

Greetings to you! The theme for this morning's meditation is "Witnesses to Christ's Resurrection". The resurrection of Jesus Christ was an event which changed the apostles' lives upside down. Immediately after the death of Jesus we find them all scared and locked up in an upper room. They simply did not know what to do because their leader had been crucified. They were not sure what the future held for them. The resurrection appearances of Jesus gave them a new confidence and courage to preach boldly the gospel of Christ. Jesus appeared on numerous occasions to the disciples after the resurrection. Initially, it was to Mary Magdalene in the tomb who was sent to inform the other disciples about His resurrection. In one of the other appearances He revealed himself to the two travelers on the road to Emmaus. The two travelers were not able to recognize Jesus as He walked with them until He explained to them that the Christ had to suffer and die and be raised on the third day. Their eyes were opened when Jesus broke bread with them. Jesus also revealed Himself to over five hundred people on another occasion.

In the gospel reading for today we see that Jesus revealed himself and stood among the disciples but they were startled and frightened because they thought he was a ghost. Jesus reassures them saying, 'Why are you troubled and why do questions rise in your hearts?' He then showed them His hands and His feet and said 'a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have.' He then asked them whether they had anything to eat. They gave Him a piece of broiled fish and he took it and ate it before them. Jesus then reminded them that the Christ had to suffer and die and on the third day rise again from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem. Fifty days later, on the day of Pentecost, as the disciples were gathered together, the Spirit of the Lord came upon them as tongues of fire and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. This Spirit was the one who empowered them and gave them the courage to go and preach the gospel without fear.

The apostles' on receiving the Spirit went about teaching, preaching and performing many signs and wonders among the people. Crowds gathered around them from the neighbouring towns around Jerusalem bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed. Due to this the high priest and all the others with them were filled with jealousy and put them in jail and told them not to teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than men.' Peter told them that the God of our Fathers raised Jesus whom you killed by hanging on a tree.

If the resurrection had been a fake then none of the disciples would have been willing to stake their lives for the sake of the gospel. One will not dare to lose their life for something which they know to be a blatant lie. The apostles were eye witnesses to the resurrection and that is what transformed their lives from being cowards to courageous witnesses to the resurrection. This is what prompted St. Thomas the great doubter to come to our country and bear witness to the resurrection and pay its price by being martyred.

Jesus continues to reveal Himself to His people well into our times as He is a living God. His presence encourages and strengthens us in our moments of fear and weakness. We may not be confident to testify to His living presence among us. However, the same Holy Spirit which empowered the disciples on the day of Pentecost will empower us also to be witnesses to the risen Christ. This power of the Spirit can transform a person from all their weaknesses, fears and anxieties, into bold and courageous witnesses. You and I are called to be courageous witnesses to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. May we do this with God's help.

**Shalom**

**Paul Swarup**