

DAILY BIBLE READINGS - Week of April 21, 2019

**THEME: "History's Greatest Event"
THE ULTIMATE VICTORY**

Sunday Read I Corinthians 15:56-58

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The ultimate enemy of man is death, so the ultimate victory in life is a resurrection from the dead. That is exactly what Jesus did and is the reason Christians celebrate Easter! God made man in His image and after His likeness, so the human being is an eternal being. God intended that He would have communion and fellowship with people forever but that was marred when Adam and Eve fell into sin. God had warned Adam not to eat of the forbidden fruit, that it would cause an immediate death. Some have asked why God did not make man so he could remain sinless, but if man did not have a free will, he would have been nothing more than a robot. Being made in the image of God meant that man would have to have freedom of choice. Being triune, the soul of man was given a living body to enjoy the physical world; and God breathed into the man spiritual life so man could enjoy communion and fellowship with his Creator. The moment Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, their spirits died and they lost the precious fellowship with God: they died spiritually and eventually died physically. Having lost their spiritual life, Adam and Eve could reproduce babies with only an eternal soul and living body. All babies born into the human race by natural means are born with a dead spirit, and could have spiritual life again only if that dead spirit were regenerated. That is why Jesus took on a human body. Having been born of a virgin allowed him to become a human being without the sin nature of naturally born babies. Having lived a sinless life, His death was a sufficient payment of the sins of humanity that allowed a holy and righteous God to offer a pardon to all humans who would confess their sins and accept Jesus as Savior. His resurrection gives spiritual life to all who have trusted Him as Savior and the hope of victory over death and eternity with God.

NEEDLESS WORRY

Monday Read Mark 16:1-4

"And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great."

That first Easter morning had a lot of unexpected drama because even those who were His closest followers were not aware that He was alive. They were mourning His death and totally confused because they had thought He was going to take the throne of David and restore the kingdom. The woman spoken of in today's Bible reading planned to go to His tomb and pay their respects by anointing His body. They did have one concern in that they had no idea how they were going to get past the stone that the officials had placed at the entrance because of the claims that they had heard that Jesus would arise from the dead on the third day. His adversaries were going to make sure that did not happen. To their credit, that obstacle did not deter these women; I guess they figured they would find a way. What they did not know was that Jesus had already left the tomb. Well, God honored their persistence and arranged that two angels would remove the stone by the time that they got there. Their worry was needless, but their persistence was honorable! They couldn't believe it when they saw the stone was gone, but they were actually in for a bigger surprise. The body was gone; now they had a new problem, or so they thought. Where was His body?

PERSONAL ATTENTION

Tuesday Read John 20:11-16

"But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and saw two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said unto her, Woman, why do you weep? She said unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus." Poor Mary! She had come to anoint the body of Jesus and did not want to go home until she had done so. She asked the angels where she might find the body. Jesus then appeared on the scene, but she did not know who it was. Does this not tell us something about Jesus? He was willing to show up and make a personal visit to this woman. She was the first to see Him after the resurrection, and did not know it was her Master; that is, until He called her by name. That's right, and He could do the same for each of us. As a matter of fact, it is the personal attention of Jesus that brought us into the

family of God. We know that from Revelation 3:20 where Jesus says this: *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."* Yes, all people who have received Christ as Savior have done so by His seeking us out and trying by some means to get our attention. It is a spiritual truth. For Mary, it was a physical appearance. For us, spiritual, but real!

DIVINE MISSION

WednesdayRead John 20:19-21

"As my Father hath sent me, so send I you." Jesus was not finished with His personal contacts with that visit with Mary at the tomb. He wanted to reassure His followers that they were still a very big part in the plans of God for carrying on His work on earth. As a matter of fact, this was the beginning of a huge part of the work of God, the outset of the process of building the Church, a new entity in God's plan. God had sent Jesus into the world on a specific mission that Jesus completed there on the cross. It would now be time for the Holy Spirit to take up residence on earth to work in and through the followers of Jesus to carry on the work of the Church. The Kingdom that the followers of Jesus were so much anticipating would go on hold until the Church was complete. It would include both the chosen people of Israel as well as Gentile believers. Jesus advised this small band of believers that He was sending them into the world as His Father had sent Him into the world. That means that the true church are the sent ones on a mission to fulfill on behalf of our Savior. What a tremendous responsibility is ours, and the highest of all privileges!

SPECIAL WALK

Thursday Read Luke 24:13-15

"Now two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of the things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them." Jesus took time to meet with a couple of men who were still trying to make sense of what they had just experienced. They were on their way out of Jerusalem and heading to Emmaus. Heavy on their hearts was the crucifixion and now the report that Jesus arose from the dead. It would appear that they had pretty much given up on their hopes of the restoration of the kingdom because Jesus asked them why they were so sad. One of the two was Cleophas, whom we know to be Jesus' uncle from what we read in John 19:25 which tells us that he was the husband of the sister of Mary's mother. Knowing of their disappointment, Jesus joined them in their walk. Without their realizing who He was, Jesus explained the happenings by making reference to the law of Moses and the Old Testament prophecies speaking of the Messiah and how they were fulfilled by the crucifixion and resurrection. Finally realizing that it was Jesus and now with an understanding of the sequence of events, they hurried back into Jerusalem to share all of this with the others. How wonderful that Jesus would take notice of these troubled followers and make sure they would understand!

PERSONAL ASSURANCE

FridayRead John 20:26-28

"Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and saith unto Him, My Lord and my God." Here again we see the heart of our Savior. Thomas had not been with the disciples in that first appearance of Jesus after His resurrection to the gathering. But when they got together again after a week had passed by, Thomas was with them. They had explained to Thomas about their previous meeting, but Thomas still had his doubts. He told them that with all due respect, but he felt that he had to see for himself to be convinced. Well, Jesus showed up again. Notice the heart of our Savior in His reaction to the attitude of Thomas. It was not a condemning spirit at all, but quite the opposite. If seeing for himself was what it would take, Jesus would accommodate his wishes. He did not rebuke Thomas, but did what had to be done so Thomas could be sure. What a loving Spirit our Lord had! So much does He want people to believe Him, He will go to extra lengths if that will do it. Jesus does not condemn our doubts; He cures them and convinces the doubters. Jesus did take the opportunity to pronounce a special blessing on all those who would be convinced without their actually seeing. Was He not speaking of us?

LIFE-GIVING SCRIPTURES

Saturday Read John 20:31

"These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life through His name." In this final verse of the Gospel of John, Jesus gives a clear explanation for God's giving us the Holy Scriptures. We have the Bible so we can learn of Jesus and put our faith in Him, the Savior of the world, to be our personal Savior. The focus of all the Word of God is to explain life in its fullest, something only God can do because He was there at the beginning and He has been witness to all of human history. God did not have to rely on anyone else to gain knowledge as do human writers. God did not have to do research to get an idea of what had happened in times past. He did not have to go to any laboratories to experiment and draw conclusions. He did not have to speculate on what this or that may mean. He created it all and He explained all that we need to know. He tells us how life began and what it is all about. He explained death and the eternal ages to come. He explained the downfall of man and how to get life back again. He has given us the truth! Why would anyone doubt?