

Easter Sunday School Lesson

Good morning, "Jesus Christ is Risen!" Happy Easter to you. I hope you are well and blessed. We celebrate Easter with rejoicing because our Savior conquered death and lives forevermore. With unwavering faith, we trust the Bible because Christ's power over the grave, proves He can and will fulfill every word.

"William Sangster was one of the great preachers of the 20th Century. Toward the end of his life, became very ill. His vocal chords were paralyzed and he was unable to speak. On the Easter morning just before he died he penned a short note to his daughter. In it he wrote these poignant words: "How terrible to wake up on Easter and have no voice to shout, 'He is risen!' But it is far worse to have a voice and not want to shout." "He is Risen!"

Prayer: Dear God, Thank you that by your might, Jesus was raised from the grave, paving the way for us to have new life with you. We praise you for your great strength, and love. We praise you that you are Conqueror, Victor, Redeemer, and Friend. We confess our need for you and we ask that you renew our hearts, minds, and lives, for the days ahead. God we ask that you keep us focused on what is pure and right and give us the power to be obedient to your word. We ask that you shine your light in us, through us, and over us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Father, we ask that you bring healing mercies to our church families, our friends and neighbors that are going through sickness and battling ailments. Lord, God you know our burdens and we pray for help so we can overcome them. Father only you can stop the spread of the virus that is plaguing the world, we pray that you end the spreading of the disease and heal the ones that are affected. God, we ask for your mercy and strength, for the families that have lost love ones. We pray Lord that you, will protect all personnel in the medical community as they continue to care for the sick. We pray for our national, state, and civic leaders asking that you, will give them the wisdom to know what to do as they lead in this time. Father, there is hope and assurance of a day when the trumpet will sound and the dead in Christ will rise, please help us to always be in Christ and live for Christ. Help us, Lord Jesus, to live each day prepared for Your coming. Help us to be faithful with the work, You have committed into our hands so we are not ashamed and left behind when You return in glory to gather

those who are eagerly waiting for You. We ask all these things in Lord and Savior name, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lesson for April 12, 2020 is "Resurrection Hope" from Mark chapter 16 and 1 Corinthians chapter 15

Sources used for this lesson: The Holy Bible (New International Version), excerpts from Dr. Rev. Hal Brady, sermons, Hope for Each Day, by Rev. Billy Graham, and The Present Word Adult Bible Lessons.

On resurrection morning, no one was looking for the risen Christ. The disciples are locked away in a room fearing the Jews might kill them. Later in the day a couple disciples will walk to Emmaus discussing how terrible things have turned out. Their hopes were dashed and as far as they are concerned things are over. Before sunrise on resurrection morning a few loyal women come to the tomb to "anoint" the body of the Lord. They are not looking for a risen Savior. They are coming to finish the anointing process Joseph started prior to our Lord's burial.

Jesus' resurrection figures prominently in all four Gospels. The Gospel writers' variations strengthen the truth that these Gospel writers are independent witnesses and are not attempting to reproduce a concocted deception.

In the New Testament, the word used for resurrection is a Greek word that means "to stand up again." Jesus died, was buried, and on the third day "stood up again" from the dead. Jesus speaks of the same resurrection in John's gospel: "The hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out." (John 5:28b-29a) We often call this the general resurrection, and we confess it regularly in the Nicene Creed ("I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come") and the Apostles' Creed ("I believe in the resurrection of the body").

Easter is also called Passover because the events of Holy Week and Easter are redemptive for Christians. Just as Passover celebrates the exodus of the Hebrew people, Easter celebrates our exodus from death to eternal life through the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God. According to the Gospels, the death and resurrection of Jesus took place during the feast of Passover and Unleavened Bread (see Matthew 26:17; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7 and John 18:39). Easter is called Passover in modern Greek (Pascha) as well as in Italian (Pasqua), French (Paques), Spanish (Pascua) and Dutch (Pasen), among others.

There were some in the Corinthian church who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians he is going over the good news which he first brought to them. It was not news which he had invented. It was news that had first been delivered to him, and it was news of a Risen Lord. Paul reminds the Corinthians that what he taught them in the past is still valid. Paul says they had "received" his message as truth, and they can "stand" on his preaching. The Corinthians can still use his teaching as a guide for their faith and practice.

It is the continuing acceptance of Paul's "gospel" that gives the Corinthians assurance that they "are saved" from eternal punishment for their sinful rebellion against God. Paul urges the Corinthians not to forget his gospel essentials; otherwise all their earlier commitments will be in "vain." Paul is saying if there is no resurrection then their faith is vain and worthless.

