

## **The Resurrection of Our Lord / March 31, 2024**

### **1 Corinthian 15:1**

**“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that He was buried that He was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures.”**

#### **Christ died was buried and rose for our salvation**

God’s blessings this Easter morning as we celebrate Jesus our Saviour, who was given into death for our sins, buried and raised for our salvation. There are many important teachings in the bible. Moses taught the children of Israel the commandments of the Lord, chief of which is “You shall have no other gods before me.” The bible teaches that we should love the Lord our God with our whole heart, soul, mind, body and strength and that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. Jesus taught the golden rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Knowing, believing and putting those teachings into practice are important, but nothing is more important than knowing and believing the gospel of salvation, for by it we are saved.

It is important to know the laws of God, there is blessing in time for practicing them. But no one is saved by obeying the commandments of God. For then, salvation would be based on our obedience and action, rather than on God’ power and grace. Salvation is more than blessings in time. Salvation is the blessing of eternal life in the presence of God. Salvation is the gift of God for the sake of His grace in the life, suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Many things are important in our lives. There are many important things in the bible. What is of first importance is the gospel of God’s grace in Christ Jesus. The gospel is that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose for our salvation. This gospel saves eternally those who believe.

St. Paul the author of our text, treasured the teachings of the bible. As a pharisee, he memorized the books of Moses, the psalms and prophets. He was familiar with the traditions of his Jewish ancestors and was versed in the wisdom of the rabbis, contained in the Talmud. He was a pharisee of pharisees, meaning that he tried to live a perfect life in accordance with the laws of God, the bylaws of the Pharisees and teachings of the elders. He was a good pharisee, but when He encountered Christ his Saviour, he realized he was not good enough and never could be good enough on the basis of his efforts and achievements. When he studied the scriptures under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, he realized that no one can attain salvation by keeping the commandments of the law. In the first place, no one can keep them perfectly and the law demands perfection. If you try to jump across a chasm, 99 percent of the way may be impressive, but it will still land you in the same place as the four percent people, on the bottom.

Secondly, God didn’t give the commandments to make us righteous, or so we could earn or achieve our own salvation. He gave the commandments to people He had already saved by His grace and made righteous in forgiveness. He gave the law to show us our sin, so we would see our need for His grace in forgiveness and to guide us as His people. Grace came first, obedience to commandments came second as a response to grace. God gives the greatest grace of forgiveness in Christ Jesus. He died for our sins and rose for our salvation. In Him we receive the grace of forgiveness and promise of eternal life with God, as a gift of grace.

Many things are important in the bible. There is nothing more important than the gospel of salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. There is nothing more important than believing the gospel. There is a difference between knowing the gospel and believing the gospel. The gospel is stated plainly throughout the bible, in terms of God’s grace in forgiveness. The gospel is stated most explicitly in the New Testament, as God’s gift of grace in forgiveness for the sake of Jesus who died for our sins and rose for our salvation. Jesus encapsulated the gospel saying, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” That’s the gospel in a nutshell.

To know the gospel is important. How can people believe what they don’t know! To believe the gospel is to know in our minds and to receive in our hearts, the love of God in Christ Jesus. There is nothing more important than knowing God’s love in Christ Jesus and believing it in our hearts. Paul reminds us of the facts of the gospel, that Jesus died for our sins, was buried and rose the third day, in accordance with the scriptures. He reminds us of the facts so that we may believe them, apply them to our lives, hold them dearly in our hearts as of the utmost importance; for through faith in them we are saved.

The gospel by which we are saved is that in infinite love God gave His Son Jesus to share our humanity and join us in this life in bondage to sin, the control of evil and under the condemnation of death. The gospel is that Jesus fulfilled the law in our place through His perfect life. The gospel is that Jesus in our place, paid the debt of sin demanded by the law, through His death on the cross. The gospel is that Jesus joined us in death and burial, so we would be joined to Him in His resurrection. This gospel as Paul said, was written previously in the scriptures, which we call the Old Testament. Centuries before the death of Christ, Isaiah wrote of Christ's suffering and death, their significance and meaning for our lives. He sang, "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with His stripes we are healed." He is our Saviour in whom we have peace with God in the forgiveness of our sins.

The gospel is that through His death, Jesus defeated death, taking away its power, which is the sin that holds us in bondage and condemns us to death in time and eternity. The gospel is that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The gospel is that through His resurrection, God testifies that He accepted Christ's sacrifice for our sins. The resurrection is God's testimony that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. The resurrection is God's testimony to those who believe in Christ Jesus that He forgives our sins, remembers them no more and will bring our faith to fulfillment in our share of His resurrection to eternal life.

The gospel is that Christ's chastisement brought us peace with God in the atonement of human sin. The celebration of Jesus' resurrection is that because of His death, God no longer sees the world through its sin. Human sin has been atoned. St. John wrote of Christ's sacrifice and its effect saying, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sin and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." God reaches out to the world in forgiveness through the gospel of faith in Christ Jesus. The debt has been paid. The gift is offered for all to receive. The gift is given freely and fully to all who believe. When we take this gospel to heart and believe in Christ as our Lord and Saviour, His suffering and death bring healing in relationship with God to us personally. Knowing is of the mind and is of fundamental importance. We have to know to believe. Believing is of utmost importance, because believing is taking what we know from the scriptures into our hearts and applying it to our lives as of first importance.

Jesus' friend Martha knew a lot of important things about Jesus. She knew He had great power, because of the signs and healings He had given. She knew a lot of important things from listening to His teaching. She knew there was nothing more important than listening to His teaching. Once He visited her house. She was distracted by making preparations for dinner. He told her nothing was more important than listening to His words. When her brother died, he told her that her brother would live. All devout Jews knew that. She said, "Yes, Lord, I know he will rise again in the resurrection of the last day." Jesus told her more. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life, whoever believes in me will live even though they die." Martha knew a lot about Jesus, nothing more important than that.

Then He asked her if she believed. Knowing is important, taking what we know and internalizing it in our hearts is of utmost importance. Martha believed. She said, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God who is coming into world." Today we celebrate Jesus' resurrection as God's testimony to the forgiveness of sins and the promise of resurrection to all who believe. God bless us with His Spirit that we may both know and believe these things. God bless us to say with Martha, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ of God, the Saviour who has come into the world and in to our hearts as God and Saviour. He has risen! He has risen indeed! In His name. Amen.