

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." – 2 Corinthians 5:20

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Behold, the Lamb!

As some of you may know, we celebrated Easter a week later here in Romania. This is because the Orthodox church has continued to adhere to an Easter centered around an older calendar which ensures that Easter never precedes the Jewish Passover. They think it rather strange that we Protestants could celebrate Christ's death on a day that precedes Passover some years. While I don't think the date of Easter matters all that much, I do appreciate the Orthodox perspective and its link to tradition (grounded in the Passover traditions established at Nicea and beyond).

There's another tradition the Orthodox have (or maybe it's just the Romanians) which I've come to enjoy. That is the traditional Easter meal is a freshly slaughtered lamb. What makes this meal particularly meaningful for me is the fact that our daily walks in the springtime take us out to a large field behind our house where we see the goats, cows, horses, and sheep grazing. Knowing that we were purchasing a lamb for Easter, our walks in the weeks prior to the celebration were pensive. As we went out to the field and saw the little lambs playing and suckling, we wondered which lamb would be killed for us. It was somewhat somber in that we were able to frequently gaze upon the innocence of these lambs throughout their short little lives, knowing what their ultimate fate would be at our very own hands.

Hopefully you can understand that I (Derek) am not being a sadist here. I don't take pleasure in the slaughter of lambs. But what I do enjoy is the tangible nature this tradition brings to the Easter story. While the gospel stories are heavy on the crucifixion, and rightfully so, they also paint a very vivid picture of Jesus's life and ministry. As a good Evangelical and a proponent of substitutionary atonement, I sometimes wondered why God would take so much space to tell us about the Christ's life when what really mattered is the transaction he made on the cross. Sure, Jesus had to live a sinless life, but you can sum that up in a sentence or two. "Jesus did tons of miracles and always did the right thing." Done. But here in Romania, I've come to see a little more how wonderfully important the life of Christ was.

While Christ's life is important for a multitude of reasons, namely so we ourselves know how to live Kingdom lives, one of the main reasons I think the gospels spend so much time on Christ's life is to paint us the incarnational

picture of Isaiah 53. Jesus was a lamb. He was innocent. He was silently lead to the slaughter. A slaughter in and of itself is violent and terrible, but a slaughter of the innocent is unfathomable. While Christ's life is filled with examples we are to follow, it is also a picture which helps us understand the true nature and consequence of sin. Jesus Christ died for our sustenance. While the Easter lamb here in Romania died for my temporal, physical sustenance (amplified even more so through the traditional Easter fasting), the Lamb of God died for my eternal sustenance. He is the living bread and water. We must eat of his flesh and drink of his blood. We who know the end of Christ's story should somberly gaze upon the depiction of his life each time we walk through the gospels. The innocent, perfect, humble, peaceful lamb we gaze upon will be slaughtered for our sustenance.

Though the Romanian Easter paints a wonderfully vivid picture of the Easter story, I'd be remiss to end the story here. Each Easter, until the Lord returns, will see thousands of lambs slaughtered in Romania and around the world as reminders to God's gracious provision. But Hebrews is very clear that our savior's provision is not like this. His sacrifice was once for all. What Jesus did on the cross was sufficient and will never be repeated. So as we celebrate Easter here in Romania, we do so more somberly than ever before, as we vividly see Christ's sacrifice depicted to us in our meal. But at the same time, we worship a risen savior who conquered sin and death and has promised us a life through him, a life in which we will live in an innocence which will never be assaulted or corrupted again.

PLEASE PRAY...

- for church unity and the trials that our church members are experiencing
- for Atticus's continual battle with asthma, allergies, and infections
- for continued follow-up with the people who attended our Holy Week event and the Easter service
- for the Roma whom God continues to bring into our lives and we build relationships with



HOLY WEEK

We had asked many of you to pray for your "Walk Through Holy Week" event, which we held the Saturday before Palm Sunday. Each Station had Scripture and stories from a bilingual Children's Bible. Each child received an "Activity Passport" with a description of each event and a "blank" they had to fill out by reading the Scripture verses. Then they completed a craft to help them remember and reflect on the event. We had stations for the Triumphal Entry, the Anointing at Bethany, the Foot Washing, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection.

So many people chipped in to help and participate, and it was a great event! We pray that the Lord will use what the kids learned to speak to their hearts and draw them closer to Himself.



EASTER EVENTS

On Thursday before Easter we visited some of our Roma acquaintances to dye Easter eggs and read through the Passion events using Resurrection Eggs and The Jesus Storybook Bible in Romanian. Elin was particularly enamoured with their new two-week old baby.

Saturday night, our good friends Maurice and Jo Ann Sikes came over to dye Easter eggs with us that we would hide on Sunday, along with the Resurrection Eggs. We had three families over for Easter dinner and used the Resurrection Eggs to review the Passion story together. We also had some sweet Roma kids

show up Sunday afternoon, and we invited them to come back and join us for dinner. This is a big answer to prayer since we've been praying for open doors with Roma who would actually come and eat WITH us and not just beg for food. We didn't know the prayer would be answered on Easter and with Roma kids! Then they came back the next day; apparently they were sitting around and one of the girls said, "Hey, let's walk to Catalina's for dinner!" HA! In the picture, our kids are playing tag with the Roma kids and our neighbor, Tanta.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

4/27/19 - April Prayer Requests by Catalina

4/17/19 - [Peter's Denial of Jesus was not Cowardice](#) by Derek

4/3/19 - [21 Pilates](#) by Derek

Check us out on Facebook! We post on Catalina's ["From Dacula to Transylvania"](#) album so that you can stay up to date with us. You can also follow [our photos on instagram](#) or check out our [video archive](#). But best, of all, you should let us know if you want to join our secret Facebook Group to get more updates!

Support Account Reminders:

- Our teammates, Derek and Shannon Ebbers, have been faithful missionaries to Romania for 11 years now and are seriously the best team leaders God could have possibly provided for us! As is normal for all long-term missionaries, they have recently lost some financial supporters and are looking to make up the loss in their monthly account. Supporting our teammates is a direct way you can be in support of us; if they have to go back to the States for support-raising, that affects the team dynamic and ministry. We would love for you to consider joining our support team by literally supporting our whole team! If you would be interested in reaching out to them, supporting them, or passing their names along to individuals and churches who may have interest

in what we're doing in Romania, we would greatly appreciate this. You can [find them here](#).

- If you're interested in one-time giving and would rather support projects, we have a project account for the Romanian church which goes towards things like the youth program, elder trainings, etc. The account is **#94978** for the Romania church plant.



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