



21 days of Meditation and Prayer On The Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Introduction

The news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ was first told and spread by His disciples who were eyewitnesses of the empty tomb where He was buried and actually had met and talked with the risen Jesus. In the book of Acts 1:3 we read, *“He presented himself alive to them (the apostles) after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.”* Each of the authors of the New Testament, wrote about the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a historical fact and how it should impact all of our lives on earth going forward. This booklet seeks to help us to meditate on the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus by each of these authors and therefore how it should impact our lives and how we should pray. May the LORD bless us, as we go through the 21 meditations each day till Easter Sunday 2024!

Day 1 March 10, 2024 Saturday - They Worship Him

Matthew 28:1;5-6 &9 *Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.... But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. **He is not here, for he has risen**, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.... And behold, **Jesus met them** and said, "Greetings!" And **they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him.***

Meditate on the words "They came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him" The gospel of Matthew was written by Matthew, one of Jesus' twelve apostles. The focus of his gospel was to declare that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the 'Messiah or Anointed King' promised and foretold in the Old Testament. He is also 'Immanuel or God with us' prophesied by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 7:14. As the promised Anointed King, Jesus came to usher in His Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Jesus preached everywhere He went, "***Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.***" (Matthew 4:17). To Matthew, the resurrection of Jesus was His coronation as the King of His Kingdom on earth, after His victory over sin, death and the devil. Therefore, Matthew emphasized how those who met Him after His resurrection worshiped Him. See also Matthew 28: 16-17, "***Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw Him, they worshiped him, but some doubted.***" Jesus, Himself claimed to be God when He said "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). Do we know Jesus as our King and our God with us? Do we worship Him as we should in our daily lives and not just on Sunday?

Prayer: Prayer is about us coming into the throne of God, to worship and to commune with Him. This is only possible because we are in Christ, clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ as a result of His death, burial and resurrection. Therefore, let us come into His holy Presence:

1. With a heart full of praise and thanksgiving and worship of Him;
2. With the desire and expectation to hear from Him;
3. To be still and wait upon Him to speak to us and
4. To allow His Holy Spirit to lead us in our prayer to Him.

Day 2 March 11, 2024 Sunday - All Authority

Matthew 28: 18 & 20b, *“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me... And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

Meditate on the above text. Matthew ends his gospel with the risen Jesus Christ as the King of His kingdom in heaven and on earth, giving the marching orders to His army. His order or command is that they are to *“go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that He has commanded them.”* In other words, they are to go and extend His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven and as they go, He is with them always till His Second Coming to usher in a new heaven and a new earth. It is obvious from the language that Jesus is not talking about a natural, physical geographical kingdom on earth but a spiritual unseen realm where He is the king in the heart and soul of mankind. It is an unseen and yet real spiritual kingdom that one day will be clearly seen and acknowledge by all at His Second Coming. Are you in His kingdom? Do you accept Jesus as the King and Lord of your life? Are you then involved in the extension of His kingdom on earth now, being part of His army on earth?

Prayer: Let us pray as Jesus taught His disciples to pray: *“Our Father in heaven. Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom comes. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation. But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”*

Let us always remember to come into God's Presence with worship and thanksgiving and not rush in with our petitions and requests. We need to first seek His Kingdom and His righteousness before we come to Him with our personal requests. We must be willing to obey Him and so forgive those who have sinned against us. We are to come to Him with clean hands and a pure heart.

Day 3 March 12, 2024 Monday - The Supernatural Resurrection

Mark 16:2 -8, *“And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”*

Meditate on what the three ladies, Mary Magdalene, Mary, Jesus’ mother and Salome saw – the empty tomb and the angel in the form of a young man. John Mark who wrote the gospel of Mark was a close associate of the apostle Peter and so he got his facts of what happened and who is Jesus from the apostle Peter. Therefore, he mentioned Peter specifically in his above account of the resurrection. Peter himself, after being told by the women, ran to the tomb and saw the empty tomb and later met with the risen Jesus many times. The focus of Mark’s gospel was to declare that Jesus is the Son of God, the promised Messiah. Throughout his gospel, Mark recorded the many miracles that Jesus performed everywhere He went, Peter’s confession of who Jesus is and His transfiguration. The final proof that Jesus is indeed the Son of God is His supernatural resurrection from the dead and the appearance of the angel to announce His resurrection.

