

## **Pastor Writes**

Greetings to you all. We are now in the week after Easter and we look at the implications of what the resurrection event has done for each one of us. Our theme for this morning is, 'Joy, Peace, Power and New Life are given through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.' How does the resurrection event bring Joy, Peace, Power and New Life, into our lives? We will be looking at the last section of John's Gospel to see the impact on the disciples and the implications for our lives.

On the eve of the first day of the week, most probably in the Upper Room, the doors were locked because of the fear of the Jews. The disciples gathered there were depressed, disillusioned because of the death of Christ. They thought they had come to the end of their tether in spite of Jesus reminding them on numerous occasions that he had to suffer and die and then be raised on the third day. While they were there, Jesus greets them, saying, 'Peace be with you.' He then shows them his hand and his side where the scars were. There is some continuity and discontinuity in the physical realm of Jesus' body. Though they can see scars on his body he could still walk through closed doors. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the risen Christ. Their disappointment and fears turned to joy and courage. They rejoiced and celebrated his resurrection. As we celebrate the Lord's Supper, every Sunday we celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus. Boldness, love and joy are not private experiences but the mark of community of faith. We sing together because we celebrate the resurrection of Christ, and we find ourselves caught up with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven in giving God the glory.

Secondly, the resurrection of Jesus Christ brings about peace with God and peace with one another. Christ took our place on the cross so that we may be able to make peace with God. Jesus has paved the way for us to enter into God's presence. The curtain in the holy of holies has been rent in two that we have direct access to the Father because of the righteousness of the Son. Just as the Father was reconciling the world through Jesus, the disciples were to be ambassadors and carry out this ministry of reconciliation.

Thirdly, the power of the Holy Spirit is available to all who believe. Fifty days after the resurrection, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured upon all the believers. Paul prays that the eyes of the believers will be enlightened so that they may be aware of the riches, of his glorious inheritance and its incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the power which he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms (Eph. 1: 18-20). In John's gospel the coming of the Spirit is portrayed as 'breathing the Spirit' on the disciples, which marks the fact that by giving the Holy spirit, Jesus creates a new community of people full of new life and power. This new Spirit breathed community is sent into the world to preach the kingdom of God, to help the poor, bring healing to the disabled and to suffer and die for the vindication of truth and justice.

Thomas who wasn't there refused to believe the appearance of Christ, he wanted solid evidence and eight days later Jesus revealed himself to Thomas when he was with the others. Jesus called him to put his hands on his side, he said, 'do not disbelieve but believe.' Then Thomas believed and said, 'My Lord and my God.' Jesus calls us to believe and have faith in the resurrected Christ. When we believe Joy will flood our hearts, peace will be made with God and our sisters and brothers, new life will be experienced. May we put our trust in the resurrected Christ so that we may truly experience his power in our lives.

*Shalom*

**Paul Swarup**