

Easter Sunday

Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb

**If only for this life we have hoped in Christ,
we are to be pitied more than all people.**

I Corinthians 15:19

Old Orchard Church

March 31, 2013

The Festival of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Pin-point Ground of Hope

The following is a fictitious but plausible dramatization in which a Roman army officer named Claudius is telling his story to the followers of Jesus gathered in a small room one afternoon after the resurrection.

“After the crucifixion I helped lower the body and lay it on the ground. I waited as these women...prepared the body, and then I saw that it was placed in the tomb. I thought my day was over. I took four men to close the grave’s opening with a huge stone. When we turned to leave, word came that Pilate and the temple leaders were nervous that someone would steal the body. We were told to seal the tomb and stand guard all night.”

“There were several of us; so we built a fire and took turns. I was the first to sleep. When they woke me for my turn, it was an hour before dawn. The night was black—as black as any night I can remember. The moon was small, and the stars were hidden by the clouds.”

“I stood on one side. Another soldier stood on the other. He laughed about how easy it was to guard a tomb. Not often does a soldier get guard duty in a cemetery! Maybe we dozed off, but at first I thought I was dreaming. The ground began to shake—violently. It shook so hard I fell to the ground. Rocks fell from the walls behind us. Sparks flew from the fire. The soldiers asleep on the ground jumped up. I know they were standing because when the light hit them I could see their faces like it was broad daylight.”

“What light?” someone asked.

“You tell me,” Claudius demanded. “Where did that light come from? The rock rolled back, and the light roared out. A burst of fire with no heat. A gust of wind blew from the tomb, put out the fire, knocked us back, and the next thing I knew, the tomb was empty. I looked at the soldiers. They were stunned.”

from *Resurrection Morning*, by Max Lucado (1992)



Transition into Worship

“Joy Comes in the Morning”

From Psalm 30

Greg Roig (2013)

Helpless, Lord, I plead for mercy.
Do you hear my cry to save?
You who raise the soul from Sheol,
Restorer of those who fill the grave.
I know your anger is but a moment,
your favor, lifetimes of joy!

Joy comes in the morning; Joy comes in the morning.

Is there profit in my bloodshed?
And what benefit the grave?
Will dust testify you're faithful?
Can the ashes sing your praise?
Weeping rushes like dark waters
Pouring from the gloom of night.

Joy comes in the morning; Joy comes in the morning.

You turned my mourning into dancing
Only in rags, you clothed me in joy!
Give thanks to God on high!
Glory be! Glory to God on high, glory!

Proclamation of the Good News

Matthew 28:1-15

Response

Leader: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again! Alleluia!

People: **He is risen indeed! The one hope of the world. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Greeting of Peace

Greet one another in the name of Christ:

“The peace of the risen Lord be with you.”

“And also with you.”

Song of Proclamation

Litany of Deliverance and Hope

(from Isaiah 25, Psalm 16, & I Corinthians 15)

Leader: On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine — the best of meats and the finest of wines.

People: **On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations;**

L: he will swallow up death forever.

P: **The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces;**

L: he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth.

P: **The LORD has spoken.**

L: But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

P: **Therefore my heart is glad, and my tongue rejoices; my body also rests secure, because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.**

L: Listen to this mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

P: **For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.**

L: For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true:

P: **“DEATH HAS BEEN SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY!”
“O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY?
O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?”**

L: The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

P: **In that day they will say,
“Surely this is our God; we have waited for him, and he saved us.
This is the LORD, we have waited for him;
let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.”**

ALL: **Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again!
Alleluia! Praise the Lord.**

Song of Delight

“Easter”

(adapted by Hal Pendergrass from a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem)
(Sung to the tune of “See Amid the Winter’s Snow”)

1. Break the box and shed its scent;
Stopping not to count the cost;
What of gold or perfume spent;
Reck not what the poor have lost;
Upon Christ throw all away:
Know ye, this is Easter Day.

*Open wide your hearts that they
Take in joy this Easter Day.*

2. Build His church and deck His shrine;
Empty though it be on earth;
Ye have kept your choicest wine—
Let it flow for heavenly mirth;
Pluck the harp and breathe the horn:
Know ye not ‘tis Easter morn?

*Open wide your hearts that they
Take in joy this Easter Day*

3. Gather gladness from the skies;
Take a lesson from the ground;
Flowers open heav’nward eyes
And a Spring-time joy have found;
Earth throws Winter’s robes away,
Decks herself for Easter Day.

*Open wide your hearts that they
Take in joy this Easter Day.*

4. Beauty now for ashes wear,
Perfumes for the garb of woe
Chaplets for disheveled hair,
Dances for sad footsteps slow;
Jigs and reels are fit to bring
Praises to our heavenly King.

*Open wide your hearts that they
Take in joy this Easter Day.*

5. Seek God’s house in happy throng;
Crowded let His table be;
Mingle praises, prayer and song,
Singing to the Trinity.
Henceforth let your souls always
Make each morn an Easter Day.

*Open wide your hearts that they
Take in joy this Easter Day.*

Confession of Faith

(adapted from various orthodox creeds)

I believe that the man Jesus:

was crucified, was dead, and was buried;
that the third day he rose again from the dead;
that he ascended into heaven,
and sits on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.

From there in due time, he shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe that this same Jesus:

was promised beforehand in the sacred Scriptures;
was born son of Mary, of the seed of David according to the flesh;
was declared with power to be the Son of God
by his resurrection from the dead,
according to the Spirit of holiness.

I believe that this man Jesus:

is Christ, Israel's Messiah, our Lord and God.
And I confess that you Lord Jesus—
not despising the womb of a virgin, to become human—
overcame death,
and opened the kingdom of heaven to the faithful.

