

Risen to Save

Rev. Taek Kim

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:3-9

³For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, ⁴and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. ⁷Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. ⁸Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. ⁹For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed!

In life, there are times when things go from bad to worse, and do not seem to have any chance to get better. And though that actually does happen at times, we must remember the times when things go wrong, get worse, and it seems hopeless, but then the unexpected and most surprising thing happens. Some call it a miracle, an act of God, or something else.

If you think hard enough, you can remember times when such unexpected blessings came your way.

It could have been an emergency, maybe the answer to a problem that you could not have come up with on your own, or something else.

Sometimes it could be problem that didn't last very long at all. At other times, it could be something that lasted year or even a lifetime until the answer or solution came.

But how about thinking of times when you never had a need, provided for, and what may be lacking for some was never a lack for you.

It may have been possibly your college tuition was all paid for and you didn't have to worry about it. Maybe it was your first car which you did not have to pay for, but was paid for and given to you. Maybe it was something else.

But if you really think about it, growing up as a child, at least for most all of us, we didn't have to work to earn money to buy food, pay for a house or rent, utilities, health insurance, and everything else that were actually provided for you, and if any children are watching, then yes, you are being taken care of and you have what you need.

Today, on Easter Sunday, I want us to all think of how God not only loved us with word but with actions. God sent Jesus Christ to die for us so that we could have no worries about our sins. Jesus paid for them, Jesus took the punishment, and we do not have to worry about our sins with God.

Sure, we have to sometimes face the consequences of our sins on earth, and you and others can hurt when we sin, sometimes hurt for a short time and sometimes a long time. But when it comes to God, we are forgiven and we do not have to worry about that.

And Jesus rising from the dead gives us the promise of life, eternal life.

What was unexpected, the most unexpected thing in the history of all time was that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, defeating death, eternal death that is.

We are human, and like I said, though we are forgiven, we live with some of the consequences and outcomes of sin. And that includes not living forever in these bodies. Our days will end.

But what we have such great hope in because of Christ rising again is that we have promised eternal life that will be one with God and all those who have gone before us who are in heaven now.

This helps us face today, to be at peace with our past, and look forward with hope, even when it seems like hope is all but gone.

As I said that children typically have a life they do not have to worry about food, water, clothing, shelter, and other needs, we too must remember we are children of God who do not have to worry about the state and future of our souls.

When we place our faith Jesus Christ who loves us, who died for us, who rose from the dead for us, and who walks with us every single moment of our lives and will continue to for all of eternity, then we can live with God's peace, hope, joy, courage, security, forgiveness, patience, kindness, and of course love.

God allows us to be forgiving of ourselves and to love ourselves instead of beating up ourselves and not liking or even hating ourselves or parts of ourselves.

God allows us to be able to forgive others, even those who won't accept it nor will forgive us if there was any wrong needing to be forgiven. And forgiveness does not mean you always remain close or even trust the person who hurt you in one way or another, but rather you can let the chain and ball go that you were left to drag around. You can learn to let go of it more and more until it no longer drags you around and burdens you. You can find such peace in forgiving as you have found in Christ and his forgiveness for you.

God allows us to face our fears and anxieties with the power of Christ, who even struggled before he was arrested with the daunting task of taking on the sins of the world and dying on the cross, with all it entailed, including being separated from God for a time and descending into hell.

Our Lord and Savior who went through all of that is the one who walks with us, who calms the storms within, who gives strength to do things that we couldn't think we could otherwise, and allows us to love with his love so that others can't help but be drawn to him.

Even while we're stuck in our homes for the most part, we can be free in him, to know that what we go through will be worth it for others, not only for us.

And we pray with the praying power of Christ as we face these crazy times, praying for one another and for all who are fighting this virus and helping care for, save, and comfort people through it all.

Christ came to save us, not only for when our lives are over and we go to heaven, but for life and each day to live from today on.

Christ rose from the dead to save us so we could live, truly live!

