

Declaration

Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen.

Song: by C Wesley

1. Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Sons of men and angels say: ...
Raise your joys and triumphs high: ...
Sing, ye heavens; and earth, reply: ...
2. Lives again our glorious King, ...
Where, O death, is now thy sting? ...
Once He died our souls to save, ...
Where's your victory, boasting grave? ...
3. Love's redeeming work is done ...
Fought the fight, the battle won, ...
Death in vain forbids His rise, ...
Christ has burst the gates of hell: ...
4. Soar we now where Christ hath led, ...
Following our exalted Head, ...
Made like Him, like Him we rise, ...
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies. ...

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Scripture

- Isaiah 55:10-12
- Luke 24: 25-27

Message: Mission Accomplished

Just a week before the extraordinary fulfilment of the Passover feast, Jesus asked for a donkey! "The Lord needs it" he said. Does that not strike you as a little odd?

Here is the Word of God who was instrumental in the creation of all things, saying that he was in need of something, a donkey in fact. Maybe even today the Lord needs something that only you can provide. Two fish? A donkey? Not much, really. What about that person – so much better than me. What about her, so gifted. Actually, the Lord's looking at you. Give it to him and watch what he can do with it.

Anyway, the requested donkey was found and delivered, and so began that final week. It began with the entry into Jerusalem on said donkey, with the crowd, as well as the children in the temple area, shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David", offending the sensibilities of the authorities present at the time.

Mission Accomplished

This was followed by an intense week of activity and teaching, with parables and prophecies and trickery and plottings culminating in betrayal, arrest, trial and execution. The end of an era. "We had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel", they said.

Unbeknowns to those watching and listening during that week, the fulfillment of the most significant event ever, and as prophesied in their Scriptures, was being realized right in front of them. Here was the culmination of everything written from Genesis to Malachi, but it was not apparent to anyone. It makes one wonder how often that happens when some of the most momentous events occur without anyone understanding the impact of what they are witnessing. Did anyone watching have any idea of the consequence of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand of Austria in 1914? Who would have known the impact that the inconspicuous response by an 18y.o. Wilfred Grenfell under the preaching of DL Moody in 1883 would have for the remote fishermen in Newfoundland; a dramatic, exciting, and profoundly useful life of 75 years.

Here was the carpenter's son from Nazareth, after three and a half years of public ministry, publicly executed for "blasphemy". But all in accord with the Father's will. Ah, the irony and injustice of it all; evil had its way, or so it thought.

Then Sunday morning, the impossible happened, but without fanfare. Somehow, silently and invisibly the Son of Man come back to life. The tomb with its heavy stone and armed guards could not stop it. Gently the resurrected Son of God introduces himself to Mary just outside the tomb. Then he catches up with two despondent disciples leaving Jerusalem and explains the Scriptures to them and then disappears. He appears to his followers in a locked room. He cooks some fish on the shore of Galilee and has breakfast with some of his disciples. He spends time with them over 40 days and teaches them, forgiving and encouraging them. And then he was "taken up" and he returned to his Father. What celebration and joy there must have been in heaven. Yes, it was finished indeed. The Saviour of the world had done his work to the complete satisfaction of the one who commissioned him. God's Word had accomplished that which was desired and achieved the purpose for which it was sent.

So we celebrate that momentous event, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The world passes it by, giving it no more than a cursory nod, often not even that, as it goes on its long weekend holiday, or the footy. Anzac Day might be remembered at the MCG in a couple of weeks with solemnity and cornet. Pride week has its colours and Indigenous round its ceremonies. But the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, giving us a four day Easter long weekend gets nothing. But for us it is cause for thanksgiving and praise that our mortal bodies are incapable of giving full expression. Can it be that I should gain an interest in the Saviour's blood? O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise. Risen, conquering Son, endless is the victory thou o'er death has won. He meets us risen from the tomb. World, you don't care? Well we do! And we will celebrate that event and the church of the Living God will remember, as we do every time we share around the Lord's Table.

Christ is risen. He's risen indeed. Amen

Prayer with suffering Christians (*Barnabas Prayer 5/4/26*)

Sovereign Lord, we rejoice in Your victory over the grave in raising the Lord Jesus from the dead. Thank You that He has conquered death and brought new life through His glorious resurrection. Please inhabit the praises of Your Church worldwide as we exalt Your Name today. Cause the joy of the Lord to be the strength of Your people, to grant courage to those weary through strife and persecution, and an assurance of Your final victory. We pray that praises of the Risen One will resound around the world today and draw many to follow Him and be built up in faith, for we ask in His glorious Name.

(Matthew 28:6; 1 Corinthians 15:55-57; Psalm 22:3).

Song: *by EL Budry*

1. Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death has won;
Angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
Kept the folded grave-clothes, where Thy body lay
Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won.
2. Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
Lovingly He greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
Let the church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing,
For her Lord has risen, death has lost its sting.
Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won.
3. No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of life,
Life is nought without Thee, aid us in our strife.
Make us more than conquerors,
Through Thy deathless love.
Bring us safe through Jordan to Thy home above.
Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
Endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won.

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Benediction:

Now may the God of peace, who by the blood of the eternal covenant brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good so that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.

Amen.

This service was prepared by Warren Mack for HopeNet SA