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Reflection for April 13

By Tsuker Yang

Imagine with me the “breaking news” coming out on that first Easter Sunday. Here are some of the headlines: “He is Risen” reported from the Women Ministry which Mary Magdalene and others were leaders. “The Tomb Was Emptied” Governor Pilate’s Headquarter reported. “The Disciples Stole His Body” was in a letter put out to the Sanhedrim by the high priest. “Jesus Is Alive: He Walked, Talked and Ate with Us” two disciples reported. “They Did Not Believe” appeared in the front page of the Jerusalem Tribune. Depending on where the news report is from, or which paper you read, you can see the different headlines and perspectives.

Today, one day after Easter, what news could there be for the church from the major news networks? How about news coming from Facebook’s Headquarters, YouTube and other major social media platforms? I like to believe the headlines would read “People gathered to worship on this past Easter Sunday more than ever amidst the pandemic and ‘safer at home’ order.” My adult kids who had stopped going to church now are willing to gather for the family devotion on Sunday in the family room, even for virtual worship online and in Facebook. Here is an email I just received this morning from Chris Backert at Fresh Expressions: “*On April 12, 2020 it is highly likely that more people heard the good news of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead than any other single day in the history of the world.*” What does this mean?

Is this a sort of worship (at home or online, drive in or drive through) for the new normal? The Fresh Expressions Movement may not disagree. The pandemic may empty church sanctuaries but it can never empty people’s hearts for Jesus Christ. It does not matter what means, medium or mode of worship people use or version/platform of Scripture they may read from; what matter is the heart focused on Jesus Christ. If you agree with me, this is wonderful breaking news. It’s exciting, perhaps, the beginning of a new normal. In fact, not long after that first Easter a new normal became reality, an overcoming from an uncertainty to a new life and new possibility. Consequently worship was no longer acceptable only in the temple but at home and wherever and whenever the Gospel is preached, the Scripture read, and prayers lifted up in the name of God.

Let’s not permit the coronavirus pandemic or the “safer at home” order to stop or hinder us and our family from worshipping and serving God in the new normal. I pray that we can learn to adapt for our gain. Peter said that our faith will be tested for its purity in such time as in this pandemic (1 Peter 1:6-7). We are in a hard time but I believe good things will come out of it (Romans 8:28). The pandemic will pass. The church will become stronger. Life will soon get better. Just hang in there, pray and believe, God is about to do new things through the power of the resurrection we have in Jesus Christ.

(Take a moment and pray, in silent or in words)

Thov koj tsom xaam nrug kuv txug qhov xuvxwm kubntxhuv kws tshimsim nyob rua thawj Nub Easter. Qhov xuvxwm ntawd tuabneeg sau lub ntsab lug tis le caag? Tej tug tis tas, “Yexus Tub Sawv Lawm.” Lwm tug kuj tis txawm has tas, “Lub Qhov Ntxaa Khoob Lug Ca.” Qee tug tseem tis tas, “Cov Thwjtim Nyag Nwg Lub Cev Lawm Moog Lawm,” hab tseem muaj qee tug tis tas, “Puab Tsi Ntseeg.” Nyob ntawm tsaab xuvxwm kws koj nyeem, cov sau ib leej nyag yuav tis txawm lawm nyag ib yaam, raws le tug tshaab qhov xuvxwm kev pum hab totaub.

Koj xaav ne, qhov xuvxwm kub ntshuv nubnua kws tshimsim ib nub tomqaab Nub Easter nws yuav tis tau ntshab lug has le caag, txhwjxeeb nyob rua peb tam nuav kws muaj tug kaabmob Covid-19 hab peb nyob tsev xwb; tsi has xuvwm lug ntawm tej chaw luj kws tshaajtawm xuvwm lossis ntawm Facebook hab Youtube. Kuv xaam pum tas qhov xuvxwm yuav has tas, “Tuabneeg pehawm Vaajtsvw coob tshaajplawg dlua le tej sijhawm yaav dlau lug” thaum muaj tug kaabmob nuav hab nyob tsev. Kuv cov minyuam kws muaj noobnyoog luj lawm puab ib txha tsi kaam moog church tabsis puab ho tseem kaam lug koom kev pehawm Vaajtsvw nyob rua huv tsev hab huv Facebook lossis online. Qhov nuav txhais tau le caag?

Nuav puas yog kev pehawm Vaajtsvw (pehawm nyob huv tsev, online, tsaav tshab moog koom lossis nyob saab nrau lub tuamtsev) rua lub neej tam tshab? Tej zag lub Koomhum New Expression yuav pum zoo tas yog. Tug kaabmob Covid-19 tau ua rua txhua chaav pehawm huv lub tuamtsev khoob quas lug, tabsi nwg ua tsi tau rua tuabneeg puab lub sab khoob tso Tswv Yexus tseg. Puab yim muab sab pehawm xwb tsi has yuav pehawm lug ntawm nyob online, live stream, huv tsev, huv xuvtooj lossis Facebook hab Youtube tej. Yog koj pum le kuv xaav, nuav yog ib qhov xuvwm tseemceeb lossis kubntxhuv. Nwg txaus sab heev, tej zag yuav yog lub neej kev noj nyob tshab pib tshab rua peb.

Tseeb tag, tomqaab thawj lub Easter dlau moog kuj muaj lub neej kev noj nyob tshab, yog kev kovyeej kws hloov ntawm tej kev txhawbxeeb txomnyem moog rua lub neej tshab hab tej peevxwm kws tshim tshab. Dlau ntawd lug moog kev pehawm Vaajtsvw tsi yog ua nyob huv lub tuamtsev xwb txha tau, tabsi nyob huv vaaj huv

tsev, qhov chaw twg hab lub sijhawm twg los puavleej tau tuabsi, ruav yog muaj kev qha txuj Moo Zoo, kev nyeem Vaajtswv txujlug hab kev thov Vaajswv nyob nrug.

Thov peb tsi xob ca tug kaabmob Cov-19 lossis nomtswv txuj cai tshwj kuas nyob tsev txwv lossis ua rua peb tso peb hab peb tsev tuabneeg kev pehawm Vaajtswv tseg. Xwbfwb Petus tau has tas Vaajtwv yuav sim peb txuj kev ntseeg saib puas tseem yog nyob rua tej lub sijhawm zoo le nuav (1 Petus 1:6-7). Paub tseeb lawm tas najnub nua peb raug kev txomnyem tabsi kuv ntseeg tas yeej yuav muaj yaam zoo tawm ntawd yaam phem lug. Cov ntseeg yuav luj hlub tshaaj qub. Thov ua sab ntev tiv, mob sab rau ntseeg hab thov Vaajtswv, Vaajtswv taabtom ua yaam tshab tshimsim tuaj lug ntawm nwg lub fwjchim kws tsa Yexus sawv huv qhov tuag rov qaab lug.

(Thov siv sijhawm ib plag lug thov Vaajtswv, thov huv sab lossis ntawm lu lug has)