

Christ is Risen Indeed!

Abundance Cell groups' sunrise meeting

The Abundance Cell Groups 1 & 2 decided to get-together for a morning fellowship on 12 April 2020. At 6.45 a.m., Patrick, our savvy IT Specialist was ready with the set-up system, waiting for the members to zoom in.



During this period in the face of COVID-19, all of us are getting used to have fellowship together via social media and digital platforms. With this approach, we

can still pray and be still in the sight of GOD despite the social distancing required.

Tony started with an opening prayer followed by a “Song of Praise” session led by Lawrence; singing “RISEN” and “BECAUSE HE LIVES”.

Let us remember Jesus who died for us on the cross, rose and live again. It is because of God’s love that we are alive in Him today.

In the Easter devotion, Jim shared about his life after retirement and reminisced the challenging yet fruitful times when he was in full-time ministry. He said he takes time to do housework, cook and go for visitations after his retirement nowadays.

RISEN

When darkness veiled the sky the day that Jesus died. In agony upon the bitter cross. They took His body down and laid it in a tomb. His friends believed that everything was lost. But when the third day came, the darkness turned to light for Mary heard her name and saw the living Christ.

Risen! To set the captives free.

Risen! To ransom you and me.

To bind up every broken heart to conquer death and sin.

Risen! To bring us home again.

And in that barren place, the world forever changed. For hope was born when Jesus rose that day. And still His wounded hands reveal the love He has for every fallen soul He came to save. And He will come again, and one by one we'll rise to praise His Holy Name and see the Living Christ.

Alleluia! He lives! Alleluia! He is Risen!

To ransom you and me

To bind up every broken heart

To conquer death and sin

Risen! To bring us home again. Risen!

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Peace of the Lord be with you! This is a good greeting as Christians gather for CGs, meetings and worship services. I recalled a scripture text from John 20:19 "Peace be with you". It was after Jesus' resurrection that He said it and when he appeared at the upper room to his disciples.

Perhaps it was to lift their fear from the pursuing Jewish religious authority. When the women told the disciples what was asked of them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." (Luke 24: 5b, 6)

A week later, Jesus appeared before the disciples to affirm what the women related were true; casting out the doubt and fear that Jesus has indeed risen.

The Jewish women had wanted to do the right thing for the dead body of Jesus who was their beloved teacher and rabbi. Since then, this significant event provided Christians the anchoring reason to remain faithful and grow in their relationship with God.

There were records that described experiences of how such a significant day was observed. Christians began keeping a time of vigil (keep watch and pray at sunrise) at an early hour on the resurrection day; marking the day of remembrance and reflection on what Jesus said and did, more than two thousand years ago.

It was the assurance of the promise of God that gave rise to hope of a new lease of life by faith in Jesus. Jesus promised the disciples before heading to Jerusalem that he would be facing his accusers. The outcome would be one that He would be condemned through a lopsided trial that led him to be crucified according to Roman law. Jesus predicted that he would be killed and "on the third day, he will rise." John 18:33b

What is the meaning or significance for us (as Christians) today?

I recalled as JCCians in the early 1980s, there was a sunrise service at the ground floor of the old Church building. I remembered vaguely, seated on the benches singing hymns and reflecting on the resurrection of Jesus. Similarly, while serving in Bedok Lutheran Church I had another seaside experience for sunrise service. We had baked buns and “Nasi Lemak” for breaking fast before we headed back to Church for Easter service.

Because He Lives

God sent His son, they called Him Jesus
He came to love, heal and forgive
He lived and died to buy my pardon
An empty grave is there to prove my savior lives
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
Because He lives, all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living, just because He lives
How sweet to hold a newborn baby
And feel the pride and joy He gives
But greater still the calm assurance
This child can face uncertain day, because He lives
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
Because He lives, all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living, just because He lives
And then one day, I'll cross the river
I'll fight life's final war with pain
And then, as death gives way to victory
I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He reigns
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
Because He lives, all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living, just because He lives
I can face tomorrow
Because He lives, all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living, just because He lives
Source: [LyricFind](#)
Songwriters: Gloria Gaither / William J. Gaither

Our Jesus' Resurrection was important because I would be among those who believed on a lie, die without hope, had no promise and would be the most pathetic person on earth, if it did not happen.

The resurrection of Jesus is crucial and an anchor to my Christian faith, just as the disciples who were with Jesus held dearly to this faith. They had the privilege to be witnesses not only to Jesus' resurrection, but they were also there on his ascension. However, let us be encouraged as we gather for sunrise

service and relive this moment with a beautiful gospel song, “Because He Lives”.

It helps us to reflect the significant moment because of the circumstances that surround us today i.e. our country and around the world are in a pandemic due to COVID-19.

Let the peace of Jesus and His love lift our fears and the hope in the empty tomb of Jesus assure us that His love conquers all.

