

April 2022

Death and Resurrection

Paul Kretzmann

And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left... And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

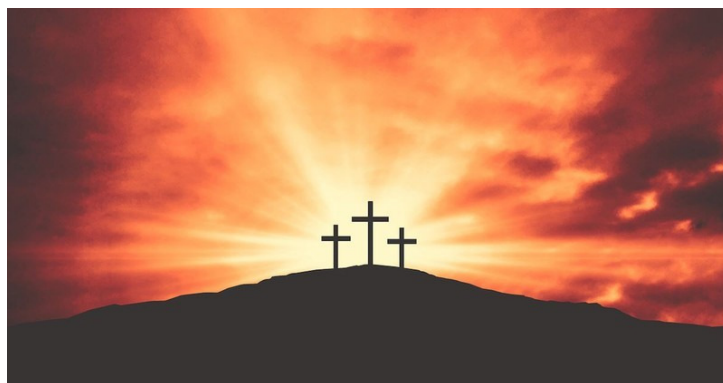
Luke 23:33, 44-46

IT WAS THE SIXTH HOUR according to Jewish, high noon according to modern reckoning, when the miracle here narrated came to pass. Suddenly, not only in Judea, but over the whole earth that was just then enjoying the blessing of sunlight, an abnormal, inexplicable darkness fell, one that was mentioned even by heathen writers. The sun simply failed the people of the world; his light was shut off. All nature was mourning at the climax of the suffering of Jesus.

This darkness was a picture of the greater, deeper darkness that had fallen into the soul of the Redeemer. He was literally forsaken by God, given over into the power of the spirits of darkness, to suffer the indescribable agonies of hell. Christ, in these three hours, had to bear and feel the full strength, the full terror of the divine wrath over the sins of the world. He was in prison and judgment, He poured out His soul in death, He endured the agonies of hell. What an incomprehensible humiliation! The eternal Son of God in the depths of eternal death! But this also was for our salvation, in order that we might be delivered from the pain of death and hell. For delivered we are, since Jesus in the midst of the agony of hell clung to His heavenly Father and conquered wrath, hell, and damnation.

But when these terrible hours were over, the victory was gained. Not as one that was expiring in weakness, but as one that proclaimed Himself the Conqueror over all the foes of mankind, Jesus committed His soul into the hands of His heavenly Father. Thus He fulfilled the great work of atonement for the sins of the whole world, thus He died for us. It was a true death. The band which united soul and body was severed. But His death was His own voluntary deed. In His own power He laid down His life (John 10:18). He sacrificed Himself unto God. In dying, He, as the Stronger,

vanquished death and took it captive forever. Christ loved us and gave Himself for us, He was delivered for our offenses (Eph. 5:2, Rom. 4:25). By His death He destroyed him that had the power of death, the devil, and delivered us from death and the devil (Heb. 2:14-15).



But no sooner had He closed His eyes in death than all nature seemed to rise in a sudden uproar to avenge this crime committed upon the person of the Holy One of God. The wonderful veil, or curtain, which hung before the Most Holy Place in the Temple was torn down through the midst, and other great signs and wonders occurred which filled the people with dread. The centurion, the captain of the guard at the cross, was moved to give glory to God; he was convinced that Jesus was truly the Son of God, righteous in the absolute sense. And likewise all those that had come together near the place of the crucifixion and had remained to see this climax of the work of Christ, beat upon their breasts and turned to go back home, moved in a way which they could hardly explain to themselves. God had spoken, and men were filled with dread. The acquaintances of Jesus also stood at some distance, among them the women whom Luke had mentioned in a commending tone before (8:2-3). They saw everything that happened, and their hearts may well have been strengthened at such an exhibition of divine power. They remained even after the death of their Master and after all these great signs had come to pass; it was hard for them to leave the beloved body of their Lord...

Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

Luke 24:1-9

ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK according to Christian reckoning, which Luke employs on account of his readers, very early in the morning, literally at deep dawn, when the dawn was just giving way to the brightness of the morning, at just about the time of sunrise, the women that were mentioned in the last chapter were on their way to the sepulchre. They brought the spices and ointments which they had prepared before and after the Jewish Sabbath, for their purpose was to anoint the body of Jesus.

But in the mean time wonderful things had happened at the sepulchre. A great earthquake had shaken the garden and the surrounding country; an angel of the Lord had come down from heaven; he had rolled away the stone from the doorway tomb, where it fitted securely into a groove, and had sat down upon it. The women, therefore, who had been apprehensive about the stone, since they were unable to move it, could enter into the tomb. But as they did so, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. The empty grave had been a surprise, the absence of the Lord's body was a greater surprise. At the time of His burial they had noted expressly in just what way He had been laid into the tomb, and now He was not there.

But while they were standing there in doubt and hesitation, all dazed by the unexpected turn of events, suddenly two men in shining, lightning-white raiment, two angels, came upon them, appeared to them. Stricken with overpowering fear in the presence of these beings from the realms of glory, they, the poor sinful human beings, could not lift up their eyes to look upon that glory, but bowed their faces to the ground. But the angels had a reassuring, a cheering message for them, destined to take away all fear out of their hearts. A wonderful Easter-message it is: Why seek ye the Living One among the dead? Jesus is the Living One; He is the source and incarnation of all life (John 1:4). And therefore this Jesus of Nazareth, who had been crucified, had arisen from the dead. He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened on the third day by the Spirit; He had entered also according to His body into a new, spiritual, divine life. Then He had gone and preached to the spirits in prison, He had shown Himself to the devil and all his angels, and also to the souls of the damned as the Conqueror of death and hell (1 Pet. 1:18-19). That was the beginning of His exaltation.



Now we know with the certainty of faith grounded in the Word of eternal truth that Christ, our Champion, has destroyed the power of hell and has taken away the might of the devil. He was no longer in the tomb; He had risen.

And the angels remind the women how, in what words, Jesus had spoken to the disciples, probably in the presence of these women, that it was necessary for the Son of Man, that the obligation rested upon Him, according to the purpose of His incarnation, to be delivered into the hands of sinful men and to be crucified, but that He had also given them the glorious promise that He would arise on the third day. All these express prophecies, which at the time had not entered into their consciousness and understanding, had been fulfilled before their eyes. All this was irrefutable evidence for the resurrection of the Master. ~

Sun of My Soul

Sun of my soul, Thou Savior dear,
It is not night if Thou be near;
O, may no earthborn cloud arise
To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes.

When the soft dews of kindly sleep
My weary eyelids gently steep,
Be my last thought—how sweet to rest
Forever on my Savior's breast!

Abide with me from morn till eve,
For without Thee I cannot live;
Abide with me when night is nigh,
For without Thee I dare not die.

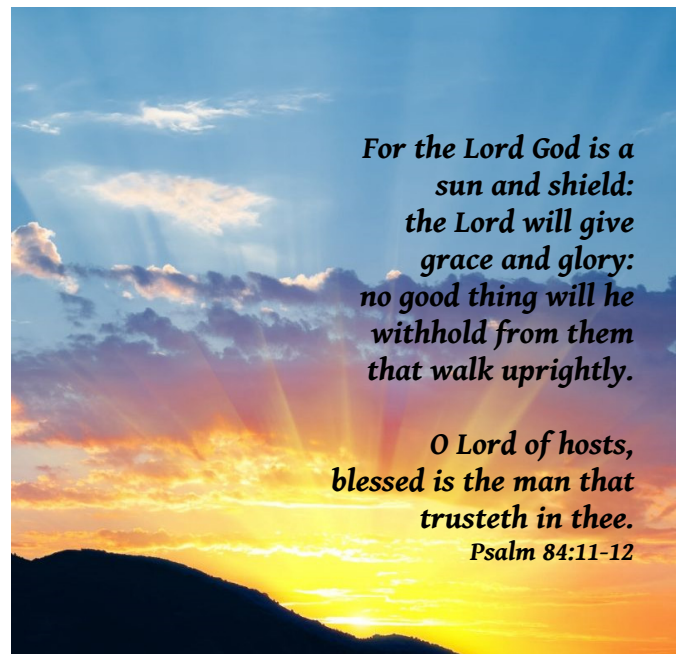
Be near to bless me when I wake
Ere through the world our way I take;
Abide with me till in Thy love
I lose myself in heav'n above.