Prayer: Let us come to Jesus, our Lord and our God with repentance, asking Him to forgive us for the times we took Him for granted. When we treated Him like ‘father Christmas’ only going to Him for goodies that we wish and desires for a good and happy life on earth. When we do not see Jesus Christ as our King of kings and Lord of lords, the sovereign Lord of the universe whom we are to worship in reverence and holy fear. He is indeed the Son of the Living God who rules over all of His creation including the angels.

Day 4 March 13, 2024 Tuesday - Our Hearts Burn Within

Luke 24: 13 -15; 31-34 *That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them... 31And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” 33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!”*

Meditate on *‘Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?’* The gospel of Luke and book of Acts were written by doctor Luke a travelling companion of the Apostle Paul as one unified two-part work. According to Luke, his work is compiled after careful research on the accounts of many eyewitnesses of what have been ‘fulfilled’ in history of the promises and prophecies of God to the nation of Israel and the world. The resurrection of Jesus is the final proof of who Jesus is, the Saviour of the World, the Son of God and that everything written about Him in the Old Testament must be fulfilled. Jesus, Himself said, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” Luke 24:46-47

Prayer: Let us thank God that He has considered us worthy and has chosen us to be part of His kingdom of those who have heard the good news of Jesus Christ, repented and received the forgiveness of our sins. Let us praise Him that in deed the good news of Jesus Christ and His resurrection is being proclaimed to all nations of the world and we have the privilege of being involve in that proclamation. Pray that all of us in ECCI will be like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, experience the risen Lord explaining to us the whole of Scriptures so that we may truly know God personally and experience the love and warmth of the risen Lord by our sides as we journey through this life on earth.

Day 5 March 14, 2024 Wednesday - Bodily Resurrection!

Luke 24: 36- 43 *“As they were talking about these things, Jesus himself stood among them, and said to them, “Peace to you!” 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought they saw a spirit. 38 And he said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. **Touch me, and see.** For a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” 40 And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 And while they still disbelieved for joy and were marvelling, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish, 43 and he took it and ate before them.”*

Meditate on “Touch me and see”. The resurrection of Jesus is a bodily resurrection with a glorious body that can be touched, with feet and hands and can eat physical food. It is not an illusion, visions or just a spirit like a ghost. It is a glorious body that can go through shut doors and appeared suddenly and stood amongst the disciples in a room. It is also a perfect body without any spot or wrinkles and that was why at first the disciples were not able to recognise the resurrected Jesus. In First Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul said that we who are in Christ and have been born again will one day at the Second Coming be raised from the dead with a glorious body like that of the risen Lord Jesus, an imperishable body perfect without any spot or wrinkle. At that time, there will be not more pain, sicknesses, sufferings and no more tears. We will be the perfect bride of Jesus Christ enjoying Him for all eternity! This is our glorious hope!

Prayer: Let us continuously praise and worship God for this glorious hope in Christ! Like Fanny Crosby let us sing, *“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. O what a foretaste of glory divine. Heir of salvation, purchase of God. Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story; this is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long. This is my story; this is my song. Praising my Savior all the day long.”*

O my dear brothers and sisters, are you praising Him and rejoicing in Him all the day long! Yes, He is worthy of all our praise and worship. Hallelujah! What a saviour? What a risen living God of all creation!

Day 6 March 15, 2024 Thursday - The Promise of the Holy Spirit

Acts 1: 3-5; 8, *“He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. 4 And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.... 8But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

Meditate on ‘you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’. Luke in the second part of his book, focus on the significance of the resurrection of Jesus to His disciples and the church worldwide. Luke recorded the last words of Jesus before His ascension to heaven, *“And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”* Luke 24:49 It is very clear that the disciples, not only have witnessed the resurrection of Jesus, they also have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit (see John 20:22). Yet, Jesus told them they cannot carry out His great commission to them unless they are baptised and empowered by the promised Holy Spirit. We are regenerated or born again by the Holy Spirit but we are baptized with the Holy Spirit by Jesus Christ. (see Luke 3:16)

Prayer: Let us pray and ask God to empower us by His Holy Spirit so that we in ECCI may be witnesses for Him in our community in Box Hill and surrounding areas, in Victoria, in Australia and to the uttermost parts of the world. Let us recognise and be humble to know that we by ourselves, without God, can do nothing of worth for the kingdom of God. Therefore, as we see our church growing spiritually and in numbers, let us thank and praise God for His goodness to us. Let us continuously pray for God to fill us with His Holy Spirit to empower us to share the gospels with those who do not know Jesus and be witnesses of Him. Let us seek the gifts of Holy Spirit so that we through our union with Jesus Christ, may build His Church and extend the Kingdom of God on earth.

