

Dear Friend,

## **RESURRECTION--Freedom to LIVE!**

It's too narrow for us to look at the Risen Christ as saying: "*Look at me! I rose from the dead!*" Jesus said, "***Because I live, you too shall live!***"

Every message about Jesus is a message about humanity--about us. In the Western church most of us were raised with this emphasis on the individual resurrection of Jesus. But there is a "broader" view held by the other half of the universal church.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church--in places like Syria, Turkey, Greece and Egypt--Easter is not usually painted with a solitary Jesus rising from the dead. He's always surrounded by crowds of people. In fact in traditional icons, he's pulling people out of Hades (Hades is not precisely the same as Hell. It is simply the place of the dead--it's where a soul waits for God).

Easter is an announcement of a *common hope*. The resurrection is about what happened in Jesus and what will happen in us! Through Christ's resurrection we are given the freedom to live a new life, freed from the bondage (imprisonment) of sin, death, fear, guilt and shame.

The transformative power of resurrection offers daily *spiritual power*, helping us to break free from destructive habits as we live in the loving, supportive faith community (church).

We have a new "*living hope*" that replaces despair and discouragement (1 Peter 1:3-9).

We are *freed from fears*, including the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-18).

**APPLICATION:** This Easter, let's remember that:

- We are united with Christ in his death and resurrection.
- We can set our focus (minds) on heavenly things and surrender control of our life to God.
- We can count ourselves "dead to sin, and alive to righteousness." (Romans 6:9-11).
- We can walk each day in freedom as we choose the path of new life in Christ!
- We can rely on the Holy Spirit to help us live each day in the LOVE that makes us truly free!

*Dear God, please open our eyes to see how we can experience new life this Easter!*

With much love,

Pastor Duff

