

Scattered But Worshiping Together **Second Sunday of Easter - April 19, 2020**

There is no right way to do this. But make it your own; use it as you want to. As you read through the devotional, if there are thoughts to engage with, we encourage you to do that.

At 11 am gather in a common area in your home.

*In the center, place a lit candle (real or electric)
Someone say out loud;*

Blessed be the God of our Savior, Jesus Christ! God has given us a new birth in the living hope of the resurrection. God has given us an inheritance that is imperishable and unfading. In this we rejoice, even when we suffer trials. For although we have not seen Jesus, we love him; and although we have not seen him, we believe in him. For the outcome of our faith is the salvation of our souls.

Prayer (Or you can pray in your own words)

Glorious God, we give you thanks and praise, for Christ is risen from the dead! He has burst forth from the tomb to break the tangles of despair and death. Love is come again.

So we give you thanks for Jesus, the risen Lord of life, who rose victorious from the grave and made the whole creation new. He broke bread with sinners, fed the hungry, and healed the oppressed, then he poured out his life in death that we might live in love. Christ is risen from the dead. Love is come again.
Amen

Scripture Reading for the Day - 1 Peter 1:3–9

Invite 1 or 2 to read it from a Bible.

Devotional

How would you like to come back from the dead, to rise again.
How would you like to know what it's like to be a Lazarus, or even like Jesus Christ himself?

Many people would love the chance at it!

The good news about Jesus' own death and resurrection, was that it's only the first of many that will be happening!! Some people, some Christians even, have trouble believing that people actually do come back to life from the dead.

Easter is a celebration of the Death AND Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Let's look at what this means for us, as Christ's followers.

Why is Christ's resurrection important to us?

Well, Jesus coming alive, is important to everything we believe in. Let's read what Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians 15:12-19.

If Jesus didn't conquer death and rise again, then all his words and miracles were only empty words. If he wasn't able to conquer death, then that would make him limited in his power. He wouldn't be all powerful, all knowing, all able. He wouldn't be a God worthy of worship or honour or praise.

If Jesus didn't rise again, then he couldn't promise us we would rise again too. Death, our greatest enemy would be more powerful than him.

If Jesus wasn't resurrected, then, as Paul puts it, in 1 Corinthians 15:17, our faith is useless,

If Jesus didn't have power over the grave, why bother following after him or doing what he asks us to do? You might as well go and do whatever you want, If Jesus didn't beat death.

But Jesus DID conquer death. Lets read 1 Corinthians 15:3-7

Jesus did come alive after his death. There were witnesses to the event. He was seen by Peter and the rest of the 11 disciples.

And there were over 500 witnesses that saw Jesus alive AFTER the date of his death. Five hundred. That's a lot. Some were still alive and able to be questioned when this was written.

Some skeptics say, "Well the writers of the gospels were biased."

But Josephus was a historian who was not clearly a follower of Jesus. He wrote before 100 AD:

" Now there was about this time Jesus a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him many Jews, and also many of the Greeks. This man was the Christ. And when Pilate had condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him from the first did not forsake him for he appeared to them alive on the third day, the divine prophets having spoken these and thousands of other wonderful things about him. And even now, the race of Christians, so named from him, has not died out."

The truth is that Jesus lived, died and rose again, conquering death.

Why is Christ's resurrection important to us? Because it means we can believe his promise to resurrect us, his followers.

Lets read 1 Corinthians 15:20-23

Those of you who follow Jesus Christ and are his disciples, can expect to be brought back to life, after you die.

This is his promise for you, and for all who believe in His name and trust him for salvation. For all who have asked him to be their God, to forgive their sins, and to live in them, you're going to come back from the dead, because he did.

From the thief on the cross to our church friends who have died.

Jesus conquered death, and there were many witnesses of this event. He promises us that he will raise us from the dead, that "all who are related to Christ, ...will be given new life"

We need to prepare for our future. We need to respond to this wonderful truth-that we worship a God who can conquer death.

We must ask him into our lives, to forgive us our sins; to begin to worship and serve Him and Him alone. To learn of Him, through the Bible, and talk with him through Prayer.

And look, this resurrection of people has already begun! Read Matthew 27:50-53

These saints were the firstfruits of the resurrection to eternal life!

They were a smaller group of Christ's followers who were raised to life to show what God would do on a large scale one day!

Writings by the Christians of that time have been collected in the AnteNicene Library. They describe how over 12000 of these saints walked through Jerusalem, witnessed by many people for 40 days, and ascended into heaven when Christ went up to heaven.

This created a groundswell of belief in Christ as the Messiah and his power over death. They are the first fruits of the resurrection of life.

Will we be a part of this wonderful resurrection? Take steps today, to follow the One who has conquered death. And look forward to more.

Take time to pray together.

-Ask or think of some things to pray for

Closing Prayer - Have someone close with this:

God has raised from death our Lord Jesus, who is the Great Shepherd of the sheep as the result of his blood by which the eternal covenant is sealed.

May the God of peace provide us with every good thing we need in order to do his will, and may he, through Jesus Christ, do in us what pleases him. And to Christ be the glory forever and ever!
Amen.