

To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father – to Him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen.

Easter
April 21, 2019
*CW-S – “In Christ Alone”

2 Ti 2:8; Mt 28:5-6
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“Remember Jesus Christ” – “He Has Risen!”

- I. “He has risen” – it’s a fact!
- II. “He has risen” – words to live by.
- III. “He has risen” – words to die by.

Dear Christian friends,

“THREE WORDS of Truth.” That’s was the general theme for our **Lenten worship** this year. We’ve looked at various three-word CATCHY PHRASES from the Passion History. Today we have two different “Three Words of Truth.” I couldn’t decide which one to use so we’re using both. There’s Paul’s three words to Timothy, **“Remember Jesus Christ.”** Then there’s the angel’s three words to the women, **“He has risen!”**

“Remember Jesus Christ.” I’ve used that verse quite a few times at deathbeds. WHAT do you tell a dying person? “HOPE you feel better” isn’t going to work. They know they’re dying – I know they’re dying. In fact I’ve USED that question at the start of the devotion. “WHAT should I tell you?” There are a lot of things I could tell them but it finally comes down to those THREE WORDS – **“Remember Jesus Christ.”** I’ve often held up three fingers to EMPHASIZE that point – **“remember Jesus Christ.”** I’ll never forget doing that in a devotion and as I left that person HE HELD UP three fingers. He was ready to **die** and join his Savior in heaven.

“Remember Jesus Christ. He has risen!” Let’s be careful NOT TO LIMIT these words to JUST Easter, deathbeds and funerals. **2 Timothy** is Paul’s last words to his **“dear son”** Timothy. Paul was ABOUT TO DIE – not Timothy. **Paul had** THREE SIMPLE WORDS of encouragement for Timothy as Timothy WENT ON with his life – **“remember Jesus Christ.”** Paul wanted Timothy to **“remember”** the ANGEL’S WORDS to the women, **“He has risen!”**

“Remember Jesus Christ. He has risen!” Both are precious WORDS OF TRUTH. 1)Those words declare a fact! Those are words 2)to live and 3)die by.

I. **“He has risen”** – it’s a fact!

Please understand what we’re **celebrating** today. **“Remember Jesus Christ, RAISED from the dead. He is not here; He has RISEN!”** The fact and joy of Easter is that the Jesus who HAD DIED and **been buried** on Good Friday CAME BACK TO LIFE on Easter morning. In the book of Revelation Jesus says, **“I am the Living One. I WAS dead, and BEHOLD I am ALIVE for ever and ever.”**

“Don’t be afraid,” the angel told the women. **“I know that you are looking for Jesus, who WAS crucified. He is not here; He has RISEN.”**

Jesus had died a HORRIBLE, TORTURED death **by crucifixion**. GREAT CARE was taken to make sure Jesus WAS dead. One of the Roman soldiers **“pierced Jesus’ side”** with his spear to MAKE SURE Jesus was dead. Pilate double-checked to MAKE SURE Jesus was dead before he released Jesus’ **body** to Joseph of Arimathea. Pilate – the **soldiers** – the women and John who had been at the cross – Jesus’ ENEMIES – **“the chief priests and Pharisees”** – all were SURE Jesus was dead. NOBODY questioned Jesus death. The guards posted at Jesus’ tomb – the seal put on the tomb – were all meant to **make sure** Jesus STAYED **dead and buried**.

Jesus’ death is a FACT. Jesus soul had left His body and gone to His Father in heaven. **Those women** had headed out early that Sunday morning to FINISH GIVING Jesus’ **dead body** a proper, loving burial.

But it wasn’t necessary! Jesus’ body wasn’t in His grave **anymore** because Jesus DIDN’T NEED His grave **anymore**. Graves are for DEAD BODIES and Jesus isn’t dead anymore! **On Easter morning** – **“three days after”** He had DIED – Jesus’ soul returned to His body – Jesus’ dead body came back TO LIFE. Jesus physically came out of His grave ALIVE and TRIUMPHANT. As real as Jesus’ DEATH was His resurrection from the dead

is JUST AS REAL. That's the HISTORICAL FACT of Easter. ***“Remember Jesus Christ, RAISED from the dead. He has RISEN!”*** That fact – those words...

II. Are words to live by.

“He has risen!” and that means we can **now live** as God's FORGIVEN people. Jesus HAD DIED and the Bible clearly explains why the ***“beloved Son”*** of God had died. ***“He was delivered over to death because of our sins and raised again because of our justification. God made Him who had no sin, to be sin for us, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”*** Or as we heard Isaiah on Good Friday, ***“the Lord laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all.”***

If we don't – or WON'T! - face up to the UGLY REALITY of our **sin** and **guilt** and the hell we **really deserved** then we won't really understand or appreciate Good Friday and Easter. Then Easter won't make ANY REAL DIFFERENCE in our lives. It's NOT JUST that we're not perfect and that we've made some mistakes in our lives. **With our sins** we have ignored and defied our almighty Creator. We've told God we REALLY DON'T CARE what He says – He can't control us. Would your dad have PUT UP **with that** from you? Yet somehow God is **supposed** to just UNDERSTAND and ACCEPT it? We need to understand that EACH ONE of those **10 Commandments** is a direct order FROM God TO us **individually**. We have no right to NOT DO EXACTLY what God says – starting with that He is to ALWAYS come first in our lives.

