

CHRISTIAN LIFE NOTES

Oregon District

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Easter Message

*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.*
Matthew 28:5-6

Have you heard the expression, "He took it to the grave"? It means that when someone dies, there are things that only that person knew would be lost forever. For example, when my first husband died, he took the combination of his combination lock to the grave. In that case, a hack saw solved what could have been a problem. But each of us has information that only we know and will be lost at our death.

We do tend to share important facts with our family, our attorney, perhaps even our pastor. That is the value of writing down information which needs to be transferred. Or the value of talking with others to share our thoughts and/or feelings.

What made me think of this "taking it to the grave" expression was a devotion which pointed out that when Jesus died, whatever people thought he took to the grave, didn't stay there. He didn't stay in the grave, but rose again as Christians celebrate at Easter and actually at every worship service. We have the hope (assurance) of our resurrection because of Jesus' resurrection. As Paul teaches about the resurrection of the dead in 1 Corinthians 15:13-14, 20:

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain...If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Christ made many appearances after his resurrection.

- First to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18)
- Mary the mother of James along with Salome & Joanna (Mt. 26:1-10; Mk 16:1-8; Lu. 24:1-12)
- Simon Peter, also called Cephas (Lu 24:34)
- Two disciples on the way to Emmaus (Lu 24:13-35)
- Close disciples without Thomas (Lu. 24:36-49)
- All 11 remaining disciples from the original 12 (Mt. 28:16-17; Lu 24:50-53; Jn 20:24-29; Acts :3-12)

- 7 disciples fishing at the Sea of Galilee (Jn 21:1-14)
- More than 500 at once (1 Co. 15:6)
- James the Lord's brother (1 Co. 15:7)
- Stephen at his martyrdom (Acts 7:55-56)
- Paul on his way to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6; 1 Co. 15:8)
- John in exile on the island of Patmos (Rev. 1:10-19)

It is for our sin that Jesus went to the cross and to the grave, but he triumphed over our sin which would keep us eternally from the presence of God as he rose victorious from that grave on the third day.

During the 7 weeks or 49 days of Lent, we only count the 40 days of Lent because

Sundays aren't included in the count. Each Sunday is an Easter celebration. And then we have the big celebration worship on Easter Sunday which is the culmination of the Passion week. (Easter doesn't mean much if we don't recognize Good Friday as the day our sin was atoned for.)

What Easter will look like for us this year is a bit uncertain at this point. Will we be allowed to gather together in our sanctuary again? Or will we still be instructed to remain socially distant or isolated in place? Will we be able to sing with members of the congregation those wonderful Easter hymns, or will we be watching and listening to a service on U-Tube?



Wherever we are, Christ is going to be with us, just as he is with us each and every day.

One result of the social distancing which is keeping us mostly at home, I have seen more scripture being shared than ever before. Between emails, Facebook posts and other communication methods, people are encouraging one another with God's words. It is in times of feeling like our circumstances are out of our control that we are comforted by the fact that nothing is beyond God's knowledge or his control. Even death has no power to keep Christ or us in the grave.

1 Corinthians 15:54-57:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

"O death, where is your victory?"

O death, where is your sting?"

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

The Christian Life Committee,

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He is
not here,
He has
Risen!
Luke 24:6

