

SERMON

**Resurrection - Forgiveness of Sins Confirmed**

**GOOD Morning OIC,**

**Today, Easter or Resurrection Day, I will attempt to bring out the true meaning and affect of Easter, *Jesus' Resurrection Celebration Day - Forgiveness of Sins Confirmed*. I want to encourage my brothers and sisters in Christ that we have a living Saviour who is active in our lives.**

Jesus' death on the Cross, Crucifixion, to buy our ETERNAL forgiveness, is detailed in the New Testament by all four Gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Easter means nothing without the Sacrificial Lamb's sacrifice on Passover, the high Jewish Holiday. Passover was commanded by God to the Jewish Nation to remember that the Death Angel passed over them in Egypt because they sacrificed a lamb and placed its blood on their doorposts. The Death Angel killed all the first born in Egypt, except anyone who was in a home with the *blood of the lamb* on the doorposts. This was the last of the plagues God sent upon Egypt to force the release of the Jews from slavery under Pharaoh. Jesus fulfilled this message from that first *Passover*. John the Baptist prophesied this when Jesus came to John to be baptized in water for in **(John 1.29)** it says *The next day he {John the Baptist} saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

Jesus' Crucifixion day has been recognized in Christian societies as *Good Friday*.

This is a curious fact: Except for government dates in Japan and China, and for Jewish religious dates, most of the world's dates count the years as BC and AD. BC is for "Before Christ", and AD for Anno Domini (in the year of the Lord). But these societies generally denote Jesus being a famous "man" not His being the "Son of God."

The Apostle John records Jesus' sacrifice in **(John 19.17-18)** *17 They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, carrying His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which in Hebrew is called, Golgotha. 18 There they crucified Him.* The Bible makes it clear that Jesus was really dead, not just fainting as some doubters claim. John, as an eyewitness to Jesus' Crucifixion said in **(John 19.33-35)** *but after they came to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 Yet one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water*

came out. **35** *And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.* As we shall see in John Chapter 20, John's bold testimony when he wrote this Gospel Book makes sense as he was quicker to believe than the other Apostles.

In **(John 20.1-2)** it says *Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already removed from the tomb. 2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have put Him."*

The first day of the week, which was later called Sunday, is the day after the Jewish Sabbath, Saturday. This was the third day since Jesus' Crucifixion. Any event was counted as a whole day for each day it covered in the Jewish culture at that time. Jesus had promised that He would take His life back on the Third Day. As in **(Matthew 16.21)** *From that time Jesus began to point out to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem and to suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised up on the **third day**.*

Mary Magdalene's first impression was that people had stolen Jesus' body. Logically, in a panic mode, she ran to the two disciples closest to Jesus, Peter an obvious leader as a fisherman, and John, who had leaned on Jesus' chest at the *Last Supper, the Thursday evening when Jesus was arrested.*

Reading in **(John 20.3-7)** *So Peter and the other disciple left, and they were going to the tomb. 4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead, faster than Peter, and came to the tomb first; 5 and he stooped to look in, and saw the linen wrappings lying there; however he did not go in. 6 So Simon Peter also came, following him, and he entered the tomb; and he looked at the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings but folded up in a place by itself.* Of course, Peter and John also felt panic, for the Lord they worshiped was gone. John won the foot race to the tomb; but Peter, ever bold and not to hesitate in an emergency, stooped in. Now the Bible records how these two Apostles reacted differently. Any Jewish Christians here who attended Hebrew School in their youth would realize that the neatly folded face-cloth or napkin that was placed over Jesus' body told a story by itself. Robbers stealing Jesus' body would not go to such trouble as to fold the face-cloth.

Reading more in **(John 20.8-10)** *8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb also entered then, and he saw and believed. 9 For they did not yet understand the Scripture, that He must rise from the dead. 10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.* Now, John

entered the tomb, saw, and believed. Believed what? And Why? One of the Jewish Christians here at OIC gave me this explanation.