Let me share the story about how this song, “Because He Lives” came about. This is about a husband and wife team, “Gloria and William J. Gaither. (I extracted a short account of their lives to be shared here).

Gloria and William were going through a lot of anxiety and challenges as William (Bill in short) was recovering from a bout of mononucleosis – a viral infection that is caused by the Epstein-Barr virus (EBV). This happened when Gloria was carrying their third child. One can imagine the ordeal the couple had to go through. It was a trying situation in this family. In addition, the drug abuse situation and an increasing racial tension in the neighborhood were not helpful during this time.

Let us use the zoom platform to share one or two moments in our individual and/or family circumstances that is challenging. Anyone would like to share?

In the midst of Gloria and Bill family’s challenges, Gloria experienced an unexpected calmness of peace within her. It felt like the heavenly Father was like an attentive mother bending over her baby, who saw His child and came to her rescue. The panic gave way to calmness and an assurance that only the Lord can impart and provide. It was by faith that they were strengthened as the Holy Spirit enabled them and by Grace received the peace of Jesus.

After Gloria’s baby was born, both Gloria and Bill remembered that it was the power of the blessed Holy Spirit that came to their aid. It was Christ’s resurrection in all its power and affirmation in their lives that revitalized their thinking and living. It was life conquering death in their daily activities.

Joy once again dominated the fearful circumstance of the day. Their experiences with life in Christ and the face-off with death gave rise to such beautiful and meaningful lyrics as they composed the song, “Because He Lives”.

God sent His Son, they called him Jesus
He lived and died to buy my pardon
An empty grave is there to prove my Saviour lives

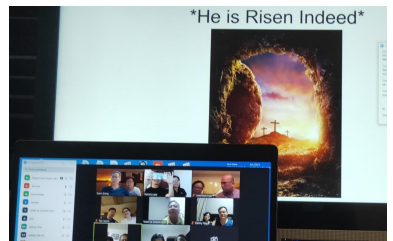
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
All fear is gone because I know who holds my future
And life is worth the living just because He Lives...
(We shall sing it together at the end of my sharing)
[The group sang before Jim ended his sharing] 😊

This Gospel message of Jesus' love can help us remember the significance of the resurrection. Let us share with others about the fundamental belief of our Christian faith that "The Lord is Risen".

Let us not just sing only on sunrise service, but we do so every other day with thanksgiving and worship. I pray that as we face uncertainty in the current climate, may the Holy Spirit lift our spirit to sing this song that brings to us a sense of calmness, peace and assurance from the Lord. Jesus reminds us in John 14:19 "Because I live, you also will live." Amen.

After the sharing by Jim, Stewart continued the session with another two songs, "I SERVE A RISEN SAVIOR" and "CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY." Then it was a time of Thanksgiving sharing by Thabitha and Samantha.

Thabitha shared that this time is chaotic because of the COVID-19 situation. We need Jesus more than ever now. The challenges will pull us down, but it is God that will strengthen us and lift us up. We are strong because of Jesus. She shared about their families who are in two places and they are praying for their safety during this time. We are encouraged to take heart and hold on to Him.



Samantha said she was asked to share about, "What Easter means to her?" She started with her view about Easter before she became a Christian. Then, the Public Holiday was just about a bunny and an egg to her. She reminisced how the Lord impacted her before she had Kieran. She knew that Jesus is a good man. When she became a Christian, there

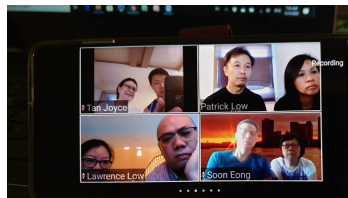
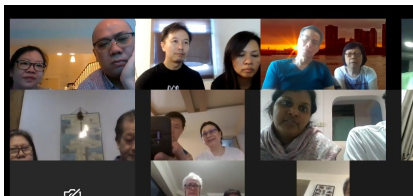
were three words that she summarized her feelings now i.e. Love, Hope and Power.

She added that first of all it is the Love of God. He died for her and the greatest love is from God. She highlighted that our God is a great God. (1 Rm 8:1). The resurrection power is in her because He has risen, we have hope for tomorrow.

For humans, no matter how bad the situation, we are just going home. What really matters to her is her relationship with Jesus. She has the authority to pray for the sick and have protection from Him. She is thankful to have Jesus.

Romans 8:1 New International Version (NIV)

8 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,



The session ended with a closing prayer by Soon Eong, followed by the Lord's Prayer. Also, Tony shared a word of encouragement to continue to meet despite the challenging situation currently.

This is the day where the empty cross reminds us that HE has risen and the familiar story of a cross that is always a reminder of what our God has done for us.

It is a privilege to be able to write and I am thankful to be able to learn along the way. Let's continue to know God better.

Giving thanks to God for the many brothers and sisters-in-Christ who loved Him as a result of HIS LOVE FOR US!

On behalf of Abundance CG 1 & 2
Joyce Tan