

DARK FRIDAY

BRIGHT SUNDAY



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Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

On that Friday, the Savior of mankind was humiliated and bruised. But then Sunday came.

I remember the first time I met my wife, Elisa. As a favor to a friend, I had gone to her home to pick up her sister, Frances. Elisa opened the door, and at least for me, it was love at first sight.

I think she must have felt something too, for the first words I ever remember her saying were, “I knew who you was.”

Elisa was an English major.

To this day I still cherish those five words as some of the most beautiful in human language.

She loved to play tennis and had a lightning serve. I tried to play tennis with her, but I finally quit after coming to the realization that I couldn’t hit what I couldn’t see.

She was my strength and my joy. Because of her, I am a better man, husband, and father. We married, had eight children, and walked together through 65 years of life.

When President Hinckley spoke at Sister Wirthlin’s funeral, he said that it is a devastating, consuming thing to lose someone you love. It gnaws at your soul. He was right. As Elisa was my greatest joy, her

passing is my greatest sorrow.

In the lonely hours I have spent a great deal of time thinking about eternal things. I have contemplated the comforting doctrines of eternal life.

The Gift of the Resurrection

During my life I have heard many sermons on the Resurrection. I can recite the events of that first Easter Sunday. I have marked in my scriptures passages regarding the Resurrection.

We know what the Resurrection is—the reuniting of the spirit and body in its perfect form (see Alma 11:43).

President Spencer W. Kimball said, “I am sure that if we can imagine ourselves at our very best, physically, mentally, spiritually, that is the way we will come back.”¹

Can you imagine that? Life at our prime? Never sick, never in pain, never burdened by the ills that so often beset us in mortality?

The Resurrection is at the core of our beliefs as Christians. Without it, our faith is meaningless. The Apostle Paul said, “If Christ





The Resurrection transformed the lives of those who witnessed it. Should it not transform ours? We will all rise from the grave. On that day we will know the love of our Heavenly Father and will rejoice that the Messiah overcame all that we could live forever.

be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and [our] faith is also vain” (1 Corinthians 15:14).

In all the history of the world there have been many great and wise souls, many of whom claimed special knowledge of God. But when the Savior rose from the tomb, He did something no one had ever done. He did something no one else could do. He broke the bonds of death, not only for Himself but for all who have ever lived—the just and the unjust (see John 5:28–29).

When Christ rose from the grave, becoming the firstfruits of the Resurrection, He made that gift available to all. And with that sublime act, He softened the devastating, consuming sorrow of those who have lost precious loved ones.

The Dark Friday of the Crucifixion

I think of how dark that Friday was when Christ was lifted up on the cross. On that terrible Friday the earth shook and grew dark. Frightful storms lashed at the earth.

Those evil men who sought His life rejoiced. Now that Jesus was no more, surely those who followed Him would disperse. On that day those men stood triumphant.

On that day the veil of the temple was rent in twain.

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were both overcome with grief and despair. The superb man they had loved and honored hung lifeless upon the cross.

On that Friday the Apostles were devastated. Jesus, their Savior—the man who had walked on water and raised the dead—was Himself at

the mercy of wicked men. They watched helplessly as He was overcome by His enemies.

On that Friday the Savior of mankind was humiliated and bruised, abused and reviled. It was a Friday filled with devastating, consuming sorrow that gnawed at the souls of those who loved and honored the Son of God.

I think that of all the days since the beginning of this world’s history, that Friday was the darkest.

Sunday Will Come

But the doom of that day did not endure.

The despair did not linger because on Sunday, the resurrected Lord burst the bonds of death. He ascended from the grave and appeared gloriously triumphant as the Savior of all mankind.

And in an instant the eyes that had been filled with ever-flowing tears dried. The lips that had whispered prayers of distress and grief now filled the air with wondrous praise, for Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God, stood before them as the firstfruits of the Resurrection, the proof that death is merely the beginning of a new and wondrous existence.

Each of us will have our own Fridays—those days when the universe itself seems shattered and the shards of our world lie littered about us in pieces. We all will experience those broken times when it seems we can never be put together again. We will all have our Fridays.

But I testify to you in the name of the One who conquered death—Sunday will come. In the darkness of our sorrow, Sunday will come.

No matter our desperation, no matter our grief, in this life or the next, Sunday will come.

Testimonies of the Resurrection

The Resurrection is not a fable. We have the personal testimonies of those who saw Him. Thousands in the Old and New Worlds witnessed the risen Savior. They felt the wounds in His hands, feet, and side. They shed tears of unrestrained joy as they embraced Him.

After the Resurrection, His disciples could have disappeared and returned to their former

lives and occupations. In time, their association with Him would have been forgotten.

They could have denied the divinity of Christ. Yet they did not. In the face of danger, ridicule, and threat of death, they entered palaces, temples, and synagogues boldly proclaiming Jesus the Christ, the resurrected Son of the living God.

Many of them offered as a final testimony their own precious lives. They died as martyrs, the testimony of the risen Christ on their lips as they perished.

The Resurrection transformed the lives of those who witnessed it. Should it not transform ours?

Blessings of the Resurrection

We will all rise from the grave. On that day I will once again hold in my arms my beloved Elisa.

Because of the life and eternal sacrifice of the Savior of the world, we will be reunited with those we have cherished. On that day we will know the love of our Heavenly Father and will rejoice that the Messiah overcame all that we could live forever.

Because of the sacred ordinances we receive in holy temples, death cannot long separate relationships that have been fastened together with cords made of eternal ties.

Death is not the end of existence. Because of our beloved Redeemer, we can lift up our voices, even in the midst of our darkest Fridays, and proclaim, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians 15:55)

When President Hinckley spoke of the terrible loneliness that comes to those who lose the ones they love, he also promised that in the quiet of the night a still, unheard voice whispers peace to our soul: “All is well.”

I am grateful beyond measure for the sublime true doctrines of the gospel and for the gift of the Holy Ghost, which has whispered to my soul the comforting and peaceful words promised by our beloved prophet.

Live in thanksgiving for the priceless gifts that come to us as sons and daughters of a loving Heavenly Father and for the promise of that bright day when we shall all rise triumphant from the grave.

No matter how dark our Friday, Sunday will come. **NE**

From an October 2006 general conference address.

NOTES

1. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 45.

