

Have you met our living Jesus?
Easter Sunday | Corinthians 15:1-11

Five-year-old Brian had an essential verse to recite at an Easter program: "He is not here, he is risen" (Luke 24:6). Unfortunately, he could not remember what to say and the director had to quietly remind him his line. He then confidently grabbed the microphone and triumphantly shouted, "He's not here; He's in prison!"

Do you know where Jesus is now? Prison? No, He is not there, he is risen and he is in heaven and in our minds with us now.

We have a traditional greeting during Easter. When one says, "**Christ is risen!**" The other person replies, "**Indeed, he is risen! Hallelujah.**" Let us exchange these greetings together. Let us greet each other "Christ is risen! Indeed, he is risen! Hallelujah."

Today is a joyful day. Today, we are very thankful. It is an exciting day because Jesus was raised from the tomb and through that God gave us new.

Today's scripture is the introduction of 1 Corinthians chapter 15, which is called 'the chapter of resurrection'. This part takes a very important position on one of the initial traditions of the early church.

There were two essential traditions in the early church during the time of Jesus' resurrection. One was the empty tomb; the other was the appearance of Jesus. The tradition of the empty tomb was usually seen in the four great Christian Gospels. On the other hand, the tradition of Jesus' appearance was recorded when Jesus appeared before his disciples. It may have been in John or the letters of Apostle Paul. Today's scripture is the typical verse representing the appearance tradition. In 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, it tells us "**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, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 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. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.**"

I would like to share with you the four messages about Jesus' resurrection from today's bible passages.

1. The resurrection of Jesus is an event that's already been promised in the Old Testament.

The resurrection of Jesus is not an event that happened all of a sudden or by chance. It was an event already announced in advance in the Old Testament. Jesus said in Matthew 12: 39, "**A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.**" This was when Jonah was in the belly of a big fish three days and three nights, and Jesus was alive from three days

and three nights after he died. This is one of the passages that prove Jesus' resurrection through Jonah's message.

Psalms 16:10 foretold the resurrection of Jesus. “because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.” In Acts 2:31, the words of the resurrection of the prophecy were fulfilled. “Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay.”

Additionally, we can find the prophetic words of Jesus' resurrection in many parts of the Bible.

It was an event included in God's great plan to save mankind, and a promise to his people. God kept his promise, sent the savior Messiah, and accomplished his work of salvation to mankind.

2. Jesus' resurrection reminds us that Jesus is living today.

What does it mean to believe in Jesus? Does it mean to believe the teachings Jesus taught over 2000 years ago? Does it mean to trust and follow his ideas or teachings? Does it mean to look back upon his memory and follow his footsteps?

We believe that Jesus is living today, living here. Therefore, to believe in Jesus means to have a relationship with him right now, today. It means we have fellowship with him, a personal relationship starting with, “I and you” not “I and it”, as mentioned by a well-known philosopher, Martin Buber. A personal relationship starting with “I and you” means that we can talk and feel each other freely. But the relationship “I and it” do not talk and feel each other; it is not a personal relationship. The meaning of Jesus' resurrection is having a closer relationship with Jesus everyday and every moment.

3. Provided the fact that Jesus is living today, encountering him is essential for our faith.

Today's scripture introduces people who have encountered resurrected Jesus Christ. Let's take a look at the verses after 1 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 5. Apostle Paul Said: “He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time... Then he appeared to James... Then he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.” Resurrected Jesus appeared to his disciples. He encouraged, acknowledged, and called them to his mission.

To meet Jesus was crucial for their faith. They could establish relationships with the living God through Jesus. Through fellowship with Jesus, they could live faithful lives in fellowship with Him.

It is the same for us today. Without meeting him, our faith is nothing but mere knowledge. Meeting with Jesus is essential for our faith today.

4. Encountering resurrected Jesus starts our new lives as his disciples. It leads us to walk our new lives.

The most convincing piece of evidence of Jesus' resurrection from the cross was the changed lives of the disciples. Without the resurrection, how was it possible for Peter, who denied knowing Jesus three times, to die hung upside down on the cross? The transformation of the Apostle Paul was even more dramatic. He persecuted Christians before encountering Jesus, but through him, Apostle Paul started a new life. He confesses in today's scripture 15:10: "...by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me."

Apostle Paul said he didn't deserve to be called an apostle. But by God's grace, through the encounter with resurrected Jesus, he took the obligation of an apostle to deliver the Gospel to the Gentiles.

This Easter Sunday, I think God is giving us a new mission to us during this crisis. A question all of us who celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ, should ask is, "Have you met the living Jesus?"

Dear God's people, have you met Jesus who is living today after he was resurrected? Are you living your new life with Jesus even though we are living in this crisis with coronavirus?

The essence of our faith in Jesus is encountering Jesus Christ. It is the fellowship with Him, because he is alive today. Where is Jesus Christ in our life? Two thousand years ago, Jesus opened the tomb and resurrected. It is important to believe this historical fact. But, what is more important is to experience meeting with Jesus. It is important to have Jesus in our life. It is important that he controls and makes changes in our lives. It is also important for us to have a personal relationship of "I and you" not "I and it" with Jesus Christ. Amen.

Let us pray!

Loving God, thank you for giving us your precious word. You have opened the gate of heaven through your one and only Son Jesus Christ who overcame death and sins. Help us to encounter Jesus Christ through your word and to experience the resurrected Jesus Christ. Help us to confess that Jesus Christ is alive today. Renew us through the power of the Holy Spirit and help us live a life of righteousness and prevail over the death of our sins and coronavirus.

We pray in the precious name of Jesus Christ, who was resurrected and overcame the dominion of death.

We pray in Jesus name! Amen.