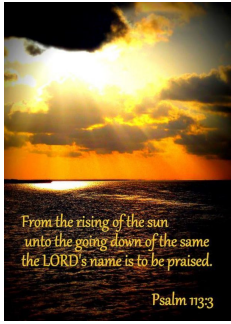
John Keble

**For the Lord God is a
sun and shield:
the Lord will give
grace and glory:
no good thing will he
withhold from them
that walk uprightly.**

**O Lord of hosts,
blessed is the man that
trusteth in thee.**

Psalm 84:11-12





Worshipping During Lent

Pastor Dennis Hannu
Wolf Lake, Minnesota

WE HAVE ENTERED THE SEASON of Lent in the church year. The Epiphany of our Lord is considered and preached on for five Sundays, and then we enter this season of fasting, prayer, and repentance. It is a time of preparation for Easter.

The season of Lent is forty days not including Sundays (Sundays are the days of resurrection). Although Lent is not mentioned in the Scripture it has a long standing tradition in the church. The forty days are often looked at as symbolic to the forty days Jesus fasted in the wilderness before He was tempted by the devil. The Lenten season was seen as a time of repentance and denial of self. All Christians were to examine self and remember what it cost their Savior to save them.

Lent was also a time of instruction for those who wanted to become members of the Christian Church. During Lent they learned the Christian doctrine by studying the Creed. They were then baptized and served the Lord's Supper on Easter Eve or on Easter itself.

At the time of the Reformation, some Christians wanted to eliminate Lent since you could not find it in the Scripture. Martin Luther said it should still be observed. He said "Lent, Palm Sunday, and Holy Week shall be retained, not to force anyone to fast, but to preserve the Passion history and the Gospels appointed for that season" (LW 53:90).

The season of Lent is not necessarily a time of denial and fasting, but rather a time to consider what our Lord has done and what He went through on this earth for us. The things we may decide to deny ourselves on this earth can never compare to what Jesus laid aside when He came to redeem us. *Philippians 2:6-8: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* The gospel of *Matthew 4:1-11* gives the account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. After He is hungry, having fasted for forty days, the devil comes and tempts Jesus to make bread from the stones. Jesus tells him in *verse 4: But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.* Satan tried to get Jesus to act independently of God like he was able to with the first Adam, but Jesus who is the Second Adam (1 *Corinthians 15:45*) would not. He always acted in concert with

the Father, He always did His will, He did what we could not and He pleased the Father. This is who we worship during Lent, the One who was victorious over the devil. This is what the Lent season and the Scriptures that we read during this season are all about. It is about Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, reversing the curse, crushing the head of the serpent.

As the temptation plays out, we see Jesus defeating the devil for us. When the devil brings Him to the pinnacle of the temple and says in *verse 6: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* The devil distorts the Scripture. He uses it for his own means, pulling this verse out of its context. Jesus says in *verse 7: Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* When the devil brings Him into a high mountain and shows Jesus the kingdoms of the world and says in *verse 9: All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me,* he demonstrates himself to be the liar that he is. Jesus says in *verse 10: Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* The devil leaves Jesus and angels came and served Him.

You see the devil never stood a chance. Three times Jesus told him and demonstrates for us, you do not act independently from God. When Adam fell in the Garden of Eden, he acted independently and brought the curse of sin on all mankind. When Jesus came, He did not act independently and has reversed the curse. He remained faithful and for this we will be eternally thankful. He was faithful unto death and now gives unto us this gift of His faithfulness. He overcame the devil for us and went on to defeat him completely on the cross and in His glorious resurrection. He lives and reigns and when we are found in Him, we live and reign as well. Praise God for the finished work of His Son!

