

IN HIS HANDS

*¹ I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. ² And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it. ⁴ Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; ⁵ and one of the elders *said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."
Revelation 5:1-5*

Beloved in the Lord,

The joyous message of Easter is so beautifully contained in our text today, namely in the words of one of the elders: ***"Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."***

The Lion of Judah – Jesus Christ, The Lord – has prevailed! He has overcome sin and death!

Already in the opening chapter of Revelation we meet Jesus and He says:

"Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades." Rev.1:17-18

The words that are repeated again and again are stop weeping and do not fear. Easter is a joyous, happy time. Jesus Christ is alive. He is risen. Death has not been able to contain Him. Early that first Easter morn, the women made their way to Jesus tomb. They were sorrowful; no doubt weeping as they were going to do this final act of love for Jesus, prepare His broken body for a proper burial. Because He died on Friday and it was almost the Sabbath, there was no time for a funeral. There was no time to say goodbye. It all happened so quickly. His body was quickly wrapped in burial cloths and he was laid in Joseph of Arimethea's tomb, which he so generously gave for Jesus to have.

Now the Sabbath has passed at it is early Sunday morning. Now they can do the proper preparations. Their sadness quickly turned to joy, and their crying gave way to praise. As they arrived at the tomb it was not what they expected. The light had dawned. Where there should have been a body, sat an Angel who proclaimed: ***"Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. ⁷ Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you." Matthew 28:5***

Ah, good news, great news, He is not there. He has risen. He is alive. Did you notice the first words of the Angel? "Do not be afraid."

No need to live in fear and be afraid, because He lives. Jesus lives. Hallelujah.

No need to fear the future, because He lives.

No need to be alone and lonely, because He lives.

No need to fear death and judgement, because He lives.

This is the good news of Easter. Jesus lives! We do not pray to some idol which is not able to answer our prayer. We do not subscribe to some empty lifeless religion, that keeps people in bondage and fear. We are not following some fairy-tale or some silly man made philosophy. Oh no – we are praying to, worshipping and believing upon the Living Lord and Saviour, The King of Kings, The Lord of Lords – Jesus Christ!

He is alive forevermore and He holds the keys to death and hades.

Shortly before He ascended forty days after Easter, Jesus said to His disciples:

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus said that He has ALL authority in Heaven and on Earth. All power is in His hands. His hands are all powerful and if our lives are in His hands then we are in the right place.

When we abide in His hands we do not need to be afraid of anything. He fills our hearts with joy, with faith, with hope, with love, with peace.

In life there are only two options – we can be in Jesus, trusting Him, loving Him, obeying Him, or we can be opposed to Him. He Himself taught that who is not for Him is against Him. There is no middle ground.

The best, the safest, the only place to be is in His hands. Living and trusting and believing in Him. When we are there, nothing can separate us from Him. We are secure. Remember He said: “All power has been given to me!” When we entrust our lives to Him, then the same Spirit that raised Him from the dead resides in our hearts.

When our life is committed to Him, then we can be sure, that as the tomb could not hold Him, it will not hold us. Hallelujah! Paul writes:

¹ For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. ² For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven, ³ inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked. ⁴ For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is

mortal will be swallowed up by life. ⁵ *Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.*

⁶ *Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord—* ⁷ *for we walk by faith, not by sight—* ⁸ *we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.* ⁹ *Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.* ¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” 1 Corinthians 5:1-10*

These words - we know, we are of good courage - can only be proclaimed by one who has placed their trust in Jesus. One who is in His hands. The question this Easter Sunday is how is it with you? Do you know? Do you have an assurance? Are you of good courage? Do you believe in Jesus for salvation? Have you surrendered your life to Him? On what basis do you hope to get to heaven?

In our foundation text we read about the vision given to John. He saw God on His throne. In His hand was a book that was sealed with seven seals. The question was asked: ***“Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?”***

Then we read: ***“And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the book or to look into it.”*** Not you, not me, not even the greatest saint is worthy, because without exception we are all sinners. We are not worthy. We do not deserve heaven. Heaven will not open its doors on the basis of our merit.

John began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy. But then comes the good news: ***“Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome....”***

Jesus is worthy. He shed His own blood and paid the penalty for sin for all people –

“Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

¹⁰ ***“You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.” Rev.5:9-10***

You see – Jesus with His death upon the cross, with His blood shed on Calvary, has purchased us (redeemed) us from sin and death.

When we surrender our lives to Him in faith, then by His blood we are washed clean and our names are written in the Lamb's book of life. They are indelible. Jesus said:

***My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; ²⁸ and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. ³⁰ I and the Father are one."* John 10:27-30**

Today on Easter Sunday, let us come to Him and entrust it all into His hands. In faith let us let go of the steering wheel and let Him steer us through this life and finally usher us into eternal life in glory with Him.

May God bless us.

Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.