

Remember Jesus Christ: “He Has Risen!”

Do you remember what the angels said to the terrified women at Jesus’ empty grave that first Easter morning? ***“Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has been raised! Remember how he told you while he was still living in Galilee that the Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again!” Then they remembered his words.*** (Luke 24:5-8 EHV¹)

Sometimes our memories are dead set against us. Years ago a woman was bragging how she could remember nearly everything. Her husband finally answered, “Yes, but 90% you should forget.” To her credit, she replied, “You’re right.” If only we could forget the guilt, the doubt, the fear of death and all the hurt we’ve caused and felt along the way! God’s memory gift this day comes to us in the last letter of an old apostle Paul to middle aged Pastor Timothy. Since his youth Timothy had a problem. We know it well. Timothy was timid about his faith. Timothy feared the present and future; Paul the past. But...

“Remember Jesus....” Here is boldness against guilt. Paul could remember how violently he had persecuted the Name of Jesus and all His followers. But remember the angel told stepfather Joseph: ***“Give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”*** (Matthew 1:21 NIV84) Loving Jesus appeared to Paul to prove that He had risen from the dead. He forgave Paul and called him to be missionary to us Gentiles so we too could be bold against guilt. Jesus died to save us from our sins – all of them!

“Remember Jesus Christ....” for boldness against doubt. ***Christ*** means “the Anointed One,” promised by God through the prophets down through the ages. In His Baptism Jesus the ***Christ*** was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power. With power over death itself, the Lord’s ***Christ*** promises: ***“Because I live, you too shall live.”*** (John 14:_) As Paul wrote another congregation: ***“Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*** (1 Corinthians 15:57 NIV84) Good memory! ***Christ*** powerful to save!

“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead....” Here is boldness against death itself. Paul wrote to his friends in Philippi: ***“Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”*** (Philippians 3:13f NIV84) As Paul faced death in prison, his boldness was all centered in ***Christ, raised from the dead....”*** Like Paul, we too were baptized into the death of Christ to be raised to new life in him. Forgetful fear must be gone....Bold remembrance takes its place as we, ***“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead....”***

All the world’s religions demand: “Do! They tell everyone that they can work their own way into God’s favor by the things they do. But they forget the Bible clearly says, ***“No one will be declared righteous in [God’s] sight by works of the law, for through the law we become aware of sin.”*** (Romans 3:20 EHV) Easter shouts boldly for us to remember this in Christ. Our Christian faith shouts: all is, “Done!”

All the world’s religions have a venerated leader who died, was buried, and now their followers remember only dust and ashes. Only the Christian faith has an empty tomb. Only one Man ever died, then conquered death by rising again. Only one faith encourages the critics to disprove it. For 2,000 years, all they have needed to do is find the body. Then Paul’s warning would come true: ***“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith....And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.”*** (1 Corinthians 15:14, 17 NIV84) But, ***He Has Risen!***

“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David....” Boldness against fear. Here my inner skeptic must stop and listen. ***David*** was a king-man-sinner who ruled in Jerusalem 1000 years

¹ EHV ~ Evangelical Heritage Version (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2017. NPH: 800-662-6022; also Amazon-Kindle.

before Christ. When his power became his idol, **David** committed adultery and tried to cover it up with murder. God called **David** to repentance – sorrow over sin and faith in forgiveness – based on the coming Christ. God promised that **David** would have a Descendant who would rule forever. He would be in the grave, but not decay. He would enjoy eternal pleasures in God’s heaven. (Psalm 16:9-11) Great David’s greater Son descended through both the legal line of stepfather Joseph (Matthew’s genealogy) and blood line of the Virgin Mary (Luke’s genealogy). Both Solomon and Nathan were sons of David and Bathsheba. All this is the historical record. Yet Jesus’ own disciples forgot His words. His own Jewish people punished people to forget. The Gentile Romans mustered their military might to keep that body forgotten in the grave! But for 40 days Jesus Christ the crucified and risen **Seed** of David kept appearing to eyewitnesses like the apostles, the women, Paul and even 500 Christians at once. All of them were willing to die rather than deny what they saw. So many simple proofs standing tall and true all these centuries! **Christ Has Risen!**

“What God had foretold about the coming Seed had to be fulfilled in Jesus of the New Testament if He was indeed the Messiah, the Christ. He had to come from the descendants of [Noah’s son] Shem. He did. He had to come from the descendants of Abraham. He did. He had to come from the tribe of Judah. He did. He had to come from the family of David. He did. He had to have a virgin mother. He did. He had to have His birthplace in Bethlehem. He did. He had to have both a human and divine nature. He did. He had to spend most of His ministry in Galilee. He did. He had to live and die according to His human nature as a perfect human sacrifice. He had to live and die as God’s divine Seed that through death He might be the Tree of Life for all and bear much fruit – the fruit being the sum total of all who believe in Him. All that He did.”²

“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.” Boldness – to suffer. Such Good News belongs to all who believe! This *gospel* was all the reason Paul needed to tell Timothy, **“I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline. So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.”** (2 Timothy 1:3–12 NIV84) Your immortal soul is safe because **He Has Risen!**

Forget everything else. In the end nothing else will matter. **“Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.”** This Good News belongs to all who trust God to never lie and only tell the truth. This Easter memory brings boldness to witness with unshakeable faith. Around 1930, Stalin was attempting to hammer Ukraine under the Soviet Union sickle. A communist leader named Bukharin was sent from Moscow to Kiev. His mission was to reeducate the populace. A huge audience was gathered to listen to the famous speaker. His subject: atheism. Imagine his verbal barrage, the heavy artillery against everything godly, everything Christian, communist atheism’s best arguments, worst ridicule. After an hour Bukharin was sure all faith lay shattered, smoldering in ashes. “Are there any questions?” he demanded. One lone man got up and asked to speak. He mounted the platform and stood close to the communist, then quietly scanned the silent crowd. Finally he shouted the ancient Orthodox greeting: *Christos anestay!* The vast assembly aroise as one man and thundered: *Alethos anestay!* You know that thunder of sanctified Easter memory: **Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!** Alleluia! Amen.

² Kauffeld, Rev. Eugene. *Eleven Divine Portraits of Jesus, the Messiah....* © 2006, pp. 60f: www.booksoftheway.com
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