

MARANATHA MESSENGER

Weekly Newsletter of

MARANATHA BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

"Present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:28).

Private Circulation Only

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Sunday School: 9.45 am Worship Service: 10.45 am Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8.00 pm

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OUR RESPONSE TO THE RESURRECTION

Introduction

What does the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave mean to you? Is it just a nice historic story to repeat? Is it merely a convenient theme for some message or conversation? "What are we to do in response to the resurrection of Jesus Christ?" We can answer that question by turning to the Bible and seeing the response that others made to the resurrection of Jesus. The ones which were approved by our God are the ones we need to imitate.

Consider Matthew's Account of the Resurrection of Jesus:

In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay (Matt 28:1-6).

Genuine Belief of Christ as God

First of all we see that we must respond to the resurrection of Jesus **with faith**. His resurrection proves that he was not a liar or a deceiver. His resurrection proves that **He was who He claimed to be, the Son of God**. The resurrection was hard for even the disciples to believe at first. When the women reported what they saw to the apostles, they did not believe the women at first. They thought it was nothing more than idle talk from foolish women. Eventually eleven of the twelve believed. They all told Thomas that they had seen Jesus alive. He would not believe, however, until Jesus appeared to him. When Jesus did appear to Thomas, he said to him, *Do not be faithless, but believing* (John 20:27). Then he believed too. The resurrection event was staggering, amazing and unheard of that it was difficult for them to believe it. **Faith was their response as it must be ours today**. When Thomas finally believed, *Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed* (John 20:29). Jesus pronounced a blessing on us if we would believe in him, even though we have not seen him literally with our eyes. Our question is, "Do you believe Jesus was raised from the dead? Do you believe and have you received Christ, the Son of God as your Saviour and Lord?" **If not, DIN or "Do It Now" and "Delay It Not"**.

Holy and Reverential Worship

A second response we ought to have when we are confronted with the resurrection of Jesus Christ is **an attitude of worship**. When the women left the empty tomb of Jesus they “departed quickly from the tomb with fear” (Matt. 28:8). Fear and worship are not the same thing, **but fear in the sense of awe or reverence is a part of worship**. These women left the tomb to tell the other disciples about Jesus. As they were going Jesus appeared to them and greeted them. The Bible then says, *And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him* (Matt 28:9). Likewise when Thomas saw the resurrected Christ, he said, *My Lord and my God!* (John 20:28). This was a statement of worship and adoration. He realised that the resurrection of Jesus meant that He truly was God’s only Son, the Lord of lords. The question is, “Whom do you worship? Do you worship the living and true God sincerely from your heart as a Christian on the Sabbath in a Bible believing church” or **do you worship self, family, work, leisure or trust in men?**

Gospel Joy and Fear

Another reaction of the women who left the empty tomb of Jesus was **to share the gospel “with fear and great joy”** (Matt 28:8). They were so excited they were running to tell the news to the other disciples. Does it put joy in your heart to know that there is a hope for eternal life and a resurrection from the grave to that eternal life? Is there also the fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom? Do we revere, respect and love God with all our heart? Is there the fine balance of joy and awe that overwhelm our hearts as we serve and worship the living and true God? Let us arise on this Easter with these sacred emotions to share the good news to our family and friends, as we live for Him fervently and confidently in the days ahead. Do not forfeit yourself of this holy joy, peace and hope to witness of our risen and victorious Lord and worship and seek Him today and forever more.

The Charge to Share the Message of Salvation

Finally the reaction of the women at the tomb was a desire to share the good news of the resurrection of Jesus with others. The angel at the empty tomb told them to do this: *Go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead* (Matt 28:7). Moments later when Jesus Himself met them and greeted them, He likewise said, *Go and tell my brethren* (Matt 28:10). After Jesus had made several post-resurrection appearances, before His final departure, He gave the great commission to the apostles. In essence, it told them to share the good news of His resurrection with the world: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit* (Matt 28:19).

