



April 2022

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

On Easter Sunday Jesus Christ marks the best hope for a world alienated from God by sin. The Lord Jesus was accused by the Jewish authorities of the crime of being a human and pretending to be God. Therefore, he was considered blasphemous, although they could not disprove his affirmation. Those accusing him claimed that he had said that he would destroy the Temple of Jerusalem and in three days he would rebuild the temple again. Also, he was accused of breaking Moses' law, when he cured people of all kinds of diseases on the Sabbath, a day of rest prescribed in Moses' law. The other charges were of sedition, in which they claimed that he was speaking against the Roman Empire, specifically against Caesar, because Jesus claimed to be the King of the Jews.

The arrogance of the High Priest, Caiaphas, went too far when he slapped Jesus in his face during the interrogation. Jesus affirmed that He was the Son of man and that they would see him, therefore, sitting at the right hand of God and coming down from heaven in a cloud. They did not question further the claim Jesus made; instead they condemned Him.

They were not interested in finding the truth. As a matter of fact, Jesus was found guilty of the charges long before he was brought to trial. The Governor, Pontius Pilate, found him not guilty of any crime; neither did Herod find him guilty. But, those who knew the law, the Jews who were part of the Sanhedrin: Sadducees, Pharisees, and the Interpreter of the Law, found him guilty and condemned him. However, they could not carry out a death sentence, so they wanted Pontius Pilate, the Governor, to carry out the death sentence on their behalf.

Jesus had to fulfill the mission entrusted to Him by his heavenly Father, to be the sacrificial Lamb of God that would take away the sins of the world. All of this happened according to the will of God. He sent Jesus to die for the sins of the whole world, so Jesus died according to God's plan to save humanity. He took the place of humanity, to die for all of us. On the one hand, Good Friday was the day of sorrow, pain, agony, shame, and the manifestation of evil. On the other hand, it was the manifestation of God's grace at its best. When Jesus said, "*It is finished*", He ended the mission God sent him to accomplish. He was buried, rested in the tomb on Saturday, and rose from the dead early on Sunday morning. He brought new hope to all humanity.

What happened in Jerusalem from Thursday through Sunday was very significant for the entire human race. Easter Sunday brought us a new way to look at death and life. Yes, in the world there is a lot of evil, but Jesus conquered evil by taking away the power of the devil over death. With Jesus' resurrection, those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, have new hope of eternal life. This new hope in Jesus Christ makes Christianity the

only great hope of eternal life for people who are living under the slavery of sin. Jesus offers to all of us the forgiveness of sins, a holy life, and eternal salvation.

Finally, Easter Sunday reminds us that the grace of God is free for anyone who comes to the foot of the cross and confesses Jesus as his or her Lord and Savior. No other form of religion can offer humanity what Jesus is offering for free to every nation on planet earth: a loving and eternal relationship with God. If we evade this great moment during our passing through this world, we miss our only opportunity to be with God forever. So, in light of Easter Sunday, let us celebrate the new life Jesus is offering to all of us. Our longing to be accepted by God, to enjoy in fullness the new life and the love he is offering us free of charge are the demonstration of his profound grace in Christ

Please note that the offering collected during Easter Sunday will be used to help with the Lydia's House Fundraising Campaign, which was held from Ash Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, through Easter Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup>.

Happy Easter Sunday,

Pastor Rey Díaz