

# God's Given Peace and Righteousness

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2 April • Wednesday of the Fourth Week in Lent

Isaiah 60:17-22

<sup>17</sup> Instead of bronze I will bring gold, and instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones, iron. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness.

<sup>18</sup> Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise. <sup>19</sup> The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your God will be your glory. <sup>20</sup> Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. <sup>21</sup> Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I might be glorified. <sup>22</sup> The least one shall become a clan, and the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will hasten it.

## Meditation

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Do we have peace in our heart and homeland? Is there peace within and around? What makes peace and what disrupts peace?

We have peace in our country and should be thankful to God for it. We do not see violence in our land, devastation or destruction within our borders. We can go about building our family, business and church with metaphorically good materials of wood, stones, bronze and iron.

We also have peace in our heart. But sometimes we do feel uneasy. Could it be that our peace is not deep enough? Why do we sometimes get a little restless when we go into solitude and reflection?

God invites us to walk closer with Him and enjoy deeper peace. He provides better materials for the building we referred to above. God starts with what we have and improves on it till the gold standard is reached. God will improve the good materials to make them better and ultimately make them the best.

But there can be no real inner peace so long as unrighteousness reigns in or around us. Our lives can be weighed down by toil and labour overseen by competitive spirit and driven by taskmasters. There is angst in a large segment of our population, caused by the inequality of income in the economy. There is lack of social equity. Our peace should be disturbed by this. The righteous thing to do is to narrow the inequality.

Let us ask God to help us do our part in living out the value of righteousness, so that we can live in peace and righteousness. Let peace replace our competitive spirit and righteousness remove our uncaring attitude. Ask God to help us do something and address this issue in His time.

## Prayer

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Teach us, Father, to be just and fair in all our dealings in life. Help us to care for the disadvantaged and give room to those who are trying hard to move up from very low social and economic levels. Grant us special grace to live more simply and enjoy a deeper sense of peace. Amen.

## Action

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Review contracts and bargains to see if there are any unfair terms. Offer to change them. Drop your plan to buy an expensive replacement for something you have which is in good working order.

*Ps Lawrence Chua  
Senior Pastor  
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# Mercy and Redemption

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3 April • Thursday of the Fourth Week in Lent

Psalm 130

<sup>1</sup> Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD! <sup>2</sup> O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! <sup>3</sup> If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? <sup>4</sup> But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. <sup>5</sup> I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; <sup>6</sup> my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. <sup>7</sup> O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. <sup>8</sup> And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

## Meditation

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“Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!” The psalmist, in the depths of his despair, turned to his God in personal, direct, and honest communication. During his prayer, he saw the painful reality of his own life. It was full of contradictions and hypocrisy. Outwardly, he lived in the community of faith and was respected as a spiritual leader. But deep within, he saw himself tangled in a web of struggles with his own sinful nature. The struggles were real and hard. This echoes Isaiah’s same deep cry, “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips...” (Is 6:5).

As he prayed, the psalmist realised he was unable to save himself. Only the mercy of God could rescue him. He cried to the Redeemer in repentance. God’s forgiveness flowed into his life. His struggles turned into prayerful waiting. “My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen

wait for the morning.” As the psalmist waited in complete surrender and firm confidence in his Lord, his faith was renewed. His vision was enlarged and he saw the Lord through the eyes of faith. God is the Word (v5), the Lord (v6), the Morning-light (v6), Hope (v7), Steadfast Love (v7), Redemption (v7), and Redeemer (v8).

Thus, he declared triumphantly, “For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.” Full and complete redemption can only come from the Lord. We live in ruins, but our merciful Redeemer brings us to repentance, rest, restoration, and renewal.

His call to us is, “Put your hope in the Lord”.

## Prayer

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Almighty God, we thank You for the example of the honest transparency of this psalmist. During this Lenten season, we cry to You out of the depths. Our deepest desire is for the Holy Spirit to search deep into our life. Cleanse away all the sins that hinder us from being close to You. Enlarge our vision of You. Mighty and loving Redeemer, may we put our hope in You alone. Amen.

