

## Easter Sunday

Today we celebrate what happened 2000 yrs ago.

When the disciples discovered that this Jesus who they had seen die on a cross had come alive again.

Think of how they felt when they watched him die - the confusion, the anguish, dashed hopes, sorrow.

And now when he stands before them alive, the amazing shock and the joy.

Can't believe, wonder.

Today we celebrate that Jesus is indeed alive, we also celebrate the amazing life that we have in him.

**DVD – John 19:38 – 20: 31.**

**John 20:17**

*Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"*

Jesus joyfully announces that something incredible has happened in the heavenlies.

He calls us family. His Father is our Father, his God is our God.

He is inviting us to be in the amazing relationship with God that he is in.

He is inviting us to have the life that he has.

This is what we were created for, to be in relationship with God.

To live with his life flowing thru us.

We have a problem.

The very first human rebelled against God. Sin separated us from God, for God is full of goodness and does not live in close relationship with someone full of sin.

We know in physical death – when we die our physical body is separated from our inner person.

There is another death – when we are separated from God.

Paul (who wrote Ephesians) views a life without Christ as death – a meaningless life, hardly worth living.

God still loved us, he had an answer.

Jesus chose to come down and take our sin upon himself. Took our penalty for sin.

But that is not all, when he rose again, he rose on our behalf that we might have new life.

In **Rom 6 Paul explains** how we can identify with Jesus death and resurrection. Through Jesus' death, we can die to our sinfulness, die to our life of separation from God. And then through his resurrection, we can receive his life, we can have his wonderful relationship with God.

### **2Co 5: 17 – 18.**

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! [18] All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:*

### **Gal 2:20**

*[20] I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

So today we will turn to Ephesians 2:1-10 where Paul explains this life more fully. Explains who we are in Christ.

He begins in vs 1-3 to show 4 things we are without Christ.

- 1) Dead in transgressions
- 2) Under power of the ruler of this world – fooled by the evil that grips our society.
- 3) Living by our own desires
- 4) Under God's wrath

### **Read Ephesians 2: 1-3.**

*[2:1] As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, [2] in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. [3] All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature \* and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*

It is hard to believe that the life we put so much effort into, is meaningless without God. But the Bible says it is, God want us to know to take this seriously.

Now comes the great **but. But God.**

**Read Ephesians 2:4-10.**

*[4] But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, [5] made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. [6] And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, [7] in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. [8] For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— [9] not by works, so that no one can boast. [10] For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

**Hand out leaflets.**

It would be very sad if Christ did all this for us and yet we continue to live as we were before.

Meditate on, pray over, believe these truths.

### **Because I am in Christ**

- \* I am loved by God  
I am under his mercy and kindness.
- \* I am alive in Christ.  
His Spirit lives in me.
- \* I am a citizen of heaven.  
I belong in God's family.
- \* I live a life of purpose.  
God empowers me to do good.

*From Ephesians 2:4-10.*

### **Loved by God**

Illsn: Recently one of my grandsons asked me to fix his shorts. Shorts old and tatty, bought about 2 yrs ago in Bali for about \$3. But I did fix them. Why? Not

because my grandson loved them so much. It was my grandson's love for these shorts that gave them value.

We are of great value. Don't have to succeed, be really clever, or be good looking, to have value. We are of value because of God's love for us.

God loves us – he looks on you with love.

When you mess things up he wants to show you his mercy.

He thinks kind things about you.

We are of great value to God.

When we know this, we have great security and strength

Because God values you, you are of great worth.

### **Alive in Christ. I am in Christ and Christ is in me.**

His Holy Spirit is present with us.

Paul talking to the church, Eph 2:2, says, *And in Jesus you are being built together to become a dwelling that God lives by his Spirit.*

I remember the great joy that flooded my heart when I first gave my life to Christ. Something happened to me, something I did not expect. It was the presence of Christ with me.

We need to remember as we go about our day – Jesus is with me. I am Alive, truly alive, because I have the life of Christ within me.

Remember as we gather together – the very presence of God is in this place.

We can be glib about this.

Really think about it. God who made the heavens and the Earth, The Amazing God, is here with us.

His joy and his strength, his grace is in me. He Himself.

Meditate and know.

### **Citizens of heaven**

Illsn: Me. Looking after Jono, visiting a playgroup. No one smiled, helped, didn't want to talk to me. Walking home and reading the leaflets found out it had a limited membership. I did not belong.

Family. Walk in, greeted, collapse on couch, refrigerator rights.

We belong in heaven.

Great security – that God wants to adopt us into his family, it is his pleasure to have us as a daughter or son (**Eph 1:5**).

One day when we go to eternity, God will welcome us himself, with open arms, welcoming us as a son or daughter.

God makes his resources available to us. His strength, his love, his joy.

**Eph 1:3,**

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*

Know that we are already seated with Christ, already have a welcome in heaven.

### **A life of purpose – empowered to do good.**

We all know we still are prone to sinning. Might be forgiven, but continue to need it.

God has a plan – that we live a life reflecting his character. And he has the power – he gives us the Holy Spirit that we can live this life. We can be people who do the will of God from the heart.

Meditate upon this, God has a great plan for you.

A significant role in his kingdom.

And he made each of us differently, each with gifts and abilities that he has placed within us.

Sometimes we live with a very low expectation of our ability to overcome sin in our lives. Paul was very optimistic about our ability to live godly lives. It is God's plan for us, and he gives us his power that we might grow in our ability to overcome.

*[10] For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

### **Read Ephesians 1:17-23.**

*[17] I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit \* of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.*

*[18] I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, [19] and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, [20] which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right*

*hand in the heavenly realms, [21] far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. [22] And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, [23] which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

**We have some choices.**

God is a gentleman, he does not force himself upon us.

**Where do we choose to live? In Christ or outside of Christ?**

**Eph 2:8**

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

God offers his forgiveness to each of us as a totally free gift. All we need to do is:

Admit we are sinful and in need of a Saviour

Ask for his forgiveness

Commit ourselves to live following him, with his help and strength.

And you become a child of God.

**What life will we let define us.**

Our old life of sinfulness, or the new life that we have in Christ.

It is a great shame if God has done all this for us and yet we continue to live as if he hasn't.

That is why I have given you these flyers.

Challenge to read it over, and to read the first chapter of Ephesians, to pray over, to grasp it afresh.

**Sing about the one who did all this for us.**

**Honour Jesus.**