

April 19, 2009

Encounter with the Risen Lord

(Job 19:1-29, Acts 9:1-9, Luke 24:13-35)

We know that all things were created by God and for God (Col 1:18). That means all things at all times, both in O.T times and N.T times and now were created by Jesus Christ who is the same yesterday, today and forever. Therefore all the Old Testament saints also know Jesus Christ because they know the Father. For those who know God, they know Him not only as their Creator, but also as their redeemer and sustainer and that faith gives them living hope even though they are in circumstances which they can not explain like Job in today's Old Testament lesson.

The Bible is the record of the lives of those people who know the true God and how that knowledge affected their lives. Paul in today's lesson is one example. Jesus Christ has come into this world as the incarnation of God's word that everyone may know the true God (I John 5:20). God the Father has revealed to humanity through God the Son. By accepting the son of God only one can know the true God. Jesus when he was in the world showed Himself as God by the miracles he did and taught how He and the Father are one. While living on earth He taught His disciples that He would be crucified and would rise again on the third day. Resurrection is final authentic proof that He is God, because by it he has proved His mighty power over death. But the disciples were slow to understand the unbelievable fact of Resurrection. Therefore, Jesus after He rose from the dead, showed Himself first to His chosen apostles, and later to 500 brethren and finally He appeared to Paul in today's epistle lesson (I Cor 15:4-8).

In today's Gospel lesson we find how the Lord appeared to the two on the road to Emmaus and had opened their eyes to see the fact of Resurrection and through it His deity. All those who encountered the risen Lord have become the witnesses of this fact and sacrificed their lives to make the world know it.

Now we can see the risen Lord only if we ask Him to open our eyes and give His Holy Spirit. No body who encountered the risen Lord ever remained the same but had become living witnesses for that fact. **Have you had an encounter with the risen Lord?** That is the point of today's message. The fact that we are not witnessing for the

Lord shows that we haven't met the risen Lord. Otherwise no body will keep quiet.

The Old Testament lesson: Job 19:1-29
Job the witness of Lord's Resurrection in the O.T

Our God is immutable. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. His dealing with the people will also never change. He is ever loving, merciful, and compassionate. Job was righteous, trusted and loved God so much that His faith in God in turn earned God's faith in him (Job) to send him into the battle of suffering to fight the devil and defeat him. Job didn't fail God's trust and confidence in him to defeat the devil. Faced with intense afflictions from all sides his faith has gone through the valley of death of belief in God, but emerged Victorious shouting victory, "I know that my redeemer lives and He shall stand at last on earth." Job didn't know anything about why this suffering had come to him but he knew that one day in his flesh He would see for himself God. He confidently said that his eyes would behold and not other. That is the power of faith in God which gives the hope in resurrection that can say my God is not dead, He is alive and for that I am the witness.

All though Job struggled with the idea that God was presently against him he firmly believed that in the end God would be on his side. This belief was so strong that Job became one of the first to talk about the resurrection of the body, which was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Even though he had no evidence for this he had the hope of resurrection. As he hoped He saw God because God revealed himself to Him and rewarded him for his faithfulness.

In the same way God has been choosing people to be in his army to fight the devil. After choosing them He trained them by teaching them and preparing them for the cosmic battles with devil by appearing to them as and when their faith was faltering. This is today's Gospel lesson.

The Gospel lesson: Luke 24:13-39
Jesus the Victorious general preparing His army

Jesus spent his life time in choosing twelve as his commanders to fight the devil teaching and training them by showing himself as their Messiah and God whom they were anticipating. He showed them

the weapons to defeat the devil were His word and the cross by which he disarmed principalities and powers and triumphed over them (Col 2:15). He taught them personally in the way he taught the two on the road to Emmaus, till they understood about how Christ ought to suffer and die on the cross and enter into His glory through resurrection, by expounding to them all in the scriptures beginning at Moses, Psalms and all the Prophets the things concerning Himself, thus setting their hearts on fire. In this way he transformed simple men into mighty warriors of the cross to conquer the world by the power of His word and His spirit. Paul in today's epistle lesson was chosen for the same mission and he became a great model warrior to fight the enemy in the battle field of suffering to follow for the people who are later recruited into this army.

The Epistle lesson: Acts 9:1-9
Paul the great commander in the very image of Jesus

We all know how Saul before he became Paul was persecuting the church and was fighting against the Lord and His church. Then there came a day in his life, when the risen Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:17). From that day onwards he was totally transformed in every way. Paul the persecutor of the church had become the pioneer of missions. It did not happen overnight. Till that time Paul was doing what ever he thought was right. After he met Jesus he started asking, "Lord, What do you want me to do?" Till that time Paul was doing his will, but after he met Jesus he started doing God's will.

God's purpose for Paul was unfolded only as he was obeying the voice of the Lord which on the road to Damascus was to get up, go into the City and wait for further orders. In the same way when we accept Jesus Christ as our savior and Lord and then begin to find His good pleasing and perfect will by meditating and studying His word our inner eyes will be opened gradually and God's over all purpose for our lives will be unfolded. Having met the risen Lord 25 years ago I now have a mission statement for my life. (Please read my testimony available in this website

<http://www.remarkableladies.com/womensstudy.html>
Under "Testimonials".

Later giving testimony of this experience on the road to Damascus before King Agrippa, Paul said that He was not disobedient to the heavenly vision and became a soldier for Christ in winning the world for him.

The same Jesus who has encountered Paul on the road to Damascus and many others every where is encountering us every time we open our Bibles and today in particular asking everyone of us to become

1. A warrior in fighting a good fight against the devil,
2. A worker who works out his salvation by keeping his faith like Job and
3. A winner in finishing the race in testifying to the gospel of the grace of God in spite of many afflictions and receive the crown of life kept for us like Paul.

Thus those who encounter the risen Lord will become living witnesses for him by becoming his warriors, workers and winners. Have you had an encounter with the risen Lord?

Life Application: Encountering the risen Lord may not always be a dramatic experience. To day we have an encounter with the risen Lord who is the Word from God. The Lord has shown us how the lives of Job, Paul and other disciples have been transformed after they encountered the Risen Lord and asking us to surrender our lives accepting Him as the savior and the Lord of our lives. Then God will show us what to do next as we read, study, memorize and meditate on His word.

We have to get up from where we are. , how long do we satisfy ourselves just sitting in the pews on Sundays? We need to get into the city. For Paul it was Damascus. For us it is the heavenly city New Jerusalem. We can get into it by being born again then God will tell us what to do next as we wait on Him through His word. May God help us to do that!