

SERMON: God's Game Changer- Jesus' Resurrection from the Dead**GOOD Morning OIC--- HAPPY EASTER ---AND WELCOME TO FATHER'S HOUSE**

In my last Message, *Immovable Walls*, part of my closing remarks included:

“We should also expect God to use His mighty power in our lives. He showed this power when He raised Jesus from the dead. He often combines **something supernatural with some hard work by us afterwards**. Joshua saw many miracles traveling from Egypt to Jericho. These miracles strengthened his faith for what he could not yet see. He trusted God's promised Victory. Today, death itself has no threat to us as Christ is risen from the grave. God's Promise is that we shall rise from the grave also. God may crumble our *Immovable Wall* before us. He may strengthen us to climb up it and fall, to try again. But we can trust God to show up and be Present to give us the Victories He promised for our lives to be abundant. As God's Son promised in **(John 10.9-11) 9** *Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. 10 The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. 11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep.”*”

Today my message focuses or highlights on the first visible results of the sacrificing of the Good Shepherd's life for the Sheep....His glorious Resurrection from the grave! It means everything to a Christian. It includes many events in all of History since Creation coming to a climax. The Weblio Dictionary defines a **Game changer as(a player whose performance changes the flow of a game in an instant; an innovative product that has a big impact).**
Christ's Resurrection is truly God's “Game Changer!”

Reading **(Luke 24.1)***But very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared.*

The simple word, “but,” shows an emphasis on a change or reversal of recent events. Before Easter Sunday, the recent event was the Death of Jesus on the Cross. Only the previous Friday we read in **(Luke 23.44-46) 44** *By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. 45 The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the*

sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. 46 Then Jesus shouted, “Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!” And with those words he breathed his last.

BUT GOD...THE GAME CHANGER

There are some uses of the word “but” in other parts of the New Testament that emphasize instant or powerful *game changers* by God:

(Ephesians 2.12-13) *12 In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope. 13 But now you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.* Personally, I really like the J.B. Phillips paraphrase for **(Ephesians 2.13/JBP)** *But now, through the blood of Christ, you who were once outside the pale are with us inside the circle of God’s love and purpose.* Phillips, being British, used a word “pale” not in most translations. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines the word “pale” as: 1) an area or the limits within which one is privileged or protected (as from censure) , or, 2) enclosure. Thus the Curtain in the Temple was torn in two, when Jesus gave His last Breath on the Cross. This is written in **(Luke 23.44-46)** *44 By this time it was about noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o’clock. 45 The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. 46 Then Jesus shouted, “Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!” And with those words he breathed his last. This clearly connects the meaning of the word “pale” with the words in (Ephesians 2.13/JBP), you who were once outside the pale. This pale is the area, or The Holy of Holies, enclosed by the curtain inside the Jewish Temple. Jesus’ death opened the way to The Holy of Holies for all who Believe in Jesus!*

(Ephesians 3.5) *God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets. The word “But” especially points to Jesus’ Resurrection in (Ephesians 2.3-5)* *All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else. 4 But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!)*

Holy Spirit wrote the New Testament and put great power and importance in the little word “but.” We can see that God used the word “but” to define His “Game Changer” in History. Ephesians, the Letter aimed at Faith and Grace from God to the Church, shows this even in

these few verses. Each verse shows man's helpless position reversed by a sense of “BUT GOD” :

MAN IS HOPELESS-(**Ephesians 2.12-13**) – *without God and without hope. 13 But now you have been united with Christ Jesus.*

MAN'S SALVATION IS A HIDDEN MYSTERY - (**Ephesians 3.5**) *God did not reveal it to previous generations, but now by his Spirit he has revealed it to his holy apostles and prophets.*

MAN IS SUBJECT TO GOD'S ANGER - (**Ephesians 2.3-5**) - *subject to God's anger ... But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, 5 that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved! This BUT GOD points directly to (Luke 24.1) But very early on Sunday morning ...that Sunday when {God} gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead.*

Next, reading (**Luke 24.2-3**) *2 They found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. 3 So they went in, but they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus.* These dear women, who went to the tomb, must have felt despair and failure. They had devoted their lives to their Saviour. Some of these dear women worked hard to buy the food for Jesus, the Creator of Heaven and Earth! Amazing! Now, their last act of love, which was to anoint His dead body with spices and perfumes, was now frustrated. Now they see ...He is gone!

ANGELS, in Christ the GAME CHANGER

Let me refer back to my Message on April 13th, *Immovable Walls*: In the year 1406BC, Joshua had confronted an angel in (**Joshua 5.13/NLT**) : *13 When Joshua was near the town of Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing in front of him with sword in hand.* The “man” {an angel} told Joshua in (**Joshua 5.14/NLT**) “I am the commander of the LORD's army.” At this, Joshua fell with his face to the ground in reverence. “I am at your command,” Joshua said. “What do you want your servant to do?”