Day 7 March 16, 2024 Friday - The Supernatural Realm

John 20: 19-20, *“On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”*

Meditate On “When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.” The apostle John is most conscious of the unseen, supernatural world existing alongside the natural physical world. In his gospel, John 1: 1 he wrote, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”* Then further on in verse 10, *“He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.”* In the incident in John 20:19-20, he wanted to show the intersection between the natural and supernatural, when in time and space, the risen Jesus came through locked doors and stood amongst His disciples. We can only ‘see’ and ‘experience’ the supernatural world through the eyes of faith. In 2 Kings 6:17 we read, *“Then Elisha prayed and said, “O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.” So, the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”*

Hebrews 11:1 says faith is the conviction of things not seen or in the NLT ‘the evidence of things we cannot see.

Prayer: When we pray, we must:

- Have the faith to believe that we are now in the unseen supernatural realm of heaven, speaking to our Father in Heaven, who hears and see us.
- Recognise in no uncertain terms that the real battle and work is done in the supernatural spirit realm in the Name of Jesus, our risen Lord.
- Therefore, we must allow the Holy Spirit to help us know what and how to pray
- Never take this privilege of praying in the presence of God for granted
- Know we are speaking to the Almighty God of the Universe who will answer in accordance with His will, not ours.

Day 8 March 17, 2024 Saturday - The New Life in Christ

John 11:25 - 26 *“Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he dies, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?”*

Meditate On the words *“everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.”*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ confirms to us that death is not the end. Jesus Christ by His resurrection has conquered death and sin. Death is the result of sin both in the physical realm and also in the supernatural spiritual realm; ‘The wages of sin is death’. For those who do not believe in Jesus, the final result of sin is eternal punishment in hell, the second death. We thank God that Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection has won the victory for us so that we who believed in Him, shall never die but have eternal life. Our physical bodies may die and return to dust but one day at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus, we will be resurrected with glorious bodies to be with Him. In the meantime, we may die a physical death and at that point, our soul lives on with Jesus in paradise. This is what our Lord Jesus said to the thief on the cross next to Him, *“Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”* Then at His Second Coming we will be raised with new glorious bodies. Our eternal life in Jesus, however starts at the moment we believe and accept Him as our Lord and Saviour. Are we rejoicing in our eternal life and no longer fear death?

Prayer: Let us pray like the father in Mark 9:24, *“Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, “I believe; help my unbelief!”* So often we say we believe in Jesus Christ and yet our lives are no different from the unbelievers. Let us repent of our sin of unbelief and ask God to help us. Let us ask God, our Father in Heaven to give us the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation to know Him intimately. The more we know God, the more we will rejoice in our eternal life. Let us thank God for His infinite grace that grant us the faith to believe in Jesus and so have eternal life through Him.

‘And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.’ John 17:3

Day 9 March 18, 2024 Monday - The Victorious Lamb of God

Revelation 5: 1- 7, *“Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, 4 and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne.”*

Meditate on: *“Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.”* Here John saw the resurrected Jesus as the Lion of Judah who has conquered sin, death and devil and so worthy to open the seal and to look into the history of mankind and creation. At the time of the book of Revelation, the Church was facing all kinds of problems. There was apathy; worldliness, immorality and false teachings were rampant and some were facing severe persecutions from the authorities. The revelation and prophecies were given to John to encourage and also to warn the Church to remain faithful to Jesus, the King of kings who is coming soon for His bride, the Church. He will come as the King with His armies to proclaim His final victory over the devil and so usher in His Glorious Kingdom in heaven and on earth.

Prayer: As we pray, we must be conscious of the fact that we coming to the throne of God who is sovereign over His whole creation and history. We must therefore, bow in worship of Him and confess our sins and ask for His forgiveness for being overly burdened and affected by the things of this world. We are to affirm our trust and faith in the Lord Jesus as our King and Saviour. We are to pray for His power to enable us to be faithful to His calling on us. We are to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness!

