

Crucifixion – Resurrection



Matthew 27:33–56; 28:1–10 / John 19:23–30; 20:1–20

The Lord Jesus was sentenced to death and crucified. Shortly before his death, he turned to his mother and to John, his disciple, who were standing under the cross. Out of love and concern for his mother, he asked John to care for her in future. Then Jesus Christ died. The Roman centurion who witnessed Jesus's death, cried out: "Truly, he was the Son of God!"

Jesus Christ was buried. But on the third day his tomb was found to be empty. He had risen from the dead! His disciples and several women saw the Risen One. He had conquered death!

The children are thankful that Jesus Christ has conquered death.
They rejoice that through Jesus' resurrection, we, too, can hope.

SStephen is sitting in the lounge with his parents. He has been looking forward to this evening for a long time, for the Priest is paying them a visit. They discuss many things. Then Mother mentions how Stephen recently kept the wafer after receiving Holy Communion so that he could have a good look at it. At first the Priest looks rather surprised, but then he smiles. Stephen sits shyly on his chair, but doesn't say a word.

The Priest asks him: "Now you know, don't you, that we must eat of the body and blood of Christ. When we keep the wafer, the wafer cannot fulfil its purpose." Stephen nods.

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Then the Priest continues: "We are very happy that the Lord Jesus celebrated Holy Communion with his disciples shortly before his death and gave them clear instructions to continue doing so in future. Every Sunday we look forward to this climax of the divine service.

"I have often thought how difficult those last days before his death must have been for Jesus Christ. After all, he knew exactly what awaited him. I always marvel at how he obeyed the will of his heavenly Father. The events in the Garden of Gethsemane show us this very clearly," the Priest observes.

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He continues: "After Jesus Christ had been taken prisoner, he

was all on his own. The disciples had fled in panic. And at his crucifixion only a few of his closest friends were present."

"Who was with Jesus when he was crucified," Stephen wants to know. The Priest thinks for a moment, then he says: "There were several women and John, the disciple. They must all have felt very sad and despondent. One of the women was Jesus' mother, Mary. When the Lord Jesus saw her under the cross with John, he said to her: 'From today, John will be your son.' To John he said: 'And this will be your mother.' In his great love, Jesus was still concerned about his mother so shortly before he died. He asked John to take care of Mary, and from that moment on, John looked after her. Shortly afterwards Jesus Christ cried out: 'It is finished!' He closed his eyes and died. He had fulfilled his commission on earth."

The Priest notices that Stephen is looking at him very sadly, so he says: "This story should not make us sad, Stephen. When Jesus cried out: 'It is finished!' it was a cry of victory. It meant redemption from sin and therefore happiness for us all. But at the time there was great sadness and the people became very frightened when Jesus died and the earth shook and trembled. Some of those present, even a Roman centurion, realized then that the man who had just died, was no ordinary person. The centurion exclaimed: 'He was truly the Son of God!'

"The disciples also knew this. But only three days later, when the risen Jesus Christ appeared to them, did they perceive God's power and might. The Son of God had not remained in the realms of the dead. He rose again according to God's will. He was alive!"

The Priest now tries to explain to Stephen what this means: "Knowing that Jesus has risen makes us happy and gives us confidence. You see, Stephen, God has given us a body which grows older and may even get sick. One day we have to die. But in every person something is laid which is immortal: this is the soul. Our soul does not die when our body dies. It lives on.

"At the first resurrection our soul will be given a new garment, a wonderful body. Today we cannot yet imagine what this will be like. But we know that we are indebted to the Lord Jesus for this new body. Through his resurrection, he gives us the opportunity to be with him for all eternity. That is true life, true joy! Jesus Christ has overcome death and has conquered everything which separates us from God.

At his resurrection, his soul received a new, transfigured body. Nothing like this has ever happened before. This is quite unique. We may look forward to experiencing a similar transformation when Christ returns."

Stephen could have listened to the Priest for hours, but he has not come only for him. His parents would also like to discuss certain matters with him. After they have prayed together, Stephen bids the Priest good night and goes to bed.

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*Jesus Christ was crucified. Shortly before his death, he asked John, the disciple, to care for his mother.
When the Lord Jesus died, a Roman centurion called out: "Truly this was the Son of God!"
Jesus Christ rose again from the dead on the third day. The glad tidings spread: "Jesus has conquered death! He is alive!"*

- 1 What does the Priest mean with his statement? Holy Communion establishes a close connection with the Lord Jesus. We receive strength to do better. Partaking of Holy Communion worthily ensures eternal life for the soul.**
- 2 We look at the pictures of the two previous lessons and let the children tell us about them.**
- 3 Referring to the picture, we ask the children what the people depicted there think and feel. We point out to the children that the soldiers are casting lots for the Lord Jesus' garment; the Scriptures had to be fulfilled (cf Psalm 22:18).**
- 4 We look at the photograph. In nature we can observe that new life emerges from things which appear to be dead. Jesus' resurrection did bring new life indeed. Sad, despondent people changed into joyful and hopeful ones. What had happened?**
 - Jesus Christ had conquered Satan (evil) which separates from God. Thanks to Jesus' sacrificial death, all sins can be forgiven.
 - God has shown that he is stronger than death. We know that we, too, have received eternal life.

Easter

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