



Church of Perth Intercessory Team

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." 2 CHRONICLES 7:14

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HEART TO HEART

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THE DAY DEATH DIED

Not long after the 1917 revolution in Russia when the Communists seized power the local Communist leader was sent to a Russian village to impress the virtues of Communism on the people and to take their minds away from the Christian faith which Karl Marx called 'the opiate of the people'. After the Communist had harangued them for a long time he said to the local pastor rather contemptuously: "I will give you five minutes to reply." To which the pastor replied, "I do not need five minutes, only five seconds." He rose to the platform and gave the traditional Easter greeting of his country: "**The Lord is risen!**" And as one man the villagers thundered back: "**He is risen indeed!**" Nevertheless, the great question in the minds of many people today is: "If a man dies shall he live again?" We know that the first part of the sentence is fulfilled every day. But shall man live again? Some believe that we humans are just bone, flesh and blood; that when we die it is merely a matter of ashes to ashes and dust to dust. And because they do not believe in life after death life has no meaning – all sound and fury, signifying nothing. Consequently many are filled with despair and disillusionment. How different from Jesus Christ who said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Some say that Jesus did not actually die, that He only fainted. Yet the soldiers were certain He was dead and there was no need to break His legs to hasten death. It was the enemies, not the friends of Jesus, who announced His death and made certain of it by piercing His side with a spear. His body was wrapped in fine linen and placed in a tomb, which was sealed by a large stone and guarded by Roman soldiers. Nevertheless, on the third day the tomb was empty. In the words of Peter Marshall, "The grave clothes lay like the shrivelled, cracked shell of a cocoon, left behind when the moth has emerged and hoisted her bright sails in the sunshine." Subsequently Jesus made thirteen separate appearances after His Resurrection. Unlike hallucinations, which can continue to deceive, these appearances ceased after His Ascension. With great frequency the Bible affirms the bodily Resurrection of Christ. Perhaps the most direct reference is in Acts 1:3, "To whom He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days." The Apostle Paul also spells out in detail the witnesses of the risen Christ: "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than 500 of the brothers at the same time" (1 Cor. 15: 3-6). The Resurrection of Jesus was an event that could be examined by the physical senses, showing it was more than a figment of the imagination. It involved the eyes for His disciples saw Him in various situations. It involved the ears for He conversed with them. It involved touch as Thomas placed his finger in His hands and side. Furthermore, they walked and talked and ate with Him.

We may not be able to examine all the evidence in a laboratory and prove it, but if we accept any fact of history we must accept that Jesus rose from the dead. His Resurrection, in fact, was not just an extension of His earthly life but one of the links in a chain of redemptive acts from eternity to eternity, which include the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Ascension and the Return. So important is the Resurrection that if it is rejected the whole of Christianity collapses. As the Apostle Paul said, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain." If Christ has not risen we can close all our churches, recall all missionaries to their homelands, burn all Bibles and do whatever we like with our lives. For what meaning would life have? We would have to join the atheists in their despair and see death as the final victor. Let us consider the testimony of the Resurrection and how it has affected history. When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane the apostles fled for fear of their lives then hid themselves with doors locked for fear of the Jews. Yet after the Holy

Spirit fell upon them at Pentecost they were afraid of no one, suffering whipping, imprisonment, persecution, stoning and death for their risen Lord as they changed the world. Throughout the two millennia that have followed, men and women in every land have experienced the same power in their lives; have enjoyed the same peace and inner security; and known the same victory. Moreover, not only have individuals been completely changed by the Risen Lord but nations and even civilizations. Our Western way of life would, in all probability, have been much similar to that of the pagan East had Christianity not been taken to that part of the world.

That brings us down to the present day. We now live in an age of materialism and unbelief when Easter means holidays, Easter eggs and bunnies and the death and resurrection of the Man from Galilee so long ago means nothing to most people. Yet, when He rose from the dead He was alive. That means He will never die. He has been alive throughout the last twenty centuries; He is alive now and shall be forevermore. Whether the world accepts the fact or not, **CHRIST IS ALIVE!** And the very same Spirit, which caused the early disciples to turn the world upside down, is still available today. The comradeship of the Risen Christ is a reality that can be yours through the infilling of His Holy Spirit. It can truly be said that bringing the resurrected Christ into our lives, both individually and nationally, is the only hope we have for making a better world. The worse thing in the world is not disease but to be deceived as to whom GOD is. **This is the message of Easter.**

OUR PRAYER

Our loving Father, Almighty God of Israel, God of Creation, Lord of Life, Transmitter of Light, Prince of Peace, King of Glory, Royal Bridegroom, Author and Finisher of our faith, we humbly come in the power of the omnipotent Holy Spirit to join the hosts of heaven to proclaim with praises, worship and thanksgiving the glory of the risen LORD JESUS CHRIST forever enthroned in heaven. We thank You that we who are born of the Spirit of God are alive in CHRIST JESUS, the Executor of God's will 2000 years ago, and recognise that the Kingdom of God is among us in this 'Great Southland of the Holy Spirit'. Blessed Holy Spirit, help us to magnify Your Word and glorify the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST. Merciful Father, we gratefully thank You for Your unique gift of salvation by sending Your only begotten Son to die on the cross of Calvary, who was resurrected from the dead and is now seated at Your right hand, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion and every title that can be given not only in the present age but also in the age to come.

Sovereign Lord, help us to surrender our all to You, the Rock of Ages, Bread of Life, Shield and Refuge, mighty Fortress and dynamic Captain. Blessed LORD JESUS, thank You for renewing our minds in Your Word and through Your Holy Spirit in us to destroy the works of the devil through Your name and in the wonder-working power of Your blood shed at Calvary. LORD, we are grateful You died our death that we might receive Your life, that You were made sin with our sinfulness that we might be made righteous with Your righteousness. You were punished that we might share Your abundance in divine love, joy, peace, wisdom, discernment, faith and all that pertains to life and godliness. Blessed Holy Spirit, help the leaders and citizens of this nation to repent and surrender their wills to the obedience of Christ and humbly yield themselves to You in the application of God's Word for their daily decisions and choices. For Your Word reminds us that as ambassadors of the Most High God, we are, to serve You by preaching Your Gospel of Life and Peace to schools, tertiary institutions, migrants, refugees and families all over this 'Great Southland of the Holy Spirit'.

Thank You, Lord, that throughout the New Covenant we are taught not to fasten our eyes on the grave, but on the coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST with great expectation, believing that "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him". Sovereign Lord, reign in this 'Great Southland of the Holy Spirit' as our LORD and coming King of Glory. Captivate the hearts and minds of us all through the cleansing power of Your Living Word and omnipotent Spirit so we may gain a heavenly perspective to help establish Your Kingdom in Australia, for all Your blessings are conditional upon obeying Your Word. Righteous Lord, we fervently pray that this nation will repent and learn to love the Lord God Almighty and know that the Spirit of truth banishes the deceptions of Satan and liberates our families, cities and nation through Your grace and sovereign Will. Maranatha, come quickly, LORD JESUS, come in all Your glory. We ask all this in Jesus' wonderful name Amen

C O P I I. Led by our Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit to glorify the Fatherhood of God with the Brotherhood of Man, in love and faithfulness to bring glory to our Eternal Father in Jesus' Name Amen and Glory

[REJOICE, UNITE, SHARE & LOVE ONE ANOTHER IN WORD & DEED TO GLORIFY OUR COMING KING JESUS]