Paul presents himself as neither the originator nor the final recipient of his message. He received his message from the Lord himself (Galatians 1:12), and his plan for evangelism has always been to deliver the gospel to faithful people who will pass it on to others.

The Apostle Paul assures that many people saw Jesus after his resurrection: Peter, the disciples (the twelve), more than 500 Christian believers (most of whom were still alive when Paul wrote this, although some had died), James (Jesus' brother), all the apostles, and Paul himself.

The phrase "first importance" that Paul uses indicates that, what he is about to say is of primary, and central importance. Paul is at the heart of the gospel message. Here, are the facts of the gospel Paul received and preached, from verses 3-5 is:

"that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,"

"that he was buried,"

"that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,"

"and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve."

In 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Paul writes, "Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede

those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each another with these words.”

Paul isn't saying much here about the resurrection except its timing. There will be a resurrection, and the reason we know that is because Jesus, the example of true humanity, was raised from the dead. We believe in his resurrection, so we believe that he will also bring back to life all who believe in him, and this will happen when Jesus returns to earth. Christians who have died will rise, and Christians who are alive will be changed and rise into the clouds to meet the Lord as he returns, and we will be with him forever.

Easter is a celebration of hope. Paul writes that the resurrection of Jesus is the very foundation of our faith: “If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead... But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. (see verses 14-20).

Paul goes into more detail, explaining not only that there will be a resurrection and provides an overview of the “first fruits” meaning.” The expression “first fruits” refers to an offering prescribed in the Torah. God’s people were to bring the first portion of the harvest and offer it to God. Paul says here that Jesus is the “first fruits” of everyone who dies. Just as the first fruits represented the entire harvest. Jesus represents all humanity in the resurrection. Because Jesus has risen from the dead, we all, too, will rise from the dead. He compares the resurrection body to the planting of a seed. The seed looks like a seed, but the plant that grows from it looks quite different, depending on what kind of seed it is (verses 37-38). So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. (verses 42-44)

After we are resurrected, we will be different, perhaps as different as a leaf is from a seed. The important differences are that we will be imperishable, glorious, powerful, and spiritual—and we will look like Christ:

Paul uses a different figure of speech, that of putting on new clothes. The point that he stresses the most, is that we will be imperishable—our bodies

will not deteriorate, and we will never die. We will have new, glorious bodies, transformed by the Holy Spirit to be like Christ.

There is no greater success story than the resurrection. The essence of the Gospel is that Christ died for our sins, that He was buried, and that He was raised from the grave, never to die again. Do we believe? We have all the proof that we need in the words of the Bible and the testimony of believers. Jesus told Thomas and us in John 20:29, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

From the section stepping into the World: Easter is arguably more important for Christians than Christmas, yet in our society much more is made of Christmas than Easter. Easter gives us an opportunity to invite others to investigate and discover the joy of this new life for themselves. Easter should mean everything because Christ has conquered death. That makes all the difference – now and forever. Jesus' resurrection not only brings eternal life; it brings life into the world: "a new heaven and a new earth." (see Revelation 21:1) Jesus offers us the life of eternal life. Thank God for Jesus dying on the cross for our sins, rising from grave, so He will return and take us to Himself. Every promise will be fulfilled.

Christ's victory means we will one day be united with Him and death will have no hold on us. Christ will bring a new world order and complete new creation. All will be joyous and eternal. There will be nothing temporary. Let the hope of our bodily Resurrection with Christ give hope to you and allow you to see its central importance in our Gospel message.

The meaning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

- the resurrection of Jesus Christ means that we are justified before God.
- the resurrection of Jesus Christ shows that Jesus defeated death.
- the resurrection Christ means that believers are united with Christ.
- the resurrection of Jesus Christ confirms the truth of scripture.
- the resurrection of Jesus Christ proves the gospel to be true.
- the resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that Jesus is the, "Son of God".
- the resurrection of Jesus Christ means that the Holy Spirit will be poured out into the hearts of those who believe.

- the resurrection of Jesus Christ gives Christians a living hope.
- the resurrection of Jesus Christ means that we will be raised like Him.
- the resurrection of Jesus Christ means that Christ will judge the world in righteousness.

Indeed, "Jesus Christ has Risen" glory be to God the Father. Billy Graham quote, "Because of what Jesus Christ did for us through His cross and resurrection, we know that we have hope for the future." Happy Easter to you.

Closing: For the love that cast out fear, the faith that sustains and the hope that never perishes, be with us now and forever more. Amen. God watch over us and take care of us.

Next week's lesson April 19, 2020 "Injustice Will Be Punished" from Esther 7:1-10.