

DO YOU BELIEVE IN EASTER?

MARCH 29, 2018

Charles Swindoll, in *The Darkness and the Dawn*, tells the story of a wonderful Christian named Edith Burns who lived in San Antonio, Texas. She was the patient of Dr. Will Phillips, a gentle physician who saw patients as people. He loved them all, but his favorite patient was Edith Burns.

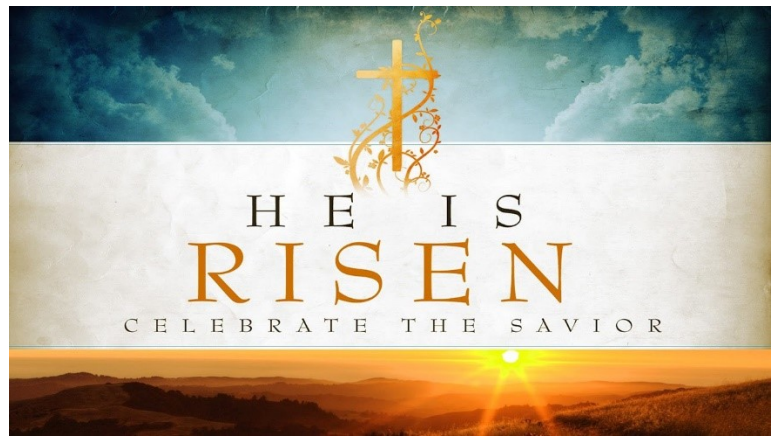
One morning Dr. Phillips went into his office with a heavy heart. It was because of Edith Burns. When he walked into the waiting room, there sat Edith with her big black Bible in her lap. She was earnestly talking to a young mother sitting beside her. Dr. Phillips knew why Edith was there and what she was doing. You see, Edith Burns had a habit of introducing herself in this way: "Hello, my name is Edith Burns. Do you believe in Easter?" Then she would explain the meaning of Easter, and many times people would by faith open their hearts to the Lord Jesus and be born again by His Spirit.

Dr. Phillips said to the nurse, "Beverly, don't call Edith into the office quite yet. I believe there is another delivery taking place in the waiting room."

After being called back in the doctor's office, Edith sat down and when she took a look at the doctor she said, "Dr. Will, why are you so sad? Are you reading your Bible? Are you praying?"

Dr. Phillips said, "Now Edith, I'm the doctor and you're the patient." With a heavy heart he said, "your lab report came back and it says you have cancer, and Edith, you're not going to live very long."

Edith said, "Why Will Phillips, shame on you. Why are you so sad? Do you think God makes mistakes? You have just told me I'm going to see my precious Lord Jesus, my husband, and my friends. You have just told me that I am going to celebrate Easter forever, and here you are having difficulty giving me my ticket!"



Dr. Phillips thought to himself, "What a magnificent woman this Edith Burns is!" Edith continued coming to Dr. Phillips every day. Christmas came and the office was closed through January 3rd. On the day the office opened, Edith did not show up. Later that afternoon, Edith called Dr. Phillips and said she would have to be moving her story to the hospital and said, "Will, I'm very near home, so would you make sure that they put women in here next to me in my room who need to know about Easter.

Well, they did just that and women began to come in and share that room with Edith. Many women were gloriously saved. Everybody on that floor from staff to patients were so excited about Edith, that they started calling her Edith Easter; everyone except Phyllis Cross, the head nurse. She made it plain that she wanted nothing to do with Edith because she was a "religious nut."

She had been a nurse in an army hospital. She had seen it all and heard it all. She was the original G.I. Jane. She had been married three times, and she was hard, cold, and did everything by the book. Well, one morning the two nurses who were to attend to Edith were sick, and Phyllis Cross had to go in and give her a flu shot. When she walked in, Edith had a big smile on her face and said, "Phyllis, God loves you and I love you, and I have been praying for you."

Phyllis Cross said, "Well, you can quit praying for me, you religious nut, it won't work. I'm not interested." Edith said, "Well, I will pray and I have asked God not to let me go home until you come into the family." Phyllis Cross said, "Then you will never die because that will never happen." She walked out of the room.

Every day Phyllis Cross would walk into that room and Edith would say, "God loves you Phyllis and I love you, and I'm praying for you." One day Phyllis Cross said she was literally drawn to Edith's room like a magnet would draw iron. She sat down on the bed and Edith said, "I'm so glad you have come, because God told me that today is your special day."

Phyllis Cross said, "Edith, you have asked everybody here the question, 'Do you believe in Easter?' but you have never asked me."

Edith said, "Phyllis, I wanted to many times, but God told me to wait until you asked, and now that you have asked..." She took her Bible and shared with Phyllis Cross the Easter story, about the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then she asked, "Phyllis, do you believe in Easter? Do you believe that Jesus Christ is alive and that He wants to live in your heart?"

Phyllis Cross said, "Oh I want to believe that with all of my heart, and I do want Jesus in my life."

Right there, Phyllis Cross prayed and invited Jesus Christ into her heart. For the first time Phyllis Cross did not walk out of a hospital room, she was carried out on the wings of angels.

Two days later, Phyllis Cross came in and Edith said, "Do you know what day it is?"

Phyllis Cross said, "Why Edith, it's Good Friday."

Edith said, "Oh, no, for you every day is Easter. Happy Easter Phyllis!"

Well, two days later, on Easter Sunday, Phyllis Cross came into work, did some of her duties and then went down to the flower shop and got some Easter lilies because she wanted to go up to see Edith and give her those Easter lilies and wish her a Happy Easter. When she walked into Edith's room, Edith was in bed.

Her big black Bible was on her lap. Her hands were on the Bible and there was a sweet smile on her face. When Phyllis Cross went to pick up Edith's hand, she realized Edith was dead. Her left hand was on John 14:2 ... "In my Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

Her right hand was on Revelation 21:4 ... "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

Phyllis Cross took one look at Edith's dead body, and then lifted her face toward heaven, and with tears streaming down her cheeks, said, "Happy Easter, Edith Burns - Happy Easter!"

Phyllis Cross left Edith's body, walked out of the room, and over to a table where two student nurses were sitting. She said, "My name is Phyllis Cross. Do you believe in Easter?"

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26