**“The servant would not dare touch the table until the master was finished. Now if the master was finished eating, he would rise from the table, wipe his fingers and mouth, clean his beard, and wad up the napkin and toss it onto the table. For in those days, the wadded napkin meant, 'I'm finished.'**

**But, if the master got up from the table, folded his napkin and laid it beside his plate, the servant would not dare touch the table, because the folded napkin meant, 'I'm coming back!'”**

I also heard from a Christian evangelist with “Jews For Jesus” that there is a unique fold taught in Hebrew School which he showed me; but, sorry, I forgot it. The point is clear, the Apostle John was alert to get the message from the “supposedly” dead Jesus that, “I shall, or already, have returned,” that is **returned from the dead!** Thus for John, *he saw and believed.*

Pastor Bruce, why didn't Peter “see and believe?” John may have been a more alert person, in general. But I believe that Peter was still depressed for having denied the Lord three times just four days earlier. When people are depressed they are not as sharp to notice things. We recall in **(Matthew 26.73-75)** *73 A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “You really are one of them as well, since even the way you talk gives you away.” 74 Then he began to curse and swear, “I do not know the man!” And immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the statement that Jesus had made: “Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly.* Perhaps Peter felt responsible for Jesus' death. He wasn't, but depression does that. As I have said at the start of many messages **JUSTIFICATION is the declaration by God that we are no longer guilty but we are made righteous on the basis of Jesus' death on The Cross to buy OUR eternal forgiveness.**

#### **TAKEAWAY#1**

**Every man who ever sinned, that is all of Mankind, is responsible for Jesus' Sacrifice. That is why He came to earth to buy our forgiveness. What a relief that Peter must have felt when He saw the risen Lord. Dear people here today, you can have the same relief for your sins are also forgiven if you believe, as John did, that the Jesus who died for your sins is risen from the dead.**

We get more details on that first Easter Day in Matthew's Gospel. Mary Magdalene returned again as the day was dawning so she could investigate further Jesus' tomb for we see in **(Matthew 28.1-10)** *Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the tomb. 2 And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred,*

*for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. 3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 The guards shook from fear of him and became like dead men. 5 And the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. 6 He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him; behold, I have told you."*

This time, they meet an Angel. This Messenger from God gives them the instructions for Jesus' eleven Apostles to go to Galilee. Then they meet Jesus Himself in **(Matthew 28.8-10): 8 And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to report to His disciples. 9 And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Rejoice!" And they came up and took hold of His feet, and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go, bring word to My brothers to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me."** We might think that an Angel's instructions would be enough; but, Jesus' compassion to reassure them that He is risen led Him to appear to them.

## **TAKEAWAY#2**

**Jesus' compassion for those who believe in Him moves Him to not only give up his life for them, but to find ways to reveal Himself to them. Christian, expect His personal touches in your life. He feels toward you as He did toward those early Believers seeking for Him. If we keep seeking Him, He will not ignore our hearts desire, and we will hear His loving instruction, "Rejoice!"**

We find that Jesus, of course, did as He promised, and met the Apostles in Galilee. He chose to repeat His earlier miracle to give them a great catch of fish. We read in **(John 21.1-3)** *After these things Jesus revealed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He revealed Himself in this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas who was called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are also coming with you." They went out and got into the boat; and that night they caught nothing.* Maybe the Apostles wanted a break from ministry. Maybe they were heading back to their previous lives now that Jesus was not visibly with them everyday. Wherever their hearts were, Jesus knew how to refresh their minds to how they began following him with a great catch of fish. We read in **(John 21.4-8)** *But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 So Jesus said to them, "Children, you do not have any fish to eat, do you?" They answered Him, "No." 6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you will find the fish." So they cast it, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great quantity of fish. 7 Therefore*

*that disciple whom Jesus loved {that is John} said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about two hundred cubits away, dragging the net full of fish.*

Peter's depression was now melted away when Jesus repeated the miraculous catching of fish as when He called him. Some years earlier in **(Luke 5.4-6)** *4 Now when He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." 5 Simon responded and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to tear;*

Now, seeing his resurrected Lord, Peter being Peter, he just had to dive into the water as the other disciples rowed to shore. He was a born leader whose feelings were deeply involved in his actions. Jesus' appearance in Galilee was focused on that wounded warrior Peter to call him to replace Him as a leader, human, but with special authority from Jesus. For after a nice fish fry breakfast, Jesus calls Peter again. This time to not just follow Jesus, but lead and feed Jesus' sheep. For we read the "Love Me" dialogue between Jesus and Peter. I must use the original Greek New Testament words for "love" to bring out what was really happening. **(John 21.15-17& Mounce Greek NT) where agapeo is deep in the heart love, value, esteem; and phileo is manifest kindness, affection, fond of someone.**

