

## IN CHRIST ALONE

I Today is Easter Sunday, a very special day for us Christians. It is the day Christians around the world celebrate the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, his victory over death and the grave.

II Actually we celebrate more than the resurrection on this day, much more. Because to come back from death, Jesus had to die. And so we also celebrate the death of Christ, what Christians call the atonement, for it is Christ's death that saves us from our sins.

I But before Jesus could die, he had to be born. Jesus, the son of God had to be made human, a son of Man. And so today we are also celebrating the incarnation of Christ.

II As Christians, we celebrate the life of the Son of God. He was with God from the beginning. He has returned to God where he now sits at the right hand of God's throne in glory.

I You see, there is a reason Christians are called Christians. We believe in Christ: The Incarnate Christ, the Crucified Christ, the Resurrected Christ, the Exalted Christ: the Christ who will one day return to this earth in power and glory.

II When we say we believe in Christ we do not mean that we are influenced by Christ, though of course we are. Nor do we mean that we highly esteem Christ, though of course we do.

I What we mean is we believe in Christ. We believe in Christ alone.

- II We believe in Christ in a way we do not believe in anyone else,
- I For Christ is not like anyone else.
- II Not like anyone who has ever been or will be again. Christ alone is worthy of our faith.
- I It was for believing these very truths about Christ that the first generation of Christians were often persecuted. They believed and they preached boldly that Christ was nothing less than the Son of the living God, that Christ was somehow God himself.
- II They didn't understand it really, who could? But neither could they deny it. Christ himself claimed it. "Before Abraham was, I Am."
- I "I am the Way, the Truth, the Life. No one comes to the Father except by me."
- II "If you believe in me you will have eternal life."
- I "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father." "I and the Father are one."
- II "Father, glorify me with the glory I had with you before the world began."
- I Now, influential leaders do not ordinarily say things like this, and for good reason. If anyone actually believed such things about himself we would consider such a person mentally troubled.
- II Or worse!

- I Unless of course his words were true. And that's the amazing thing. Those first Christians believed those words were true.
- II They believed Christ was unlike any prophet or religious leader or wise guru. He was all of these; but he was profoundly more.
- I No great prophet, no moral leader, no wise philosopher would ever make such outlandish claims about themselves and be taken seriously.
- II But Christ did make such claims and Christ was taken seriously.
- I Throughout history people have tried to say Christ was something else. Some said he was a supernatural spirit or angel sent from God. Others said he was only a man, a great man, but just a man, not God.
- II To counter such false statements about Christ very early in history of the Church the wisdom of Scripture was compiled into summary statements of faith. One of those was called the Nicene Creed written in the 300s.
- I We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.
- II For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.

I For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;

II He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I Today we again confess that we believe in Christ, in Christ alone. And we make this confession in both the Word of God, in scripture and the words of man in Song. Now, hear the word of the Lord.

II From the gospel of John: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

I From Paul's letter to the Colossians: The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

*Of the Father's Love Begotten*

*Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending He,  
Of the things that are, that have been,  
And that future years shall see, evermore and evermore!*

*At His Word the worlds were framèd; He commanded; it was done:  
Heaven and earth and depths of ocean in their threefold order one;  
All that grows beneath the shining  
Of the moon and burning sun, evermore and evermore!*

*O ye heights of heaven adore Him; angel hosts, His praises sing;  
Powers, dominions, bow before Him, and extol our God and King!  
Let no tongue on earth be silent,  
Every voice in concert sing, evermore and evermore!*

*Christ, to Thee with God the Father, and, O Holy Ghost, to Thee,  
Hymn and chant with high thanksgiving, and unwearied praises be:  
Honor, glory, and dominion,  
And eternal victory, evermore and evermore!*

- I The scriptures proclaim that God became man and dwelt among us.  
Now hear the word of the Lord.
- II In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the  
Word was God.
- I And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.
- II The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all  
creation... For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.
- I Jesus Christ did not consider equality with God something to be  
grasped; but emptied himself and was made in human likeness.
- II The one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of  
the same family. Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. Since the  
children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity
- I In the past God spoke through the prophets at many times and in  
various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son...  
through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's  
glory and the exact representation of his being,
- II That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we  
have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have  
touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.
- I The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to  
you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.  
We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard...