This is why we set aside this time of Lent in our calendar and gather to worship on Wednesday evenings, because of Jesus and His victorious work for us on this earth. It is okay if we feel compelled to give up something for the Lent season in our devotion to Him, but let us always remember that it is not what we do during this season that makes it holy, it is what He has done. Worshipping during Lent is not about our fasting, prayers, or even our attempts at repentance. It is about the One who fasted, prayed and made repentance possible for us by His gracious work on our behalf. Come, let us praise Him during this season! ~

Jesus said: *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. (John 12:32)* Human beings can be saved from the ancient wound of the serpent in no other way than by believing in Him who, when He was raised up from the earth on the tree of martyrdom in the likeness of sinful flesh, drew all things to Himself and gave life to the dead.

Irenaeus

[Christ] came back to life, and this became an opportunity for life, which before had been an opportunity for death. In this way death has become the door to life for us; disgrace has become the elevation to glory; condemnation and hell, the door to salvation. And this has happened through Christ, who was sinless...

Martin Luther

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:1-4)

Believe—Jesus Died for You

Gwen Wilson
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children,

Wherever you are, I do hope you are having a very good day. May God bless your day.

ONCE AGAIN WE COME TO that time of year we call Easter, when Jesus was hung on the cross and arose from the grave. He was only 33 years old at that time.

Jesus had been preaching and teaching the people about His Father-God, and spending time with His disciples for just three years before He died. He spent a lot of time teaching His disciples all they needed to know so that they would be able to keep on preaching God's Word and spread that good news to all nations even though Jesus would not be with them in person. This was God's plan. The disciples had a very important job to carry out, and God helped them do His will.

God's plan for Jesus' life was a perfect plan. Jesus had to die for you and me and all people so that we could believe in Him and one day go to heaven. Jesus' blood washes away all our sins, big and small, and makes us free from them forever. The Bible says this in John 3:16: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Jesus was in heaven with the Father from the very beginning. He waited for the day that the Father would send Him down to earth to teach the people about God His father and then die for the people.

Just think, our heavenly Father and Jesus love us more than our moms, dads or other family, friends or anyone can. You can always be sure of God's love. Each of you children are very precious to Him.



Christ on the Cross
Carl Heinrich Bloch

One thing Jesus taught the people a lot about was love, and that is God's greatest commandment. We read in *Mark 12:30-31: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

Jesus would wish for us to love Him first and then we can love other people. And as we know, Jesus loved us first and even died for us and now we can love Him. He puts that love in our hearts.

When Jesus died, He was hung on the cross, but He did not stay there. He was taken down and put in a grave that was in a cave-like place, but He did not stay there either. Jesus rose the third day just as He said he would. *Luke 24:7: The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.* We call this Easter. Do you see what compass direction is in the word Easter? Yes, east. It will be from the eastern skies that Jesus will come from heaven on His return, and all who are on the earth will know it is Him. He will take His own with Him up to heaven.

Jesus arose the victor over death and the grave and went back to heaven to be with His Father. He is waiting there until God sends Him to take us to live with Him forever. He has prepared a beautiful home for us there, where there is no pain, sadness, or hurts of any kind. There is only peace, joy and happiness that will last forever.

We can be very thankful that Jesus died for us for we have so much to look forward to.

Jesus loves us so much that we should thank Him every day for that and pray that He will show us how to be just as loving to all around us.

May each of you remember Jesus this Easter season, in your own special way and keep wanting to love Him. Have a happy blessed Easter.

God's peace.

