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Associated Press

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians, blessed worshipers during a service in Istanbul. (NY Times Sunday April 11, 2004)

Matthew 28:1-20

1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

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8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

16 Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

All around the world, people are celebrating the rising from the dead of the Lord Jesus Christ. In today's N.Y. Times <http://www.nytimes.com> there is a slide show

of people from all over the world celebrating Easter. Some of the pictures are from Syria, Gaza, Ukraine, and other parts of the world. This is a good time to remember that Easter is not about the Easter Bunny, dyed eggs, and chocolate, but about who Jesus Christ really is.

Jesus Christ not only conquered death, hell, and the grave, but he has given us the ability to have eternal life with him in heaven. This should be a time for the Christian to reflect on what is important in his walk with the Lord.

- When the trumpet of the Lord sounds, will you rise to meet the Lord in the air?
- Are you prepared to meet the Lord today?
- Are there areas of your life that need improvement?
- Would you like to have a closer walk with the Lord?

When you answer these questions, each of us will find that we all need a closer walk with Jesus Christ. We all have shortcomings that can be corrected. It is important to remember that Jesus had to die to rise from the dead. In order for us to rise, we must be dead to sin.

The Apostle Paul asked the Romans questions about their spiritual walk.

Romans 6:1-13

1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father,

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even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him:

9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Just as Jesus Christ rose from the dead, we need to be ready to rise to meet the Lord in the air. Are you prepared to heed the trumpet call of the Lord? If that call came today, would you rise to meet the Lord in the air? Is the Lord pleased with your walk?

As the world turns more and more wicked and the depths of sin increase, we need a closer walk with the Lord. As temptations increase, we need to be closer to the Lord to resist those temptations.

Matthew 24:21-22

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as

was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

Here the Lord is talking about the last days, saying that the days need to be shortened or else there would be no one left who is saved. We are rapidly approaching the days described in the Bible as the last days. The technology along with the world all linked together on the Internet indicates that we are at the dawn of the rise of the antichrist who will rule the world.

There is always the dispute about when the rapture will take place, pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation, or post-tribulation. I advise that you need to have your bags packed and be ready tonight for the trumpet call of the Lord. If the Lord sounds the trumpet tonight, will you be one of the few to rise to meet the Lord in the air? Are you ready for Jesus to call his church home?

1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

The Bible tells us that the above promise is for those who hold fast to the end. Are you where

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you should be in the Lord's will? If not, you need to seek the Lord's help, guidance and strength to resist all the wiles of the devil.

We need to put on the whole armor of God to be able to hold fast to the end.

Ephesians 6:11-18

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

With the resurrection of Christ on our mind, we need to prepare for our own resurrection when the Lord calls us home.

Praise the Lord and prepare yourselves for the Lord's soon return.

The Full Gospel Church

3014 E Street
Philadelphia, PA 19134
Church Office Phone: (215) 634-3637
Published by: Rev. LeRoy D. Cressy (215) 535-4037

Services:

Sunday School 11:30 AM
Sunday Morning Worship 12:00 Noon
Sunday Evening 6:30 PM
Wednesday Evening 7:30 PM

Contact Information:

- E-Mail: leroy@lrcressy.com
- U.S. Mail:
Rev. LeRoy D. Cressy
P.O. Box 1731
Philadelphia, Pa 19105-1731