Now we read on Easter Sunday about 30AD that the women who came to anoint their beloved Jesus' dead body saw two angels. They reacted to these angels similarly to how Joshua did to one with a sword in his hand. For in (**Luke 24.4-5**): *4 As they stood there puzzled {by the empty tomb}, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes. 5 The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground.*

After Jesus' RESURRECTION God's Angels, God's Messengers and instruments of His Power, appeared to a few Apostles of Jesus. Just quoting a few verses to make my point: (**Acts 5:18-20**)

18 They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. **19 But an angel of the Lord came at night**, opened the gates of the jail, and brought them out. Then he told them, **20** “Go to the Temple and give the people this message of life!”

AND

(Acts 12.7-8) Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and **an angel of the Lord** stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, “Quick! Get up!” And the chains fell off his wrists. **8** Then the angel told him, “Get dressed and put on your sandals.” And he did. “Now put on your coat and follow me,” the angel ordered.

AND

(Acts 27.22-24)**22** But take courage! None of you will lose your lives, even though the ship will go down. **23** For last night **an angel of the God** to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, **24** and he said, ‘Don’t be afraid, Paul, for you will surely stand trial before Caesar! What’s more, God in his goodness has granted safety to everyone sailing with you.’

Note that none of these Apostles of Jesus fell on the ground before the angels! The Holy Spirit within them would never allow that! For every Christian is **in Christ**.

The Apostle Paul repeats these two little words *in Christ, in Him, or in the Beloved* **NINE TIMES** to the Christians in the first chapter of Ephesians alone. As we are in Christ, God chooses to see us in Christ. Therefore His angels who look at us and meet us (whether we see them or not) look at us and see CHRIST. It is more likely that the angels might worship us, than we them. They will not. But they are now a source of supernatural power and messages from God. **They are our friends and helpers sent from Heaven.**

Pastor Bruce, you may ask: “Why did you spend so much time on the angels?” For the same reason that Paul repeated the words “*in Christ*.”

I have shown that the Bible tells us that Christians no longer bow down before angels. Angels see Christ in them!

In this Message I have described two *Game Changer* words: **But, to introduce God's life changing event in raising His Son from the dead.** And, **in Christ**,to describe how great is **God's power toward Christians.** I spoke here repeatedly of God's angels even as the Apostle Paul wrote his reason for repeating **in Christ** in (Ephesians 1.19-20) **19** I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power **20** that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.

Dear OIC Believers in Jesus, God wants for you to believe and understand His mighty power in your lives. This is the same power that He showed on Easter Sunday when God raised Jesus from the dead! He used angels to announce the Resurrection of Jesus. God will help us in powerful ways. He gave us His Spirit and He often sends angels, not always visible, to meet our needs and to help us know our high calling in Christ.

THE ANGELS' MESSAGE

Now the angels bring the Message from God that will turn the world upside down. Reading **(Luke 24.5b-7)** *Then the men asked, “Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? 6 He isn’t here! **He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day.”*** Jesus said this clearly to His disciples in **(Matthew 17.22-23)** *22 After they gathered again in Galilee, Jesus told them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. 23 He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead.” And the disciples were filled with grief.*

A few notes on these verses in Matthew's Gospel of Jesus. How often we disciples of Jesus just remember the negative “bad news” and forget the end of God's Message with the His Good Promise. The disciples remembered *killed*, but quickly forgot *on the third day He will be raised from the dead.*” As they, we too, need Re-reading and Re-hearing the Word; Holy Spirit whispers; and Angels bring impressions to remember what God wants us to remember. These disciples, like we may be, were depressed from a hardship or loss. They had just seen their Lord and Messiah crucified. We too, find it difficult to remember God's wonderful promises, during times of loss, hardship and grief. Some of us seem incapable of remembering “mountain tops” or “good spiritual memories” when our minds drop into “valleys of depression.”

But, on this glorious Easter Sunday, the angels boldly proclaim to not look for God's wonderful promises in dead things, or bad memories. Look instead to the Living - Risen - Saviour! Like a bright sunrise on an Easter Morning, finally, we read in **(Luke 24.8-10)** *8 Then they remembered that he had said this. 9 So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and several other women who told the apostles what had happened.* These women now believed that they would see their Lord again. We also know that Mary Magdalene actually saw Jesus in the garden when she was alone.

God wasn't about to orchestrate or direct the supernatural as to take away from Faith. Yes, His control emphasized that Faith in God's Word continues when we don't see what we want. He did not send a Legion of Angels to speak to the eleven Apostles. Yes, Jesus Himself would later appear to the Apostles. Note that when the Apostle Paul wrote about twenty five years later that there were again twelve Apostles. Matthias had been chosen to replace the traitor, Judas.

