

Readings for April 21, 2019

Easter Sunday

9:30 AM

Isaiah 65:17-25 Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Acts 10:34-43 Luke 24:1-12

10:45 AM

Isaiah 65:17-25 Luke 24:1-12



Readings for April 28, 2019

Second Sunday of Easter

"The Great Mystery of Faith...The Holy Spirit"

9:30 AM

Acts 5:27-32 Psalm 150
Revelation 1:4-8 John 20:19-31

10:45 AM

Psalm 150 John 20:19-31

Daily Walk for the week of April 22, 2019

"Easter Sunday" devotions

Written by Vernon Mukhlall

Mon April 22 Christ, Our Chief Cornerstone

"The stone which the builders rejected has become the head stone of the corner." Psalm 118: 22. The cornerstone is one of the largest, most solid, and carefully constructed of any stone in the building. It is chosen for firmness, strength and durability. This upholds and maintains the building without which the whole structure will crumble and fall . This may be prepared to contain necessary information that may be transmitted to future generations. Jesus refers to this verse when he speaks of being rejected by his own people (Luke 20:17). The Jewish leaders (who are the builders) and the heathen world have rejected Jesus' claim as the Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior of the world. He was a stumbling block to one and foolishness to the other (1 Corinthians 1:18). However, Christ has become the one true and only foundation of the church who supports us individually and the church collectively. Even though He is rejected, He has become the Head of the Church and is now elevated to the right hand of God. The cross, the symbol of Jesus' rejection has become the symbol of our Salvation . We are the building blocks and our lives are standing firmly on Jesus Christ, our Chief Cornerstone, who holds together the whole structure of the Church, which is referred to as His body. Prayer: Lord God, we rejoice in this day because you made it. You answer when we call, and you build us into your people on Jesus Christ, our Chief Cornerstone. Give us joy in our daily endeavors so we may be glad in all you provide. Amen.

Tue April 23 Jesus' Victory Over The Dragon

"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony;" Revelations 12: 10 – 11(a). Satan, (aka: the dragon, the devil, the serpent of old – Rev 12: 9) was defeated in heaven and was cast down to earth . For forty days he tempted Jesus in the wilderness and was defeated. As Jesus hung on the cross and later

laid in the tomb, Satan thought that he had Jesus cornered. But on the first Easter Sunday Satan was again defeated. The critical blow to Satan came when Jesus, the Lamb Of God, shed His blood on the cross and triumphantly raised from the dead on the third day, gaining the victory over sin , Satan and death. Three strikes to Satan, the dragon, sent him in a frenzy behaving like a roaring lion, trying to devour the believers (1 Peter 5:8). We are in a battle with the dragon . We cannot win the battle with swords, bullets, or bombs, because this is a spiritual battle. We cannot win it on our own strength. As Paul says we have to put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:11) and fight with the invincible weapons which are Salvation through Christ and the Word of God. The dragon is very cunning and he will seek different ways, different tricks to hinder our effectiveness for the Kingdom of God. In His temptation in the wilderness , Jesus defeated Satan by using the word of God. We need to do the same. Prayer: Almighty God, in the resurrection of Christ , you defeated the devil and all his empty promises. We renounce the deceits of this world and long to grasp your vision of a new kingdom of peace. Help us to step into your promise of life everlasting. Amen.

"The Great Mystery of Faith: The Holy Spirit"

Written by Mary Anderson

Wednesday, April 24th Obey God Over Human Authority

"But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.'" Acts 5:29-32. The apostles had been given the Holy Spirit's power and because they were teaching and healing the people, they had been put in a public prison by the high priests. An angel of the Lord set them free and they were found teaching again in the temple against strict orders. The disciples had witnessed Jesus' death and resurrection and had repeatedly accused the Jewish leaders of being responsible for his death. But with the Holy Spirit guiding them and within them, they shared the repentance and forgiveness Christ gave to all who believed. They put God's authority before that of the Jewish

high priests. We too want to share this good news with everyone that by Jesus' sacrifice and God's grace we are saved if we only believe, obey and follow him. We are blessed to live in a country where we can share our beliefs freely. What a gift we have been given. With the Holy Spirit's strength and guidance we can be all God wants us to be. **Prayer:** Almighty God, you have enriched your church with the stories of the acts of the apostles. Give us grace to believe firmly in the good news of salvation and walk daily in your word, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Thursday, April 25th Praise God For All He Has Done

"Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament. Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness!" Psalm 150:1-2. This hymn of praise closes the book of Psalms. And what better way to show our love for God and his gifts of his Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit than to sing praises to the Lord. These first two verses tell us where and why to praise the Lord—in his church or sanctuary and in the vast expanse of our sky and the heavens. This reminds me of when we sing, "Lord I lift your name on high" and our arms reach to the heavens in praise. And secondly we are to praise him for all his deeds and greatness. I try to focus on all God has given me and done for me and my family and others. But it is so easy to fall into the habit of complaining about what we don't have or the difficulties we have with our aging bodies and minds (at least in my case)! God is so good, sacrificing his son to die on the cross so our sins are wiped away. He then raised him from the dead and sent the Holy Spirit to guide them. We too have been given that gift of the Holy Spirit. Let us show our love and belief in his goodness by praising him in all we do and say. **Prayer:** Lord God, you give us a fresh and new start every morning. Let our days be filled with joy and praise for all we have been given. Let the light of your Holy Spirit shine through us so others may see your glory. Amen

Friday, April 26th Praise God With Loud Sounds

"Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe! Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud dashing cymbals! Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Psalm 150:3-6. These last verses of Psalm 150 bring to mind today this quote from Shakespeare, "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways..." They give us examples of ways we might praise God and look at all the exclamation points!! When I am texting back and forth with a family member or friend, I am conscious of all the times I want to put an exclamation point in to be sure my point is clear and I try to limit them. But when we are praising God for all he has done for us, we want to make sure the significance is recognized by all and what better way than to make a lot of noise to be sure we are heard—loud trumpet or other instrument, tambourine or dance (liturgical dance is a wonderful way to show our praises). Clanging cymbals are mentioned twice and we know how majestic that sound can be as it really grabs our attention! May all we do and say be a praise to God, complimenting others to lift them up rather than criticizing which brings us all down. Praise God for all He has done! **Prayer:**

God of new creation, you are bending the world to resurrection, and we are witnesses to your mighty acts. Surprise us in our daily labor with the simple beauty of your creation so we might sing of your goodness with every breath. Amen

Saturday, April 27th Jesus' Peace Among Our Fears

"When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" John 20:19-22. After Jesus' death and resurrection, the disciples were hiding out behind locked doors. They were in fear of those who had put Jesus to death on the cross. But Jesus came through that shut door and appeared among them. This was evidence of the truth he claimed, that he is the gate to salvation and abundant life. He offers them peace and gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit. Jesus is here for us today also, offering his peace and calming our fears. And he has given us the Holy Spirit to guide us. When I am afraid, I know I can call on God the three in One to calm my fears and give me the strength I need to fight my battles. He will never leave us alone. **Prayer:** O God of life, you reach out to us amid our fears with the wounded hands of your risen Son. By your Spirit's breath revive our faith in your mercy, and strengthen us to be the body of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Sunday, April 28th Just Believe

"But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came...A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt, but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God.' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'" John 20:24, 26-29. This story of doubting Thomas is a familiar one and is only found in John's gospel. Thomas wasn't with the disciples the first time and he had a hard time believing Jesus was really alive again. How often do we need proof of something before we want to believe it? Jesus understood that with Thomas and had him touch his sides and hands where the nails had been. He also went on to praise those who haven't seen Him and still have come to believe, you and I and our ancestors before us. The Gospel was written to bring others to faith and to help believers to remain faithful. May we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives so others will come to know Jesus and our beliefs with be strengthened as we study his Word. **Prayer:** Lord Jesus, you lived a life in service to others, dying on the cross so our sins are forgiven. Send us your peace and guide us with the Holy Spirit so we may know and not doubt that you are the Living Lord. Amen