“Go quickly and tell the gospel.” That is the first command given to those who saw the resurrected Christ. We should go and tell the whole world because it is such a liberating and joyous truth. We should go and tell because it is good news. We should go and tell because it brings hope of salvation from the bondage of sin. We should go and tell because Christ’s death is not the end of it all. *With Christ it is an endless hope, without Christ, a hopeless end.*

Application of Salvation - The Resurrection

If we believe in the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament, what significance then does the resurrection have for us?

1. *In the resurrection of Jesus Christ we see the clear demonstration of the power of the true God.* Eph 1:19-21 tells us that it is the power of our heavenly Father that raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

2. *The resurrection proves that Jesus Christ is God.* That is exactly what God the Father wanted to communicate to us, as we read in Rom 1:4. The Jews crucified Jesus Christ because, to them, He was blaspheming when He said that He was the Son of God, equal to the Father. The resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrates the truth that He is who He claimed He was, for only God can triumph over death.

3. *Our salvation depends on our faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* In Rom 10:9, we are told how to be saved. It says 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.” This means that you cannot be a Christian unless you believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If someone claims to be a Christian but reject the resurrection of Jesus Christ, they are not genuine believers.

4. *The resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrates to us that all the teachings of Jesus Christ are true.* Everything Jesus taught was true, including His great promise in John 6:40, *Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.* Jesus’ teachings concerning His person, work, heaven, hell, and the future judgment are all true.

5. *The resurrection of Jesus Christ secured our justification. Christ died for our sins and He was raised for our justification,* Paul says in Rom 4:25, *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

6. *Our own resurrection depends completely on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* Read 1 Thess 4:14: *We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.* There are other verses concerning this, including 2 Cor 4:14.

7. *The power for our Christian life in the present is the power of His resurrection.* We read about this in Eph 1:19-21 and Rom 6:4: *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.* “How can we live this Christian life?” We can live it by the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ demonstrates that He is the appointed judge of all the wicked people in the world. In Acts 17:31, Paul told the Athenians, *For he [God] has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead.* We see the same idea in John 5:22 where Jesus said, *Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.* In verses 27-29 he continued, *And he has given him authority to judge, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will rise—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.* The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that He will raise up some to eternal life and some to eternal damnation and **Jesus Christ will be the Judge of the wicked one day.** All who have trusted in their fallen reason and rejected the claims of Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:51-58), He will then judge them righteously one day with eternal consequences.

Conclusion

Is death the end of it all or is there is more beyond the grave? We can be certain there is life beyond death due to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. People are dying, but who has come back to tell us what it would be like on the other side? Christ tells us there is. Do you believe this? Do you share this good news with others as well? **Be a witness for Christ today and save souls.**

The resurrection changed Peter from a denier of the faith into a preacher of the gospel. It changed Paul from a persecutor of Christians into a missionary of the Christian faith. The early Christians all preached Jesus and the resurrection wherever they went. Some in that day who mocked, some procrastinated and some believed. But for those **who believed, the resurrection had a life-changing, transforming experience.** That is what God would have us know this Easter morning. Do you believe the resurrection? Do you believe that **Jesus arose from the dead, bodily and supernaturally?**

He is the One who has all the power in heaven and earth, and He must be reckoned with. His offer to us is, if any man will receive and acknowledge Him into his life, **then he shall be born again.** Christ says, *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light* (Matt 11:28-30). This can be your privilege too today.

We have looked at how we ought to respond to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we realise that Jesus was raised from the dead and that he is God's Son, our response should be (1) genuine belief of Christ as God, (2) holy and reverential worship, (3) gospel joy and fear and (4) the charge to share the message of salvation with others with a burning desire. Will you do it today?

Jack Sin

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BAPTISM

ANGIE TAN

Following my parents' ways, I grew up as a zealous Buddhist. However, I went to a Christian Secondary School. I was anti-Christian then and anything relating to Jesus Christ and the Bible failed to impact my stony heart. All along, I chased after the world goals: good grades, qualifications and eventually "good" life. In Sec 3, I got my wish when I made it into a good class but I was unhappy, stressed-out and disliked the selfishness between classmates. The turning point came after the "O" levels when I chose to study in a Polytechnic instead of the Junior College.