It's terribly sad to see someone who has everything they need but for some reason or another does not see it or refuses to see it. It's sad when they have what they need but won't take it. And it's sad to see that they do that not only in the moment, not only for a while, but sometimes for their entire lives.

Sure we go through ups and downs in life. Sure there are times when we're happy as well as sad and doing well and not doing well.

But in Christ we find that no matter the circumstances or how we feel, we know we have been given the gift of life in him, to live well and to share his love and saving grace.

Just as a parent wants to raise their child as well as possible so they have what they need to live well, not only mostly independent lives, but good lives, blessed lives, and lives full of love, fulfillment, and happiness.

So does God desire with us. To live with the joy he has for us. To share the gifts we have in him. To pass on to our kids, grandkids, relatives and friends, as well as strangers, the gift that is eternal, that blesses in life and after this life.

We must never forget to celebrate Easter, not only on Easter Sunday, not only on Sundays, but every single day and make the most of the gifts of life and eternal life Christ has given to us.

Let us not forget this amazing gift so that when we look at even the worst of times, we can see hope and life in Christ.

Even when this pandemic has gotten us feeling beat up, as we should when we not only know of people who have gotten sick but have passed away, including the very healthcare workers who are doing their best to help and save people, we must remember that Christ rose again in order to save us for a life of giving such saving hope to others, even in the face of death.

So if you have a list of things that is bringing you down, that have brought you down, lift them up to God. Give them to Jesus in prayer. Ask for help.

And at the same time, look at what Christ has done for you, has given you, and continues to bless you with as we have this Easter Sunday from our homes.

May we share Christ's love so to help others rise from where they are feeling low, where they need help to rise above, and to feel the loving hands of Christ lifting them up.

May we share the abundant gifts of Christ's love, forgiveness and salvation in any way we can during these times.

May this Easter be a time when you decide that each day will be a day, no matter what, to turn to the one who rose from the dead so you could too...from a dead soul, from a dead relationship, from some other part of your life that has ended or felt like death in some way.

May the scars and pains from the past be present and reminders, but not the way you live your life or are burdened.

May you feel debt-free in Christ, freed to live because even when you feel you are struggling and do not have enough of something, that in Christ you have what is need most when it comes to life on earth and life one day in heaven. It is him, your Lord and Savior.

I hope this message helps you turn to Jesus when you feel like nothing seems to be helping and when it seems hopeless.

That's how people felt when they put Christ in the tomb on Friday. Yet, what a glorious day it was when Christ appeared to them, ate with them, let them touch him to see he had a new body that would never die again, and when Christ continued showing himself to so many that what happened some 2,000 years ago has continued to be told to us.

The Apostle Paul was among those who not only came to believe in Jesus, but in a way that was an utter surprise and miracle too.

Paul did not see Jesus, at least the resurrected Jesus as others did. Jesus met Paul, who at the time was known as Saul, as Saul was on his way to persecute and arrest more Christians. Jesus

appeared to him and knocked him off his horse, temporarily blinded him, and said he would no longer be attacking Christians, but would be helping save them.

Though we do not live in such a terrible time, that in our country we are not hunted down and imprisoned for our faith in Christ, we must see how scary it was for Christians during that time.

And for them to know Saul was after them was terribly frightening. But Christ rose from the dead to save even those who were persecuting him by attacking his followers.

Let us know that those who seem to be the worst, the ones who are not helping others but hurting others, they too can be the ones God uses to transform and be messengers of his salvation.

We know Jesus rose from the dead because people's lives were changed and their testimony and witness of Jesus Christ rising from the dead reached us and continues to reach so many for Christ.

We know it to be true in our hearts. And to hear it from Paul, who once hated and tried to defeat Christ, that indeed it is true should remind us of what Christ has and continues to do in his world today.

And do not forget we all are messengers of Christ, of his life, death, and resurrection.

So take time to give thanks, to count your blessings, and know you are truly loved and saved because your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, rose from the dead and has saved you!

Happy and blessed Easter! Amen.