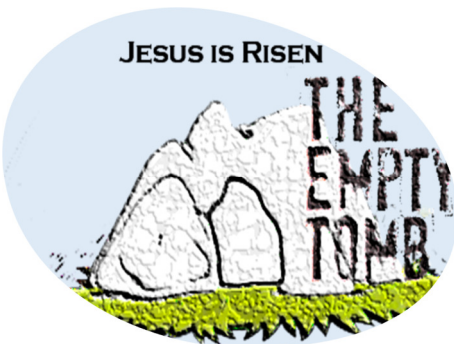


# THE RESURRECTION

On Good Friday, Jesus was crucified. The mood was solemn and sad. The people who followed Him had high hopes, but never the inkling how His death would come to be so heart-rending on the Cross. Their hopes were dashed.

## A Resurrection of Hope

On Easter, apt was the mood of awe and rejoicing. The dashed hopes of Jesus' followers were resurrected with the Lord's resurrection. What comes after?



At one point after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to more than 500 people. (1 Cor 15:6) Jesus was crucified not because He was guilty of any of the offences He was charged with. He submitted to death on the Cross to atone for our sins – not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 Jn2:2)

Now, He rose from the dead, proving that His death was temporary, and HE IS ALIVE, and OUR HOPE IS ALIVE!

Jesus said, *“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?”* (Jn11:25-26)

Death is never an easy thing for a living person to accept. However, life in this world is also never without its pain and sorrow. Mercifully, our life in this world is only temporary; and when it is time for us to leave, the death will also pass away (be temporary) – *“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”* (Rev 21:4)

Death is a transition stage, and in our final destination we no longer live the days of the dead but live the days of the living in eternity where everything is made new (Rev 21:5) – with none of the characteristics of pain and sorrow found in the present world.

## *A Resurrection Gift of Peace*



Everyone yearns for peace, but true peace is elusive because man is unable to free himself from the bondage to sin that lies at the root of strife. When sin rears its head, peace is suppressed. Therefore, to yearn for peace, it is necessary for sin to be dealt with.

Jesus was crucified to pay the debt of our sin. His resurrection demonstrated that He successfully conquered the power of death and won victory over the power of sin, thus empowering a change in believers' lives.

“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Rom. 6:4)

We have transformed our destiny from “Death through Adam” to “Life through Christ”. (Rom 5: 12-20)

Jesus, on the night before His crucifixion, told His disciples (Jn14:27-28):

- “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”
- “I am going away and I am coming back to you.”

Indeed, Jesus has come back with His resurrection gift of peace. What kind of peace is this?

In Mk 4, Jesus and His disciples were in a boat when a furious storm came up. In the absence of peace, the disciples were terrified and so they questioned Jesus whether He cared if they perished.

When Jesus commanded the storm to cease and thus gifted the disciples with the gift of peace (not exactly the type they desired), they were still terrified (with a feeling of incredulity) instead of being readily receptive of the amazing peace that were beyond their understanding and made them terrified. (Mk 4:35-41)

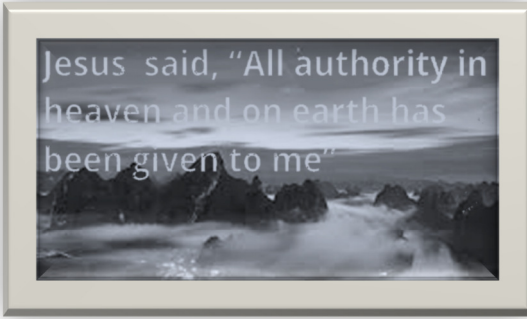
Facing storms in life, it is normal for us to feel anxious in the absence of peace. The peace we desire to wrap around us: illness-free, accident-free, job-security, happiness, etc.

Now, when we get the resurrection gift of peace of the amazing kind, do we respond to it with incredulity? Referring to Philippians 4:7, this is:

- peace of God – divine peace (not envisioning changes in circumstances or meeting external needs);
- peace that transcends all understanding (not according to man's reason);
- peace that will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (i.e., an inward state or peace of soul that will set your hearts and thoughts right without being influenced by evil temptations).

