

Sunday, April 20, 2025 Easter Morning Worship Sermon

"Death Swallowed Up by Victory" Pastor Takaaki Inoue  
Corinthians 15:50~58, Mark 16:1~8

### ① 【The tombstone had already been removed】

Today is Easter. It is the most important festival of Christianity. Christ was crucified on Friday, died and buried, and was resurrected on the morning of Sunday, the third day, so Sunday was a day off. It was an event that had such an impact on the history of the world. Let's look at the Bible to see what happened. Early on Sunday morning, as soon as the sun rose, the vulnerable women Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went to the tomb of Jesus. In particular, Mary Magdalene was the one who had previously cast out seven demons by Jesus (Luke 8:2). All of the male disciples abandoned Jesus and fled, hiding in their houses for fear of being caught by the authorities, and did not take any action. But the ladies were different. They came to the tomb early in the morning with the intention of at least anointing the body of Jesus. They were discussing with each other, "Who will roll that stone out of the door of the tomb" (Mark 16:3). Because the tomb stone was so large and heavy that it could not be rolled without a few men. However, when I looked up, I saw that the stone had already been rolled aside. What this teaches us is that when we become strong, we will help others, when we become rich, we will give, we will take action, but instead, no matter how weak or poor we are now, we should immediately do what we can now. If we do that, God will surely open the necessary gates. It is only those who give a little courage, determination, and love that can see the glory of God.

●Ayako Miura was sick with caries and spent a long time in the hospital, but as soon as she was baptized, she turned her hospital room into a meeting place and evangelized the sick. Even sick people can evangelize. We can pray. You can also give it. What Christianity needs is a practice of love.

### ② 【Christ who came to destroy death】

When they entered the tomb, they were very surprised to see a young man in a long white robe sitting on his right hand. This young man would be an angel. He told the women: "Do not be surprised, for you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth crucified, but he has risen and is not here. Take a look. It is the place where you have delivered." (Mark 16:6) What does this mean? The angel said that you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth crucified. Jesus of Nazareth is a historical figure who actually existed. He was raised in Nazareth and died on the cross. Everyone looks for people they know. Those who do not know cannot

be searched. But there is another side of Jesus that humans don't know. It is the face as God. Christ is the one who existed before the creation of the heavens and the earth, created the heavens and the earth, and created man in His own image. However, because the human being he created sinned and died, he received a human body and became a human being in order to save this human being, suffered in the flesh, died and was buried, but was resurrected as a god. The Bible clearly declares that Christ is God, and that God really came to this world as a man. This book is about God who appeared to mankind. It is a formidable book. I also write about the future. However, the people of that time also thought that Jesus was a mere human being, treated him, and persecuted him. They cursed, beaten, spat on, robbed him of his clothes, mocked him, whipped him, nailed him, and stabbed him in the side. He accepts and forgives all the sins of mankind in silence as if he were on earth. It was and still is. Man's sins swirl around God. Destroy nature, wage war, destroy people. Work to study Jesus Christ as a historical figure is still being done in seminaries. We are looking for the human Jesus in the Bible, but in vain. Because the angel said it clearly. When we read it as God, we can clearly see what the Bible is saying.

So what is resurrection? It is not about the soul leaving the body and going to heaven. Because there were no bodies in the grave. It is the transformation of the human body, in which the soul and body are one, into a body that does not die in unity with God. Human beings were not originally designed to die. This is because God, who is life, created life, not death. Death began with human sin. Because we sin every day, and we die every day, we have become accustomed to sinning, and we have become accustomed to death. I think death is a daily occurrence and a natural thing. I was paralyzed by death. But Christianity declares that death is abnormal. What God did not create will surely be taken out of this world. Therefore, death will surely disappear from this earth someday. The Bible promises and prophesies. "On this mountain the Lord will destroy the cloth that covered the faces of all the people, and the cloth that covered all nations, and will destroy death forever" (Isaiah 25:7~8). For it says, "Death shall be destroyed as the last enemy" (1 Corinthians 15:26). God came to fight this death head-on. If you don't have a human body, you can't die. Christ ruled by death for only three days, but was resurrected on the third day. It is the moment when the divine life of Christ swallowed death. The ancient Holy Saturday prayer says:

●Today, hell groans and screams like this. I received the dead Christ as one of the dead, and my authority perished. I dare not detain this person. With him I lost those who were under my authority. I had the dead from ancient times. But lo and behold. He raised all men. Glory be to Thy cross and resurrection, O Lord.

● Christ the Word, when hell received thee, and saw that the mortal was deified, and that the one who was wounded by the nail was the Almighty, he was troubled, and he was made speechless by this terrible state.

● God's excellent wisdom that flows the river of life Christ entered the coffin and kept alive those who were in hell, which is beyond the reach of life.

Christ, who is God, dared to enter into hell and death and destroyed it from within.

### ③ **[You can meet in Galilee ~ Return to the beginning ~]**

The angel tells the lady. "He will go before you to Galilee, and there he will meet you, as he has been told." (7) In Galilee, Jesus said that He would wait for His disciples. Galilee is a place name, the place where the disciples first met Christ and began to walk, the first place where the story began. Waiting there means going back to basics. I'm telling you to go back to the beginning and start all over again. The 50 days leading up to Easter seemed like a long time, but it went by in a blink of an eye. On the first day of my 50 days of prayer, I realized that I was a seriously ill person with a soul and had not been treated. In other words, I realized that I had really expected God and had not really prayed for Him. After a while, I felt a renewed dedication to the fact that the kingdom of God really exists, that the king of that kingdom is Christ, and that I will serve this king. It was as if the veil in front of me had been lifted. This is because I read the Bible carefully, listened carefully with my ears, and accepted each word into my heart without dropping it to the ground. We don't read like we read, we don't believe as we believe, we don't expect much from them. In other words, they don't really listen to God's words. Exactly the same as the first disciples. They seem to be listening to Jesus, but they are not listening. I'm listening. But when you really start listening, you discover something surprising. That's why the angel said. "Remember what you said when you were in Galilee" (Luke 24:6).

● During World War II, Pastor Bonhoeffer was hanged for his involvement in the assassination of Hitler. He wrote, "This is the last, but for me it is the beginning of life." Martin Luther King Jr., a member of the Black Liberation Movement, said the day before he was assassinated: "I hoped for that promised country... I want you to know tonight that we will reach the Promised Land as one people. So, tonight, I'm so happy. I am not afraid of anything. for my eyes have already seen the brightness of the Lord's second coming."

Paul said: "Death has been swallowed up by victory, Death, where is your victory? Death, where is your thorn?" (1 Corinthians 15:54~55) Christ was stabbed by the thorn of death but was resurrected. Death has lost its power.

Because the life of Christ is stronger, bigger, and brighter. Death has no power over me. Christians are strong because they are wearing this Christ. Therein lies the joy and hope of Christians. Let's celebrate the end of death. I would like to go out and share the immortal life of Christ with many people without fear of death.