I believe that this same man Jesus,

the one Lord Christ, is both God and man.
I believe that he now rules the universe,
and will come again in glory
to judge both the living and the dead,
and that his kingdom will have no end.

O Lord: with all eagerness now,

I look for the resurrection of the dead—
for myself, and for all who love you—
and I look for everything promised in the world to come,
so that what is mortal in me
may be swallowed up by Life.
Lord I believe; help my unbelief.
Praise God in the highest! Amen.

Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.

Tithes and Offerings.....Song of Triumph

For what we have gives supreme delight and is reckoned the best, unless we have already known something more pleasant. But when later we find something better, it changes and spoils our taste for everything old.

Pagan philosopher, Titus Lucretius,
in On the Nature of the Universe
(c. 55 B.C.)

Behold, I am making all things new.
Revelation 21:5

“The ‘Big Bangs’ Theory of Hope”

Text: Matthew 27:45 -28:15

⁴⁵ From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. ⁴⁶ About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, [a] lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”). ^[b]

⁴⁷ When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling Elijah.”

⁴⁸ Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. ⁴⁹ The rest said, “Now leave him alone. Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

⁵⁰ And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

⁵¹ At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split ⁵² and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. ⁵³ They came out of the tombs after Jesus’ resurrection and ^[c] went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

⁵⁴ When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!”

⁵⁵ Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs.

⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, ^[d] and the mother of Zebedee’s sons.

The Burial of Jesus ⁵⁷ As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸ Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus’ body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to him.

⁵⁹ Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, ⁶⁰ and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb ⁶² The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. ⁶³ “Sir,” they said, “we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I will rise again.’” ⁶⁴ So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”

⁶⁵ “Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

Chapter 28 Jesus Has Risen After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

² There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

⁵ The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: ‘He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.’ Now I have told you.”

⁸ So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them. “Greetings,” he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

The Guards’ Report ¹¹ While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹² When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, ¹³ telling them, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.’” ¹⁴ If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” ¹⁵ So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Song of Confidence

“Christ Is Risen”

Matt Maher (2004)

Please see print copy for the words to this song.

Communion in the Body and Blood of Christ

For our guests this morning: We celebrate the Lord's Supper in a circle at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Song of Hope

“Lo He Comes With Clouds Descending”

Charles Wesley (1758)

Verse 1

Lo, he comes with clouds descending
Once for favored sinners slain
Thousand thousand saints attending
Swell the triumph of his train
Alleluia alleluia!
God appears on earth to reign.

Verse 2

Ev'ry eye shall now behold him
Robed in splendor's majesty
Those who set at naught and sold him
Pierced and nailed him to the tree
Deeply wailing deeply wailing
Shall the true Messiah see.

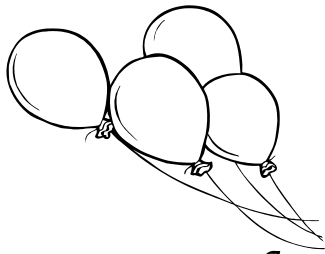
Verse 3

Now the Savior long expected
See in solemn pomp appear
All who have not him rejected
Now shall meet him in the air
Alleluia alleluia!
See the day of God appear.

Verse 4

Yea amen let all adore Thee
High on Thine eternal throne
Savior take the pow'r and glory
Claim the kingdom for Thine own
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thou shalt reign, and thou alone.

Blessing on the People of God



Jesus is Risen!

A warm welcome to those who are guests with us today. Please join us after worship in the front yard of the church as the children send off their balloons, a symbol and a message to our neighborhood—and to those who find the balloons—that Jesus truly rose and destroyed death!

If you would like to know more about Old Orchard Church, please call us at 314-962-3795. We'd be happy to talk with you.

Credits

Art

Cover [top]: Etched engraving by Mattaeus Merian (The Elder) in *Icones Biblicae* (1625-1630)

Music

Thanks to the choir and all the musicians for helping us to worship this morning and to our Music Director, Greg Roig, for bringing them together!

Songs

“Mighty Lord, Extend Your Kingdom” © 2008 Gregory D. Wilbur. Used with permission. CCLI License # 188763

“Christ Is Risen” by Matt Maher. © Thankyou Music, spiritandsong.com. Unknown (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing) (Admin. by EMI Christian Music Publishing). All rights reserved. Used by permission. CCLI #188763

“Lo He Comes With Clouds Descending” Charles Wesley | Henry Thomas Smart | John Cennick | Martin Madan Public Domain. All rights reserved. CCLI License # 188763

Where Shall We Find What We Are Looking For? (Food for Thought)

The “Shakers” were a sect founded in England in 1770 by Ann Lee, who claimed to receive direct, authoritative revelations from God. Two years before the Declaration of Independence was signed, nine of them emigrated to America. Eventually 18 Shaker communities grew up, from Maine to Kentucky. They lived by four basic teachings. True followers of God: 1) Must live communally; 2) Must live celibate lives and not marry; 3) Must confess their sins to one another often; and 4) Must separate themselves from the outside world. At present, there are fewer than a dozen Shakers left in the world.

Shakers are known and famous for their craftsmanship, especially for their beautiful furniture, marked by a graceful and simple style. Here is the tail end of one PCA pastor’s reflection on what was wrong with the Shakers’ vision of how earth relates to the Kingdom of Heaven, and God to us, and the present to the future.

* * *

See the print copy for a portion of the original article. by C. R. Wiley in “Stirred by Shakers” (2011)

Location of the article in Touchstone:

<http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=24-04-017-v>