*15 Now when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love {agapeo} Me more than these?" He \*said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love {phileo} You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." 16 He said to him again, a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love {agapeo} Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love {phileo} You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love {phileo} Me?" Peter was hurt because He said to him the third time, "Do you love {phileo} Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love {phileo} You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep. Peter accepted this call to leadership as we see in Peter's sermon in the book of **(Acts 2.14)** But Peter, taking his stand with the other eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: "Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, know this, and pay attention to my words.*

Jesus' first question to Peter was not only do you *agapeo-love Me*, but also do you *agapeo-love Me more* than the other disciples. This hard question was not for Peter to be arrogant, but to realize Jesus' call to leadership meant *following Him* with the greatest commitment humanly possible. Now,

you may ask, why, Pastor Bruce, did it take three times before Peter said back to Jesus, *I agapeo-love you?* Because Peter remembered the last time he was so confident in his own heart to give his all for his Lord Jesus that the result was disaster. This recorded in **(Mathew 26.33-35)** *33 But Peter replied to Him, “Even if they all fall away because of You, I will never fall away!” 34 Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you that this very night, before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” 35 Peter \*said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!” All the disciples said the same thing as well.*

Peter was getting over his depressed state, but, he had not forgotten his own sinful heart! He was afraid to say to Jesus, “I agapeo-love you!”

**Dear OIC Christians, if you have failed our Jesus, please remember Peter's failure and Jesus' awesome love to keep him. Ever since the Angel said “He is risen” we have a living Saviour who can't take His eyes off of us because He loves us so much.**

Sometimes we must remember love is something we do, more than we feel. After Peter finally took the chance that his heart would truly not deny his Lord again, Jesus showed Peter that He saw Peter's sincere heart. Peter would be the leader of the little group of men who would turn the world upside down after they received the “Promise of the Father”, the Holy Spirit. Jesus also trusted Peter's commitment to stay true to the End of Life. We see in **( John 21.18-19)** *18 Truly, truly I tell you, when you were younger, you used to put on your belt and walk wherever you wanted; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and someone else will put your belt on you, and bring you where you do not want to go.” 19 Now He said this, indicating by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when He had said this, He said to him, “Follow Me!”*

When He who is TRUTH, JESUS says *truly, truly*, then a rather startling truth is about to come from His Holy and Perfect mouth. Jesus told Peter that he would someday be crucified, *you will stretch out your hands and someone else will put your belt on you, and bring you where you do not want to go.”*

The Glory of Our Risen Saviour calls us to realize that just as He is Risen from the Dead, we shall be, too. Peter knew that he could live a life faithful to this Glorious Risen Saviour for, as the Apostle Paul would say about 50 years later in **(1 Corinthians 15.54-56)** *54 But when this perishable puts on the imperishable, and this mortal puts on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written: “DEATH HAS BEEN SWALLOWED UP in victory. 55 WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR VICTORY? WHERE, O DEATH, IS YOUR STING?” 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law.*

Easter, Resurrection Day, confirms that our sins are forgiven. Jesus ended the Law's power that had made Death our lord. Yes, our Lord broke the grave in two. Death has no power over any

Christian. If we follow Jesus in life, we will follow Him through death to the Glory promised the Sons of God.

Have you denied your Lord when the fear of death gripped your heart like a vice, just as Peter felt in the face of the cruel Roman soldiers? Don't condemn yourself. Jesus forgave Peter. Jesus will forgive you. Let the joy of this most glorious day, move you to obey Jesus as when He appeared to His disciples after they heard from God's Angel. Jesus wants to shower you with love, not just give you marching orders as His soldiers to go to Galilee, or anywhere else, without the assurance that He is Risen for you. He is walking up and down these aisles reaching out to renew self-condemned hearts. Accept His word of joy for yourself, as to those disciples. REJOICE! He is risen.

Today are you here at OIC out of curiosity about the Christian religion and our celebration of Easter? God brought you here! Believe on the Lord Jesus and accept His Sacrifice and believe that He is Risen. You too will hear His voice saying *Rejoice*.

Let's all *Rejoice* in the Love and care of Jesus for His Sheep, Christians, young and old, as we now partake of the Holy Communion. This is our remembering His Last Super on Earth on that infamous Thursday evening before *Good Friday*.

## REFERENCES

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