Day 10 March 19, 2024 Tuesday - A Chosen Instrument

Acts 9: 10-18 *"Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord." 11 And the Lord said to him, "Rise and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying, 12 and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." 13 But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name." 15 But the Lord said to him, "**Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine** to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. So, Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized"*

Meditate on 'Who appeared to you' This was the account of how Paul met with the risen Jesus and experienced the miraculous regaining of his sight and being baptized by the Holy Spirit. Paul was a pharisee and well versed with the Old Testament scriptures and in Galatians 1:16-17, we are also told that after this he went into Arabia, presumably to be taught by our Jesus, Himself. Paul was appointed as an apostle of Jesus and called to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to 'the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel.' (Acts 9:15) Paul turned from persecuting the church to become the greatest evangelist for the Gospel as a result of meeting the risen Jesus. From then till today, thousands upon thousands can also testify to how their lives were completely turned around as a result of their meeting with the risen Saviour and Lord Jesus. Yes, Jesus is risen and alive not only because of the empty tomb in which He was buried but more because thousands and even millions have met the resurrected Jesus in person.

Prayer: Let us pray for those who still do not know Jesus and have not met Him. Let us pray that God in His mercy may allow them to hear the gospel and be convicted of their sins and believe in Jesus.

Let us pray for ourselves that we, by the grace of God, may be like Ananias, called to witness and share the good news of Jesus to someone who do not know Jesus Christ and that person be given the sight to see Jesus and be baptised just as Paul did. Let us remember that like Ananias, we may be used to share the Good News of Jesus to someone who may one day become the 'modern equivalent' of Paul, the evangelist and missionary

Day 11 March 20, 2024 Wednesday - Believe In Your Heart

Romans 10:6-10, *“But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*

Meditate On these two verses. The apostle Paul explains here what having faith in Jesus Christ involves. Verse 9 ‘confess with your mouth then believe in your heart’. Verse 10 the sequence is reversed, ‘the heart believes then the mouth confesses.’ In other words, believe in the heart and confess with the mouth must go hand in hand. Real faith always leads to action.

The best illustration of this is in Joshua 3 when God told Joshua to tell the people in verse 13, *“And when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan shall be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above shall stand in one heap.”* Now if the Israelites did really believe what the Lord told them, then they must have the priests bearing the ark of the Lord to step into the river Jordan. We are told that at that time the river Jordan was overflowing its banks. This is a test of the faith of the Israelites in the word of God. Well, in the rest of the chapter we read the Israelites did have faith in God and so saw the miracle of the river Jordan being divided and they walked through on dry ground. In the same way, if we say we believe that God did raise Jesus from the dead and confess Him as our Lord and Saviour, then is our life and behaviour consistent with our belief?

Prayer: Let us pray that our Father in heaven may grant us:

- The faith to believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and so to live our lives consistent with that belief.
- To see a vision of the resurrected Jesus on His throne reigning as a result of His victory over sin, death and the devil.
- The sense of awe of God’s glory and holiness every time we come together to worship Him on Sunday.
- The faith to obey God even when His word to us, seem illogical or unreasonable by human reasoning.

Day 12 March 21, 2024 Thursday - Newness of Life

Romans 6: 3 – 7 *“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. 6 We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. 7 For one who has died has been set free from sin. 8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him”*

Meditate on *‘we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.’* The apostle Paul is explaining that when we truly believe in Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord, we are united with Him in His death and resurrection. Therefore, let us reckon our old self of sin dead and buried, so that it can no longer trouble us. We have been forgiven of all our sins past, present and future and liberated from our old self so that it no longer has any more hold on us. Just as our Lord was resurrected from the dead, we too in union with Him have also be raised to a new life in Him. We must now live our lives with no more feeling of guilt over our past sins, neither should we be fearful or shameful of what had happened to us in the past. This is what the apostle Paul declared in Galatians 2:20, *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”* This is who we are as Christians, we are in Christ, born again by the Holy Spirit into newness of life! A life lived by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

Prayer: Let us continuously thank and praise God for His amazing grace ‘that saved a wretch like me’. Let us pray daily and constantly to our Lord Jesus who is with us and in us by His Spirit. Whatever our circumstances whether good or bad, He is there with us so let us thank Him for taking us through our difficult times. Let us remember that our Lord Jesus is the way maker, the promise keeper, the miracle worker and so we can also seek and ask Him for a miracle to heal us whether it be a physical or mental illness. As Paul said in Philippians 4: 6-7 said, *“The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

