

ONE MAN'S EASTER, ANOTHER MAN'S SPRING

Pastor Bill Orf

What is Easter? This is my story of how Easter finally came to me. Maybe my journey will help you.

Born and raised in Schuylkill County, we liked our neighbors, our town, and our life seemed to hold hope of a good future. Easter was a church service that talked about Christ being raised, but to us it really meant spring had come. It followed Palm Sunday that I liked as a boy because we got palms to "play with" after church. You see, our faith was practiced by going to church each Sunday, yet we made no real connection with God. I served as acolyte, sang in the choir, and went to the required religious classes, but in many services fought to stay awake through the sermon. I often read the words beautifully painted on the Church's walls for something to do. **"Ask and it will be given to you; Seek, and you will find; Knock and it will be opened unto you."** In retrospect, I might say those words from Jesus were my childhood Bible, even God's message to me, but I missed it! I didn't ask, seek or knock. I didn't believe God was there, or that I had a sin problem that only Jesus could fix, and I thought I could handle life. Easters led only to Spring, not new life with Jesus.

I went to college, married my high school sweetheart, Sandy, and we began life together with new jobs, a new apartment, and what seemed like a great future. But God was not a real part of our lives or our plans. However, just ten months later our daughter was born! Due to a problem in the delivery process, she was brain damaged and lay motionless in the hospital, seemingly dead. We suddenly needed God, if He was here, so we prayed, **asking** for His help. After three days, our daughter amazingly came to life! God had shown up. We took her home from the hospital, but seizures soon began that were severe and frequent. Our life was consumed with cares, God was somehow forgotten, and gradually the love that had begun our marriage wilted under life's pressure. After just three years, we divorced and shared our daughter on alternate weekends. The next five Easters passed for me with nothing more than Spring following them.

But in that period following our daughter's birth problems, my wife's parents recognized their need for God and found the real meaning of Easter. They began **seeking** the living God themselves, and found Him! Jesus became their Savior & Lord of life! They began praying for us and telling us about the Lord, but years passed & Easter was still just Spring.

Then my wife began **seeking** to know if God was real for herself. It took her a year of earnestly reading the Bible and praying to believe by faith that Jesus was Savior & Lord and Easter came to her. She became a new woman with a dramatically new life. She told everybody about Jesus, taught teens about Him, held prayer meetings in her apartment, and a mini revival broke out. She was alive! After some time, she began praying/**Asking** for a godly husband. God heard and was about to answer with His own plans for that Spring, around the time of Easter.

At that time, I didn't believe in a God who was with us and affected our lives, so I never prayed, nor went to church, nor thought of God. In fact, I had become engaged over the previous winter, and planned to marry later that year, thinking that a new marriage was what my life lacked. But God had some surprises for both Sandy and I. He shocked her, telling her in answer to her prayer for a husband that she already had one: namely, me! Now you must understand we were divorced more than five years, I was engaged, I had no interest in God, and she had no interest in me. She was shocked at God's plan, and told Him remarriage to me was impossible for all of these reasons. But God wouldn't change His mind! So after a period of resisting His plan, she asked what part she would have to play, believing that His plan would not work, and then He could send her a good husband. He told her to briefly tell me of her new life with Jesus and His plan for us, and He would do the rest. So when I came to her apartment to pick up our daughter, she told me His plan. Now I was astounded, saying I didn't like her, and she immediately said she didn't like me either! I said this was crazy, and she responded it wasn't her plan, but God's. As I rushed out of her apartment, she said I should pray about it. Hah!

Yet, Wednesday night, there I was, praying! I **Asked** God, "Show me if You are real, and I will give up my engagement, remarry my wife, and go Your way". God answered by speaking His plan to my fiancée,

and she believed Him! On Thursday evening, in tears, she visited me and said God spoke to her, telling her I must remarry Sandy and that He had a plan for my life. She handed her ring back and left forever. As she walked out my gate that spring evening, God's Easter finally came to me in my backyard. I remembered my prayer, "if You show me You are real," and suddenly I became a BELIEVER in God and received new life. Sandy and I were remarried two months later, moved to a new job in Binghamton, New York, and began a life living together with God and serving Him. We began to **Ask, Seek, and Knock** about God's plan for our finances, our time, our talents, our purpose, and He answered.

Several years later, God really surprised us again. One day He told us to leave my job, move back to our home area, and wait upon Him, for He had a work for us to do. With lots of questions but with faith in His Word, we did as he said. About one year later, around Easter, He began The Lighthouse Church. But that's another story. I am Pastor Bill Orf, and I deeply hope you too may find Jesus' forgiveness, power over sin, and new life for yourself. Whatever time of year your Easter comes, it will bring much more than just Spring! **Ask, Seek, Knock – and God Himself will answer!**