Early on Easter morning, two women came to Jesus' tomb. There had been a great earthquake, because an angel had come and rolled the stone away. He was sitting down on it. The angel looked like lightning and his clothes were as white as snow. The women were afraid, but the angel said, "Don't be afraid. I know you're looking for Jesus who was crucified. He isn't here for He is risen as He said. Come and see where He lay. Then go quickly and tell His disciples He has risen from the dead and is going to Galilee. You will see Him there."

The women quickly left, still afraid but very happy, and ran to tell His disciples. Jesus met them and said hello to them. They came and hugged His feet and worshipped Him. Jesus told them, "Don't be afraid. Go and tell my brothers that I'm going to Galilee. They will see Me there."

Why did the angel roll the stone away? Was it so that Jesus could get out? No, Jesus didn't need anyone to move the stone for Him. Maybe it wasn't so Jesus could get out, but so the women could get IN! They were able to go inside and see that Jesus wasn't there. Then they saw Him, so they could tell everyone that

the tomb was empty and Jesus was alive!

Christian Monthly for Children April 2012



Abide With Us!

Elmer Yliniemi
April 2008 CM

And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

Luke 24:28-31

IT WAS A TIME OF DESPAIR for the disciples on the weekend that Jesus was crucified. They had expected Jesus to be their ruler and king. They thought He was to redeem Israel from Roman rule and they would become an independent nation. They were not concerned about Him being a Savior from sin, death, and the devil. Their minds were still in the things of this world. The death of Jesus took them by surprise.

Jesus had told them plainly many times and in many ways what would come to pass. *Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.* (Matthew 26:31-32) They knew the Old Testament writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, and had Jesus' own words of His suffering, death, and resurrection. But as yet they had not been revealed to them.

Now we find two disciples, one of them named Cleopas, walking to Emmaus, perhaps to their home, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were shocked over what had just happened in Jerusalem.

They were talking about these events when Jesus joined them and asked them a question. *What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?* (Luke 24:17) Cleopas asks Jesus, *Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?* (Luke 24:18) Jesus says, *What things?* (Luke 24:19) Then the discussion begins—for they did not know they were talking to Jesus.

Why did they not recognize Jesus even after He walked beside them and talked to them? Jesus may have come to them in the guise of a stranger and chose to remain unknown to them for a time to try them and deepen the roots of their faith. But perhaps it was their great sorrow and bitter disappointment that clouded their eyes with unbelief. These disciples are not alone. Sometimes we go through bitter disappointments, painful illnesses, or face very difficult problems in our lives that seem to have no solutions. We can become so wrapped up in our own pain that our faith becomes weak and we cannot feel His presence and we walk alone. Instead of joining the other disciples in Jerusalem, they were going their own way.

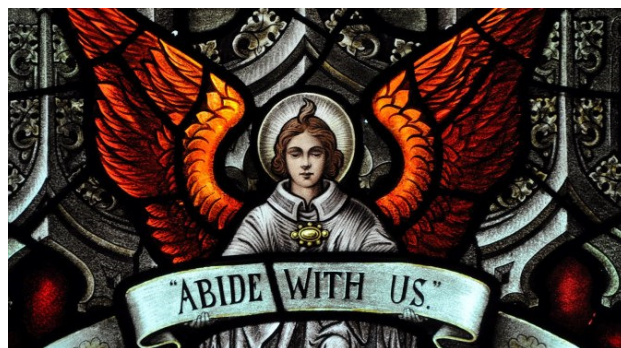
Praise God, He does not forsake us when we have doubts and fears and a weak faith! *A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench.* (Isaiah 42:3) Those are the times He walks beside us wanting to reveal Himself to us. He wants to teach us through His Word as He did these disciples.

He did not reveal Himself to the apostles first. The first messengers of His resurrection were the women who went to

the sepulcher and now these two unknown disciples. God does not allow glory to go to mankind.

Jesus begins teaching them from Moses and the Prophets. He explains what has been prophesied concerning Christ in the Old Testament writings. He found Himself in these Scriptures, whereas modern liberal scholars are not able to do so. They say that the Prophets spoke to the political ills of their day and had nothing to do with future events.

