**The Power and the Glory of Easter**

**(John 3:16-18)**

***Senior Pastor Dr Daniel Ho***

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. (John 3:16-18)

Many times in our life, we struggle with certain issues; one of them is the issue of death. Easter provides a powerful platform to talk about death. Death is not something that humans like to talk about, and we weave all kinds of things around it, as to mask up death. The reality is, death is real and something everyone has to encounter. The moment a child is born, he is destined to die. It is the lot of every human being on earth, something that no one can run away from, no matter what our background is.

We don’t like to talk about death because:

1. **It is an unknown**

Do you know what happens when you die? It is normally impossible to bring someone dead back to life.

1. **It is a mystery**

It is a mystery in every culture, and we concoct all kinds of rituals around death so as to appease the dead.

1. **It is fearsome**

Death is frightening, because we don’t know what is happening in a process like this.

We can’t talk about life or living properly until and unless we talk about death. You and I as Christians must face this issue head-on. To be able to live well, we must know how to die well.

# Why is it we all have to die?

What is the reason that all of us have to die? Every religion has no answer to it. Only the Christian faith has an answer for this.

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

We have to die because of sin. We are all sinners saved by grace. We have to die because we are sinners.

…for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)

# Why is it we all don’t want to die?

It is a normal human response that we want to live as long as possible, and as much possible.

In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, “This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover.” Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord,“Remember, Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly. (2 Kings 20:1-3)

Hezekiah was actually a very good king. Hezekiah cried bitterly because he wanted to live as long as possible. This is actually a normal human response.

“Go back and tell Hezekiah, the ruler of my people, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the Lord. I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.’” (2 Kings 20:5, 6)

It is wonderful and amazing that God responded to his cry. God in His mercy and grace intervened.

Life is not about how long we live. We want to live long, but it is also important to live well. A long life is not an indication of a life well-lived. Life is not about how long we live, but how well we live and how much we are a blessing to others.

# How can we die well?

Only in the Christian faith we can talk about victory over death. Only in the Christian faith that there is a hope and a future. That is why a Christian is not fearful about death. In Jesus we have victory, assurance and peace. In the Christian faith, we cannot talk about how to live well without talking about how to die well.

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25, 26)

Jesus said He is both life and resurrection. He died, and three days later, He rose again. He is living, He defeated death. If you are born once (physical birth), you will die twice (physical death and spiritual death) but if you are born twice (physical birth and spiritual birth), you only die once (only a physical death).

When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:54-57)

Jesus came, He died and rose again, and He defeated death. The pain and sting of death has been removed. When a loved one dies, we experience pain, which is natural, because a loved one has been separated from us physically forever. But it is not one where we mourn and grief without hope and a future.

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (Hebrews 2:14. 15)

Jesus came and freed us from the fear of death.

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (John 8:36)

That is why we can live in a wonderful manner.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (John 10:10)

That is why we celebrate Easter, the victory Jesus has over death, so that the whole world can have a hope and a future. People can be free from the clutches of death. That is a blessing that we as the people of God have. This is the reason why we can talk about death and without fear whatsoever, that we can deal with it and help people overcome it with Jesus. Jesus has come to deliver us all, so that in Him and through Him, we can have the victory. In Jesus, we can look forward to a better day, a better outcome, whereby we walk in victory and assurance, that we shall be with Him forever and ever.

That is why we must share Jesus with as many people as possible, because we want to give everyone, the eternal blessing of being with God forever and ever, so that they can look death in the face and have no fear whatsoever.





*Sermon summary contributed by May Ng*

*Prayer Points by Abbey Thangiah*



SERMON: Easter 2016: The Power and the Glory of Easter

**Pray:**

* We will not live in fear of death but be brave to face the reality that we will die someday.
* We will learn to live a fulfilling life.
* We will not equate the quality of life with the length of living.
* Like Jesus, we will learn to live for others and serve the community.
* Praise God that we are born again because we believe in Jesus Christ.
* That we have joy as we know that we meet our loved ones in heaven.

***Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (Hebrews 2:14&15)***

**MINISTRIES & EVENTS: Alpha Classes**

**Alpha 2016.**

**Pray:**

* That people who started Alpha will stay on to the very end.
* Covering of the organizing team, leaders and helpers.
* People will look forward to the weekend away.
* Nicky Gumble will continue to refresh the hearts of the helpers even though they have heard him many times.

***He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. (Mark 16:5)***

MALAYSIA MY NATION: Bullying in schools

***KLANG: Cowed into terror by the bullying from five boys, a Year Two pupil snipped the tip of his own tongue with a pair of scissors to submit to their demands. He was bullied into doing the act by the group of nine-year-old boys in a classroom at a school in Bukit Tinggi here on Thursday, said South Klang OCPD Asst Comm Azman Abdul Razak. (Thestar.com.my).***

**Pray:**

* Schools will take bullying seriously.
* Students in schools and colleges will not be succumbed under peer pressure to do foolish things, especially injuring themselves and steering away from faith.
* Malaysian students will not live in fear but stand fast to the promises of God and live life boldly.
* We Christians will take the hope that we have in God and use it in defence and as a testimony to others.

***Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.” (Joshua1:9)***

* **A TRANSFORMED WORLD: Blizzards at New York and Washington**

***Russia - After circling a southern Russian airport for more than two hours because of high ground-level winds and poor visibility, a passenger jet from the United Arab Emirates crashed during a landing attempt, killing all 62 people aboard. The FlyDubai Boeing 737 took off from Dubai and was scheduled to land at the Rostov-on-Don airport at 1:20 a.m. Saturday (6:20 p.m. ET Friday), Russian Emergencies Minister Vladimir Puchkov said. (CNN)***

**Pray:**

* People won’t live in fear despite the series of plane crashes.
* Pre-flight security measures will increase not only for the safety of the passengers but also for the safety of ground staff and maintenance team as well.
* People will learn to put their hope on God and not rely on circumstances.
* People will continue to empathize with the victims and families.
* The church will rise to provide emotional support to the victims.

***Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. (Psalm 23:4)***