



EASTER PARADE

Jesus came to give new life!

by BOB HOSTETLER

CRISP NEW CLOTHES. Shiny shoes. Bows and ribbons. Girlish curls peeking out from delicate bonnets. Bright colors and spring flowers. Years ago, a church or Sunday School — sometimes even a neighborhood or city¹ — featured an annual Easter parade, when boys, girls, men, and women strolled around happily in new finery, admiring and being admired. The custom even inspired the hit song “Easter Parade” by Irving Berlin. For some, new clothes were a rarity, but Easter was different. Easter was special. On Easter, girls wore flouncy dresses and extravagant bonnets; boys donned new suits and ties. Like spring itself, everything in the Easter parade looked crisp and clean and new and bright.

The soul who experiences newness of life by trusting in Jesus Christ reminds us of a child bouncing out of bed on Easter morning, ready to join the Easter parade: “It is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep The night is nearly over, and the day is near; so let us walk with decency, as in the daytime: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus

Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires” (Rom. 13:11-14).

This Easter — this very day, in fact — can be a personal Easter parade for you, in which “the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17). No matter how

wrinkled or frazzled your heart and life may seem, all can be made new, if you’re willing. Simply pray a sincere and heartfelt prayer like this to God: “Heavenly Father, I need an Easter parade in my heart and life. I come to You as a sinner who needs forgiveness. I trust Jesus who rose from the grave to conquer my sin and make me clean and new inside. I turn from my sinful ways and surrender to You right now. Rule my life and help me to walk with You in newness of life from this moment on. I ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

If you prayed that prayer, tell a pastor or Christian friend. Or call 888-537-8720.

¹Some, such as New York and New Orleans, still do.

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A Perspective on the Ascension



You would've thought I had discovered the moon, the thrill I felt exploring this theory about human behavior. Yet I was in high school, and new discoveries were meant to be tested and then shared with the world. So there I sat in the restaurant, staring at the ceiling. My sister put her fork down and, as if on cue, looked up, asking what I was staring at. I proposed that if she and I stared at the ceiling long enough, everyone in the restaurant would begin looking upward. We could hardly contain our laughter as, table by table, diners became curious and craned their necks. It was a moment to enjoy but a better life lesson to learn.

That lesson was taught during a different course of life when I was a football mom fumbling with deflated hopes as my son's team floundered on the field. Out of the blue, our running back's sister leaned over and interrupted my thoughts: "Don't things look different when you look up, Mrs. Debbie?"

My gaze shifted from the scuffle at the 30-yard line to a fleecy cloud in an otherwise cloudless sky. With a change of view, my outlook was altered. Words from the psalmist appeared before me: "He wraps himself in light as if it were a robe, spreading out the sky like a canopy, ... making the clouds his chariot" (Ps. 104:2-3). The struggles of the day paled in the warm light.

Things do look different when we look up and redirect our worries to worship our ascended Savior. This Easter, Dr. Bill Cook will point us to the promised resurrection, and Ellen Vaughn will raise our hearts for revival. Page by page, each author will inspire us to look upward for a hope-inflated perspective. May our ascending outlook cause curious onlookers to follow our gaze and ask, "Why are you looking up?"

Upward and onward,

DEBBIE DICKERSON

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