

Celebrating the Good News of the Resurrection of Jesus Resurrection Sunday, April 17, 2022

Thesis: Today is a celebration. It is resurrection Sunday. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Yes, Easter is a celebration. And, Easter is a time for reflection, gratitude, surrender, and worship.

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

This past week has been significant for us as followers of Jesus. Many of us took time to reflect on the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. From Palm Sunday, where Jesus is presented as King, to Friday, when Jesus is the Lamb who was slain, to Sunday morning, where Jesus is vindicated and raised as Lord and Christ, Jesus made a journey for us.

Through Jesus, God offers forgiveness of sins, breaks the power of hell, invites us into relationship, gives us eternal life, adopts us into his family, transforms us by his power working in our lives, and invites us to partner with God on his mission. And, that is just a taste of what we experience in God because of Jesus.

Today is a celebration. It is resurrection Sunday. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Yes, Easter is a celebration. And, Easter is a time for reflection, gratitude, surrender, and worship.

Today, we celebrate good news about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11 Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed (1 Corinthians 15:1–11).

1. ... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3).
 - a. Isaiah 53:1-12 gives us a picture of the suffering Servant / Messiah.
 - b. Psalm 22, which Jesus quotes on the cross, is an amazing picture of what Jesus experienced and was written more than a thousand years before his crucifixion.
 - c. The death of Jesus happened in a way that fulfilled Scripture (Matthew 27:45-56; John 19:28-37).
2. ... that he was buried... (1 Cor. 15:4).
 - a. We read about the burial of Jesus in the gospels, like in Matthew 27:57-61 and John 19:38-42.
 - b. The statements that Jesus died and was buried **emphasize the finality and reality of his death.**
3. ... that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 15:4).
 - a. *Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay* (Psalm 16:9-10).
 - b. *On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " 8 Then they remembered his words* (Luke 24:1-8).
 - c. **Over and over Jesus prophesied that he would die and would rise on the third day.**
 - i. *From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life* (Mathew 16:21).
 - ii. *Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. 32 He will be handed over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. 33 On the third day he will rise again." 34 The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about* (Luke 18:31-34).

- d. **After his resurrection, Jesus opened their eyes to see what was revealed about him throughout the Scriptures.**
 - i. *He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself (Luke 24:25–27).*
 - ii. *While they were still talking about this [what the 2 people on the road to Emmaus shared with the eleven disciples], Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37 They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have." 40 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, "Do you have anything here to eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate it in their presence. He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." 45 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:36–49).*
4. *... and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born (1 Cor. 15:5-8).*
 - a. Jesus appeared to over 500 of his followers after his resurrection.
 - b. These witnesses shared with others what they heard, saw, and experienced.

Here is the good news that Peter proclaimed in Acts 2.

“Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. 25 David said about him:

“ ‘I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand,

I will not be shaken.

*26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will live in hope,*

*27 because you will not abandon me to the grave,
nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*

*28 You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.’*

*29 “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. 32 **God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact.** 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,*

“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord:

“Sit at my right hand

*35 until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.” ’*

*36 **“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ”** (Acts 2:22–36).*

His name-- Lord Jesus Christ-- means that he is King, Savior, and Messiah. Jesus is King of the universe, Savior of the world, and Messiah who fulfills all the promises of Scripture as the Anointed, Appointed One of God.

Christianity is different from other religions.

Christianity, you see, isn't a set of ideas. It isn't a path of spirituality. It isn't a rule of life. It isn't a political agenda. It includes, and indeed gives energy to, all those things; but at its very heart it is something different. It is good news about an event which has happened in the world, an event because of which the world can never be the same again. And those who believe it, and live by it, will (thank God!) never be the same again either. That's what 1 Corinthians 15 is all about. (NT Wright. *Paul for Everyone: 1 Corinthians*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. 2004. p. 206.)