## *Tell Me the Story of Jesus*

*Tell me the story of Jesus, Write on my heart every word.*

*Tell me the story most precious, Sweetest that ever was heard.*

*Tell how the angels in chorus, Sang as they welcomed His birth.*

*“Glory to God in the highest! Peace and good tidings to earth.”*

*Tell me the story of Jesus, Write on my heart every word.*

*Tell me the story most precious, Sweetest that ever was heard.*

*Fasting alone in the desert, Tell of the days that are past.*

*How for our sins He was tempted, Yet was triumphant at last.*

*Tell of the years of His labor, Tell of the sorrow He bore.*

*He was despised and afflicted, Homeless, rejected and poor.*

*Tell of the cross where they nailed Him, Writhing in anguish and pain.*

*Tell of the grave where they laid Him, Tell how He liveth again.*

*Love in that story so tender, Clearer than ever I see.*

*Stay, let me weep while you whisper, Love paid the ransom for me.*

- II The Scriptures proclaim that God became a man that he might give his life as an atonement for our sins. Now hear the Word of the Lord.
- I Though he was in the form of God he emptied himself and was made in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross!
- II When Christ came into the world, he said: “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll, I have come to do your will.’”
- I And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all...For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.
- II For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.
- I In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them,
- II He made him to be sin who knew no sin so that we might become the righteousness of God.
- I What an amazing and contradictory sight is Calvary.
- II The Sacred Son in human form, full of God
- I Radiating the glory of God, mediating the love of God...
- II On a cross

## *O Sacred Head*

*O sacred Head, now wounded, With grief and shame weighed down,*

*Now scornfully surrounded With thorns, Thine only crown.*

*How art thou pale with anguish, With sore abuse and scorn!*

*How doth Thy visage languish That once was bright as morn!*

*Now from Thy cheeks has vanished Their color, once so fair;*

*From Thy red lips is banished The splendor that was there.*

*Grim Death, with cruel rigor, Hath robbed Thee of Thy life;*

*Thus Thou has lost Thy vigor, Thy strength, in this sad strife.*

*What language shall I borrow To thank Thee, dearest Friend,*

*For this, Thy dying sorrow, Thy pity without end?*

*Oh, make me thine forever! And should I fainting be,*

*Lord, let me never, never, Outlive my love for Thee.*

I The Scriptures proclaim that Christ died, that he was buried and that on the third day he rose from the grave.

II Now hear the Word of the Lord.

I And the angel said to the women, “Why do you look for the living among the dead. He is not here. He is risen.

II If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Those who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

I But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead... “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?”

II The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard a loud voice like a trumpet. And when I turned around I saw...someone like a son of man... The hair on his head was as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he said:

II “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

I And the angel said to the women, “Why do you look for the living among the dead. He is not here. He is risen.

## *Resurrection*

*They crucified my Lord, Laid Him in the tomb,*

*Now lies the Son of God In death's sable gloom.*

*The Man of grief and toil There in silence lies;*

*Death has with in its coil God of earth and skies.*

*But behold there was an earthquake, For from heav'n there came an angel,*

*With a countenance like lightning, And a raiment white as snow.*

*When at dawn came Mary Magdalene, 'Twas the angel's voice which said:*

*"Lo, He is not here, but risen!" Christ is risen from the dead.*

*He who for the world's salvation bled, Now is risen, risen from the dead;*

*Glory, honor we will ever sing, Praise to our risen, risen King.*

*Hallelujah, sing, with hearts to heav'n and voices raise,*

*Ever shout, ye ransomed ones for you His blood was shed.*

*Sing a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise,*

*Christ the Lord is ris'n indeed, is risen from the dead.*

II The Scriptures proclaim that Christ ascended into heaven and is now seated at the right hand of God in glory. Now hear the Word of the Lord

I God has highly exalted him and given him the name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth.

II Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. And they sang a new song, saying:

I *You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.*

II I heard the voice of many angels, ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and in a loud voice they were saying:

I *Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!*

II Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

I *To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!*

II He who was seated on the throne said,

I *It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.*

*Worthy Is the Lamb*

*Thank you for the cross, Lord.*

*Thank you for the price you paid.*

*Bearing all my sin and shame, in love you came*

*And gave Amazing grace.*

*Thank you for this love Lord.*

*Thank you for the nail pierced hands.*

*Wash me in your cleansing flow, now all I know*

*Your forgiveness and embrace.*

*Worthy is the Lamb seated on the throne.*

*Crown You now with many crowns you reign victorious.*

*High and lifted up, Jesus, Son of God.*

*The darling of heaven crucified, worthy is the Lamb.*

- I There is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.
- II Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”
- I We believe in the Word made flesh.
- II We believe in God made visible.
- I We believe in the Reality to which the Law of Moses was but a mere shadow.
- II We believe in the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world.
- I We believe. Our hope, our peace, our strength is found in Christ...
- II In Christ alone.

*In Christ Alone*

*In Christ alone my hope is found, He is my light, my strength, my song;  
this Cornerstone, this solid Ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.  
What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease!*

*My Comforter, my All in All, here in the love of Christ I stand.*

*In Christ alone! who took on flesh fullness of God in helpless babe!  
This gift of love and righteousness scorned by the ones he came to save:*

*Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied -  
For every sin on Him was laid; Here in the death of Christ I live.*

*There in the ground His body lay light of the world by darkness slain:  
Then bursting forth in glorious Day up from the grave he rose again!*

*And as He stands in victory sin's curse has lost its grip on me,  
For I am His and He is mine - bought with the precious blood of Christ.*

*No guilt in life, no fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me;  
From life's first cry to final breath. Jesus commands my destiny.*

*No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand;  
Till He returns or calls me home, here in the power of Christ I'll stand.*