Day 13 March 22, 2024 Friday - Living Hope

1 Peter 1:3-4, *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be **born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,”*

Meditate On *“born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”* Peter knew what it means to be born again as he remembers what he was like before that. Before we are born again, we were sinners and under the wrath of God without hope beyond the grave. There was nothing for us in our future but the certainty of judgement and eternal punishment. The resurrection of Jesus Christ changed that completely. Those who are born again Christian by the Holy Spirit, are born again to a living hope. The sure foundation or basis of this living hope is the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter tells us that this living hope is an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us. We need to constantly remind ourselves that this world and all that is in it – the land, the properties, the gold, our position, our wealth, everything - is perishing and of not value whatsoever to us in eternity. Only what is kept for us in heaven, our living hope is real for all eternity! We must ask ourselves: On what are we placing our priority and value?

Prayer: Let us come to our God full of praise and thanksgiving that He has chosen us to be born again as His children. Indeed, let us thank Him for the resurrection of our Lord Jesus that gives us the living hope of an inheritance that is kept in heaven for us. Pray that God will strengthen us by His Holy Spirit to go through whatever grievous trials and challenges that may come our way. Pray that as we go through these trial and testing, our faith may be refined as precious gold to the approval of God. Pray that our testimonies as we go through such trials and testing will result in the leading of others to know our Lord Jesus to the praise, glory and honour of God. Pray that our lives may indeed be a living testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Pray that we may rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of our souls.

Day 14 March 23, 2024 Saturday - A Living Stone

1 Peter 2: 4-5; *As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...*

Meditate on “*you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house*” Peter was given the task of pastoring His sheep by the Lord Jesus Himself. (John 21:15-17) 1 Peter was probably written around 64AD just before his death in Rome to the churches in Asia Minor (Modern Turkey) who were under severe persecutions by the Roman Authorities. He refers to the resurrected Jesus as the Living Stone rejected by men but chosen by God and precious in His sight. And the born-again Christians as the chosen and precious living stones of God that are being built up as a spiritual house. Peter remembered what Jesus said to him when he confessed that Jesus is the Christ in Matthew 16:18, “*And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*” Therefore, to Peter, Jesus is building His church on earth as a spiritual house of God with every born-again Christian, chosen as the precious living stones. Everyone of us as Christians and members of ECCI are precious living stones specially chosen by God to be the building blocks of His spiritual house. No one in our church is not needed, there is no accident with God. Everyone who comes to ECCI has been chosen to be a part of it. We are all uniquely chosen to fit perfectly into His spiritual house so that together we grow and function as His holy priesthood. As priests we are to offer our prayers, praise, thanksgiving, repentance, our bodies as living sacrifices, fruit of the Holy Spirit and also converts to the Jesus Christ, as our spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God.

Prayer: Let us praise and thank God for choosing us as His precious living stones and building us to be His spiritual house here in Box Hill and in Holland Road. Let us ask Him what role are we to play and what gifts He has given us so that we can be well fitted into His spiritual house here. Seek Him for the spiritual gifts that He has promised to us by His Holy Spirit. Let us indeed constantly offer prayers of thanksgiving, praise and worship to our God with full surrender of our lives. Let us pray for His leading and empowerment to lead others to know Jesus and to be born again Christian for His glory.

Day 15 March 24, 2024 Sunday - A Holy Nation

1 Peter 2: 9-11 *“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.”*

Meditate on *“you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession”* Peter here remembers what God said to Moses about the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. Exodus 19:5-6, *“Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”* These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.” Clearly Peter applied what God promised to Israel, now to the believers of Jesus Christ, His church on earth. As His church, we have been chosen by God to be a people of God, a holy nation that is now ‘sojourners and exiles’ on earth and therefore we are to distinguish ourselves from other peoples in the world. How? By abstaining from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against our souls. In other words, unlike the world, we should no longer set our minds and desires on the things and lusts of the world. We are also a royal priesthood and so as royal priests we are to go out into the world as witnesses to declare the excellencies of God in Jesus Christ. Let us always reminds ourselves of who we are in Christ, we are Not just a simple, weak and helpless Christian, a nobody! No! We are His royal priests!

