The Feast of the Resurrection

Rev. Carl F Thrun

Rolling Meadows, Illinois - April 11, 1971

IN NOMINE JESU

I Corinthians 15: 57: BUT THANKS BE TO GOD, WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

If you ASK the MAN on the STREET, "What about JESUS of NAZARETH and what do YOU EXPECT from HIM?" his ANSWER will be: "HONESTLY, NOTHING! It is all SO LONG AGO, and the WORLD has CHANGED so MUCH that I would NOT KNOW WHAT to EXPECT PEOPLE continue to TALK ABOUT His SPIRIT being EVIDENT in the LIFE of today - but EVERYONE KNOWS that they will have to FIND some WAY of really GETTING ALONG WITHOUT HIM. JESUS IS DEAD! - and the PEOPLE of our TIME LIVE ~~and through~~ as though that were REALLY TRUE. HE IS DEAD! - Pontius Pilate OFFICIALLY acknowledged it and HIS ENEMIES were MUCH RELIEVED. HE IS DEAD! - and we KNOW that WE shall CONTINUE to do JUST AS WE PLEASE BECAUSE HE IS DEAD!

Long ago even His FRIENDS THOUGHT SO. They were SURE that EVERYTHING had ENDED for THEM. That SAME FEELING has gotten HOLD of MANY of US ALSO. We are SURE that He IS DEAD and OUT of the WAY. We have had our WARNINGS - even Albert Einstein said SHORTLY before his DEATH: "The WORLD has about FIVE YEARS MORE to GO. If, by that time, it has NOT STRAIGHTEN OUT its ETHICAL and MORAL CHARACTER it will simply FADE AWAY and be DESTROYED by its own DEVILISH INVENTIONS."

Many a PERSON is REALLY DEAD even though he is STILL ALIVE and WALKING AROUND. There is NO REAL LIFE in him - - but for HIM as for ALL of US, it is EASTER and a chance to COME ALIVE!

The EASTER MIRACLE lies in the FACT that you are HERE. There would be NO CHURCHES - NO SERVICES TODAY - IF on the THIRD DAY Jesus had NOT RISEN from the DEAD -

a MIRACLE THEN and a MIRACLE NOW! JESUS CHRIST who was CRUCIFIED for US is RISEN from the DEAD and LIVES FOREVER AND EVER!

The EPISTLE for today tells the STORY VERY WELL. It does NOT report anything that HAPPENED on that FIRST EASTER. It is STILL LESS CONCERNED with PROVING anything about that FIRST EASTER. It DOESN'T even TRY to SAY anything about the GLORIOUS RISEN LORD. The apostle does NOT regard PROOF as NECESSARY. It is as though he were saying: "EVEN THOUGH YOU CANNOT SEE THE SUN BEHIND THE CLOUDS, YOU KNOW IT IS THERE - AND IF YOU WILL JUST WAIT A LITTLE WHILE, THE TRUTH WILL BREAK THROUGH AND THE SUN WILL SHINE AGAIN."

The apostle goes BEYOND the HISTORIC EASTER DAY to the GREAT EASTER of the LAST GREAT DAY - at the END of WORLD HISTORY - JUDGMENT DAY! There is NO QUESTION about the VICTORY THEN and THERE!

Our HUMAN NATURE is BOUND by ALL the RULES and LAWS of NATURE - but NO MATTER what a MAN has DONE, or WANTED, or REACHED - - - at the END there is DEATH and DESTRUCTION. This ENDING NO CHRISTIAN can ESCAPE any more than any OTHER PERSON.

BOUND UP with all the FAITH of the APOSTLE'S WORLD is our DESTINY. He POINTS with CLARITY to the FACT that our LIFE will NOT just have an EXTENSION ADDED ON to it. Our LIFE will TRADE its MORTALITY for IMMORTALITY and our PERISHABLE BEING for an IMPERISHABLE. We are REMINDED that we are DUST and that we shall RETURN to the DUST out of which WE CAME. That goes for FLESH and BLOOD and HEART and MIND. We shall NOT just have a RENEWAL of our DEAD FLESH and BLOOD - but we shall have a brand NEW BODY - - - HOLY, IMPERISHABLE, and ETERNAL! This, says our text,

shall HAPPEN in the TWINKLING of an EYE - : "FOR THIS PERISHABLE MUST PUT ON IMPERISHABILITY and THIS MORTAL MUST PUT ON IMMORTALITY."