We need to understand – I NEED to understand! – that **my sin** has consequences – NOW in time and **for eternity**. Sin makes a mess in our lives and in OUR RELATIONSHIP with God. Sin means I'm GOING TO DIE one day and I really should end up FOREVER BANISHED from **God's presence** – forever punished in hell. **If I don't believe** that ABOUT MYSELF then **Easter** will only be about bunnies and candy and pretty flowers and tomorrow is **just Monday** and back to work.

But being honest about our **sin** and **guilt** – to hear ***“He has risen!”*** – OH, WOW! We have a LIVING Lord Jesus who has perfectly obeyed every commandment for us – who has personally paid for all our sins IN FULL with His **own innocent** death – who has conquered death and the grave and shares His victory with us – who sets us free from the **devil's power** and **sin's grip**. In our LIVING Lord Jesus we have forgiveness full and free – peace with God – a whole new relationship with God – eternal life in heaven when we die. A STILL DEAD and buried Jesus WOULD MEAN I still have all my **sins** – I'm still under God's **judgment** – I'm still going to die and **go** to hell. But to hear those THREE WORDS OF TRUTH – ***“He has risen!”*** – those are words to live by – a truth TO ENJOY **every day** – a truth that changes our **lives now**.

“He has risen JUST AS He said.” Our LIVING Lord Jesus is our FAITHFUL Lord Jesus. Let's not repeat the **mistake the disciples** made. They were walking – **living** – BY SIGHT and **not by faith**. They were so devastated by what had all happened – **so burdened with the guilt** of having FAILED Jesus – **so overcome by fear** of the Jews – that they FORGOT JESUS' PROMISE of Easter. They had NO HOPE – no peace – no comfort – no **joy**.

THEY forgot but JESUS didn't. ***“He has risen JUST AS He said.”*** Easter proves we CAN CONFIDENTLY TRUST Jesus' promises and **power**. Death and the **devil** COULDN'T STOP Jesus from keeping His promise of Easter. Isn't that a truth to LIVE BY – to enjoy every day? God's promises to ***“be with us always”*** – to ***“work all things”*** for our eternal good – to ***“meet all our needs”*** – to hear and answer all our prayers in the WAY BEST for us – **those promises** are not just NICE THOUGHTS. They are the promises of our LIVING – FAITHFUL – ALMIGHTY Lord Jesus. OH, WOW!

“Remember Jesus Christ. He has risen!” Those are certainly words TO LIVE by – and yes also...

III. Words to die by.

“HE IS RISEN INDEED.” My parents had those **words engraved** in BIG CAPITAL LETTERS on the top of their headstone. Their dead bodies now lie under that headstone but those words SAY IT ALL.

HOW do you deal with death WITHOUT our **risen, living, triumphant** Lord Jesus? WITHOUT **Jesus risen** from the dead what comfort – what hope – would **you have** on YOUR DEATHBED? **Without Jesus risen** from the dead what comfort – what hope – would YOUR FAMILY have at **your funeral**? Pictures – **memories** –

stories are wonderful but they're IN THE PAST. The present confronts us with a DEAD body and an OPEN grave. My grandma baked great cookies and made fantastic bread – I can still see her in the **kitchen** with **her apron** on over her dress. But I haven't heard her voice – tasted her baking – FOR YEARS. And it's not just grandma that I MISS!

THREE WORDS – **three words of truth**, dear friends! **“Remember Jesus Christ. He has risen!”** **“Because I live, you shall live also. I give them eternal life; they shall never perish. I am the Resurrection and the Life.”** Clinging to our LIVING Lord Jesus we already know now that we are GOING STRAIGHT to heaven the very moment we die. **“With Me in Paradise,”** Jesus promised that repentant criminal on the cross. WHAT COMFORT – what peace – what **joy!** One minute we're **here** – the very next instant we're in the VERY PRESENCE of our living Lord Jesus in all His heavenly glory. **“God having wiped every tear from our eyes.”** SO IT WAS for all our Christian loved ones and **friends** who have already gone before us. So it WILL BE for us when we DIE IN JESUS. What a grand Christian FAMILY REUNION we have to look forward to **“before the throne of God and in front of the Lamb!”**

But God's comfort DOESN'T STOP there! **“He has risen”** and when Jesus returns in glory on the Last Day He will raise all the dead back to life. For us Christians Jesus **“will transform our lowly bodies to be like His glorious body.”** Our NOW weak, frail, mortal bodies will be raised **“immortal – imperishable – in glory – in power.”** Then we will live forever with Jesus in that **“new heaven and new earth, where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain - where God will have made everything new.”**

We have all that because of those THREE WORDS OF TRUTH – **“He has risen! Remember Jesus Christ – raised from the dead.”** Amen!

EXPLANATION TO 2ND ARTICLE (in bulletin)