

Osaka International Church
Title: Jesus, Our Living Lord
Special Events: Easter Celebration with Children's Worship and OIC Choir

Pastor Daniel Ellrick
Scripture: 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

March 31st, 2013
Key Verse: Luke 24:46-47

I. Introduction

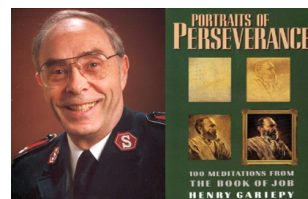
Happy Easter! Thank you for joining us this morning. We have enjoyed some wonderful music from the worship team, the Sunday School, and our choir. In all of the music, the words echoed the themes of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the blessings of salvation, joy, love, and peace that God gives to those who trust in Jesus.

The last song we enjoyed, just a moment ago, was called, "*He Lives.*" The lyrics are in the bulletin; let's look at the words of the chorus one more time!

*He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.*

This is not just a song. It is a proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus, a celebration of Jesus' presence with us, a testimony of faith, and an encouragement to all to seek Jesus. This is what Easter is all about. Proclamation. Celebration. Testimony. Encouragement. May the Lord bless you today with all of these things and more.

Billions of men and women around the world and across the centuries have come to know Jesus and to enjoy the blessings of trusting in Him. One person I would like to mention this morning is Henry Gariepy. Most of you have probably never heard his name before, but Henry was a man who gave his life to loving God and neighbor. Henry served in the Salvation Army, a Christian denomination that is a bit unusual in its use of military-style terms to emphasize that we fight for good and against evil in this world. As a Salvation Army officer, Henry battled the suffering brought by poverty and fought for the truth of Jesus his whole life. Born in 1930, Colonel Henry Gariepy was, "*promoted to glory,*" on April 3rd, 2010. The day after his death, Henry celebrated Easter in heaven with Jesus.



Henry was a prolific author who constantly wrote about Jesus and about what it means to be a Christian. One of his books is called, "Portraits of Perseverance." In this book, Henry told about a rich man named Carl and a poor man named Hans.

Carl owned a large estate in a valley and he would often ride a horse through the valley to check on his property and his workers. One day, Carl was riding, looking at all that he owned and congratulating himself on his great wealth and success. As he rode over a hill, he came across one of his tenant farmers, an old man named Hans. Hans had stopped his work to eat lunch.



As Carl watched, Hans bowed his head and gave thanks to God before eating his lunch, a single slice of bread and a piece of cheese. Carl was unimpressed. "If that's all I had to eat, I wouldn't bother to pray," he said. But Hans replied, "It's enough and I am thankful that God has provided it." Startled by the old man's answer, Carl turned his horse to leave. But Hans said, "Wait a minute. I need to tell you something. I had a dream last night, and in the dream I saw a beautiful scene and a voice said, 'Tonight the richest man in the valley will die.'"

Carl mocked Hans. But as the day went on, he began to worry about what Hans had said, "Tonight the richest man in the valley will die." Carl summoned the doctor to come and give him a thorough checkup, but the doctor found nothing wrong. Still,

Carl was worried, and he could not sleep at all that night. Finally morning came and before long a messenger arrived with news, “Carl, old Hans died last night.”

Who was the richest man in the valley? Carl had money and property. Carl lived in luxury. But old Hans owned nothing at all and barely had food to eat. Yet, Hans had peace with God and a thankful heart. There are many voices in the world that tell us to seek wealth and fame. And pride often drives us to do the same. But Jesus told His followers (**Matthew 6:19-21**), **“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”** Carl had treasure on earth, but Hans had treasure in heaven.

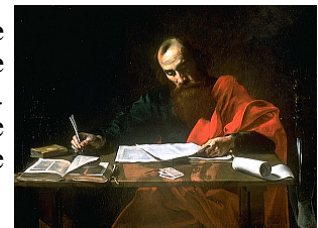
Where is our treasure this morning? Do we want to know how to have true riches, a life of peace and joy, and treasure in heaven? True riches are received by faith, by trusting in Jesus. Let’s read **1 Corinthians 15:1-8**. In this passage, Paul writes to the Corinthian church about the Good News of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

II. Scripture Reading (1 Corinthians 15:1-8, NIV)

1 Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance : that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

III. Teaching

In this passage Paul says, (**1 Corinthians 15:2**), **“By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.”** (Painting by Rembrandt, 1620) The issue at stake is salvation. The Apostle Paul had previously visited the city of Corinth and preached the gospel to the people, that is, the Good News of Jesus. Now in his letter to the church in Corinth, Paul reemphasizes the key points of his preaching.



Paul continues saying (**1 Corinthians 15:3-4**), **“For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: 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.”** Paul did not invent the message he preached; it was received by him. As a faithful messenger, Paul was passing on the message of salvation. The word Christ refers to the Savior, called the Messiah, whose coming had been promised by the prophets for hundreds of years. Many details concerning the Messiah were prophesied long before the birth of Jesus; and, as Paul stresses here, the death and the resurrection of Christ Jesus happened just as prophesied, that is, in accord with the Scriptures.

“Christ died for our sins.” This statement reflects the fact that we all do and say things that are wrong in the sight of God; that is, we are all sinners. We are all sinners and our sins separate us from our true Father, the Creator God who gives us life. But Jesus lived a perfect and sinless life and then gave Himself as a sacrifice to pay for our sins. Jesus dies in our place, taking upon Himself the death penalty, so that we might be reconciled with God and receive eternal life.