## Action

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Pray regularly for your church leaders, for no one is immune from struggles with the sinful nature. Let us not rely on our wisdom, strength or riches. This Lenten season, make a commitment to put your hope in God alone.

*Rt Revd Datuk Dr Yong Ping Chung  
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# The Word of God: Repent and Live

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4 April • Friday of the Fourth Week in Lent

Ezekiel 33:10-16

<sup>10</sup> “And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, Thus have you said: ‘Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we rot away because of them. How then can we live?’ <sup>11</sup> Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

<sup>12</sup> “And you, son of man, say to your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him when he transgresses, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall by it when he turns from his wickedness, and the righteous shall not be able to live by his righteousness when he sins. <sup>13</sup> Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and does injustice, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered, but in his injustice that he has done he shall die. <sup>14</sup> Again, though I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ yet if he turns from his sin and does what is just and right, <sup>15</sup> if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has taken by robbery, and walks in the statutes of life, not doing injustice, he shall surely live; he shall not die. <sup>16</sup> None of the sins that he has committed shall be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right; he shall surely live.

# Meditation

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In Ezekiel 33:10-16, we are confronted with three things: the destructive reality of sins and transgressions (v10), the danger of self-deception leading to false hopes and misguided confidence (vv12, 13), and the mercy of God that redeems and transforms lives in the midst of human failure (v11). These themes of destruction, deception and redemption speak of the human condition, as much as the situation of the Israelites in the sixth century BC.

As Christians in the twenty-first century, we have become painfully aware of how human sinful nature has led to the two world wars, environmental and economic crises, the ever thinning human value and moral fibre, and the never-ending conflicts around the world. Many contemporary Christian thinkers have joined the Israelites in asking, “How then can we live?” (v10)

Reading this passage during Lent reminds us that our hope for the human race can only come from the creator who says, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live” (v11). However, the prophet’s proclamation alerts us to the danger of false religiosity, epitomised by the self-righteous who “trusts in his righteousness and does injustice” (v13). The passage does not tell readers how such misguided self-righteousness and compartmentalised faith came about, leaving us to ponder over the threat of false gospels and the need to recognise them in our modern context.

Jesus’ death on the cross is the ultimate expression of God’s redemptive love. His sacrificial love is our only hope and answer to human predicament. What is noteworthy is that our hope, engendered by our personal faith in Jesus, is no private matter but of public significance. It challenges us to do “what is just and right” (vv 14, 16). Such

is the redemptive efficacy of God's love, transforming us at both the personal and public level.

## Prayer

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Praise God for His mercy and redemptive love for sinners.

Pray for discernment to recognise and reject elements of self-righteousness and self-assurance in Christian piety and passion.

## Action

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Choose a particular context of practice, such as your family, school, work place, church or neighbourhood. Identify steps that you can take to do what is just and right for God.

*Rev Dr Lim Teck Peng  
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Trinity Theological College*



# Jesus, the Fulfillment of Scriptures

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5 April • Saturday of the Fourth Week in Lent

Luke 24:44-53

<sup>44</sup> Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." <sup>45</sup> Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, <sup>46</sup> and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. <sup>48</sup> You are witnesses of these things.

<sup>49</sup> And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." <sup>50</sup> Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. <sup>51</sup> While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. <sup>52</sup> And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, <sup>53</sup> and were continually in the temple blessing God.

## Meditation

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How essential it is for the Lord Jesus to open our minds to understand the Scriptures. For without divine illumination, we will be in the dark like the disciples on the road to Emmaus. The Lukan account of Scriptures in its tripartite form – the Law, the Prophets and the Psalms is one of the earliest records on the division of Israel's Scriptures. The first five books of the Bible making up the Law of Moses prophesied that the seed of the woman will one day bruise the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15), and a star shall come forth from Jacob to crush the forehead

of Moab (Num 24:17). According to the prophets, the Messiah will come forth from Bethlehem to shepherd and rule over Israel (Mic 5:2). The Psalms also point to Christ, as King David when inspired by the Holy Spirit called the Messiah, “My Lord” (Ps 110:1).