During Polytechnic attachment in Dec 1996, a Christian colleague gave me an English Bible and wrote two verses on its cover page. ***There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death***" (Prov 14: 12) and ***The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going*** (Prov 14: 15). I could not understand what those verses meant but promised to read the Bible as token of appreciation. However, the Bible ended up on the shelf. Between

1996 and 1998, there were countless occasions of friends sharing the gospel and inviting me to Christian events. I either attended just to satisfy them or avoided their phone calls. My heart was very stubborn; I simply refused to accept anything and I even boasted that I would never be converted.

I started working after graduating from Polytechnic. Somehow my conscience was pricked for not keeping the promise to the colleague. Hence, I started reading Proverbs. Though I could not understand most of it but was fascinated by Prov 16:9 – ***A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps.*** Though I initially planned to go in direction A but somehow ended up taking direction B. I was very close to this female Christian colleague who too had invited me down for gospel rallies and other events. At that point, I was reflecting on my life, pondering over the verses in Proverbs and those biblical messages. Unknowingly, my heart towards Christianity softened.

On 31st Oct 1999, while attending a Sunday worship service at a Charismatic Church, the sermon, about worldly people chasing after qualifications, prestige and wealth, spoke to my heart deeply. I realised I was a sinner and accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour that day. From then, I started attending the Church before leaving for further studies in Adelaide.

By God's grace, I was introduced to my host's dad who was a colleague of my dad's friend in Adelaide. So I started worshipping in the Baptist church that my host's parents attended. It took me a while to adapt to the Baptist's worship style and with the help of the church, my Biblical knowledge grew. When I returned to Singapore during the holidays in Dec 2000, I faced the challenge of leaving the Charismatic Church. It was a tough struggle. Thus after much seeking of the Lord, I left the church and was introduced to Life B-P church.

During my stay in Adelaide, I grew closer to God. He proved Himself to be faithful and real. I was also blessed with godly Christian friends who supported me spiritually by encouraging and praying for me when my faith was challenged, when I almost backslided and in the midst of temptations. And was also greatly encouraged by the godly lives of my host's parents who constantly shared Bible verses with me and demonstrated the meaning of unconditional Christian love and godly contentment.

I began looking for a church upon returning back to Singapore in Jan 2003. I started worshipping in Life B-P Church before moving to Moriah B-P Church in April, as it was much closer to home. Towards the end of May, I accompanied a Brother-in-Christ from Life B-P to Maranatha B-P Church for a Sunday worship service and found the message edifying. Hence, I started attending Maranatha and eventually decided to commit to the church. All along, I have desired to serve in the music ministry and by God's grace; the opportunities of serving as both an organist and in the choir just come. Despite firm parental objection to baptism, I have decided to take the step of faith. Indeed, Our God is a faithful God whose everlasting love endures forever!

2 Tim 1:9 – Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”

RE-AFFIRMATION

JONATHAN OH

I was born in 1991. I grew up in the heavenly atmosphere of a Christian family; of much Bible readings, prayer and hymn singing.

As a child, I attended Sunday Schools. I can still remember some verses that are important. *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord* (Rom 6:23). Why should God judge my sins as worthy of death? It is because of His infinite holiness that no sin could exist in His presence.

Every time I did something wrong, I would feel guilty. After confessing to God about my wrong doings, my heart would be filled with joy again. It was all emptiness within my heart before receiving Christ.

Surely, Jesus came to seek and save the lost! While in agony, Christ came to my rescue. He sent my mother to tell me about God and the wonderful things God had done for her. When my mother conceived me, she had some problems during pregnancy. But God is gracious and merciful to me, He delivered and preserved my life.

Praise the Lord, for His mercy and grace! I believe in the Lord and my mother prayed with me to accept the Lord into my heart when I was nine years old.

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At the Pulpit

Theme for the Quarter:

“Vibrant Christian Witness in a Hostile World (Studies in Daniel)”

Rev (Dr) Leonard Pine

Our Response to the Resurrection

(Col 2:1-23)

*These hyperlinks work with Word 97 and later version.

[End of MM, 11 April 2004]