With Jesus' resurrection, our Lord completed the mission that the Father had sent Him to come down from heaven. We were once enemies with God. We were once carrying God's wrath. Now, we have been justified through faith and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Rom 5:1)

## *A Resurrection proving Jesus' Authority*



The resurrection did not happen out of the blue. It was predicted by Jesus. (Mark 8:31, 9:31, 10:34) It could not be avoided because it was God's plan. Therefore, when Peter rebuked Jesus for making the prediction, he was immediately chastised for his human concerns

superseding God's concerns. (Mk 8:33)

Jn 10:18 tells us about Jesus' Authority in the resurrection: "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

This Authority of Jesus was proven to the hilt when the resurrection ensued as predicted – the Authority to completely defeat death, the last enemy among all dominion, authority and power (1 Cor 10:24-26) whereby believers have the complete confidence for their salvation with the unfolding of eschatological events – this salvation being secured by Christ as the firstfruits, "the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead" (Col 1:18; Rev 1:5) or, in other words, the first to rise out of death's sleep to life eternal. (Acts 26:23)

Remember the time in the desert when Satan taunted Jesus to bow down to him? Of course, Jesus did not do so, but declared, "It is written 'Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve.'" (Mt 4:9-10; Deu 6:13)

Indeed, all Authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus. (Mt 28:18) This Authority is given by God the Father and comes with great power:

*"This is incomparably great power for us who believe ... is the same as the mighty strength he [the Father] **exerted when he raised Christ from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come." – Eph 1:19-20*

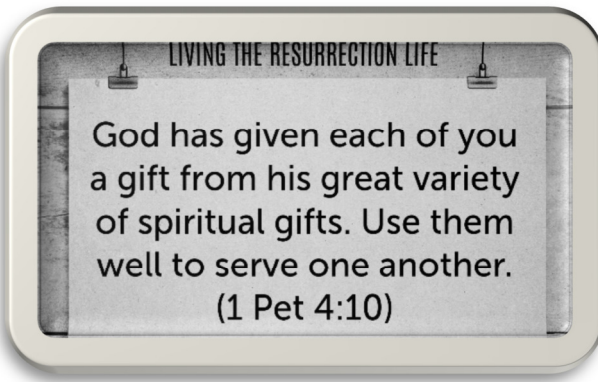
There is a lot of unbelief in the world today. Even during Jesus' time with His disciples, there were people who rejected His legitimacy despite miracles performed right in front of their eyes. From prophecies of old fulfilled step by step through the Nativity, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, nobody has been able to evidentially debunk the events. It is not that Jesus' Authority has not been proven, but that "the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." (2 Cor 4:4)

In the words of John MacArthur speaking about people turning away from the truth: "Our society has grown steadily darker; and the message the church is now giving to the world is more confused and confusing than perhaps any time since the Dark Ages."

With the Authority from the Father, the Lord in turn gives power and authority to believers and those who are not necessarily believers – kings (Ps 22:28), governments (Rom 13:1), His disciples (Mt 10:1) and whoever believes in Him (Jn 14:12).

Whether believers or unbelievers, the Lord who gives can also take away. (Job 1:21) If we fail to recognise this, it is to our peril. If we recognise where all Authority ultimately lies, may we – in accepting the resurrection truth – have the divine peace that guards our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7)

## *A Resurrection Encouragement*



What motivations do Christians have in serving God and people?

Let's see what Paul's motivation was in dedicating himself to serve God and others:

*“Christ’s love has moved me to such extremes. His love has the first and last word in everything we do. Our firm decision is to work from this focused center: One man died for everyone. That puts everyone in the same boat.*

*“He included everyone **in his death** so that everyone could **also** be included **in his life, a resurrection life**, a far better life than people ever lived on their own.” – 2 Cor 5:14-15 (MSG)*

In KJV, “Christ’s love” is rendered as “the love of Christ”, which can mean Christ’s love for Paul or Paul’s love for Christ. This double-interpretation can be logically accepted since love is commonly understood as a two-way street. We love because God first loved us. (1 Jn 4:19) Our love for Christ is a response to His self-sacrificing love and completes the two-way street. His love for us makes our love for Him so full-heartedly compelling as the “focused center” from which we apply our firm decision to work.

*“Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.” (Rom 6:3-4)*

*“For if we have been united with him in a death like his, **we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection** like his.” (Rom 6:5)*

*“May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.” (2 Thess 2:16-17)*

*John Lee*