The primacy of Scriptures in the life and work of Jesus cannot be overemphasised. Scriptures as a whole testify about Christ and how in Christ’s coming to earth, He has fulfilled what is written concerning Him, namely that He had to undergo much sufferings before being raised on the third day. Since Christ’s death and resurrection, the gospel has been preached to all nations in His name, offering forgiveness of sins to those who repent. For almost two millennia now, believers around the world have experienced the joy of salvation through Jesus Christ. From its inception in Jerusalem, the holy city, the gospel has been advancing in the world by the power of the Holy Spirit. If you and I are clothed with power from on high today, we too will become God’s servants and witnesses, blessing God and bringing salvation for many who call upon the name of Jesus.

## Prayer

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O Lord, open our eyes to see Jesus more clearly through Your Word.

## Action

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Share Christ with others today so that they may also experience the great joy of salvation.

*Dr Tony Siew  
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# Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

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6 April • Fifth Sunday in Lent

John 11:38-44

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odour, for he has been dead four days."

<sup>40</sup> Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" <sup>41</sup> So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. <sup>42</sup> I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." <sup>43</sup> When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." <sup>44</sup> The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

## Meditation

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The story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead teaches us many things. Some say it is a story of faith – believe and the impossible will happen. Others say it is a story of God's great love for His Son. One question remains. How did Jesus do the impossible to raise a man from the dead?

There was no doubt that Lazarus was dead. The facts proved it – he was buried in a tomb. His sister Martha who loved him confirmed that he was dead, even urging Jesus not to remove the stone for fear that the rot had set in. Lazarus had already been buried in the tomb for four days and his body reeked of decay.

Verse 43 states that Jesus called out loudly, “Lazarus, come out!” and the dead man walked out. There was no way a dead man could hear Jesus calling him. Jesus was not speaking to the dead flesh, but to the spirit of man that endures even after death.

As the authority over life and death, Jesus spoke to Lazarus’ spirit and commanded him to rise. Jesus loved Lazarus very much, demonstrated the glory of God (v40) and re-affirmed that God listens and hears the needs of His children.

## Prayer

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Speak to my soul, that my faith will be established and I will see Your glory every day in my life. Teach me to rely on You and come to You in prayer for any difficulty I may encounter.

## Action

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Take a moment to consider whether you’ve been making the effort to speak to our awesome God. Share your burdens with the ever-listening Almighty God. Set aside time daily for God to speak to you. The God of miracles is constantly working in our lives. You have to believe to see the glory of God.

*Rt Rev Leow Khee Fatt  
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The Presbyterian Church in Singapore*

# God's Inscrutable Ways

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7 April • Monday of the Fifth Week in Lent

1 Kings 17:17-24

<sup>17</sup> After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill. And his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. <sup>18</sup> And she said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance and to cause the death of my son!" <sup>19</sup> And he said to her, "Give me your son." And he took him from her arms and carried him up into the upper chamber where he lodged, and laid him on his own bed. <sup>20</sup> And he cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, have you brought calamity even upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by killing her son?" <sup>21</sup> Then he stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, "O LORD my God, let this child's life come into him again." <sup>22</sup> And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. <sup>23</sup> And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives." <sup>24</sup> And the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth."

## Meditation

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The story of the healing of the widow's son recorded in 1 Kings 17 is one full of profound twists and turns. Elijah, the great prophet of God, was asked to go to a widow in Zarephath whom God had instructed to supply him with food (17:9). When Elijah arrived at the widow's house, he found that her community had been ravaged with drought, and she was among the poorest in that community. Furthermore, the widow did not worship the God of Elijah, but the idol Ba'al.

Although God's instruction was in many ways counter-intuitive and puzzling, Elijah obeyed. When Elijah arrived at the widow's house, he found her on the brink of destitution because of the ravaging drought. God miraculously replenished her meagre supply of food. When her son died, probably due to malnutrition, God raised her son from the dead through the prayers of Elijah. Through Elijah's obedience, God was not only able to demonstrate to this pagan widow that He is the Provider, but that He is also the very source of life.

Most significantly, as a result of Elijah's obedience, the pagan woman came to the knowledge of the true God and a firm faith in His word (1 Kgs 17: 24).

