

Sunday, May 12, 2013

The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord

When the Lord Jesus appeared to the disciples on the resurrection day in the evening, He gave them His peace and showed them His hands and side, the Bible sites that *“The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.”* (John 20:20).

What is the reason for this joy? And how do we enjoy with them this kind of joy?

Perhaps the disciples rejoiced because:

First: They saw the power of Christ overcoming death despite the serious injuries and the deadly torture that He went through. However, He overcame all these torments and resurrected victoriously. This is very joyful for us because we follow Him as our God.

We belong to a powerful God who cannot be defeated. We can also be strong in Him as the Bible commands us, *“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.”* (Ephesians 6:10). The Lord Jesus defeated our vicious enemy, death, who devoured thousands of people every day with no mercy and no one escaped it. Nonetheless, when death tried to devour the Lord Jesus, He trampled over it and defeated its sting. He saved the righteous from Hades and elevated those who believe in Him to the level of overcoming death. He did so by giving them the power of His new life which cannot be defeated by death, through partaking of His body and blood, and living His commandments. Thus, death has become to us merely a departure, and we long to depart and be with the resurrected Christ at all times for this is far better (Philippians 1:23)

Second: they saw His tremendous love which was evident in His wounds that He endured to save us. The Lord Jesus was keen on revealing His wounds to the disciples, not only to prove His identity to them, but also to draw their attention to the great love He had for them such that He endured all this suffering for their sake. We know that the majority of the disciples were not present at the time of crucifixion and didn't witness the wounds of scourging, nails, or stabbing. They merely heard about it from eyewitnesses. Now when they saw it and touched it, their hearts became fervent with the love of the redeemer who trod the winepress of suffering because He loved us. (Isaiah 63:3)

Third: They saw that He is among them and didn't desert them. During the events of crucifixion, the disciples thought that they had lost Jesus, the sweet shepherd, the friend and leader, the faithful teacher, and the one with remarkable dominion yet His heart is full of love. Now, here He is after resurrection, among them. And death, with all its cruelty, couldn't separate Him from them. The Lord also assured them that *He will be with them always, even to the end of the age,* (Matthew 28:20) therefore they greatly rejoiced. The words of the Lord Jesus on the eve of crucifixion were fulfilled.

“I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.” (John 14:18). *“Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.”* (John 16:22).

Fourth: They saw that Life defeated death, righteousness defeated evil, and truth defeated falsehood. This positive aspect of resurrection excites strong feelings of joy within us. As much as we are saddened by hearing news of evil and deceit, we equally rejoice when justice is served. Thus, the resurrection of Christ assured us that truth will prevail at the end, therefore, the disciples greatly rejoiced in the defeat of death, injustice, and hatred, they also greatly rejoiced in the victory of truth, justice and love. The Lord Jesus sent justice to victory and fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah which was asserted by St. Matthew in his Gospel, *“He sends forth justice to victory; And in His name Gentiles will trust.”* (Matthew 12:20-21).

The Joy of the resurrection overflowed out of the hearts of the disciples when they saw the victorious Christ abolishing death. This joy still flows in the veins of the church until today. It overflows in the hearts of those who cling to Christ, those who accepted to die and rise with Him in baptism, accepted to walk with Him all their life carrying the cross in the narrow path, those who are sojourner in this world, and victorious over all its temptations. Then, the resurrected Christ comes and reveals Himself to such person, gives him peace so he greatly rejoices in ways that are indescribable by any human language.

Fr. Yohanna Naseef
fryohanna@hotmail.com