Reading in **(1 Corinthians 15.3-8):** *3 I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. 4 He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said. 5 He was seen by Peter and then by the Twelve. 6 After that, he was seen by more than 500 of his followers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. 7 Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. 8 Last of all, as though I had been born at the wrong time, I also saw him.*

But Mary, had a unique honor. She is the Believer who was set free when Jesus cast seven demons out of her. She would have been crucified in His place, if it were possible. Jesus knew this and gave her a “personal visitation” at the grave site before He appeared to the other disciples. We read of this in **(John 20.11-16)** *11 Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. 12 She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 “Dear woman, why are you crying?” the angels asked her. “Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” 14 She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognize him. 15 “Dear woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?” She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.” 16 “Mary!” Jesus said. She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”).*

GRIEF TURNED TO GLORY

Mary Magdalene's grief turned to joy unspeakable and full of Glory. The other women as well. For we see their reaction to the Good News in **(Luke 24.9)** *So they rushed back from the tomb to tell his eleven disciples—and everyone else—what had happened.* **There is nothing like a living faith that Jesus is risen from the dead to motivate true Evangelism. He is risen!**

Believers with a living faith do not stand around idle as the world perishes about them. They **rush to tell “everyone else!”** When their pathway is blocked, the fire of Heavenly love just burns stronger in their souls. No one or nothing can stop their sharing the wonderful Good News: God's sacrificial Lamb Jesus-is now their Risen Saviour.

Next, in (Luke 24.11-12) *11 But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it. 12 However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.*

Ah poor Peter!..... The most depressed of all the Apostles. The last service Peter performed for His Lord was to deny Him three times!.... **But....desperation often sparks urgency.** So *Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look.* Peter was afraid to look in the tomb..but then, more afraid not to! He looked in. *In Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened.*

Now, the Bible reveals some interesting truths about John and Peter looking into the empty tomb. The parallel verses are written by the Apostle John in **(John 20. 3-10)** *3 Peter and the other disciple {John} started out for the tomb.*

4 They were both running, but the other disciple {John} outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

5 He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. 6 Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, 7 while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. 8 Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— 9 for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. 10 Then they went home.

The fact that John could run faster than Peter is an interesting detail. But, bold Peter looked into the tomb before John. Peter felt that desperation of mixed fear and hope! They both saw the same thing: **(John 20.7-8)** *while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. 8 Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed—*

You may ask: Pastor Bruce, why did John believe Jesus was risen, but Peter did not? I believe there were two reasons. The first. Peter in a great depression had a lot of “brain fog.” This is similar to what COVID does to many who catch it. Second, John more calm and deductive, remembered his Hebrew School as a child. All Hebrew boys were taught how to fold a napkin differently after dinner, than before the meal. Jesus' face covering must have been folded as **after a meal...denoting: the Master has left the Dining Room.** He must be Risen, John thought and Believed.

HE IS RISEN...WE CAN REJOICE BECAUSE WE BELIEVE

(PSALM 72.18-19) *Praise the LORD God, the God of Israel,
who alone does such wonderful things.*

19 Praise his glorious name forever!

Let the whole earth be filled with his glory.

Amen and amen!

As we read (Ephesians 1.3-6), remember that we who believe are *in Christ*, and that when angels look at us, they see Him. (Ephesians 1.3-6):

3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4 Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. 5 God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. 6 So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.

God showed His power when He raised Jesus from the dead. But also God often combines **something supernatural with some hard work by us afterwards.** As with Joshua in 1406BC. He saw many miracles traveling from Egypt to Jericho. These miracles strengthened his faith for what he could not yet see. Today, 3431 years later, we Jesus Followers believe Jesus is risen from the dead. We can trust God's promised Victory on our pilgrim walk to Heaven. Today, death itself has no threat to us as Christ is risen from the grave. Nothing in all History is as supernatural as God the Father raising His Son from the dead. This was God showing to the whole world that God accepted, as perfect and complete, Jesus' Blood Sacrifice on The Cross. This substitution, or taking our place for judgment and punishment, paid the full price for our sins. We rejoice as our Risen Saviour has removed the debt that we could never pay. He took the punishment we deserved.

SOME HARD WORK FOR US AFTERWARDS

As we rejoice *because we believe in our Risen Lord Jesus* we also get empowered by Holy Spirit to obey Jesus' commands. This includes loving other Christians and also the sinners who need our help. Helping them is part of our **hard work after the miracle of Jesus' Resurrection.** This is to make disciples for Him as we go through our life.

Points to review are the *Game Changers of God*:

1. *But God.....*
2. *in Christ*
3. The work of angels
4. God's miracles help us to get to work

REJOICE AND GET TO WORK GIVING YOUR FAITH AWAY

The more a Christian gives his faith away, the more He receives from God by Holy Spirit to keep giving! Before Jesus returned to Heaven He wasted no time to get His troops to work, His soldiers in God's Army. They were rejoicing in His Resurrection. Jesus led them back to work for men's souls. Reading in **(Mark 16.14)** *Still later he appeared to the eleven disciples as they were eating together. He rebuked them for their stubborn unbelief because they refused to believe those who had seen him after he had been raised from the dead.*

Likely the low classification of women in the Jewish Culture had some part in their not believing the women's message. These women saw the Two Angels, and heard their Word from God. Mary Magdalene even saw the Lord....yet the Apostle men refused to believe these fellow Believers. Jesus gave them no such excuse. For we read in **(Mark 16.14-16)** *He rebuked them for their stubborn unbelief because they refused to believe those who had seen him after he had been raised from the dead. 15 And then he told them, "Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. 16 Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned.*

The only joy greater than a Living Faith that "He is Risen,"
is leading a lost sinner to believe it with you! He is Risen indeed!

Let Us Pray,

REFERENCES

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