God's ways are truly inscrutable! He works in unexpected ways to fulfil His purposes. Even though Elijah did not fully comprehend God's instructions, he was willing to obey. Through Elijah's obedience, a pagan woman and her son came to faith in the true God. May we also be obedient to God even though His plans are not always transparent to us! As we do so, may God use us to bring the revelation of His grace and love to many.

## Prayer

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Gracious God, use us in ways that would bring glory to Your name. As You guide us, help us to be sensitive and obedient to Your Spirit. I pray this in the name of Christ my Saviour and Lord. Amen.

## Action

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Ask God to show you the person whom God wants to bless through you.

*Dr Roland Chia  
Chew Hock Hin Professor of Christian Doctrine  
Trinity Theological College*

# All Is Well

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8 April • Tuesday of the Fifth Week in Lent

2 Kings 4:18-37

<sup>18</sup> When the child had grown, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. <sup>19</sup> And he said to his father, "Oh, my head, my head!" The father said to his servant, "Carry him to his mother." <sup>20</sup> And when he had lifted him and brought him to his mother, the child sat on her lap till noon, and then he died. <sup>21</sup> And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God and shut the door behind him and went out. <sup>22</sup> Then she called to her husband and said, "Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again." <sup>23</sup> And he said, "Why will you go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath." She said, "All is well." <sup>24</sup> Then she saddled the donkey, and she said to her servant, "Urge the animal on; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you." <sup>25</sup> So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When the man of God saw her coming, he said to Gehazi his servant, "Look, there is the Shunammite. <sup>26</sup> Run at once to meet her and say to her, 'Is all well with you? Is all well with your husband? Is all well with the child?'" And she answered, "All is well." <sup>27</sup> And when she came to the mountain to the man of God, she caught hold of his feet. And Gehazi came to push her away. But the man of God said, "Leave her alone, for she is in bitter distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me." <sup>28</sup> Then she said, "Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me?'" <sup>29</sup> He said to Gehazi, "Tie up your garment and take my staff in your hand and go. If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not reply. And lay my staff on the face of the child." <sup>30</sup> Then the mother of the child said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So he arose and followed her. <sup>31</sup> Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was no sound or



sign of life. Therefore he returned to meet him and told him, "The child has not awakened."

<sup>32</sup> When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. <sup>33</sup> So he went in and shut the door behind the two of them and prayed to the LORD. <sup>34</sup> Then he went up and lay on the child, putting his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands. And as he stretched himself upon him, the flesh of the child became warm. <sup>35</sup> Then he got up again and walked once back and forth in the house, and went up and stretched himself upon him. The child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. <sup>36</sup> Then he summoned Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite." So he called her. And when she came to him, he said, "Pick up your son." <sup>37</sup> She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out.

## Meditation

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"All is well," said the woman whose son had just died. Not once, but twice she said it: first to her husband, and again to the servant of the prophet, Elisha. How could someone who had suffered a sudden and tragic loss make such a statement? Was she in denial? Or did she have understanding of her situation?

The Shunammite woman features in the story as a wealthy but anonymous character. She and her elderly husband had no children. Upon her suggestion, they set aside a room in their home for Elisha. In return for their hospitality, God blessed them with a son. Would God give us something only to take it away? When that happens, could all still be well?

Can we say, "All is well" when the thing we have received in answer to prayer is suddenly removed? The woman could

say it for two reasons. Firstly, she recognised the grace of God. Her son was a gift to her from God's gracious hand. Her husband, and perhaps she herself, were past child-bearing age. When Elisha told her that she would have a child, she begged him not to lie to her. She didn't believe God would do it until she saw it happen.

Secondly, she recognised the power of God. She had witnessed it first hand when her son was born. God could do the impossible. The God who did a miracle could do it again. God who gave her a son in a womb thought "dead", could raise to life a lifeless body. She believed God could do it, even before it happened. No wonder, she said, "All is well." May we recognise the grace and power of God, put our complete trust in Him and say, "All is well" in any circumstance.

## Prayer

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Lord, teach me to say "All is well" in all circumstances of life. It is not an act of denial, but a declaration of trust in Your grace and power.

## Action

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List the things that are not going well in your life. Bring them to the Lord and trust Him for the outcome.

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