

## JESUS IS ALIVE AND REIGNS!

**2024**

A letter I wrote to my heavenly Father a few years ago is probably not an Easter message you'd expect to receive. But for some reason, I feel compelled to share it with you at this time.

*Dear heavenly Father,*

*Every morning I wake up, each day you give me is a gift from you. I don't want to take it for granted. My first thoughts always turn toward you as I thank you for the love you show me in so many ways. Each day also starts without the foreknowledge of how exactly it'll play out before a new one begins... This is quite exciting, but I must admit it can be daunting at times... However, rest assured that I never dwell on this negative thought because I know that together we can handle anything that will occur during the day. The good – which is easy! – as well as the bad and the ugly... It's this togetherness that gives me the confidence to get up in the morning with joy in my heart!*

*In the Bible, Psalm 139 tells me that you formed me in my mother's womb; intricately and wonderfully made by you. And in your book were written - every one of them - the days ordained for me before one of them came to pass. You also discern my going out, and my lying down. You are familiar with all my ways. It also says that wherever I go, you are there. I cannot go from your Spirit. I cannot flee from your presence. And that your hand will guide me, will hold me fast.*

*How amazing is the thought of it all, but also how very complex and difficult to understand from a human perspective. It's only through your divine revelation and by faith that I can accept your truth, say that you're constantly with me, and that you've always been since the day I was born. So, even though for many years you were far from my mind, I know that if I go back in time, you'll remember the following circumstances that happened in my life because you were present in every one of them...*

*Do you remember the day my mom passed away of tuberculosis when I was only three years old? I was too young to realize what had just happened, but as a result I was also diagnosed with the disease. However, a medicine that had been discovered at the time saved my life. In spite of this 'miracle', for three years I still had to follow a strict regimen before I could be given a clean bill of health from the doctor.*

*After my mom's death, an aunt came to live with us to take care of our family. And because of her relentless devotion, I didn't have to be transferred to a sanatorium. I was too young back then to recognize your hand in all of this, but today I know that you were there all along...*

*Do you remember when my younger brother passed away of cancer at the age of twenty-three? Oh, it was such a hard time for our family... I had been married for a couple of years at the time, and his death affected me tremendously emotionally. For two years, my dear husband and I had to live through this difficult patch. I experienced panic, and anxiety attacks which got so bad at one point that I couldn't even leave my home. I finally found help and got back to a normal life.*

*Despite everything, I realize today that my brother's death wasn't in vain... Because of it, I found a great appreciation for my husband's love and commitment toward me, as well as compassion for people going through emotional problems. I know today that you were always there because something good came out of this tragedy...*

*Do you remember one evening when my husband and I were sitting in a large auditorium filled with people that were there to listen to a preacher-evangelist speak about you? Oh, it's difficult to really describe what happened that evening, but you made me clearly understand that it wasn't through religion, my good works or my own efforts that I could make myself look better in your eyes. You showed me your*

*love, mercy, and compassion. You revealed to me the extreme sacrifice you had made in sending your only Son to die on the cross for my sins, and what it required of Him to take my place on that cross so I could be made righteous in your eyes... It's by your grace alone that it can be done. There's no other humanly speaking kind of way... Oh, I can say without a shadow of a doubt that you were there that evening because you totally transformed me from the inside out...*

*Do you remember when my father passed away, about four months prior to our family moving from Canada to the United States? Oh, what a great loss that was... My father and I had a very special bond, and the day I heard of his death, I was devastated.... But I know that you were with me during this time of deep sorrow because I felt a peace in my heart like none other; a peace that only YOU can bring...*

*Last but not least...*

*Do you remember when our little family went through some major financial struggles? Oh, how difficult it was to come to the realization that we were going to lose everything... After a while, I had enough of all the struggles, and I remember questioning your faithfulness, mercy and compassion. I remember being at the end of my rope and crying out to you one day, "God, why can't you give a good job to my husband?" It's not that he wasn't looking for one... Your reply was swift. "Who are you to tell me how to provide for your family as long as I do?" You didn't mince your words, and I heard you clearly that day...*

*How sorry and contrite I was for having acted this way toward you, and I remember asking for your forgiveness. I had no reason to behave the way I did because I realize that YES, you always provided for our needs. Oh, maybe not the way I would have liked to, but you did... I witnessed your miracles so many times during the time it took to finally come out of this crisis. And even to this day, I cannot forget them because in the midst of all our struggles, you were always there...*

*Father, these are just a few circumstances where I saw your presence, but I'm sure there have been many more that I'm not even aware of...*

*Oh, I could go on and on, but now I just want to run into your loving arms, and tell you how much I love you, and how much you mean to me. How awesome, all-powerful, boundless God you are; full of compassion, gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in mercy! Thank you Father for your love... for everything!*

*Your loving daughter.*

*Beth*

Despite the fact that for many years God was far from my heart and mind, He never stopped loving me. Being spiritually blind at the time, I couldn't see His presence in all the trials I went through back then. I couldn't grasp His incredible love for me; that He was always watching over me, and had a plan for my life. Actually, I had a very limited knowledge about who God really is...

However, everything changed when He revealed Himself to me in an unexpected way. At that moment, God gave me a new heart and put His Spirit within me. I believed in His Son, Jesus; I was convicted of sin and sincerely repented. I received Jesus as my Savior, and surrendered my life to Him as Lord. Amazingly, just as God raised Jesus from the grave, He gave me spiritual life in Christ. I was born again! The Bible says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."<sup>1</sup> And the good news is that God's amazing grace has made it possible for all who believe in Him to receive this new life, His free gift of salvation and eternal life. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."<sup>2</sup>

For believers and followers of Christ, His resurrection is central to our faith. Oh, we might face adversity, overwhelming challenges and trials in our lives that may call into question our faith, and even the faithfulness of God toward us. However, when we surrender our lives to Him, and realize that His incomparable power is given to us, there's no limit to what God can accomplish in us and through us. Actually, "That power is the same as the mighty strength God exerted when He raised Christ from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly realms."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, His promises to never leave us nor forsake us, to help and sustain us in our time of need, pain and suffering are absolute. As the Psalmist said, "He is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."<sup>4</sup>

In resurrecting Jesus from the grave, God demonstrated as well that He has complete dominion over both life and death. Jesus own words confirm this when He said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he may die, he shall live; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."<sup>5</sup> For every believer who keeps the faith till the end, there's the amazing promise of an eternal life in heaven.

Oh, let us rejoice and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, the almighty Son of God and Savior of the world, not only on Easter, but every day that He graciously gives us!

<sup>1</sup>2 Corinthians 5:17    <sup>2</sup>John 3:16    <sup>3</sup>Ephesians 1:19-20    <sup>4</sup>Psalms 34:17-18    <sup>5</sup>John 11:25-26