, giving you plenty of time to wake up later and still come out to worship.

4. “Christians are too judgmental.”

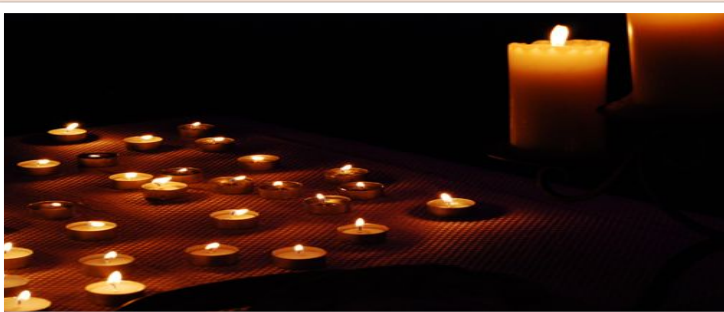
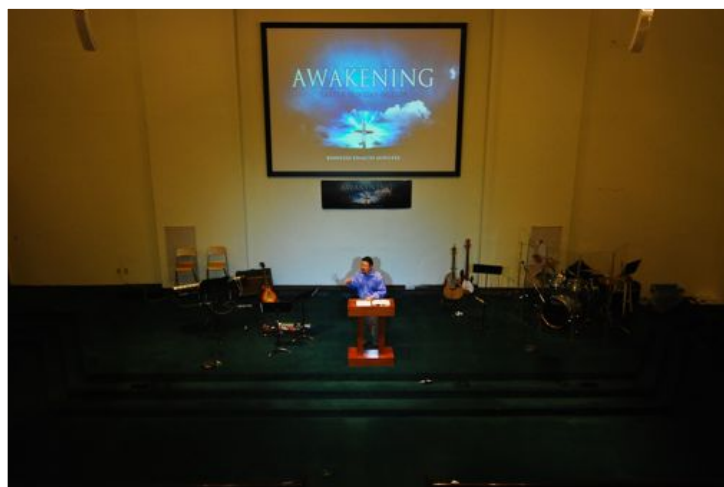
The only One who has any authority to judge is God. We are in no place to be judgmental. As a church, our goal is to be a community that is welcoming and accepting, and one that anyone can join and feel like he or she belongs.



5. “I can be a Christian and have a good relationship without going to church.”

True, you can be a Christian and not go to church. However, it is hard to grow on your own without having a community to help your walk. It’s important to have someone to hold you accountable for your actions. Also, it’s important to have a community that can encourage you. Because of this, we provide LifeGroups. These groups of six to eight individuals meet once a week to do a devotional or study and to share their daily struggles. If you would like more information on being part of a LifeGroup, check our our website at www.binnerriem.org/connect/lifegroups/ or contact one of our pastors. ❖

Good Friday and Easter Services



Submissions

Want to submit an article? We'd love to hear from you! E-mail us with your articles/ideas at connections@binnerriem.org. Submissions must be made by the third Sunday of each month.

Want to serve in a different way? Join the *Connections* team! E-mail us at connections@binnerriem.org for more information.