

4/4/2010 - Easter

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY O God, you gave your only Son to suffer death on a cross to pay for our sins, and by His glorious resurrection you delivered us from the power of death. Make us die every day to sin, so that we may live with Him forever in the joy of the resurrection; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Isaiah 65:17-25

(God creates a new heaven and a new earth.)

17 "Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. 19 I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more.

20 "Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed. 21 They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. 22 No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat. For as the days of a tree, so will be the days of my people; my chosen ones will long enjoy the works of their hands. 23 They will not toil in vain or bear children doomed to misfortune; for they will be a people blessed by the LORD, they and their descendants with them. 24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear. 25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox, but dust will be the serpent's food. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

THE EPISTLE LESSON 1 Corinthians 15:19-26

(We have hope because Jesus has risen.)

19 If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. 20 But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22 For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

23 But each in his own turn: Christ, the first-fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24 Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

THE GOSPEL LESSON Luke 24:1-12 *(The tomb is empty.)*

1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to

the ground, but the men said to them,

"Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" 8 Then they remembered his words.

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

INTRO - On January 12 of this last year Odinel, a mother of six, was preparing a supper of rice and beans for her family of 6 children. One minute home was like every other day. But then their building and the whole world around them shook with great convulsions. The six story building they were living in came crashing down on top of them. Odinel said, "I was screaming out for the children as I threw pieces of concrete off of ME, but heard nothing. I was sure they were dead. Some how miraculously she got out.

I. Has the world ever come crashing down on you?

A. Tragedy is all around us.

1. Have you lost a loved one, tragically, like Odinel?
2. Have you lost your job?
3. Has your family been torn apart, by fighting, or a substance, or unfaithfulness?
4. Has the harsh reality of politics hurt you?
5. Worse yet, have you failed yourself by acting in a way you never thought you would, hurting yourself and others?

B. The world came crashing down on Jesus and His disciples in the events of Holy Week.

1. One minute things are going as normal. In fact, not only had Jesus' miracles shown the kingdom of God, but others were responding. There was even a parade on Palm Sunday.
2. The next moment the leaders in the temple are more hateful to Jesus than ever. Jesus is betrayed and put on trial with no reasonable charge. The Roman governor gives in to the petty jealousy of the leaders and has Jesus put to death who laid in a grave Friday night and Saturday.
3. Now the one they followed as the Messiah, the Son of the Living God, is dead.

C. The world came crashing down on Jesus. He was killed by the sin of the people of His day. He was killed by the sin that infects the whole world, and our sin.

1. Scripture tells us that the whole world is in bondage to sin, so we have

illness, and earthquakes

2. In fact, the wages of sin is death.

3. Jesus did not get what His sin deserved, but what our sin and the sin of the whole world deserved.

II. Seven-year-old Kiki and his ten-year-old sister Sabrina were still alive. Though it would have been easy to simply surrender in despair, slipping into death like their brothers and sisters, they continued to hope beyond all hope that they would be rescued. A week after the disaster, their aunt returned to the family's apartment to look for some belongings. She heard their muffled cries. After eight grueling days without food or water the two children were reunited with their mother amidst tears and laughter

A. Before we talk about the joy of the survival of Kiki and Sabrina, why had no one been looking for them? Well, Odinel had been in the building. She had been hit by the concrete. She saw the building fall. Many who could be found were dead. Why look for even more tragedy? How could they be alive?

B. The women that Easter morning could have said the same thing to the angel? The angel said, "**Why do you look for the living among the dead?**"

1. "Well," they might have said, "we saw him crucified. We saw him tortured on the cross, give up His last breath, and a spear pushed through His side.

2. What else do you expect? We have taken care of others we lost. We loved Jesus. We're taking care of one we loved, and still love?

C. You see, all of us are so used to the tragedies of life, the sin in life, the consequences of life's tragedies, that we often act the pain, defeat, and disappointment of life are inevitable, even when the God's victory is there.

1. The angel asked, "Why look for living among the dead?" God might ask us, "Why do you expect bad when the situation is really good? Why do you doubt that I am in the world defeating sin and loving you?" Because we've experienced it so many times.

2. We are all guilty of expecting the worst, expecting pain and defeat, and then ACTING THAT WAY, even in the face of God's love and victory.

a. Have you ever known someone needs help, but also known they hold something against you and can't forgive you, so why even try to help? That is expecting the worst. Why try?

b. Have you tried to overcome a weakness 3 times, 30 times, 300 times and failed. Why even try? That is ignoring the power of God over the sin and bondage of this world. Why even try?

3. Have you ever wanted to do something good for the Lord and His church, but you feel you lack the ability, or your resources are short. How can you serve God? Why try. That is expecting the worst and not giving God a chance.

3. We have experienced life's pain and disappointment so often that even when God is in our lives with His power and love and victory, we act like He isn't.

III. Now remember all the words of the angels. "**Why do you look for the living**

among the dead? **6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'** **8 Then they remembered his words.**

A. In spite of the doubt of the ladies, God had acted powerfully and Jesus was alive.

1. The sin of the Pharisees, of the disciples, of us, could not keep him dead. **6 He is not here; he has risen!**

2. The unjust and violent death could not keep Him dead. **6 He is not here; he has risen!**

3. We may be tempted to doubt God's love and believe the worst. The pain and death and failure of this world are not stronger than God and His love even in our lives. **6 He is not here; he has risen!**

B. When the ladies were told that Jesus had risen, they actually started acting differently, though slowly at first, and still not in assurance. **9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.**

1. If Jesus has risen, and he has, if Jesus is victorious over sin and death, and He is then we can act like it.

2. We can continue to gently and lovingly reach out, even to the person that hates us. Sin and death are not stronger, He is risen.

3. We can face our weakness and failure, and keep trying to live in righteousness and health. Sin and death are not stronger, He is risen.

4. We can continue to share the victorious love of Jesus, even when our resources may be limited. Sin and death are not stronger, He is risen.

CONCLUSION In spite of the sure grief of Odelin, her children were alive, and finally rescued. Others may say it was just a coincidence. She sees the hand of God.

Life may be painful. We have been hurt. But God's love and power are stronger. God is here for you with the resurrection of Jesus and His victory over your sin and death. We don't have to live like He is still dead. We can live in faith, and love, and hope. **He is not here. He is risen!**