

# PASTOR'S THOUGHTS - 31 .03. 2024

## *Hallelujah*

More than 2,000 years ago, in the early morning following the Sabbath, three frightened women made their way to a tomb where the body of a man who had been wrongfully convicted and was innocent. His body bore the marks of torture and brutal flogging, with bruises and disfigured features, hastily buried in a tomb not meant for him. Ironically, just a week prior, he had entered the city as a hero, only to meet his end as a criminal.

To those unaware of the political backdrop, it was perplexing. The reports about him were positive; he healed the sick, showed love to all, regardless of gender or ethnicity, fearlessly challenged authority with his intelligence and forthrightness. He was accompanied by a group of twelve disciples, loved by the poor, and a source of challenge to the wealthy.

Yet, despite his virtues, he was betrayed and abandoned by his own, with only one remaining by his side until his death. It was truly a tragic turn of events. At the age of 33, after three years in the public eye and thirty years in relative obscurity, his life should have been long and celebrated. Instead, he was subjected to a brutal beating, forced to carry his own cross, and publicly crucified alongside two criminals, dying after six hours.

His body was crudely buried, his followers dispersing, seemingly closing the chapter on what could have been a promising life and ministry. However, on the early morning following the Sabbath, those three frightened women made a discovery that would alter the course of history: an empty tomb, confirming the resurrection of Jesus.

Today we celebrate the risen Jesus who conquered death and likewise has promised us eternal life for those who believe in him.

In Luke 24:6-7 the scriptures states, *"He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'"*

As part of the early church liturgy, they cite, *"Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again, **Hallelujah**."*

Here are two statements of history, *"Christ has died, Christ has risen*, one statement of expectation, *"Christ will come again"* and lastly a proclamation *"Hallelujah"* a transliteration of a Hebrew word, הללויה (hal·le·lu·Yah), which means "praise the Lord" or "praise Yahweh."

Today, we celebrate the message of the empty tomb and shout from the bottom of our hearts *"HALLELUJAH"*.

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