Prayer: Let us thank God for His grace towards us in choosing us to be His own people and to be His royal priests. Let us ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit to:

1. Empower us to share the Good News of Jesus to those around us.
2. Walk and behave as the chosen, precious people of God
3. Help us to abstain from the desires and lusts of the flesh and so be different from the world, that we may be in the world but not of the world.

Day 16 March 25, 2024 Monday - First fruits of His Creatures

James 1: 18-22 *“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that **we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.** 19 Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. 21 Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”*

Meditate on first fruits of His creatures. James who wrote the letter of James was the half-brother of Jesus who also met Jesus after His resurrection. see 1 Corinthians 15:7. He later became one of the respected elders in the church at Jerusalem. See Acts 15:13. In the NLT, verse 18 is translated as, *“**He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.**”* James is saying here that since we have been born again as children of God by the living true word of God, we need to be very careful with our words. As God’s prized possession, we are to be quick to hear, meaning we must seek first to understand and so not be easily angered. Only when we fully understand what is being said then, and only then should we speak. Then our speech should be seasoned with salt to mediate, heal and to encourage others and not to tear them down. Furthermore, real and living faith involves not just hearing the word of truth but must also be doers of the word.

Prayer: Let us come in humility to God, our Father asking Him to forgive us for the times we have been quick to speak, quick to anger and so hurt those around us especially our loved ones. Let us at the same time ask God to grant us the courage to apologize to those whom we have hurt by our words. On the other hand, if we have been hurt by the quick words of others, let us ask the Lord for grace to forgive the person concerned and seek reconciliation. Remember the words of our Lord in Matthew 6:14-15, *“**For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**”* May the power of His Holy Spirit, moves us to not only hear the word of God but to obey Him to do and to go wherever He may lead us.

Day 17 March 26, 2024 Tuesday - Wise And Understanding

James 3: 13-18, *“Who is **wise and understanding** among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. 15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”*

Meditate on ‘Wise and Understanding’ To Peter, those who are born again are the precious ‘first fruits’ of God’s new creation and therefore must live out who they are in wisdom and understanding. Those who are wise and understanding are those who are meek, meaning though they have strength and authority yet they treat others with respect in true humility. They are those who find no reason to be jealous of others and neither do they harbour any selfish ambition. Why? Because in their wisdom and understanding they know who they are in Christ Jesus and so they are very secured in His love for them and what more is there to be ambitious about since they are already God’s prized possession, having an inheritance kept for them in heaven. Therefore, they exhibit the wisdom from above which according to Peter is, *“first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere.”*

Prayer: As James said in James 1:5, let us ask God for true understanding and wisdom so that we may indeed live out who we are in Christ in newness of life. Let us ask God to reveal any pride, jealousy and selfish ambition in us so that we may repent and confess our sins to Him. Oh, may the Lord forgive us for our pride and jealousy of other brothers and sisters who seemed more blessed by God than us. As the Psalmist prayed in Psalm 19:14, *“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”* May the grace of our Lord lead us to do nothing out of selfish ambition but in humility consider others more significant than ourselves.

Day 18 March 27, 2024 Wednesday – The Supremacy of Jesus Christ

Hebrews 1: 1-4, *“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.”*

Meditate on *“he upholds the universe by the word of his power.”* The book of Hebrews is likely to have been written by a very close associate of the apostles including Paul. The title Hebrew means that it was written to Christians who know the Hebrew Bible well and so most likely to be Jewish Christians. In this passage, the writer portrays Jesus as the Son of God who after His finished work on earth was resurrected and now seated at the right hand of the Majesty King of Heaven. (verse 3) Furthermore, Jesus Christ, through whom the world was created, is appointed the heir of all things and now upholds the universe by the power of His word. In other words, the victorious risen Jesus Christ is worthy of all our trust, devotion and hope in. Therefore, we are to remain faithful to Him come what may whether it be: persecutions, troubles, sicknesses, sufferings due to loss of loved ones or any other calamities. So, in Hebrews 2:3, we are told, *“how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”*

Prayer: Let pray with a sense of awe and thankfulness that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour is upholding the universe by the power of His word. Whatever our circumstances or spiritual state we may be in now, let us renew our faith in Him, repenting and confessing our sins to Him. He is faithful and will forgive us of our sins no matter how terrible they may be. For in Jesus Christ and based on His finished work on the cross, there is now no condemnation because Jesus has paid in full the penalty for our sin. Let us now pray in faith that God in His grace will lead and guide us to live victorious lives for Him.