There are many religions in the world, but Christianity is the only religion whose founder was raised from the dead. Confucius started Confucianism, but he died in 479 B.C. Buddha started Buddhism, but he died somewhere around 483 B.C. Muhammad started the Islamic faith, but he died in A.D. 632. Joseph Smith started the Mormon religion, but he died in 1844. In the case of Christianity, Jesus Christ actually predicted before His death that He would be crucified, killed, buried and then raised to life. And that's exactly what happened. Never underestimate the power of the resurrection of Jesus. Never doubt that He walked out of that tomb alive. Happy Resurrection Day! (Lee Grady. [Why the Resurrection of Jesus Is an Indisputable Fact](#). Charismag.com. 4'13'22.)

This room is filled with many people who are witnesses to what they have seen, heard, and experienced of Jesus, the Risen One.

Here is what I wrote in my spiritual journal as I reflected on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This came from our Thursday morning time of worship and intercession (4'14'22)

Dear Father:

This morning in the midst of our praise and worship, I am thinking of testimonies of transformed lives. I am thinking of the power of your resurrection which has caused people to come alive forever in you with eternal life.

1. **My testimony at age 9.** In a revival service, Jesus became real to me. By the grace of God, I became aware that I was separated from the Lord. I surrendered my life to Jesus and asked him to take over my life. I was changed and transformed. For weeks I told everybody what Jesus did for me and how I became a follower of Jesus. I received you, Jesus, as Lord and King of my life, and you changed my life. And, the journey continues to this day.

2. **The testimony of a friend of mine.** She came to Christ at age 22 after her mom and dad came to Jesus. Her mom led her to Jesus, and he transformed her life. She is forever grateful. Her story moves me.
3. **The Muslim man on his way to prayer in Northern Nigeria.** In 1993, a team from Calvary, hosted by Apostle Mosy Madugba, visited the Muslim North of Nigeria. We met a pastor serving the Lord in the city of the Emir. I was amazed at his faith in Christ in the midst of such hostility. So, I asked him to share his story with me. One day, he was on the way to prayer with everyone else. As he walked, someone touched him on the shoulder and said, "You won't find what you are looking for in there." So, he turned around and began a 3-year search. Through a series of divine appointments and conversations, he met Jesus. Jesus so changed his life that he was willing to serve there in the midst of hostility, persecution, burning of churches, and killing of pastors and Christians, all because of the power of God's love, life, and resurrection in him.

Lord, I keep thinking of all the lives which you have transformed by the power of your love, your life, and your resurrection power.

Thank you for your love.

Thank you for your indestructible life.

Thank for your resurrection power that is alive today in us, forming us into the nature of Christ, healing us, and transforming us.

Thank you for your ascension.

Thank you for your rulership even now. Thank you that you are on mission in the earth today, and you invite us to partner with you and others to work for shalom, which is wholeness, well-being, and human flourishing, which is the kingdom of God.

Thank you that you are coming again, to rule and to reign in order to put this world back together as you intended.

You did not call us to a teaching, a way of life, a rule of life, or a moral code. You called us to yourself, to follow you, to an intimate relationship with the God who is "with us."

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God (John 1:12–13).

To all who received "him." Not religion. Not a rule of life. Not a moral code. Not a teaching. Yes. It is all about relationship. May you say "yes" and receive Jesus today as King of your life.

The disciples believed in the resurrection because they saw Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:1ff). They touched Jesus. They already had the scriptures. They already had a religion. They already had moral teaching. Now, they had relationship with the risen man, Christ Jesus. Now, they followed a person, the Son of God. Now, that same Jesus committed to those who committed to him: "I will never leave you."

This is the good news. It is not just a prayer. It is a declaration into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ by the Spirit of Christ (Romans 10:9-10).

That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved (Romans 10:9–10).

A few weeks ago, our team was praying about this Easter Sunday. As Joshua prayed about celebrating the resurrection power of Easter, these thoughts came to me.

1. May Easter Sunday not just be a celebration of the resurrection power which Jesus experienced, but may there be the same kind of power encounters in our midst. May God show himself strong.
2. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is here to heal, to transform, to save, and to give breakthrough.
3. Resurrection Sunday is a day to share life and hope.
4. May those who come here one way leave changed.

Today, we celebrate good news about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. May you experience the reality of that celebration, I pray.