Food For Thought: Sunday Christians

“He is not here, he has risen! ...”
~Luke 24:6 NIV

Easter will be here in a week and I am sitting here again pondering the meaning of what that Sunday stands for. I am sure that come Sunday, as with most other Sundays, you will be attending a service and sitting in a church pew listening to your pastor give the Sunday sermon. For the most part, it will be like any other Sunday except that there will be quite a few more “Holiday” about.

For almost an hour, or in our case, two, millions of people who don’t normally participate in church services will be attending Easter service to hear the story of the crucifixion – probably the most repeated and familiar story of the Bible. On Sunday, pastors will paint the image of the cross as an ongoing reminder of the events that happened that day beginning in Jerusalem and ending on a hill called Calvary. The events that took place may have looked like a really bad day for Jesus, but that was Friday, and as Tony Campolo, the outspoken Christian Evangelist says, “SUNDAY’S COMING.”

Usually starting around Ash Wednesday, and continuing to Easter Saturday – that day between Good Friday and Easter Sunday – I find myself pondering what it must have been like during those three days for Jesus’ followers on that day. What did they do? What were they thinking? How did they spend their day? What thoughts were running through their heads? Their leader had been arrested, beaten, crucified, killed, and buried. Miracles attested to his suffering – earthquakes and darkness – and yet still he was dead. Confusion must have reigned to say the least.

IT WAS FRIDAY
And Jesus was taken to Pontius Pilate, the fifth Prefect of the Roman province of Judaea and tried before the Roman procurator. Since Pilate could find nothing to charge Jesus with, he washed his hands of him by giving into the wants of the crowd and religious leaders who chanted to kill Jesus and free Barabbas.

Yes, that was Friday, but didn’t they know SUNDAY’S COMING?
IT WAS FRIDAY
And Judas, seeing he had betrayed innocent blood, does not think that God can forgive him, goes and hangs himself. Jesus is taken aside and beaten. A cat of nine tails, coated in sheep’s blood, with nails and other sharp objects to bite into the skin of Jesus. 39 times the soldiers whipped Jesus, ripping his flesh for our sins.

But that was Friday. Didn’t they know SUNDAYs COMING?

IT WAS FRIDAY
When the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and beat it down on the head of Jesus. They placed a cross on his shoulders and made him carry it all the way up the Via Delarosa, the steepest street in Jerusalem. The crowd jeered and mocked him, even pulling his beard as he stumbled up the street. Isaiah tells us that his features were so beaten that he was beyond recognition.

But that was Friday. Didn’t they know SUNDAYs COMING?

IT WAS FRIDAY
And darkness covered the city, Jesus was on the cross, hanging between two thieves. The soldiers below him casting lots for his clothing, the crowd jeering him, saying that “He had saved others let Him save himself.” It was Friday, and the thief on the other cross says “Remember we when you come to your throne.” Jesus cries out “My God, MY God, why have you forsaken me?”

IT WAS FRIDAY
And Jesus experiences for the first time in his life separation from the Father. It was Friday and Jesus says “it is finished, Father into your hands I commit my Spirit” The curtain in the Temple is torn in two. The centurion standing there confessed to all around that “This truly is the Son of God”

IT WAS FRIDAY
And Jesus died and they took him from the cross and laid him in a borrowed tomb. They sealed it with a Roman seal, and a legion of soldiers were placed outside to guard the tomb. The disciples were saddened and distraught, the women were in mourning, and the enemies were worried.

Yes, that was Friday, but didn’t they know SUNDAYs COMING?
That is how they may have felt that Friday, now here I am, albeit 2000 years later, asking myself how I feel about those events. I am a follower of Jesus, do I feel the need to mourn? Can I relate to the sadness that they must have felt? How can I call myself a Christian and not? Surely His death and the celebration of Him rising should have some impact on me other than to plant some Easter Eggs for my grandchildren. I should feel something – emotionally and spiritually.

Well, this led to a lot of soul and internet searching and I think I found my answer. It also got me thinking about why we have our services on Sunday – haven’t you ever wondered? Muslims worship on Friday. Jews worship on Saturday. But Christians worship on Sunday because that is the day when Christ proved that he had conquered death.

This is why we too should be called Sunday Christians so to speak. We are not Friday Christians who serve a dead Savior. Not Saturday Christians still waiting and wondering if He will rise. No, we are Sunday Christians because we serve a living, breathing, Savior – one who rose from the grave and is alive and still reigns today.

He died because He had to die. Or sin demanded blood and death. And yet, He rose because He had to rise. He was the Son of God – how could death hold Him. How could the Creator of all that exists be held down by death? It could not happen and did not happen. Christ Rose!

For 2,000 years, we Christians have been celebrating Jesus’ conquest. I can cite hundreds of books, songs, and poems that proclaim this truth. But my favorite comes from that old story that Tony Campolo tells whenever he gets a chance:

Yes, it is Friday, but … SUNDAY’s COMING

Have you given any thought on how that day is going to affect you?

Just some Food For Thought