

"I have seen the Lord"

Today's readings for your perusal are Acts 10: 34-43, Colossians 3: 1-4 and John 20-1-18.

EASTER DAY – THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! But do these words actually mean anything to you, to me, to us as Christians? Well they should and they do because *1 You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. 2 Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory!* This means my friends that we have been saved by the death and glorious resurrection of Christ on our behalf so that we can come back into that intimate relationship with our Heavenly Father which was lost during the fall from grace of mankind. It took this innocent sacrifice of God's own Son to redeem us in and through his blood tying us forever to God where we will see him again in glory. Paul is telling us here about our new position in Christ: - for you have died and tells us what we must do as Christians: - keep your minds fixed on things in heaven, in other words let us listen to the teachings of Christ and let us today set our hearts and minds on things above, on heavenly teachings.

Unlike the Disciples, unlike the women and unlike Mary we may not have seen him, but we know him intimately in our hearts. For it is in our hearts that we commune with Christ, with God through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is in our hearts that we know that He is risen!

Peter understood the significance of the resurrection, not only was it unique but true because of the eyewitness details within the Gospels but also, he was one of those witnesses, but it took him to receive a vision from God for him to fully understand that everyone was welcome in God's kingdom, **all those who hear his message and believe will be saved.** There is no distinction between colour, language, status in society or even sexual orientation, all are welcome, **God's gift was for everyone regardless of who they are. Christ died for everyone,** not for a select few as some in our society teach, but our task is to take the true meaning of the Gospel, the true meaning of the Resurrection and share it with everyone so that they may be given the words of life and the chance to approach God through Jesus' shed blood and seek their forgiveness and redemption. Our tasks as Christians are to proclaim that loving message to all and not stand in their way when they come to Christ. In some cases, it may be hard to stomach or to take in but leave it with Christ, do not judge but pray for understanding, pray for strength of faith and service and leave it to God.

Peter didn't fully understand until he received the invitation from Cornelius a Gentile to come to his home and baptise his family, he didn't understand that the resurrection was for everyone until he was shown the vision of the food from God: *34 Peter began to speak: "I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis.* God does not favour an individual because of his or her status in society or what denomination they belong to, their nationality or their material possessions. God does, however, respect the character and judge according to their work. This is evident

because *35 Those who fear him and do what is right are acceptable to him, no matter what race they belong to.* Cornelius already worshipped the true God, but this was not enough: he lacked faith in Christ. *36 You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, proclaiming the Good News of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.* *37 You know of the great event that took place throughout the land of Israel, beginning in Galilee after John preached his message of baptism.* *38 You know about Jesus of Nazareth and how God poured out on him the Holy Spirit and power. He went everywhere, doing good and healing all who were under the power of the Devil, for God was with him.* *39 We are witnesses of everything that he did in the land of Israel and in Jerusalem. Then they put him to death by nailing him to a cross.* Peter was stating what was known at the time where there was plenty of witnesses to the risen Christ and to which it all could be easily clarified, but the authorities tried to rubbish it but found no real purchase, for the truth remains, Christ lived, Christ was crucified, Christ was buried, His tomb was sealed and Christ rose from the dead to eat and drink with people and at one time over 500 people at the same time witnessed him and the good news is that people still meet him today all over the world. Peter tells us about this: *40 But God raised him from death three days later and caused him to appear,* *41 not to everyone, but only to the witnesses that God had already chosen, that is, to us who ate and drank with him after he rose from death.* Those who ate with Jesus after He rose from the dead received unmistakable evidence of His bodily resurrection, they ate and drank with Him, they witnessed Jesus eating and drinking and receiving food physically from Him. Then we are told: *42 And he commanded us to preach the gospel to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God has appointed judge of the living and the dead.* *43 All the prophets spoke about him, saying that all who believe in him will have their sins forgiven through the power of his name."* All who believe in him will have their sins forgiven them, that means that we have a duty to spread and teach this message to everyone, not worrying about what to say for God will guide us and He will help us to spread His message of hope, love and forgiveness to all. Our job is to plant the seed, water it where it needs watering and let the Lord harvest it!