CHRIST IS ALIVE! - And that is why the apostle comes up with the HAPPIEST LANGUAGE of HIS EPISTLES at this point: "FOR WHEN THIS PERISHABLE SHALL HAVE PUT ON IMPERISHABILITY AND THIS MORTAL SHALL HAVE PUT ON IMMORTALITY, THEN SHALL BE BROUGHT TO PASS THE SAYING THAT IS WRITTEN, "DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY. O DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING? O GRAVE, WHERE IS THY VICTORY?"

The ECHO still RINGS OUT: "THE STING OF DEATH IS SIN." You KNOW now how SIN and DEATH are INTERWOVEN and DANGEROUS for US ALL. Here we have the ASSURANCE that our RISEN LORD will be there to MEET US at the END of our DAYS. He will be the VICTOR over OUR FATE ALSO. My FAITH is FOUNDED on the TRIUMPH of HIS FIRST RESURRECTION!

from one another

SIN is STILL showing its POWER in our LIVES. It STILL SEPARATES us from OUR GOD and OUR REDEEMER.* It is SIN that CUTS US OFF from the FOUNDATION of our LIVING and KEEPS us CLOSE to DYING. "WHAT A MAN SOWS, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP!" - "THE STRENGTH OF SIN IS THE LAW" - God's OWN law - the LAW which DEMANDS MY OBEDIENCE, and says an ABSOLUTE "NO" to my SINFUL SELFISHNESS. If we set OURSELVES AGAINST the COMMANDMENTS of GOD, we shall have what ALL the WORLD is having TODAY - LOVE turned into LOVELESSNESS - TRUTH into a LIE - RIGHT into WRONG - and PEACE into RIOTS. God says "NO" to THAT kind of LIVING. God will NOT have it!

Just because CHRIST was the SINLESS ONE - just because these CONTRADICTIONS did NOT ARISE in HIS LIFE - just because there was NO SIN in HIM and HE went to

DEATH of HIS OWN FREE WILL - - - that is WHY we have HOPE in HIS RESURRECTION! On GOOD FRIDAY He BORE OUR SINS on the CROSS and ATONED FOR US FOREVER. Now EASTER FOLLOWS NATURALLY! Because He has FREED US from the POWER of SIN, WE can RISE to the POWER and the GLORY of the LIFE EVERLASTING. "THANKS BE TO GOD WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THRU OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!"

The RISEN ONE - who on the LAST DAY will PROVE HIMSELF TO BE the CONQUEROR of SIN and DEATH - has WON the RIGHT to this place of HONOR by SUFFERING and DYING for US. How do we REALLY SHOW that WE BELIEVE and TRUST in HIM? St. Paul gives us the right slant: "THEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHEREN, BE STEADFAST, IMMOVABL ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD, KNOWING THAT IN THE LORD YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN." You can only TALK like THAT to CHRISTIANS who are SURE that since the RESURRECTION of JESUS, NO SIN can DESTROY THEM and NO DEATH can KILL THEM. According to ALL that the APOSTLE KNOWS, we GO ON and LIVE FOREVER THROUGH HIM who DIED FOR US and ROSE AGAIN.

STEADFASTNESS is POSSIBLE since the RESURRECTION, because STEADFASTNESS is MUCH MORE than just PULLING YOURSELF TOGETHER. STEADFASTNESS means that WE KNOW that "HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF GOD ABIDES FOREVER." We must be "IMMOVABLE!" What CHRIST DOES FOR US TODAY is a SHIELD AGAINST TEMPTATION - and HE HELPS US make OUR LIFE in GOD a HAPPY and BLESSED THING. If need be, we can take SICKNESS and SUFFERING, even DEATH, in STRIDE - because we KNOW that "THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US."

What we DO HERE TODAY we ought to DO ALWAYS! It can be a CONSTANT GLORY and an INCREASING HAPPINESS. It will HELP us ~~BARE~~ Bear our OWN as well as our NEIGHBORS

TRAGEDY and SORROWS in the FULL LIGHT and ASSURANCE of CHRIST'S OWN WORDS: "BECAUSE I LIVE YOU SHALL LIFE ALSO!" And it will HELP to make the APOSTLES HYMN of PRAISE our DAILY TRIUMPH: "THANKS BE TO GOD WHO GIVES US THE VICTORY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST!" Amen.