

A Bit of Good News for Sunday!

Recently I came across a question followed by a statement from the Queen Mother of Britain, the mother of the present monarch. The Queen Mother was meeting with folks after the church services in Royal Lodge at Windsor Great Park. She remarked to those around her, "Wasn't the sermon wonderful?" This remarkable woman of 102 years (now deceased) who then added with bright glistening eyes, "I do like a bit of good news on Sunday, don't you?" This beautiful understatement brings a smile to my heart. I would say a hearty, "Yes!" to that question from the royal centenarian.

The word Gospel means "Good News." The biblical definition of the Gospel is given by Paul, *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved... For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."* The Gospel in its full disclosure came to us on Sunday, the first day of the week. The angel told the ladies at the tomb, *"And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you"* (Matthew 28:7). And on Sunday Christ was seen and celebrated. Yes, I do like a bit of good news on Sunday! Here are three pieces of information that should not only make Sunday special to us, but every day with Jesus!

1. Christ is risen.

All Hell had thrown it's worst against our Lord. True to form, however, when opposition gives the worst, God gives His best. It was necessary for Christ to not only suffer, but die for our sins. The good news is that Christ conquered death by His resurrection. He said, *"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death"* (Revelation 1:18). So God allowed the kingdom of this world to operate in its wisdom, which is foolishness with God. *"Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory"* (I Corinthians 2:8). Yet through hatred of the devil and the ignorance of man, God weaved His Divine plan.

Notice how through Scriptures the resurrection of Jesus is intertwined with His suffering: In Philippians 3:10, the Apostle longingly said, *"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* is the secret to the Christian's happiness. There is the promised resurrection of Christ that was fulfilled. And we are inextricably linked to Him, who, in anticipation of His own death and resurrection, said to His followers, *"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also"* (John 14:19). In an even more direct word to Martha, *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"*

I want to encourage you to always think of Easter as special, but also think of every Sunday as a form of Easter celebration. Please keep in mind the reason the worship day moved from Saturday to Sunday, also known as the Lord's Day, is to say, Christ is risen, He is risen indeed. So come to church every Sunday and celebrate His resurrection and anticipation of ours. I do like a bit of good news on Sunday, don't you?

2. Our sins are forgiven.

I love to see congregants fall under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. It is God's way of bringing us to salvation. You may remember, it was strong conviction for wrong doing that brought Paul to the Light of Life, yea, even the risen Lord on the road to Damascus. This understanding is given in this Divine dialogue: "*And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks*" (Acts 9:5). Conviction is like the ox goad, a long pointed stick used to drive the stubborn oxen. God doesn't make us go against our will, but he can certainly make us willing to go.

Conviction for sin not only brings us to Christ, but it also brings us to repentance and renewal for the Christian who backslides. When we sin against Christ, our heart is smitten and rightly so. When we sin, we should be ashamed! There is a law in the heart of humans that tells us that wrong is wrong. A perfect example of this came last week when Prime Minister Netanyahu gave a rebuttal to the diatribe that was spewed forth from the United Nations by a despotic dictator who tries to change the truth of history by wicked lies, The Prime Minister said, "To those who gave this Holocaust denier a hearing, I say on behalf of my people - have you no shame? Have you no decency?"

Shame is good and the Lord uses it to bring us to Him for mercy and forgiveness. The good news is the Lord forgives us and uses us after we have failed Him. The promises are replete in Scripture: "*He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*" (Micah 7:19). Isaiah said it like this: "*Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back*" (Isaiah 38:17). We don't have to live in the misery of unconfessed sin; we can be and should be right with God. In mercy, God gives us a path back to Him when we sin. I love the tender words of the apostle when he encourages us to forgive others as God forgives, "*So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*" (II Corinthians 2:7). That is a bit of good news for anybody wondering if they can be right with God!

3. The Christian has hope in the darkest of nights.

Hope is an expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. It is grounds for believing that something good will happen. "*For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it*" (Romans 8:24, 25). Therefore we should be, "*Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer*" (Romans 12:12).

The two closing lines of Sarah Williams' poem, *The Old Astronomer to His Pupil*,

"Though my soul may set in darkness, it will rise in perfect light.

I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night."

Christ is risen, our doubts may then be settled as they were for Thomas! Christ has risen, our denials like Peter's can be forgiven. Christ is risen, we will never say good-bye to loved ones who die in the Lord! Jesus said in Revelation 22:16, "*I am... the bright and morning star.*" The morning Star is considered to be a star of the first magnitude, meaning it is of the brightest strength. The Morning Star gives most of its light just before the break of the day. Actually stars don't come out at night; we see them at night because during the day the sun keeps us from seeing the stars. It takes night to see the stars. When my wife and I were at McDonald Observatory we discovered all around the Fort Davis area laws are enforced to prevent too much man-made light to beam up and interfere with the light of the stars. Too many times our man-made efforts keep us from reaping the benefits of the comfort that only the Morning Star, the Lord Jesus Christ can give. Our dark nights only give us more

opportunity to see Him in a different and glorious light. I do like a bit of good news on Sunday, don't you?

- Pastor Pope -

[Back to Pastor's Word](#)