

# REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

*relating to the Easter story and our Easter services ...*



## 1. REFLECTION

We've just journeyed through another Easter ...

The gulf between

the anguish & grief & horror & desolation of  
Friday & the Cross,

& the joy & ecstasy & amazement & excitement  
of Sunday & the empty tomb,

is VAST ...

Because we know the story, and the outcome, before we begin the Easter journey each year, it's difficult for us to get a real sense of the depths of Friday ... and the heights of Sunday ...

But we do know these sorts of experiences in our own lives ... deep despair, and absolute elation ...

Think back to one of each kind of experience in your own life ... a time when you were 'in the pit' ... and a time when you were 'on the mountaintop' ... Can you remember what each one felt like? With the benefit of hindsight, what did you learn and how were you changed by each experience? Can you see how God was with you, and at work in your life, in each one?

At this point in your life journey, which do you identify with most readily ... Is it more of a Friday or more of a Sunday in your life right now? Why?

Does the reminder of Jesus' journey at Easter help you to understand or 'move through' your own current experience?



# REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

---

## 2. SCRIPTURE

The Easter story – the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth – is at the heart of the gospel message, and at the core of the history of humanity ... And at the crux of every Christian's life and faith. As the Apostle Paul wrote, if this story isn't real and true and historically factual, 'we have nothing to preach and nothing to believe'. (1 Corinthians 15:14).

Ephesians 1 gives one of the New Testament's great summaries of the results of Easter ... how we are blessed because of the death and resurrection of Jesus, what Jesus has achieved on our behalf, and how everything is different because of this ...

Think about and talk about this astonishing description of what is ours because of the events of Easter ... (You might like to read this passage in a couple of other New Testament translations as well in order to get a fuller picture of the wonder of what is written here.)

---

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. <sup>4</sup> Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. <sup>5</sup> God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. <sup>6</sup> So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. <sup>7</sup> He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. <sup>8</sup> He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

<sup>9</sup> God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfil his own good plan. <sup>10</sup> And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. <sup>11</sup> Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan.

<sup>12</sup> God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. <sup>13</sup> And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. <sup>14</sup> The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

*Ephesians 1:3-14, New Living Translation*

---

# REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

---



## 3. TWO PRAYERS ...

to think about, and to pray ...

### The 'Lord's Prayer' (Matthew 6:9-13)

When the disciples of Jesus asked Him to teach them how to pray, He gave them this prayer – which has come to be known as 'the Lord's Prayer'.

Firstly, **the traditional version of this prayer**, based on the Authorised or King James version of the Bible – a 17th Century translation into English...

---

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever. Amen.

### And secondly, **from the Message translation of the New Testament ...**

Our Father in heaven,  
Reveal who you are.  
Set the world right;  
Do what's best— as above, so below.  
Keep us alive with three square meals.  
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.  
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.  
You're in charge!  
You can do anything you want!  
You're ablaze in beauty!  
Yes. Yes. Yes.

*And ...*

---

# REFLECTION & DISCUSSION

## Our 'National Prayer'(the New Zealand National Anthem)

E Ihowā Atua,	<i>literal translation ...</i>	O Lord, God
O ngā iwi mātou rā		Of all people,
Āta whakarangona;		Listen to us,
Me aroha noa		Cherish us.
Kia hua ko te pai;		May good flourish,
Kia tau tō atawhai;		May your blessings flow.
Manaakitia mai		Defend
Aotearoa		Aotearoa

God of Nations at Thy feet,  
In the bonds of love we meet,  
Hear our voices, we entreat,  
God defend our free land.  
Guard Pacific's triple star  
From the shafts of strife and war,  
Make her praises heard afar,  
God defend New Zealand.

Men of every creed and race,  
Gather here before Thy face,  
Asking Thee to bless this place,  
God defend our free land.  
From dissension, envy, hate,  
And corruption guard our state,  
Make our country good and great,  
God defend New Zealand.

Let our love for Thee increase,  
May Thy blessings never cease,  
Give us plenty, give us peace,  
God defend our free land.  
From dishonour and from shame,  
Guard our country's spotless name,  
Crown her with immortal fame,  
God defend New Zealand.

Peace, not war, shall be our boast,  
But, should foes assail our coast,  
Make us then a mighty host,  
God defend our free land.  
Lord of battles in Thy might,  
Put our enemies to flight,  
Let our cause be just and right,  
God defend New Zealand.

May our mountains ever be  
Freedom's ramparts on the sea,  
Make us faithful unto Thee,  
God defend our free land.  
Guide her in the nations' van,  
Preaching love and truth to man,  
Working out Thy glorious plan,  
God defend New Zealand.

**Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!**

