

NEWSLETTER

March - 2024

Sunday Bible Study: 9:45 a.m.

Sunday Service: 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday Bible Study:

7:00 p.m.

SPEAKERS

March 3: Ken Storm, *Holy Communion*

March 10: Ivan Niemela

March 17: Ivan Niemela

March 24: Ken Storm

March 29 @ 7 p.m.: Ken Storm, *Good Friday*

March 31: Nathan Ruonovarra, *Easter, Potluck meal following the service*

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TAPIOLA APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH

Resurrection Sunday

The resurrection of Jesus on Easter Sunday is celebrated by the world as a fulfilment of God's plan of salvation, and rightly so, because it was Adam and Eve's sin against God that not only caused all of mankind to inherit a sinful nature but that also required Jesus to die. Most notably, it was the shedding of blood in the Garden of Eden for the forgiveness of sins that explains the need for the crucifixion of Jesus some 4,000 years later. Every person should thus be grateful for the events of Good Friday whereby Jesus paid for the sins of the entire world by His innocent suffering and death on the center cross of Calvary—grateful, because we are all sinners in need of God's forgiveness. Moreover, because Jesus arose from the grave three days later, all people have His promise of eternal salvation—for those who willingly answer His call to repent of their sins.

In the beginning, on the sixth day of creation, "*God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was very good*" (Gen 1:31): there was neither death nor sin in the world and all was perfect without corruption. But everything changed when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit: sin and death and all manner of corruption then entered into the world. Sorrowful though they were, Adam and Eve hid from God and covered up their nakedness with fig leaves, but, rather than condemning them, God lovingly called out to them and they answered by willingly coming out of hiding to admit what they had done. That was when God showed them that He had forgiven their sin by covering up their nakedness with animal skins, forever showing the world that "*without shedding of blood is no remission*" (Heb 9:22).

The shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sins remained the central feature of worship thereafter, as explained in the Book of Leviticus. In that book, whenever sin troubled a person he would willingly bring an animal to the door of the tabernacle where he would confess his sin to a priest and the priest would then sprinkle the animal's blood round about and burn the entire carcass on the altar to forgive all his committed sins before God. This was a foreshadowing of what Jesus would bring into the world; the forgiveness of sins through the sprinkling of His shed blood.

It was John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, that preached in the wilderness saying, "*Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matt 3:2). Interestingly, he preached not in the cities where there were lots of people but in the wilderness where there were, at best, few people. As we learn from scripture, it was God who provided what listeners He saw fit; "*Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins*" (Matt 3:5-6). As previously mentioned, these people who would normally have confessed their sins at the door of the temple now were confessing their sins in front of John. Because Jesus had not yet shed His blood on the cross, John admitted that neither he nor anyone else could sprinkle that blood and thus proclaim forgiveness until that happened: "*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the holy Ghost, and with fire*" (Matt 3:11).

Thus, things were changing around the time of the Crucifixion, and yet, the way of salvation remained the same. The one change that did occur between the Old and New Testaments was that animal blood could not permanently take away sin (Heb 10:4) but that the blood of Jesus could: *“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (1 John 1:7). So, penitent souls today continue to confess their sins to other believers, who are priests in their own right (1 Peter 2:9), and who are empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit to proclaim the forgiveness of sins in the name and shed blood of Jesus to any penitent person: *“Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained”* (John 20:23).

The sin debt of the entire world has been completely paid for by the death and resurrection of Jesus. God now calls all people to confess any sin that troubles their conscience and to believe the gospel of reconciliation (Mark 1:15). It’s as if the gates of hell, which have held us prisoners to our sins, are now unlocked—the fine for breaking the law was paid in full. But suppose someone says, I’m not ready to leave the prison. I’m comfortable here. This is not just a supposition, for the Bible tells us, *“... many are called, but few are chosen”* (Matt 22:14). Therefore, dear reader, don’t wait to answer God’s next call to repent of your sins, as you may eventually wait too long before you hear Him say, *“... I called you, but ye answered not”* (Jer 7:13).

God’s Peace,

Charles Korhonen