Jesus is alive! It is not a story this is fact. *1 Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been taken away from the entrance.* *2 She went running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and told them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"* Even though it appeared at first that the worst had happened – somebody took His body, it was hard to take in, but the fact is Jesus was crucified, history proves it. What is also true is that He rose from the dead to walk the earth once more; He met many people before He ascended to Heaven to reign by the Father's side.

The disciples met Jesus; they ate meals with Him and drank with Him. Mary Magdalene, with other female companions went to the tomb on the Sunday morning only to discover that at dawn when they arrived that the stone had been rolled away and that Jesus was gone! The weighty evidence in John's Gospel account of the resurrection is the eyewitness account of the other disciple believed to be the author John. Jesus burial shroud and head cloth were still lying where the body had been laid, undisturbed by Jesus resurrection. Only an eyewitness could have put that kind of detail in.

5 He bent over and saw the linen cloths, but he did not go in. 6 he went straight into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there 7 and the cloth which had been around Jesus' head. It was not lying with the linen cloths but was rolled up by itself. Eyewitness accounts with accurate description are key here, first of all they came to know of the resurrection through what they saw with their own eyes and then later did they see it in Scripture. It is obvious they did not make it up, a story of resurrection, for it was only later did they find it in Scripture and then they realised that because it was in Scripture meant it was the will of God. The eyewitness also tells us that the cloths were in an orderly arrangement, not scattered around which would have been the case if it was a grave robbery as the officials wanted it to be known.....10 Then the disciples went back home. Today is not about grieving like Mary but instead we should be like Mary when she met the Lord we should cling to Him, He appeared to her first because she was the one who was in greatest need at the time, she was heartbroken because she thought grave robbers or the authorities stole His body. She came with the other women that morning to persuade the guards at the tomb to open it up so they could carry out the Jewish burial procedures by washing, anointing and wrapping the body in clean linen, but when she got there and saw the open tomb she cried and through her tears she didn't recognise Jesus when she saw Him until He spoke to her....16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned toward him and said in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (This means "Teacher.") 17 "Do not hold on to me," Jesus told her, "because I have not yet gone back up to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that I am returning to him who is my Father and their Father, my God and their God." 18 So Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and related to them what he had told her. We are reminded here that we will have the opportunity to see Jesus again because Jesus has gone ahead of us and is awaiting us to come home. But we can know Him and have Him with us always inside us through the Holy Spirit because 1 You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. 2 Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory!

CHRIST IS RISEN ...HE IS RISEN INDEED...AMEN

PRAYER

Heavenly Father we thank you for raising Christ from the grave today. How the women at the tomb and the disciples must have celebrated when they knew that Jesus had risen from the dead as He said He would, all we can do today Father is praise your Holy Name and shout alleluia! Christ is Risen Alleluia!

It is because Christ is risen that we are able to take comfort through the trials and tribulations of life, for He overcame the power of sin and death in our lives and because of that we are happy, we are at peace. Again Father we thank you for that wonderful gift of eternal life that you have given to all who believe and accept Jesus Christ in to their hearts as their Lord and Saviour. For today we celebrate the risen Christ, we celebrate new life and new hope for those who find themselves, down in life, who see no hope for themselves or their loved ones, but today that hope has been clearly seen in the world, for Christ has risen and He brings new life to all those who believe.

We pray today Lord for your message of peace to be heard around the world, we pray that all those who do not believe will take time out to open their hearts, their minds and their ears to your live giving Word and come home. Too many in our world Lord are hurting and are unhappy with their lives, even those who fool themselves into thinking because they have money or possession and can eat and drink they are happy, but deep down inside they know the truth that they are unhappy because they are empty inside, today Lord we ask you to go to these people and fill them with your love and peace. We pray also for all those who do not believe or who follow false teachings to listen to you and be saved. Today is a day of wonder and joy and so we pray for your healing and we pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen