

11th Lesson

JESUS' PASSION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Biblical passages for Passion Week Reading: Matthew 21-27; Mark 11-15; Luke 19-23; and John 12-19.

Holy Week (Passion Week) is the time from Palm Sunday through Easter Sunday, including Holy Tuesday, Holy Wednesday, **Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday**. This Week is named Passion Week because of the **passion** with which Jesus willingly went to the cross in order to pay for the sins of His people and us.

Passion Week contained several memorable events.

Jesus' Cleansing of the Temple for the second time (Luke 19:45-46),
His Dispute with the Pharisees regarding His authority.
His Olivet Discourse on the end times and teaching on the signs of His second coming
His Last Supper with His disciples in the upper room (Luke 22:7-38),
Praying at the garden of Gethsemane, followed by the betrayal of Judas and arrest
Trials before the chief priests, Pontius Pilate, and Herod (Luke 22:54-23:25).
Following the trials, Jesus' scourging at the hands of the Roman soldiers
Carrying His own Cross through the streets of Jerusalem along (Via Dolorosa (way/stations of the cross)). Jesus' crucifixion at Golgotha on the day before the Sabbath
Buried and remained in the tomb until Sunday
Glorious resurrection.

What is the Palm Sunday? Palm Sunday is the day we celebrate the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, one week before His resurrection (Matt 21:1-11). Palm Sunday reminds us of the final seven days of Jesus' earthly ministry.

Meaning of Palms: On Palm Sunday, we hold the palms which symbolize Christ. As the people declared their loyalty to Christ, we express our loyalty to Christ our King and ruler of our lives by holding palm branches in our hands.

Palm branches in the Bible: Palm trees are abundant in the land of Israel and have been mentioned in the Bible multiple times pertaining to important historical moments. For example, one of Israel's judges, Deborah conducted court meetings under the shade of Palm branches (Judges 4:5), and King Solomon had carved the walls of the temple, both inner and outer sanctuaries with figures of palm trees, cherubim, and open flowers (1 Kings 6:29). Also, interestingly, history has recognized Jericho as the city of palm trees for it has the finest palm branches (Deuteronomy 34:3).

The palm tree is an important symbol of victory for Israel after God delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. After Israel got out of Egypt, the Lord commanded that they celebrate a feast in honor of the freedom they had from the hands of their captors who enslaved them for

hundreds of years. From then on, the people of Israel celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles which took place for seven days. Throughout this period, the Israelites dwell in booths made of palm branches, boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; Leviticus 23: 40-43. Furthermore, the Lord commanded that this practice be passed on to future generations. In this way, the people of Israel will know the victories God has given to them. This Jewish tradition commanded by God was carried out each year until the day of Jesus' crucifixion.

Reception: Jesus was given a royal reception by his admirers who took part in the joyous parade from the Mount of Olives to the city of Jerusalem, a distance of two miles. According to the Biblical scholars, Two-and-a-half million people were normally present to celebrate the Jewish feast of the Passover.

Why did Jesus allow such a pompous celebration while he all along in his life lived and taught poverty and simplicity as his hall mark? He allowed it for two theological reasons: 1) to reveal to the general public that he was the promised Messiah, and 2) to fulfill the prophecies of Zechariah (9:9) and Zephaniah (3: 16-19): "Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion.... see now your king comes to you; he is victorious, triumphant, humble and riding on a donkey..." (Zech. 9:9).

Why Jesus rode on a lowly donkey? It seems odd to see Jesus using a donkey for the final two miles from Bethany to Jerusalem. In those days, kings used to travel in such processions on horseback during wartime but preferred to ride a donkey in times of peace. I Kings 1: 38-41 describes how Prince Solomon used his father David's royal donkey for the ceremonial procession on the day of his coronation. By riding on a lowly donkey, Jesus entered the Holy City as a king of peace, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah. Secondly He was going to Jerusalem (City of Peace) as the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6).

Why a colt tethered on which no one has ever sat? (Luke 19:30) An animal used for religious purposes must be without blemish and "on which yoke has never been laid" (Numbers 19:2)

The mode of reception given: Jesus was given the royal reception usually reserved for a king or military commander. We have some examples in the OT. I Maccabees 13: 51ff describes such a reception, given to the Jewish military leader Simon Maccabaeus in 171 BC. II Maccabees 10:6-8 refers to a similar reception given to another military general, Judas Maccabaeus, who led the struggle against the Greek Seleucid Emperor, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, and liberated the temple from pagan control in 163 BC.

The slogans used: The participants sang the "Hallel" psalm (Psalm 118), and shouted the words of Psalms 25 and 26. The Greek word "hosiana" originally meant "save us now" (II Samuel 14:4). The people sang the entire Psalm 118 on the Feast of the Tabernacles when they marched seven times around the Altar of the Burnt Offering.

The symbolic meaning of the Palm Sunday procession: Nearly 25,000 lambs were sacrificed during the feast of the "Pass Over," but the lamb which was sacrificed by the High Priest was taken to the Temple in procession four days before the main feast day. On Palm

Sunday, Jesus, the true Paschal Lamb, was also taken to the Temple in a large procession (Matt 21:12).

As Jesus ascended toward Jerusalem, a large multitude gathered around Him. This crowd understood that Jesus was the Messiah; what they did not understand was that it wasn't time to set up the kingdom yet. Even as the multitudes waved the palm branches and shouted for joy, they missed the true reason for Jesus' presence. They could neither see nor understand the cross. That's why, "as [Jesus] approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies . . . will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you'" ([Luke 19:41-47](#)). It is a tragic thing to see the Savior but not recognize Him for who He is. The crowds who were crying out "Hosanna!" on Palm Sunday were crying out "Crucify Him!" later that week ([Matthew 27:22-23](#)). But the day will come when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The worship will be real then. Also, John records a scene in heaven that features the eternal celebration of the risen Lord: "There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands" ([Revelation 7:9](#)). These palm-bearing saints will shout, "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb" (verse 10), and who can measure sum of their joy?

What is Maundy Thursday / Holy Thursday? Maundy Thursday (also known as "Holy Thursday") is the Thursday on which Jesus celebrated the Passover with His disciples, known as the Last Supper. The word Maundy is derived from the Latin word Mandare (Mandate) for "command." The "Maundy" in "Maundy Thursday" refers to the command Jesus gave to the disciples at the Last Supper, "that they should love and serve one another"

Two important events are the focus of Maundy Thursday: Last Supper and Washing of the disciples' feet

Firstly, Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with His disciples and thereby instituted the Lord's Supper, also called the Holy Eucharist. That is why we adore the Holy Eucharist after the Holy Thursday services, in memory of Jesus' Last Supper with His disciples. **Secondly**, Jesus washed the disciples' feet as an act of humility and service, thereby setting an example that we should love and serve one another in humility ([John 13:3-17](#)).

What is the connection between Jewish Passover of the OT and the Holy Eucharist in the NT?

Our tradition of celebrating the Eucharist developed out of Passover traditions. Jesus was raised in a Jewish society. He celebrated the Passover at the age of 12 and other years too in remembrance of Jewish people's freedom from enslavement in Egypt. Passover celebrations involve a meal. Before Jesus' crucifixion, He gathered his disciples to share a Passover meal. He knew that in the coming days, he would be crucified and die. It was at this meal that he told his disciples to eat some bread and drink some wine "in remembrance of him". He said

that his followers should remember his life as well as his message to love one another and to accompany this remembrance by eating some bread and wine.

The apostles and the apostolic community celebrated the Holy Eucharist as Jesus commanded (1 Corinthians 11:23-34). The Holy Eucharist that we celebrate is NOT the invention of the modern Catholic Church (as some ignorants baffle) but celebrated, commanded by Jesus, celebrated by the apostles and the apostolic community and we belong to this Biblical history of 2000 years old when we celebrate the Holy Eucharist. What a glorious history we have in the Holy Eucharist, the center of our christian life. Today the Eucharist is celebrated regularly by us and some other Christian denominations. The difference is that the Holy Eucharist that we catholics celebrate is the real body of Jesus after the consecration. It is called the Transubstantiation. The substance 'white bread and wine' changes its physical substance into the body and blood of Christ, a spiritual substance. Both the Passover meal and the Holy Eucharist are traditions focusing on God's covenants with the humanity. The initiative is from God and we relate with Him through prayer and worship.

Passover celebration of Moses in the OT is the parallel to the Sacrifice (Holy Eucharist)

of Jesus in the NT: It is amazing to discover the parallel between the sacrifice of The Passover Lamb in OT and the crucifixion of Jesus in NT. The Lamb that was slain in Egypt marked the beginning of The Exodus, deliverance of the Israelites from slavery. The sacrifice of Jesus the Lamb delivers us from our sins. The celebration of the Passover and Holy Eucharist is God's commandment. We read in Ex 12:14 "This day shall be a memorial feast for you, which all your generations shall celebrate with pilgrimage to the Lord, as a perpetual institution".

The 14th Day, Nisan (April and May)	The Passover Lamb was slain on the eve of Passover, on the afternoon of the 14 th of Nisan, which is the first month of the Jewish calendar (Ex 12:1-6).	Jesus is the lamb, sacrificed on the 14 th of the first month. The Significance of the lamb sacrifice is the shedding the innocent blood. It is a substitute for the person who would have died in the plague. The people were spared from death.
Without blemish	The lamb had to be without blemish. 12:5	Jesus was without blemish, he was sinless. 1 Pet 1:19 - but with the precious blood of Christ as of a spotless unblemished lamb
One year old	The lamb had to be one year old, in the prime of his life. 12:5	Newness of life comes from Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus died in the prime of his life
Male	The lamb was necessarily a male 12:5	Jesus came to earth as a man

Everyone	Every house and each family had to have their own lamb 12:3	Jesus died for everyone and hence everyone has to open their heart
Sacrifice in Jerusalem	The lamb had to be brought to the house four days before the 14 th	Jesus was brought to Jerusalem on a donkey (Jn 12:14) four days before his death on the cross on the eve of Passover (Palm Sunday)
Broken bones	<p>The Israelites weren't allowed to break the bones of the Lamb 12:46 . Not during the cooking and not even during the eating.</p> <p>Bitter Herbs: remembrance of their slavery</p> <p>Without Yeast: Since the children of Israel left Egypt hastily, they did not have time for the bread to rise (Deut 16:3). Do not take anything</p> <p>Cloak tucked into the belt: since they were in a hurry, they cannot relax and eat. Since they are still in Egypt, they need to run.</p>	Jesus' bones didn't get broken Jn (19:36). Not during the torture and the mockery he had to endure moments before his death and not during his crucifixion.
No Leftovers	The lamb had to be consumed entirely on the eve of Passover. Nothing was to remain overnight. (Tabernacle will be empty after the Maundy Thursday until Easter Vigil)	Jesus was taken off the cross on the same evening of his crucifixion, although this wasn't customary
First born	The lamb died in the place of the first born of the Israelites	Jesus the first born died in our place.
Blood	The Israelites had to sprinkle the blood of the lamb on their doorposts as a sign to God. Whoever hid behind the blood of the lamb was safe from God's judgment against the Egyptians. 12:22	The blood of Jesus saves us from eternal damnation

The Hebrew Calendar

1. Nisan	March and April
2. Iyyar	April and May
3. Sivan	May and June
4. Tammuz	June and July
5. Ab	July and August
6. Elul	August and September
7. Tishri	September and October
8. Mar	October and November
9. Kislev	November and December
10. Tebeth	December and January
11. Shebat	January and February
12. Adar	February and March

The Holy Eucharist - A Foretaste of Heaven on Earth

Time for family meal: Our presence at the family meal and other important celebrations is a great expression of our bonding and sharing our life with family and friends. The Holy Eucharist is the Thanksgiving meal of our Catholic Family. The word Eucharist comes from the Greek word εὐχαριστία (Eucharistia), which literally means "thanksgiving." Jesus Himself instituted this family tradition on the night before He died. When He gathered the disciples in the Upper Room for the Last Supper, He told them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover meal with you". He eagerly desires to celebrate this thanksgiving meal with every one of us (every day) each Sunday.

The Mystery, Faith and Devotion surrounding the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Sine dominico non possumus: In Abitene (modern-day Tunisia) in 303, forty-nine Christians suffered torture and martyrdom because they defied the Roman Emperor Diocletian's order not to celebrate the Eucharist on Sunday. When asked why they had disobeyed the emperor, one of them said, "Sine dominico non possumus"—"Without Sunday, we cannot live". During the Reformation in England, priests were martyred while celebrating the Holy Mass for English Catholics. In the past century, Catholics in the Soviet Union or Vietnam were persecuted for practicing their faith. Today in places such as Egypt, China, North Korea, Iraq, Sudan and countless other areas, Catholics risk their lives and travel for hours to attend

Sunday Mass. We give thanks to God that we do not have such dangerous situations to attend Mass at our local parish.

Why do we go to Mass?

1. We desire **to respond to God's love** in the Holy Eucharist. The Mass is the best place to thank God for the gifts besides Himself that He gives us – especially life, family, friends, faith and love.

2. We desire **to encounter Christ** in the most profound way possible by **listening to his life giving words** and **receiving his life giving body**.

3. We desire **to gather and pray with our parish family**. Our Christian life is a pilgrimage which we make with our brothers and sisters in Jesus. Our presence to each other is a symbol of our solidarity and unity with God and with each other. It is the fullest expression of our Christian identity.

4. We desire **to strengthen our particular family**. Father Patrick Peyton, the great "Rosary Priest," instructed us, "**The family that prays together, stays together.**" He advocated praying a family rosary daily. In the same way, when we pray together at the Sunday Mass, we strengthen ourselves and families together to confront the various challenges today that often tear families apart.

5. We desire **to witness to our faith and provide a living legacy to our children** and grandchildren. Children are always watching their parents and grandparents. We form our young people by the way we participate in the Mass.

6. We desire **to be transformed by Christ's sacramental grace**. The Eucharist is not just something symbolic. Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; . . . he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and . . . abides in me, and I in him." The grace and transformation that our Lord provides in each celebration of Mass help us move toward a happier, holier life.

7. We desire **to participate in Jesus' victory over death** and the salvation of the world. Each Sunday Mass is a "little Easter" because it marks the Resurrection – Jesus' victory over death. This victory is the most significant one for our faith that we will become victorious over death and receive everlasting life.

8. We desire **a foretaste of Heaven**. St. John Paul II said in 2004 "Every time we celebrate the Eucharist, we participate in the Lord's Supper which gives us a foretaste of the heavenly glory."

9. We desire **to follow the commandment of God**. God's Third Commandment instructs us to keep the Sabbath holy. For us, this weekly Sabbath is Sunday, which the early Christians always called the Lord's Day. By keeping Sunday for God, by keeping first things first and

putting God above other things, we will experience greater order and more peace in our lives. The Church calls every one of us to make a commitment to attend Sunday Mass. In doing so, we promise to do our part to keep up our relationship with Christ and with our Church family – the Body of Christ.

What is Good Friday? Good Friday is also known as "**Holy Friday**,". Why it is called Good Friday? What the Jewish authorities and Romans did to Jesus was definitely not good. However, the results of Christ's death are very good! Romans 5:8, "But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us". 1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the sake of the unrighteous, that he might lead you to God"

Crucifixion: In antiquity, thousands of people were crucified. It was considered to be one of the most brutal and shameful ways to die. In Rome, the crucifixion process was a long one, entailing scourging before the victim was nailed and hung from the cross.

How did this terrible death sentence begin? And what types of people were usually crucified? Crucifixion most likely began with the Assyrians and Babylonians, and it was also practiced systematically by the by the Persians in the sixth century B.C. At this time, the victims were usually tied, feet dangling, to a tree or post; crosses weren't used until Roman times. The Romans "perfected crucifixion" until Constantine I abolished it in the fourth century A.D. However, given that crucifixion was seen as an extremely shameful way to die, Rome tended not to crucify its own citizens. Instead, slaves, disgraced soldiers, Christians, foreigners, and – in particular – political activists often were killed this way. The practice became especially popular in the Roman-occupied Holy Land. In 4 B.C., the Roman general Varus crucified 2,000 Jews, and there were mass crucifixions during the first century A.D., according to the Roman-Jewish historian Josephus.

How did they crucify? There were four forms of punishment by the Romans. 1. Decapitation 2. Burning a person alive. 3. Throwing a person to the beasts. 4. Crucifixion with tortures. In Rome, people condemned to crucifixion were scourged beforehand, with the exception of women, Roman senators and soldiers. During scourging, a person was stripped naked, tied to a post, and then flogged across the back, buttocks and legs by Roman soldiers. This excessive whipping would weaken the victim, causing deep wounding, severe pain and bleeding. "Frequently the victim fainted during the procedure and sudden death was not uncommon," the biblical authors write. "The victim was then usually taunted, then forced to carry the patibulum [the crossbar of a cross] tied across his shoulders to the place of execution."

The cruelty didn't stop there. Sometimes, the Roman soldiers would hurt the victim further, cutting off a body part, such as the tongue, or blinding him. The next step varied with location. In Jerusalem, women would offer the condemned a pain-relieving drink, usually of wine and myrrh or incense. Then, the victim would be tied or nailed to the patibulum. After that, the patibulum was lifted and affixed to the upright post of the cross, and the feet would be tied or nailed to it. While the victim awaited death, soldiers would commonly divide up the victim's clothes among themselves. But death didn't always come quickly; it took anywhere

from three hours to four days to expire. Sometimes, the process was speed up by additional physical abuse from the Roman soldiers. When the person died, family members could collect and bury the body, once they received permission from a Roman judge. Otherwise, the corpse was left on the cross, where predatory animals and birds would devour it.

The history of the Lord's crucifixion confirms the OT prophecies (Psalm 22) about his death. In spite of the history of crucifixion, the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ had a purpose and was the will of the Father. Although Christ was hung on a cross, it was not the crucifixion that took His life, He "laid it down." "The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life - only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father" (John 10:17-18). "When he had received the drink, Jesus said, 'It is finished.' With that, he bowed his head and gave up [dismissed] his spirit" (John 19:30). Nations down through history have used this form of punishment and torture and God has taken the curse of the cross and turned it into a gift of grace.

We celebrate Good Friday with a subdued service remembering Christ's death with solemn hymns, prayers of thanksgiving, a message centered on Christ's suffering for our sake. The events of that day should be ever on our minds because the death of Christ on the cross—along with His bodily resurrection It is the paramount event of the Christian faith. Christ's death by crucifixion demonstrates visibly the magnificent love of God for His fallen and grievously immoral creatures. The crucifixion is the touchstone of Christian authenticity, the unique feature by which everything else, including the resurrection, is given its true significance. It reveals the gravity of sin but also says that God is merciful. Finally it puts our personal sufferings into perspective. It reminds us that we don't earn our salvation by works. It helps us as we experience trials.

Crucifix is a spiritual book: St. Philip Benizi requested while dying "Please get my book, ". The brethren eagerly sought his Bible, breviary, and the rosary - St. Philip Benizi gently shook his head to each. Finally, it dawned upon Bl. Ubald of Florence, who went in search of the "book" that was the source of St. Philip's surpassing wisdom - his crucifix. Upon this book, St. Philip rested his eyes until at last, they closed in death. One might ask, "How then is the crucifix a spiritual book?" After all, it's just a silent piece of wood, perhaps some metal, or a painting. The only words one reads on it are "INRI", that is, "Iesus Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum," - Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. Yet, in one sense, the crucifix is the ultimate statement. God Reveals Himself on The Cross. When Jesus declares from the Cross, "It is finished," it may well be paraphrased as "I've now said everything." Christ discloses all that is in His Heart from the Cross - in complete silence.

Crucifix is a book of Virtue: Love of God and neighbor, self-denial, patience, forgiveness, humility, fortitude, generosity, trust, obedience, and perseverance - it's all there on the Cross in summary and in silence. Indeed, how eloquently does the silent figure speak! The crucifix is a compendium for all the virtues. For example, if we wish to understand love, we have to see Jesus on the crucifix, for greater love has no man than to lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13). If we desire a lesson in humility, we observe Jesus on the crucifix, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped; rather, he emptied himself by taking the very nature of a servant, being made

in human likeness (Phil 2:6-7). If we seek to understand patience, we look at Jesus crucified, who was despised and rejected, yet opened not his mouth (Is 53:3, 7). If we don't know how to forgive, learn from Jesus, who said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34). Finally, if we wish to know forbearance, see Jesus as they gave me gall for my food, and in my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink (Psalm 68:21).

The crucifix teaches that God is no foreigner to pain. He understands it to the maximum. God truly understands the hurt of betrayal, the pain of humiliation, the anguish of physical and mental pain - from the inside out. "If God suffered so for love of us, then we can endure for love of Him." God therefore identifies with the one who suffers - He's been there.

St. Paul helps us to understand the mystery of the Cross in 1 Cor 1:22-25. The word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to those who are being saved, it is the power of God...For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. (Corinthians 1:18, 22-25)

Crucifix is a Book for the Ultimate Hour: For us, the Holy Scriptures are the first choice. While we cherish the Scriptures, when the ultimate hour arrives, we can ask like St. Philip Benizi to get the Holy Crucifix, which though wordless and silent, speaks the most eloquent affirmation needed at that critical moment.

What is the Holy Saturday? That is the day we celebrate the Feast of all the feasts "Jesus' resurrection" from the dead. Jesus' resurrected body was not a figment of the imagination or the appearance of a ghost. It was the real which the disciples touched. Jesus ate food and able to appear and disappear.

Jesus' teaching on resurrection and the inability of the disciples' understanding it: Jesus proved the reality of Resurrection to Sadducees (Matthew 22:31-32). Jesus answered from the book of Exodus (3:6) when God said, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Issac and the God of Jacob". From God's perspective, they are alive. Jesus said, " That I am of the OT is Jesus in the NT: I am the gate, good shepherd, I am the resurrection, way and life, I am the living bread".

Did the disciples understand the purpose of Jesus' resurrection? Matthew 17:22-23 No. they were filled with grief about Jesus' death. They focused on what Jesus said about his death and ignored what he said about his resurrection. Even though he spoke plainly, they would not grasp the significance of his words until they saw the risen Christ face to face. The disciples did not fully comprehend the purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection until they saw him face to face after the resurrection and in the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2)

How did Jesus' resurrection's effect the disciples? The disciples were eyewitnesses to all that had happened to Jesus Christ - his life before his crucifixion. 40 days after his resurrection, he taught them more about the kingdom of God. Resurrection made change in

their life. After seeing the resurrected Christ, they were fearless and risked everything to spread the good news about him around the world. They faced imprisonment, beatings, rejection and martyrdom and yet they never compromised their mission. They were fired with enthusiasm to tell others. Twenty centuries later we can still be confident that our faith is based on fact.

St. Paul's teaching on the resurrection of Jesus: Most Greeks did not believe that people's bodies would be resurrected after death. They saw the afterlife as something that happened only to the soul. According to the Greek philosophers, the soul was the real person, imprisoned in a physical body and at death the soul was released. There was no immortality for the body and the soul entered an eternal state as per the Greeks. Christianity by contrast affirms that the body and soul will be united after resurrection.

Resurrection Examples: St. Paul compares the resurrection of our bodies with the growth in a garden. Seeds, sowed in the ground, do not grow unless they 'die' first. The plant that grows looks very different from the seed because God gives it a new 'body'. There are different kinds of bodies - people, animals, fish and birds. Even the angels in heaven have bodies that are different in beauty and glory. Our resurrected bodies will be very different in some ways. Our resurrected bodies will be transformed. These bodies will not be limited by the laws of nature. That does not mean we will be 'super people' but our bodies will be different from and more capable than our present earthly bodies. Our spiritual bodies will not be weak, will never get sick and will never die. They are powerful, glorious and spiritual.

Why is the truth of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ so important? The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the most important event in history, providing irrefutable evidence that Jesus is the Son of God. The resurrection was not only the supreme validation of His deity; it also validated the Scriptures, which foretold His coming and resurrection. Moreover, it authenticated Christ's claims that He would be raised on the third day. If Christ's body was not resurrected, we have no hope that ours will be (1 Corinthians 15:13, 16). As the apostle Paul said, our faith would be "useless" and the life-giving power of the gospel would be altogether eliminated. When Jesus Christ was resurrected, He became the "first fruits" of all who would be raised. The "first fruits" language Paul uses indicates something to follow. Just as he rose, everyone who believe in him will rise.

How is Jesus' resurrection key to our faith? The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the central fact of Christian history. On it, the church is built. Without it, there would be no Christianity. Jesus' resurrection is unique. Other religions have strong ethical systems, concepts about paradise and afterlife. Only Christianity has a God who became human, literally died for his people and was raised again in power and glory to rule his church forever. Jesus' bodily resurrection shows us that Christ is living and ruling us as our eternal king. As he rose, we will rise and for us, Death is not an end, there is an eternal life. The resurrection is the basis for the church's witness to the world. We do not spin stories but we proclaim the reality of his resurrection. He is not legend. He is real and living. The resurrection helps us find meaning even in great tragedy. No matter what happens to us as we walk with the Lord, the resurrection gives us hope for the future

How Jesus' resurrection should affect our life? Because of the resurrection, nothing we do is in vain. Sometimes we hesitate to do good because we don't see any results but if we can maintain a heavenly perspective, we will understand that we often will not see the good that results from our efforts. If we truly believe that Christ has won the ultimate victory, that fact must affect the way we live right now. Let us not be discouraged over an apparent lack of results from our good works. Let us keep on doing the good, having a heavenly perspective.

How does our resurrected body look like? We will be recognized in our resurrected bodies and yet they will be better than we can imagine for they will be made to live forever. They will be perfect without sickness or disease. Refer Phil 3:21: He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body by the power that enables him also to bring all things into subjection to himself.

Easter: The origins of Easter are obscure. It is often assumed that the name Easter comes from a pagan figure called Eastre (or Eostre) who was celebrated as the goddess of spring by the Saxons of Northern Europe. According to the theory, Eastre was the "goddess of the east (from where the sun rises)," her symbol was the hare (a symbol of fertility), and a festival called Eastre was held during the spring equinox by the Saxons to honor her. This theory on the origin of Easter is highly problematic as it seems that Easter might as well have pagan origins. We celebrate Easter as the resurrection of Christ on the third day after His crucifixion. It is the oldest Christian holiday and the most important day of the church year because of the significance of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the events upon which Christianity is based (1 Corinthians 15:14).

For us, Easter means that our greatest enemy, death, has been conquered. It means that our sins are forgiven and we are made right with God. It means that Christ is truly the King and Victor, seated "far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked" (Ephesians 1:21). The meaning of Easter is that Jesus is Our Lord, Our Way, Our Truth and Our Life. It means no one can hide the Truth. It means that He lives in those who believe him. It means He can move mountains, split seas, restore life, and roll the stone away.