



11500 West 20th Avenue  
Lakewood, Colorado 80215  
303-238-2482 (Fax 303 238 2337)

[www.soth.net](http://www.soth.net)

contact us at [mail@soth.net](mailto:mail@soth.net)

9:00 a.m. Christian Education

**10:00 a.m. Worship**

Children's Sunday School during Worship



## "Invitation to a New Life"

**1 Corinthians 5:6b-8**

**Rev. Ron Holmes**

**April 4, 2010**



Easter is an invitation. Yes, it is certainly an invitation to a great celebration—the biggest day of the year in the church—Christ's resurrection from the dead and the victory thus gained over sin and death. Yes, Easter is an invitation to celebrate that. But contained within the celebration of the Easter event is the invitation to a new life. For Christ's resurrection from the dead means an opportunity for a new life for all. In his resurrection Jesus Christ invites you to a new life, a new life in the future—the promise of eternal life with Christ because he has conquered sin and death—and the invitation to a new life here and now, a new life, using the words of Paul in his first letter to Corinth, rid of malice and wickedness for a new life of sincerity and truth.

Those are the invitations contained within the Easter celebration. Jesus, by his resurrection from the dead, brings new life as our Savior and as our Lord. Those are foundational titles we ascribe to Jesus—Savior and Lord. As Savior, Jesus brings the promise of new life with him in heaven on the occasion of the end of our life here on earth. This is the first and foundational truth of Christian faith—by going to the cross, Jesus paid the penalty of death for sin. Only one who was without sin and, therefore, undeserving of the penalty for sin could pay it. Only Jesus. His death on the cross was the payment for all humanity's sin—for every person...for you...and for me Jesus paid for our sin. His resurrection from the dead brought victory over sin and death—for you...and for me. That victory means a new life awaits us at the end of this life on earth. (If your curious about what that new life looks like refer back to the Heaven series earlier this year) Jesus is Savior because he saves us from our sin and one clear invitation in the Easter story is to

receive the assurance of new life in eternity with Jesus by accepting him as your Savior.

But Easter is about more than a future new life with Christ. It is also about a new life here and now with Jesus as your Lord. Easter is an invitation to begin a new life right now where sin no longer rules in your life. Jesus' resurrection has conquered sin, not only in death, but in this life as well. Jesus, through his Spirit alive and at work in us today, gives us power to overcome the temptations of sin in our lives right now. Through proclaiming Jesus as our Lord and, therefore, seeking to live according to his standards for us and no one else's—certainly not the world's standards—we can experience new life right now.

Jesus wants us to be free of the effects and consequences of sin in our lives. That's why he went to the cross! For you...and for me to be free of sin. That is the invitation of Easter. But will you accept that invitation?

According to the apostle Paul, sin affects everything. It is like yeast that once it enters into dough it works its way through the entire batch of dough. It's not like some of the dough rises because of the yeast's impact and some of it doesn't. Yeast works its way through the whole batch of dough. That is the affect of sin in our lives. We fool ourselves if we think we can somehow separate out an area of sin from other areas of our lives. For example, thinking that we can somehow separate out an affair we are engaging in from the other areas of our life. My affair over here and the other areas of my life—my life as husband, and father, my life at work and my life at church can somehow remain unaffected. For a while, perhaps. But eventually the yeast of that sin works its way through the whole batch of dough that is my life. Ask Tiger Woods about that. Or John Edwards. Not to beat up on those guys who have certainly suffered huge consequences for their sin—but they serve as a very public example of how sin works its way through every aspect of the dough that is our lives. We fool ourselves when we think we can separate out an area of sin in our lives from the other areas of our lives. We ought to work not at trying to keep separate the sinful from the righteous aspects of our lives—that's hard work...in fact it is impossible to accomplish—but work hard, with Jesus' help, at getting rid of the sinful things in our lives. Paul describes it as getting rid of the old yeast, "*the yeast of malice and wickedness*," for bread without such yeast, "*the bread of sincerity and truth*." And I think it would be fair to categorize "the yeast of malice and wickedness" in this way: malice would be sins against others, premeditated acts of injury against another person, acts of revenge, hurtful gossip and the like; wickedness would be sins of self-indulgence, riotous living, illicit affairs, gluttony and drunkenness. All sin is yeast that works its way into all areas of our life. Some sins target others as its victims, some sins are selfish acts of indulgence, but all sin, like yeast, works its way into all areas of our life. And Jesus wants us to be free of all of that by serving as our Lord in life. He sets the standards. He draws the boundary lines, not for our detriment or to suck all the joy out of life, but for our betterment and to bring true joy into our lives.