When this Stranger expounded Scripture on the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Messiah with authority, their hearts began to burn. The Word of God is what creates faith. That is why it is so important for us to meditate on and come to the hearing of the Word of God.



Now the disciples had reached home and *they constrained him, saying, Abide with us,* (Luke 24:29) and He went in with them. Jesus never forces His way into our heart. *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* (Revelation 3:20) Something happened here when they sat to eat. Christ was given the Master's place at the head of the table, for He broke the bread and blessed it. This is when the eyes of the disciples were opened and they recognized Him and He disappeared. When we yield our life to the Lordship of Christ, He reveals Himself to us. We often want to remain the Lord of our lives and miss His blessing. We must receive the bread from His hands.

When the two disciples recognized Jesus, their doubts and unbelief disappeared. When Jesus is revealed to us, He takes away sorrow, depression, and fear. But our hearts do not remain empty. We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit which gives us love, peace, and joy in the Lord. He makes us alive!

The same thing happened to the disciples. They forgot their tiredness and immediately rose up and walked back to Jerusalem. They joined the eleven disciples gathered behind locked doors and reported to them that *The Lord is risen indeed.* (Luke 24:34) They had found new energy and joy.

The disciples had to learn that a resurrected body is in a new and wonderful state. He could enter and leave as He chose. The rock at the sepulcher and closed doors no longer hampered His body. He is not bound by time, space, or place, but He rules all creation with His resurrection power. It is a comforting thought that He can be with us in whatever we face, unhindered by the world.

May the risen Lord find an abiding place in our hearts and lives! The good news is **Jesus Lives!** ~

A Song of Freedom

J. M. Hoppin

And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

Revelation 14:1-3

A “NEW SONG” IS DOUBTLESS the song of a new and higher victory. A song is, above all, an expression of the heart, something spontaneous, the irrepressible upspringing of an inward emotion. A bird sings because it cannot help singing, and because its little heart is thrilling with an overflowing joy; and so they who sing the “new song” have had, doubtless, some true experience of a great good and joy which causes them to sing.

I think that it is the experience of every thoughtful man that all the real misery springs, in some way, from spiritual wrong. If he have lost friends, which is one of our great natural griefs, yet if sin had not thrust itself into this sorrow, if the soul of the friend as well as one's own had been perfectly true to God, and to right, one would find in the bereavement a cause to rejoice, for to the holy dead God reveals the fulness of His love. It is the conscious want of the love of God, manifesting itself in acts of selfishness, ingratitude, and treason to truth and duty — it is always this that has made the human spirit wail. Selfishness is a constant pain, and love a constant joy. I do not deny the many natural sorrows of life, and that they are sometimes painful beyond human power to endure, but we would be strong from a Divine strength to bear troubles and sufferings which fall to our lot in this life, and they would be only for our discipline and perfection, were we without transgression. These would be outside sufferings. But it is the feeling that we have acted unrighteously, that we have stained our soul's honour, that we have been unthankful to the heavenly Father. It is this that consumes the spirit within us. If we are raised for one instant by the quick motion of faith, by the absorbing exercise of prayer, by the unselfish act of pure obedience, into the light and liberty of God's presence, we gain inward freedom and peace, we experience an absolute deliverance from the tyranny of evil.

We may perceive, then, why the power of sin in our human nature is called in the Scriptures a “bondage.” It is pure absolutism. Let the bondsman strive once to free

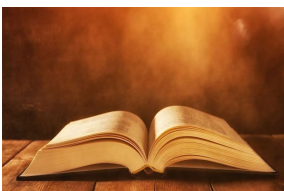
himself, to shake himself loose from his bonds, to change his own nature, and he will see what a grasp evil has. To be freed from the power of evil would soothe all pangs, would wipe away all tears, sorrow, care, and would restore to the life-giving presence and joy of God.