“He was buried.” After it was confirmed by the Roman soldiers that Jesus was dead, His body was taken down from the cross, wrapped in grave clothes and buried in a stone tomb. A stone was rolled over the entrance and sealed with a Roman seal. Guards were posted to make sure that no one could disturb the tomb. Jesus was dead and buried and precautions were taken to ensure that no one could steal the body.



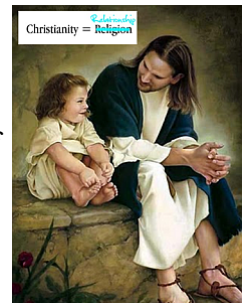
“He was raised on the third day.” This is the resurrection that we celebrate at Easter. Our Lord Jesus was dead and buried, but He rose from the dead on the third day. This is the greatest proof that the promises of Scripture are sure and true. We believe in, trust in, and follow a Living Lord. Jesus is alive! In the passage that we read a moment ago, Paul wrote that over 500 witnesses saw Jesus alive after the resurrection. And Paul added, **“most of whom are still living.”** This small added comment is very important. Paul wrote his letter to the Corinthians about 23 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. And in his letter he asserts that most of these 500 witnesses were still alive at that time. In other words, Paul is telling his readers that if they doubt what he is saying then hundreds of witnesses who saw Jesus alive are available to testify.



There is strong evidence to support the historical fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. First of all, as Paul records here, there were hundreds of people who saw Jesus alive after His resurrection. Many of these people are known by name and by the writings they left behind, the gospels, the letters of Peter, and the letters of Paul. These testimonies are reliable. Further, there is the testimony of the empty tomb. The body of Jesus was never found, because He was alive again. The tomb was well-guarded, so the body could not have been stolen. And the Scriptures record that although the body was gone; the grave clothes were still there. It is unimaginable that someone would undress a dead body before stealing it. The grave clothes being left behind only make sense if we accept the resurrection. There is also the powerful evidence of the fulfilled prophecies. The prophets said the Messiah would rise from the dead and He did. And further, many millions of people across the centuries and still today experience a personal relationship with the Living Lord Jesus. As the song we sang earlier said, *“He walks with me and talks with me.”* I know my Savior lives!

By human power, the resurrection of the dead is impossible. But the Bible tells us that it was God who raised Jesus from the dead. For the Creator God who made the heavens and the earth and that gives life to us all, resurrection is not too difficult. The Scripture tells us something more, something very important: **2 Corinthians 5: 17-19, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.”**

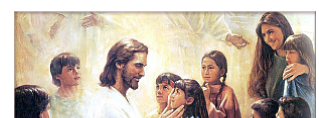
God was in Christ Jesus. In other words, the true identity of Jesus Christ is God. God Himself came into this world in the person of Jesus Christ in order to provide salvation for the people of His creation. Therefore, when we believe in Jesus we are reconciled with God. It is often said that Christianity is a relationship, not a religion. Of course, if you make a list of religions, you will probably include Christianity. But this statement makes a very important point. The heart of Christian faith is a relationship with Jesus Christ. The Christian believes in Jesus. Talks to Jesus. Walks with Jesus. Without Jesus, there is no Christianity.



This is why the resurrection is so important. You can't have a real relationship with a dead person. But Jesus is not dead; Jesus is alive. In John 20, we can read the story of how doubting Thomas became a believer in the resurrection. Jesus had already appeared to the rest of the disciples, but Thomas must have been out shopping or something on that day. Listen to what happened a week later.

John 20:24-28, “Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.” A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” “My Lord and my God!” Thomas was slow, but now he finally gets it. Jesus is alive. Jesus is Lord. Jesus is God, come to bring salvation to His people. Notice that Thomas says, **“My Lord and my God!”** This is very personal. Thomas is claiming a personal relationship with Jesus.

The answers to all of life's most important questions are found through a relationship with Jesus



Christ. Where did we come from? Why are we here? What is the meaning and purpose of life? How can we deal with loneliness? What happens when we die? How can we be forgiven for the wrongs we have done? Where can we find strength for living? The answers are all found in Jesus.

God created us so that He could love us. Our purpose is to walk with God. Jesus is always with us; we are never alone. When we die we go home to heaven to be with Jesus. When we trust in Jesus completed work on the cross, our sins are forgiven. As we walk with Jesus, His Spirit gives us strength to overcome the struggles and sorrows of life.

In **Romans 10:9-13**, Paul explains how to begin a personal relationship with Jesus. **“That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile--the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.””**

IV. Conclusion

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” This promise is for all people. This promise is for me and for you. When we call upon the Name of Jesus and invite Him to be Lord of our life, we are forgiven from our sins and we receive the free gift of eternal life. Eternal life is not just long life, it is abundant life, life with love, joy, hope, and peace – it is resurrection life. It is a relationship with Jesus. In your bulletin today, there is a DVD of a movie about a woman named Mary Magdalene who met Jesus. Take it home. Watch it and see how she discovers what it means to know Jesus.

There are also two art cards prepared by Noelle in the bulletin. One shows Jesus after His death and the other shows the resurrected Jesus. I would like to share one more painting by Noelle. This painting shows Mary meeting Jesus just after His resurrection. Mary is not meeting an idea or a wise teaching. Mary is not meeting a set of rules for life. Mary is meeting a person. This is Christian faith. It is not a religion; it is a relationship with Jesus. I pray that each and every one of us, and also our friends, family, and neighbors, would also meet Jesus and enjoy a loving relationship with Him.



Let's close with **Luke 24:46-47**, **“He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”**

Let's pray.

V. Prayer