

Easter – What the Resurrection means for me!

The Easter story is not just another myth or story with a happy ending and a good moral to have us learn something and feel good about ourselves. Easter is a much better story because it is more than just a metaphor for change and hope - it is a real-life narrative! Take Mary Magdalene for instance who was the first person to boldly proclaim to the disciples the good news of Hope for all people, "I have seen the Lord!" meaning that she had personally met with Jesus the Messiah who was back from the dead and alive once again.

So, what exactly does the Easter resurrection mean for you and me?

1. The resurrection of Jesus Christ means He is still alive and among us today.

After Jesus arose from the dead and before he ascended to heaven to stand at the right hand of the Father in heaven, he said to his disciples, who had who had journeyed in obedience to a mountain in Galilee, these words, "*Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*" (Matthew 28:20) Jesus was speaking to address directly some of their doubts in him with these reassuring and empowering words as the God who was to remain with them, even though he was departing. Thirty-five years later the writer to the Hebrews picked up on this theme when he wrote to doubting, persecuted struggling Christians the reassuring words from the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 31:6, "*Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.*" (Hebrews 13:5)

Jesus' resurrection is not just something that happened in the distant realms of ancient civilization, to make today Easter Sunday a memorial day and therefore what I'm saying a mere history lesson.

When we say "Jesus is risen!" We mean that "He is here among us today!" That he can take up residence by his spirit in his body, the church- Today! And also, in the being of a human believer –Today!

So, Question:

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is in this place, among us today by his spirit? That he can live in the hearts of believers? Do you believe that Jesus is still alive in us and among us? Do you?

2. The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that everything He said, every promise He gave, every claim He made, is good, and stamped with Heaven's verification.

Jesus paid in full the price of humanity's sin since Adam and Eve. He has paid the price of our sin sacrificed himself on the cross to die in your and my place for our sin that separates us from God. Christ's blood has bought for us freedom from sin, forgiveness from God and therefore a right relationship with God. All the promises are Amen in Jesus because Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father! He is the way, the truth, and the life –the only way to God! (John 14:6)

So, next Question: When are we going to believe the truth and all the promises that go with the truth in order to receive God's grace, his undeserved, unmerited, merciful and forgiving love. We each need to get straight about Jesus being the only Door to every-thing God in Heaven has to offer? Can you hear him knocking? Are you ready to turn and change your fleshly sinful worldly and sometimes demonically inspired thinking through honest to God convicted by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, confession and repentance? Are you ready and prepared to do that? To be the one who hears Jesus knock and opens the door for him to come into your life so that you might be the victorious one, achieving the greatest victory this life has to offer you because you get to walk through that spiritual door in to God's very own presence. Rev 3:19-22. The resurrection means that this promise remains good. Let Jesus in to your life and you will receive your heavenly verification because of the resurrection.

3. The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that death is defeated and we need never fear the thought of our dying in this life again.

Two important scriptures to illustrate this for us are... For this purpose Jesus partook of flesh and blood (like us), that *"through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to bondage all their lives"* (Hebrews 2:14-15). Meaning that Jesus resurrection defeated not only death but also the devil and his grip on humanity serving to deliver his captives! In this next scripture 2 Timothy 1:10 states, *"it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."*

He literally “nullified” death, putting it out of business. So, when we die in Christ, we go straight to Him. For the redeemed believer, to the follower of Christ, the true child of God there is no permanent state of death, because death no longer matters to us.

Question: When are we going to stop fearing death and start believing Jesus? For the resurrection of Jesus Christ means that death is defeated and we need never fear the thought of our dying in this life again.

4. The resurrection of Jesus Christ means we may live boldly in this life, since the power of death has been overcome and nullified.

So - **No fear of death** should mean for any believer that we have - **No hesitation about living!**

So the question that remains for us to answer in light of the resurrection is: What is holding you back from the bold things Christ wants from you? The answer is individual to each one of us, where we are each at with God on our spiritual journey. Beginning with, have you been bold enough to say yes to Jesus Christ, believing in him, receiving him as your Lord and Saviour, putting him as the living King on the very throne of your own life to worship above all other things? And if you have done that, and you know it because you’ve been born again by the spirit of the living Christ who now lives in you and his church, have you committed yourself to following Christ as his disciple – both a learner and a doer? Are you obediently responding to his teaching, his voice, and guidance to live boldly for him as his witnesses in word and in deed? ...No fear in death –no hesitation in living! How might Christ be personally challenging you today to live boldly for him beginning with declaring that he is your Risen Lord and Living Saviour?

5. The resurrection of Jesus Christ means we have a gospel [ladies and gentlemen] unlike any other message on the planet!

And everyone needs to hear it- as Jesus declared in **Acts 1:8** Making You and I the messengers or witnesses. We get to break the news to those still cowering in fear of death. We have the privilege of unlocking the chains holding them in darkness.

Question: Have we conned ourselves into thinking we can keep silent but live so wonderfully that the lost will see and believe? Godly living has value yet someone needs to engage people in any way we can in meaningful conversations that illuminate other possible ways of thinking and direct people toward Jesus.

6. For all who are in Christ, from here on in—into eternity!—the news is all good-- including experiencing troubles and suffering along the way...

Which are like driving over or hitting speed bumps on the road. So as you're driving through life keep in mind the hope for all contained in the message of Jesus is not called "good news" for nothing! Listen...here's why it is "good news" for you and me: My sins are gone; the charges against me have been nailed to the cross; the blood of Jesus has washed me from all sin; and there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. The list goes on... I am born again, adopted into the family of God, with my name written in the Book of Life. I am indwelled by the Holy Spirit, who also overshadows and undergirds me, goes before me and comes behind me. I am saved, forgiven, called, sent, accompanied, commanded, instructed, blessed, filled, and used by the living God for His purposes.

Question: Do you realise that as a disciple, a follower of Christ that all these things are true for you? And further to that, in all the suffering and difficult and trying circumstance that we experience and have to go through, there is no suffering in this life, in this world that Christ cannot understand and empathise with us, because, he too suffered greatly and was required to live through it until his death. But he has lived to tell the tale of his suffering, and what's more enters our lives to be with us, to journey with us as we hit life's speed bumps that rock and can even seem to wreck us at times. The hope for all is that he is still here, in us, living, forgiving, healing, guiding, strengthening, and empowering us by his spirit into eternity- which is good news for all! To conclude this morning

7. I must not be upset if these lessons come slowly to me.

Such truths are too wonderful for me. My carnal mind resists believing that death is defeated and that at the end of life being absent from the body means being at home with our Lord, but my heart of hearts knows this is true. So we daily give ourselves anew to Him, we surrender to His will for that day, and we dedicate ourselves to growing in Christ knowing one of these days, we will get it right. Until then, do not weaken. Christ does not require perfection of us today so we should not require it of ourselves, or even in others. So, I finish by saying as we await the day, when we will get it right - "Can we be more patient with ourselves, and with one another?"

We Pray: Help us Lord Jesus as we come to understand and then act on what the resurrection means for each one of us. Amen