Can we not then begin, in some feeble manner I grant, to perceive or imagine what may be the significance of the “new song”? It is in truth a song of freedom, and we need not wonder that it is represented to be like the sound of many waters, the outpouring of innumerable hearts on the free shore of eternity, for God has made the soul to be free and to have no law over it but the law of love. There are, indeed, but few such chords that vibrate in human hearts. Sorrow is one of these. Coleridge said that at the news of Nelson's death no man felt himself a stranger to another; and of these universal chords, that of freedom is also one. Such a spontaneous cry rises from an enslaved nation, whose chains are broken by some God-inspired man...

So it will be a new joy in heaven to be free — to be free from the shameful oppression of evil. The believer may, in some feeble and imperfect measure, in his best times, when Christ his Light is near, be able to conceive of this state of entire victory over, or deliverance from, sin, because he has in the present life yearnings after it, and prophecies of it; but to the unrenewed mind this truth is not quite clear. It is, on the contrary, a thought which gives that mind, when it thinks at all, much uneasiness and confusion. For it has had fleeting tastes of sweetness in this earthly life, and in those pleasures into which God does not come, poor though they be, and it fears to lose those alloyed and swift-passing experiences of happiness in being holy. It would not release entirely its hold upon these, for fear of losing its happiness altogether.

But we must let go one to win the other. We must push off from the shore of this world to gain the free shore of eternity; and so complete is the victory of heaven, that not even such an electric thought of evil as has been described, shall pass over the soul. Holiness is happiness. Goodness is joy. Love is freedom. There are no remains of the conflict of temptation. The spell of sin is broken; and as freedom is one of those things that never grows old, so the song of heaven shall be a “new song.”

But another and higher sense remains, in which it would seem that the song of heaven is called a “new song,” arising from the fact that this heavenly freedom which is sung, does not end in ourselves, in our freedom or holiness or joy, but ends in Christ, and in the Divine will in which dwells this pure and mighty power of the soul's deliverance from evil. ~



Let us then consider it certain and firmly established that the soul can do without anything except the Word of God and that where the Word of God is missing there is no help at all for the soul. If it has the Word of God it is rich and lacks nothings since it is the Word of life, truth, light, peace, righteousness, salvation, joy, liberty, wisdom, power, grace, glory and of every incalculable blessing...

To preach Christ means to feed the soul, make it righteous, set it free, and save it, provided it believes the preaching.

Martin Luther

Praise Ye the Lord!

Lois Matson
Yacolt, Washington

Praise ye the Lord. *I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious: and his righteousness endureth for ever. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He hath given meat unto them that fear him: he will ever be mindful of his covenant. He hath shewed his people the power of his works, that he may give them the heritage of the heathen. The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness. He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.*

Psalm 111

MANY OF THE PSALMS BEGIN (and end) with this command: Praise the Lord! The psalms recount many different reasons the Lord is to be praised. From delivering the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, to delivering them from their enemies, the good works of the Lord are related. His good, good works toward His children are recited and remembered by the generations following.

Martin Luther says of Psalm 111: "This is a Psalm of thanksgiving, and a song for the people of Israel, to be sung at the feast of the Passover, or at the eating of the paschal Lamb. For by this short song the people were instructed to give thanks, and to magnify and praise God for those great and glorious works of his, the leading them out of Egypt at the first; and also, for giving them a good and divine government, for the priesthood he established, for the law he gave them, and for appointing the preaching of his word; for their feasts and for their Sabbaths, for public peace and a good administration of the laws, and, in a word, for all his infinite mercies..."

Psalm 111 says, *The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein.* We who delight in the Lord's good works seek them out. We painstakingly look for His good works in His creation, in the world we inhabit, in the Church, in our own lives. And His good works are evident.

It's the season of Easter. On Maundy Thursday, we recall the Last Supper, the suffering in Gethsemane, and the arrest of our Lord. On Good Friday, we remember the crown of thorns and the purple robe, the mocking and scourging, and

the death of our Savior on a cross. On Easter Sunday, we celebrate the glorious resurrection of our Redeemer.

