

 **Pastor's Letter** 

Dear Beloved Family of God

May 2025

Happy Easter! I find a surprising truth rising from our culture: even in an age of skepticism, Americans are still believing. In her yearlong project titled "*Believing*," (New York Times, April 21, 2025), Lauren Jackson explores the enduring and evolving spiritual lives of Americans. Despite rising secularization in previous decades, 92% of U.S. adults now express some form of spiritual belief. Religion is re-emerging in public life, from politics to tech, and a generational shift seems to be underway. Jackson, who left the Mormon Church, interviewed thousands to understand how people grapple with belief today—inside and outside organized religion.

The article reveals that while millions left institutional faith in past decades, many found secular substitutes like fitness classes or mindfulness apps ultimately unfulfilling. Religion often fulfills core psychological needs—offering belief, belonging, and behavior. People of faith generally report better mental and physical health.

Though not all are returning to church, there's a growing desire for spaces where spiritual reflection can thrive. This resurgence suggests Americans are searching for meaning, community, and deeper conversations around values like confession, forgiveness, and purpose.

We have Jesus who came to offer forgiveness, a chance to confess and **be** forgiven, **and** an opportunity to be right with God and with others. The first of his last seven sayings from the cross was about forgiveness. The first word after Easter to his disciples was also about forgiveness. His life, death, and resurrection were all his efforts to make sure **that** access to God **was** possible for all those who confess and forgive. Easter, the resurrection of Jesus, was the final act of God to complete it. Because of Easter, **the** disciples knew they were forgiven. Their Lord, who was betrayed by them, was risen from the dead. Their guilts were lifted up, and they were driven to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the undeniable conviction of the resurrection of the Lord.

Over the past 30 years, I have witnessed more and more churches refraining from mentioning the name of Jesus. Whenever I go to various churches to preach, people say to me, "Thank you for preaching about Jesus." Every time, I am taken aback. Christianity is a gathering of those who follow Jesus, and we are those who believe in the God revealed and taught by Jesus, so why should I receive such a greeting? If I don't talk about Jesus, what else am I supposed to preach?

In America, where various races with diverse cultures and religions live together, it is right to respect all religions. However, losing the identity of Christianity and abandoning our core truths is a suicidal act. We can genuinely respect other religions when we stand firm as true Christians and healthy disciples of Jesus. This is because we hope that Buddhists will live as true Buddhists and Muslims as true Muslims.

People are searching for the meaning of life. They desire true salvation and joy in life. When they come to our church, they will want to encounter the real Jesus, not a fake window-dressing Jesus. We must first understand Jesus well, sincerely follow Him, and show His life. I earnestly pray that our church will be a place that gives living water to the thirsty.

I hope and pray that during this Easter season and beyond, we continue to learn about Jesus, practice the ways of Jesus, and to spread the truth of Jesus always and everywhere.

Happy Easter

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you!" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)



Your Pastor, Hyesung Lee