That is the invitation inherent in the Easter celebration. An invitation to a new life filled with assurance as to what our final destination is and a new life freed from the bondage and damaging affects of sin in our lives—sin that works its way into every aspect of our lives, damaging families, friendships, and relationships of all kinds.

The question is, what invitation do you need to respond to today? Where do you need to R.S.V.P. to Jesus today? Is it the invitation to receive Jesus as your Savior? Do you struggle with questions about what happens to us, if anything, when we die? Do you have anxieties about that? Jesus, through his death and resurrection, invites you today to be free from that, to have full assurance that you are his and nothing can take you away from that. Time after the time the Biblical message is one of assurance of our salvation through Jesus Christ...and nothing can take that away from us. The apostle John, in his gospel writes, *"...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ [Messiah], the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name"* (John 20:31). Also, in his first letter, John writes, *"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life"* (1 John 5:13; underline mine). We do not have to live in doubt or with fear about our future. It is assured in Jesus Christ as our Savior. Accept his invitation to be your Savior through what he has done for you upon the cross and through his resurrection we celebrate today.

Or, perhaps you need to accept Jesus' invitation to have him as Lord over your life. I know I need to be reminded of and accept again and again his Lordship over my life. Sometimes, I try to take control and be lord over my own life—and the yeast of such actions...or even such thinking begins to work its way through my entire being. I need to commit, and re-commit again, my life to Jesus Christ serving as my Lord. That's one reason why we have a time for confession every Sunday...because we need it! But more and more, as I allow Jesus to be Lord over my life and follow his direction for my life I experience the true joy he desires for my life. To be sure, he sets the standards high. Read and reflect on the Sermon on the Mount. Or, there is the challenge of Romans, chapter 12. I know of one pastor who spent a year with Romans, chapter 12, as his Bible reading and reflection for the day. I once challenged a family member who was angry at another family member and close to seeking some kind of revenge against that family member to trust God and live out what God asks of us in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans. In part (but read and be challenged by

the entire chapter!) it reads, *"Do not repay anyone evil for evil. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. Do not be overcome by evil, (the yeast of malice and wickedness!!), but overcome evil with good (the bread of sincerity and truth!!)"* (Romans 12:17a, 18, 19, 21; underlines and parentheses mine). That is the goal for those who seek to follow Jesus Christ as their Lord.

I invite you to respond to and accept the invitation Jesus is offering to you today in our Easter celebration. I'm going to close this time with a prayer rather than

silent reflection, and I encourage you to offer it as your heartfelt prayer today,

wherever you are in your faith journey with Jesus and the invitation he offers this day. Let us pray.

Jesus, we ascribe to you the names Savior and Lord...and hear in the Easter celebration today your invitation to receive you in those titles we give to you. For those who need to accept your invitation to be received as their Savior, we pray today a prayer of gratitude for what you have done for us upon the cross and through your resurrection. We admit our need for a Savior, acknowledging our sin and our inability to save ourselves. Thank you for taking my sin with you to the cross that in your glorious resurrection we might be freed from the penalty for sin, death and separation from you, and be restored to a new relationship with you and eternal life in your heavenly kingdom. For those, Savior Jesus, who need to accept your invitation to give up lordship over their lives and receive you as Lord, we also pray a prayer of gratitude today, thanking you for the victory you gained over sin and death through your resurrection that we might be freed from the bondage of sin in our life...asking you to be Lord in our lives and recommitting this day to follow you as Lord—recognizing that sin is like yeast working its way through our lives and desiring to be rid of it and live instead a life of truth and sincerity with you as Lord. Thank you, Jesus, Savior and Lord, for the celebration and invitation of Easter. Amen.