

From Jessie:

**Resurrection Life and Blessings of Aloha to all of you, brothers and sisters in Christ!**

April has always been one of my very favorite months of the year. The harshness of winter is finally past, new life is sprouting everywhere, and temperatures are finally creeping back up again. Okay, I now live in Hawaii where we seem to have an endless summer, but I grew up in the high sierras of western New Mexico and there it seemed that winter would never end! I still get shivers when I recall the bleak winters of my childhood, working for my father in his gas station, trudging out in my threadbare coat into the snow, sleet, and icy rain or howling winds – or sometimes all of those elements at the same time - to fill a gas tank with my gloveless hands. I know it's God's mercy that brought me to Hawaii to thaw out – as I am still doing after nearly 40 years here!

But, April comes “in like a lion and out like a lamb” as is said, Yes, the earth is starting to warm up, the melting snows soon give way to gentle breezes and rain showers which promise May flowers. I also recall the newborn lambs bleating happily and skipping away in the sunshine across the meadows at our small ranch. Little did I think back then how the gentleness, innocence and purity of a lamb would come to represent Jesus to me.

**“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”** With these words, John the Baptist introduced Jesus to the crowds of people who had come seeking to be baptized by him. Perhaps they were into the latest fad – crowds of people wanting to do what everyone else was doing. On the other hand, perhaps they really were seeking the answer to the universal sin problem: selfishness. As he baptized people, John encouraged them to repent, stop the old life of greed and selfish behavior and **“bear fruits in keeping with repentance”**. (Luke 3:8)

However, simply making a determination to **be** a better person or **become** less selfish, or giving away all one's possessions is not enough to satisfy the consequences of sin. Unless the root of sin is dealt with in the only way that God has decreed – *the wages of sin is death* (Romans 3:23) – then all the outward expressions we make remain merely external coverings over a dead soul. What is needed is **truth** in the innermost being, which is to say, believing on the Lord Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6), who paid that penalty of death for us!

For centuries, the Jewish people had celebrated the Passover in remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt, when God had commanded the Hebrews to sacrifice a lamb – one without blemish (Exodus 12:5) and place its blood upon the doorframes of their homes, if they would not want a visit from the Angel of Death. The sacrifice of the lamb was a forward looking to the **Perfect Lamb** (the sinless Son of God Himself) who would be nailed to a Roman cross – after undergoing unbelievably agonizing torture – for no wrong of His own.

Nearly 700 years before Jesus was born into the world, the prophet Isaiah wrote in chapter 53 the perfect Gospel:

*“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a **lamb to the slaughter**, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.”* (vs. 5-7)

The ultimate sacrifice of God's own sinless Son did not end at the cross, however! He suffered sin's penalty of death for us, but He was raised back to life and lives forevermore! O, Hallelujah! Thank You, Father, for You have provided Your Lamb. I am eternally grateful for the **free** Gift of Your salvation that cost You everything, and how I long to kiss those nail-scarred hands and feet.

Maranatha. Come, Lord Jesus. The grace of the Lord Jesus be with us all. Amen!

Jessie

Jesus, my burdened Jesus,  
Praying in the dark of the Garden  
The Garden of Gethsemane.  
Saying: Father, Oh, Father,  
This bitter cup,  
This bitter cup,  
Let it pass from me.

Jesus, my sorrowing Jesus,  
The sweat like drops of blood upon his  
brow,  
Talking with his Father,  
While the three disciples slept,  
Saying: Father, Oh, Father,  
Not as I will,  
Not as I will,  
But let thy will be done.

Oh, look at black-hearted Judas  
Sneaking through the dark of the Garden  
Leading his crucifying mob,  
Oh, God!  
Strike him down!  
Jesus, my lamb-like Jesus,  
Shivering as the nails go through his feet.  
Jesus, my darling Jesus,  
Groaning as the Roman spear plunged in  
his side;  
Jesus, my darling Jesus,  
Groaning as the blood came spurting from  
his wound.  
Oh, look how they done my Jesus.

Mary, weeping Mary,  
Sees her poor little Jesus on the cross.  
Mary, weeping Mary,

Why don't you strike him down,  
Before he plants his traitor's kiss  
Upon my Jesus' cheek?

And they take my blameless Jesus,  
And they drag him to the Governor,  
To the mighty Roman Governor.  
Great Pilate seated in his hall,  
Great Pilate on his judgment seat,  
Said: In this man I find no fault.  
I find no fault in him.  
And Pilate washed his hands.

But they cried out, saying:  
Crucify him! Crucify him!  
Crucify him!  
His blood be on our heads,  
And they beat my loving Jesus,  
They spit on my precious Jesus;  
They dressed him up in a purple robe,  
They put a crown of thorns upon his head,  
And they pressed it down  
Oh, they pressed it down  
And they mocked my sweet King Jesus.  
Sees her sweet, baby Jesus on the cruel  
cross,  
Hanging between two thieves.

And Jesus, my lonesome Jesus,  
Called out once more to his Father,  
Saying:  
My God, My God,  
Why hast thou forsaken me?  
And he drooped his head and died.  
And the veil of the temple was split in two,  
The midday sun refused to shine,  
The thunder rumbled and the lightning

Up Golgotha's rugged road  
I see my Jesus go.  
I see him sink beneath the load,  
I see my drooping Jesus sink.  
And then they laid hold on Simon,  
Black Simon, yes, black Simon;  
They put the cross on Simon,  
And Simon bore the cross.

On Calvary, on Calvary,  
They crucified my Jesus.  
They nailed him to the cruel tree,  
And the hammer! The hammer!  
The hammer!  
Rang through Jerusalem's streets.  
The hammer! The hammer!  
The hammer!  
Rang through Jerusalem's streets.

Jesus, my lamb-like Jesus,  
Shivering as the nails go through his hands;

wrote  
An unknown language in the sky.  
What a day! Lord, what a day!  
When my blessed Jesus died.

Oh, I tremble, yes, I tremble,  
It causes me to tremble, tremble,  
When I think how Jesus died;  
Died on the steps of Calvary,  
How Jesus died for sinners,  
Sinners like you and me.

### **From Grandma Hansi:**

May God give you a Blessed Easter Season!

Please, please, make it more than candied junk food and a rabbit who lays eggs for your children and grandchildren!

May our beloved "LAMB of GOD", who died and rose at that weekend bless and fill you with His Love and Gentleness. May we lead others toward Him and also each other! May we reach those who live still in hopelessness and physical hardship! Your help and partnership makes it possible for us to teach (and feed!) and open new channels of blessings around the world. The photos we are including in this issue are from another group of believers from our church in Lviv who recently went to the war zone (in eastern Ukraine) to share practical expressions of God's love. Our financial support helps to cover fuel costs they needed to travel there. The "parcels filled with blankets, pills, candies and other good things" were gratefully received by the soldiers.

Thank you, thank you, hallelujah and Amen! May you be rewarded a hundred-fold!

*Grandma Hansi*

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