

CHURCH OF TE HEPARA PAI

Sunday 12 April 2015

Te Rātapu Tuarua o te Aranga / 2nd Sunday of Easter

CHRIST VICTORIOUS



ALIVE

Death
defeated



Christ Victorious

SENTENCE OF THE DAY:

Again Jesus said, "May peace be with you! The Father has sent me. So now I am sending you." (John 20:21)

COLLECT OF THE DAY – Let us pray:

Grant us, O Lord, a keen appreciation of the Easter feast we have just celebrated. Make us to ever want to bring forth the fruits of the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus - the gifts of our baptism, in all areas of our lives. May our conversations and behaviours be always pleasing to you. Change us into such powerful witnesses of the resurrection that others may, on seeing our faith in action, be drawn to the Living Word. **Amen.**

Christ's Resurrection

Victory over Death

Christ's victory over death ensures our victory over death. He has conquered death and we share in his victory. We now have nothing to fear from death.



Death
is just
a change
of address,
but what you believe
will determine
what neighbourhood
you end up in.



God created the world and everything in it, including human beings. God created a perfect world. In the beginning, there was no sin--no hatred, no disagreement, and no death. But God also allowed humans to make their own choices. The first humans, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God, allowing sin to enter God's perfect world. From then on, every human has been born with sinful desires—desires to think, say and do things that are not pleasing to God—that lead to separation from God and eternal death.

But the situation does not end there. God loves the world and the people in it--so much, in fact, that he made a plan to take away the guilt of our sin. God sent his Son, Jesus, into the world as a human. Jesus gave his life to pay the price for sins he did not commit (1 Jn. 2:2). Jesus accepted the punishment for our sins so that we do not have to. Three days after Jesus was killed, God brought Jesus to life again because Jesus himself had committed no sins, defeating the power of death (Acts 2:24). This is referred to as the resurrection, and is the main focus of the Season of EASTER. So Jesus Christ was victorious over both sin and death.

Our faith is centred in God's love for us shown in Jesus Christ, his Son, giving his life to pay the price for our sins so that God could forgive our sins and grant us eternal life. When we accept Jesus' sacrifice for us and commit our life to following him by inviting him into our heart to obey him, after turning away from our sins, God forgives our sins and grants us eternal life. This is what the Bible means to believe in Jesus Christ, and how Christ's victory over death ensures our victory over death (refer to the two pictures at bottom of front page).

And when we commit our life to following Jesus Christ, he will say to us " *The Father has sent me. So now I am sending you*" (Jn. 20:21). Jesus wants his followers to tell people about salvation through his victorious death and coming back to life. It is our responsibility to tell people how to obtain God's forgiveness. His Father had sent him to the world in order to save people from the results of their sins, which are separation from God and eternal death. In the same way, Jesus now sends his followers to tell everybody about this. But we cannot do this mahi alone. We need God's help. We need him to guide us. We need his power and authority. So we need to depend on the Holy Spirit in our heart for the power to serve God and minister to people by bringing them the message of salvation. If they accept the message sincerely from the heart and truly turn away from their sins, God forgives them. But if they are not sincere when they ask for God's forgiveness because they may not really want to turn away from their sins, then their sins will not be forgiven and they will remain lost. As more and more people sincerely turn away from their sins and put trust in the risen and living Jesus Christ, his victory over sin is extended in their lives.

If you are not saved from the results of your sins which are separation from God and eternal death, what keeps you from turning away from your sins and putting trust in Jesus Christ? What holds you back? Whatever it is, it is not worth the eternal price you will pay for not coming to him.

In the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - amen.



The Reading from Acts: Acts 2:14a, 22-32

A reading from Acts chapter 2 beginning at verse 14a.

Peter Speaks to the Crowd

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the 11 apostles. In a loud voice he spoke to the crowd. ²² “Fellow Israelites, listen to this! Jesus of Nazareth was a man who had God’s approval. God did miracles, wonders and signs among you through Jesus. You yourselves know this. ²³ Long ago God planned that Jesus would be handed over to you. With the help of evil people, you put Jesus to death. You nailed him to the cross. ²⁴ ***But God raised him from the dead. He set him free from the suffering of death. It wasn’t possible for death to keep its hold on Jesus.*** ²⁵ David spoke about him. He said, “ ‘I know that the Lord is always with me. Because he is at my right hand, I will always be secure. ²⁶ So my heart is glad and joy is on my tongue. My whole body will be full of hope. ²⁷ You will not leave me in the place of the dead. You will not let your holy one rot away. ²⁸ You always show me the path that leads to life. You will fill me with joy when I am with you.’ (Psalm 16:8–11)

²⁹ “Fellow Israelites, you can be sure that King David died. He was buried. His tomb is still here today. ³⁰ But David was a prophet. He knew that God had made a promise to him. God had promised that he would make someone in David’s family line king after him. ³¹ David saw what was coming. So he spoke about the Messiah rising from the dead. He said that the Messiah would not be left in the place of the dead. His body wouldn’t rot in the ground. ³² God has raised this same Jesus back to life. We are all witnesses of this.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.



The Epistle Reading: 1 John 1:1-2:2

A reading from 1 John chapter 1 beginning at verse 1.

The Word of Life Became a Human Being

¹ Here is what we announce to everyone about the Word of life. The Word was already here from the beginning. We have heard him. We have seen him with our eyes. We have looked at him. Our hands have touched him. ² This life has appeared. We have seen him. We are witnesses about him. And we announce to you this same eternal life. He was already with the Father. He has appeared to us. ³ We announce to you what we have seen and heard. We do it so you can share life together with us. And we share life with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We are writing this to make our joy complete.

Walking in the Light

⁵ Here is the message we have heard from him and announce to you. God is light. There is no darkness in him at all. ⁶ Suppose we say that we share life with God but still walk in the darkness. Then we are lying. We are not living out the truth.

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⁷ But suppose we walk in the light, just as he is in the light. Then we share life with one another. And the blood of Jesus, his Son, makes us pure from all sin.

⁸ Suppose we claim we are without sin. Then we are fooling ourselves. The truth is not in us. ⁹ But God is faithful and fair. If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure.

¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar. His word is not in us.

¹ My dear children, I'm writing this to you so that you will not sin. But suppose someone does sin. Then we have a friend who speaks to the Father for us. He is Jesus Christ, the Blameless One. ² *He gave his life to pay for our sins. But he not only paid for our sins. He also paid for the sins of the whole world.*

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Thanks be to God.

The Gospel Reading: John 20:19-31

VICTORIOUS!

*The Holy Gospel according to John chapter 20 beginning at verse 19.
Praise and Glory to God.*

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were together. They had locked the doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, "May peace be with you!" ²⁰ Then he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were very happy when they saw the Lord.

²¹ *Again Jesus said, "May peace be with you! The Father has sent me. So now I am sending you."* ²² He then breathed on them. He said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

²⁴ Thomas was one of the 12 disciples. He was also called Didymus. He was not with the other disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So they told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "First I must see the nail marks in his hands. I must put my finger where the nails were. I must put my hand into his side. Only then will I believe."

²⁶ A week later, Jesus' disciples were in the house again. Thomas was with them. Even though the doors were locked, Jesus came in and stood among them. He said, "May peace be with you!" ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸ Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen me but still have believed."

The Purpose of John's Gospel

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in front of his disciples. They are not written down in this book. ³¹ But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. If you believe this, you will have life because you belong to him.

This is the Gospel of Christ. Praise to Christ, the Word.