Your sin is forgiven and the devil is defeated. Christ is risen and death is conquered. That is praiseworthy indeed!

The Nicene Creed tells of the good, good works of our good, good God:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; **who for us men and for our salvation** came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

All of this was **for us men and our salvation**. That is the good, good work of our our good, good God. That is praiseworthy!

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (1 Tim 3:16)

Praise ye the Lord! You, yes, all of you! Praise the Lord! ~



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Life and Death



My Dearest Friend.

How good you are to me in renewing by a letter the sweet recollection of yourself and in excusing my tiresome delay. It is not possible that any forgetfulness of your affection could ever invade the hearts of those who love you; but, I confess, I thought you had almost forgotten yourself until I saw your letter. So now no more delays; fulfil quickly the promise that you have written; and if your pen truly expresses your purpose, let your acts correspond to it. Why do you delay to give birth to that spirit of salvation which you have so long conceived? Nothing is more certain to mortals than death, nothing more uncertain than the hour of death, since it is to come upon us as a thief, in the night. Woe unto them who are still with child [of that good intention] in that day! If it shall anticipate and prevent this birth of salvation, alas! it will pierce through the house and destroy the holy seed: For when they shall say Peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

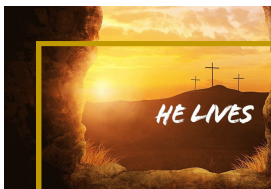
I wish you not to flee from death, but only to fear it. For the just, though he avoids it not, because he knows that it is inevitable yet does not fear it. Moreover, he awaits it as a rest (Isaiah 57:2) and receives it in perfect security; for as it is the exit from the present life, so it is the entrance into a better. Death is good if by it thou die to sin, that thou mayest live unto righteousness. It is necessary that this death should go before, in order that the other which follows after may be safe. In this life, so long as it lasts, prepare for yourself that life which lasts for ever. While you live in the flesh, die unto the world, that after the death of the flesh you may begin to live unto God. For what if death rend asunder the coarse envelope of your body so long as from that moment it clothes you with a garment of joy? O, how blessed are the dead which die in the Lord (Revelation 14:13), for they hear from the Spirit, that "they may rest from their labours."

And not only so, but also from new life comes pleasure, and from eternity safety. Happy, therefore, is the death of the just because of its rest; better because of its new life, best because of its safety (Psalm 34:21).

On the other hand, worst of all is the death of sinners. And hear why worse. It is bad, indeed, through loss of the world; it is worse through separation from the flesh; worst of all through double pain of worm and fire.

Up, then, hasten; go forth out of the world, and renounce it entirely; let your soul die the death of the righteous, that your last end also may be like His: Oh, how dear in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints (Psalm 116:13). Flee, I pray you, lest you stand in the way of sinners. How canst thou live where thou durst not die?

Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, to his dear Romanus, as to his friend.



I know that my Redeemer lives;
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my ever living Head.

He lives triumphant from the grave,
He lives eternally to save,
He lives all-glorious in the sky,
He lives exalted there on high.

He lives to grant me rich supply,
He lives to guide me with His eye,
He lives to comfort me when faint,
He live to hear my soul's complaint.

He lives to silence all my fears,
He lives to wipe away my tears,
He lives to calm my troubled heart,
He lives all blessings to impart.

He lives to bless me with His love,
He lives to plead for me above,
He lives my hungry soul to feed,
He lives to help in time of need.

He lives, my kind, wise, heav'nly friend,
He lives and loves me to the end;
He lives, and while He lives, I'll sing;
He lives, my Prophet, Priest, and King.

He lives and grants me daily breath;
He lives and I shall conquer death;
He lives my mansion to prepare;
He lives to bring me safely there.

He lives, all glory to His name!
He lives, my Jesus, still the same.
Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives,
"I know that my Redeemer lives!"

Samuel Medley