EASTER SUNDAY

CHRISTOS ANESTI – ALITHOS ANESTI

I hope that today, on this Easter Sunday is a point in your life where believing in the resurrection of Jesus suddenly stops being a thing about questioning an odd event in the first century and becomes a matter of rediscovering hope in the twenty-first century.

John Stott said, "We live and die; Christ died and lived!" what amazing, unparalleled hope we have…

I wonder if we have reduced the kingdom of God to private devotion, the victory of the cross to comfort for the conscience, and Easter itself to a happy, escapist ending after a sad, dark story.

Easter is the most important event in the Christian faith, the time we remember the resurrection of Christ.

As Paul says, "…*if Christ is not alive, you are still lost in your sins and your faith is a fantasy*." (1 Cor 15:17 TP Paraphrase) BUT He is alive and our faith is not fantasy!

In Jesus's death and his resurrection, the powers of the world are defeated. In His resurrection, there was a launching of a new world order, a new humanity, a new creation, a different model for the human race to live out.

That gives us hope! What hope?

Hope is what you get when you suddenly realize that a **different worldview is possible,** a worldview in which the rich, the powerful, the ruthless, and the corrupt do not have the last say.

The same worldview shift that we are called to by the resurrection of Jesus is the shift that will empower us to transform the world.

One day when in heaven you meet:

Obadiah, and he greets you and as you get to know him he asks, "So, did you read my book?"

Actually, when you get to heaven and meet some heroes of our faith and ask them how it was to….

- Noah and ask him about the Ark
- Abraham and ask him about taking Isaac up the mountain
- Sarah being barren and having a child in her older years
- Joseph sold into slavery and then became the kings right hand man
- Moses and ask how it was to part the Red Sea,
- Gideon defeating armies with a few soldiers
- Samson and his strength
- Elijah, calling down fire and the prophets of Baal
- Jonah, and his time in the fishes belly and preaching in Nineveh…
- Daniel and the lions den

You know what I think they will ask you.

"HOW WAS IT TO LIVE WITH "I AM" DWELLING IN YOU…?"

They all had visitations of I AM and saw a few miraculous events, we have Holy Spirit (I Am) indwelling us!

Rom 8:11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also <u>give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit,</u> **<u>who lives in you.</u>**

Jesus was raised to life by the life-giving Spirit – and now that life-giving Spirit indwells us and our lives will never be the same!

Gen 1:2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

The Holy Spirit is how God "gets things done." Remember the Spirit hovering over the waters in Genesis 1:2, bringing life in the chaos. This is the same Holy Spirit who indwells you. He brings life to the chaos and if you say yes, your life will be transformed. And trust me when I say, nothing will ever be the same.

I know I said yes, and my life has been ruined for anything else… **Hi my name is Andrew, and I am a God junkie…** I love Him and do my best to love others, I love seeing His kingdom come, I love seeing salvation to the lost, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, the lame walking, cancer healed, limbs grow and so much more… I love seeing communities formed around faith in Him, and society changed…

That my friends is the Spirit of Easter…

1 - *THE SPIRIT OF EASTER*

Luke 24:1-6 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. (2) They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, (3) but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. (4) While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. (5) In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? (6) He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee:

The Holy Spirit was up to a whole host of things on Easter morning in addition to raising Jesus from the dead;

Easter was the beginning of a New Creation party!

Luke 24:6 HE IS NOT HERE; HE HAS RISEN!

Do you see how the "Spirit's power" on Jesus was what set Him apart from other supposed 'Messiahs' of the time. On the cross Jesus cries out, "Father into your hands I commit my Spirit," it seemed that the Spirit had left, until we see the Spirit's power at work on Easter morning and Jesus is resurrected from the dead. Then things radically change… In Easter there is the…

2 - *THE SPIRIT OF NEW CREATION*

John 20:21-22 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." (22) And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

After His resurrection Jesus "breathed" on His disciples, calling dry bones to come to life. Let's take a moment to talk about Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones…

Eze 37:1-5 The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. (2) He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. (3) He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "O Sovereign LORD, you alone know." (4) Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones

and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! (5) This is what the Sovereign LORD says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.

Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones… Does it have anything to do with Easter and the New Creation? I think it does…

The Lord to the dry bones - I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life.

Jesus to the disciples - He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit

When we receive Jesus, we receive the breath of life. Our 'dry bones' come to life as New Creation People. And when we are new creations in Christ that means something. It means we are His hands and His feet in the world. We are called to do the things that Jesus did.

After all Jesus did say:

John 14:12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

NT Wright: *Resurrection doesn't mean escaping from the world; it means mission to the world based on Jesus's lordship over the world.*

Let me put it simply, Resurrection doesn't mean pie in the sky when you die, it mean steak on your plate while you wait… **As New Creation people** we must, claim our lives and our church for the kingdom of God, for the Lordship of Jesus, and in the power of the Spirit. When we do that, when we believe that, when we walk in that, we can then go out and work for that kingdom, we announce the Lordship of Jesus, and see transformation of people and society through that power.

In Easter there is the…

3 - *THE SPIRIT OF RESURRECTION*

There is a new life that Easter beckons us to…

Rom 6:4-5 We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (5) If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.

WE TO MAY HAVE NEW LIFE! The Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is raising people to life all around us – and there is no miracle more beautiful to watch. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom! As we walk in the fulness of this new life we will see people come to salvation and their lives will never be the same. Do you believe this? I remember leading Glen, a Messianic Jew to Jesus when I had my restaurant. The conversion was so radical that he painted his Toyota Cressida with blackboard pain and wrote scriptures all over his car. He continues all these years later to live a radical life for Jesus.

My story is similarly radical, as Mandy says, I used to 'Spray & Cook' at the restaurant and now I 'Pray & Cook'… Does anyone else have their personal salvation story that shows new life to share? Thumbnail sketch… from where you are…

We have freedom in Christ today! As Paul writes to us:

2 Co 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (18) And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

"…where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom…" There is freedom in Christ and it is available today!

The message of Easter is neither that God once did a spectacular miracle and then decided not to do any more. Nor is the message of Easter that there is a blissful life after death to look forward to. The message of Easter is that God's new world has been unveiled in Jesus Christ and that you're now invited to participate and belong to it.

CONCLUSION

In the Gospel of John Jesus said it this way:

John 3:8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

We must act as his messengers, announcing the Lordship of Jesus to the entire world, inviting his kingdom come on earth as in heaven! What does on earth as it is in heaven mean? It means:

Rev 21:4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

If you really make a start on it, it might give you a sniff of new possibilities, new hopes, new ventures you never dreamed of.

Two simple questions will open the door for kingdom interaction with people:

1 - What would you like Jesus to do for you today?

2 - How can I pray for you?

It might bring something of Easter into your innermost life. It might help you wake up in a whole new way. And that's what Easter is all about. The Surprising Spirit is about the business of the Trinity in your life and mine at this very moment. Are you ready for the next surprise the Spirit has in store?

Friends, the power that resurrected Jesus indwells you as a Christian. Encountering this resurrected Jesus, transforms, empowers, and equips you to change your life, your suburb, your city, your nation, and the world. Why would you live a watered-down existence with this one life you have to live, simply waiting to get to heaven when you have been empowered to engage with the mission of God in this world. The Surprising Spirit is like the wind, blowing where it pleases (John 3:8).

CAN WE TAKE SOME TIME TO RESPOND TO THE SPIRIT'S PRESENCE TO SAVE, FORGIVE, HEAL, DELIVER AND EMPOWER!