Day 19 March 28, 2024 Thursday - Overcomes the World

1 John 5: 1-5 *“Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. 4 **For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.** And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. 5 Who is it that **overcomes the world** except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?”*

Meditate on “For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.”

To the writer John, those who believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God have been born of God. In other words, it is the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin and by His miraculous power caused us to be born again into the family of God. We receive this grace by faith which is also a gift of God. In this one act, we have been justified and transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God. As we are now in the kingdom of God, in newness of life we continue to live by faith in Jesus Christ and this is how we overcome the world. God’s commandment to us is not burdensome because we are living by faith in Christ and empowered by the power of His Holy Spirit in us. We rejoice in our faith that overcomes the world as the apostle Paul also proclaim in Romans 8:37, “in all these things we are more than conquerors” Overcoming the world in this sense is not about us overcoming our external physical world but more in terms of our internal world as John puts in 1 John 2:16, *“For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.”*

Prayer: As we come to the Father in heaven, let us seek and ask Him to increase our faith so that we can become more and more like Jesus. Let seek Him for new revelation to us from His word so that we can have greater understanding and wisdom to walk in obedience to His word and commands. Let us ask for His Holy Spirit to empower us to love one another more by willing to go out of our way to help those in need. Let us pray that God will enable us to maintain the unity in our church by working together as a team in the bond of love.

Day 20 March 29, 2024 Friday – Kept My Word

Revelation 3: 7-8 &10-11 *“And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: ‘The words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens. 8 “I know your works. Behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut. I know that you have but little power, and **yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.** Because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world, to try those who dwell on the earth. 11 I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown”*

Meditate on ‘yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.’ This is our risen Lord Jesus speaking to the church at Philadelphia. It may also be a message to our church ECCI. We know we have little power but we have kept the word of God and not denied the Name of Jesus Christ. The Lord’s message to us is that He has set before us an open door which no one is able to shut. That door is for us to reach out to the migrants from China, Hongkong, Taiwan and elsewhere, to our area. We are therefore, to be united and work as a team to extend God’s Kingdom in Victoria. As we consider the situation in Victoria and the world, we know trouble times and even persecution of the Christians are coming. Let us take hold of these opportunities and be bold and courageous to reach out to them.

Prayer: Pray that God will enable us to be a church that is vibrant, growing, centred on Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. Pray therefore:

1. for the leadership of the church to have a common vision of reaching out to our communities by working as a team.
2. that our church will not be divided as a result of jealousy, selfish-ambition and false teachings.
3. that God will convict us where there is the sin of worldliness and immorality, so that there will be real confession and repentance of sin by those concerned.
4. that God will grant us the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that we can build His church for His glory.

Day 21 March 30, 2024 Saturday - Able To Present You Blameless

Jude 1:24 *“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”*

Meditate on “able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy”. Jude was written by Judas, a brother of James and also half-brother of Jesus. See Matthew 13:55. Like his other brothers, Jude or Judas did not believe in Jesus until he met with the resurrected Jesus Christ. After his conversion, he went on to become a prominent member of the church in Jerusalem, a travelling teacher and missionary to the Jewish communities. As we come to the end of our 21 days of meditation on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is appropriate to end with the doxology in Jude. Jude was written to a church that was facing all kinds of problems of divisions, immorality and worldliness resulting from teachings by false teachers who have crept into the church unnoticed. Today we may similarly be discouraged and depressed by the state of the church in our Western World. Beset by so much false teaching and immorality, how can Christians ever reach heaven? The answer lies only in the power of God. Jude’s doxology is a message of hope in the power of the risen Lord Jesus Christ who is able to keep His church from stumbling and present to Himself a church that is perfect as His bride at the end of time. Jesus Christ is the victorious risen King of kings and Lord of lords, the Alpha and the Omega, worthy of all our worship and praise.

Prayer: Let us end this meditation with our heartfelt joyful thanksgiving and praise to our Risen Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who is able to keep us from stumbling and to present us blameless before God in his glory with great joy. Let us bow in worship to the only wise living God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

