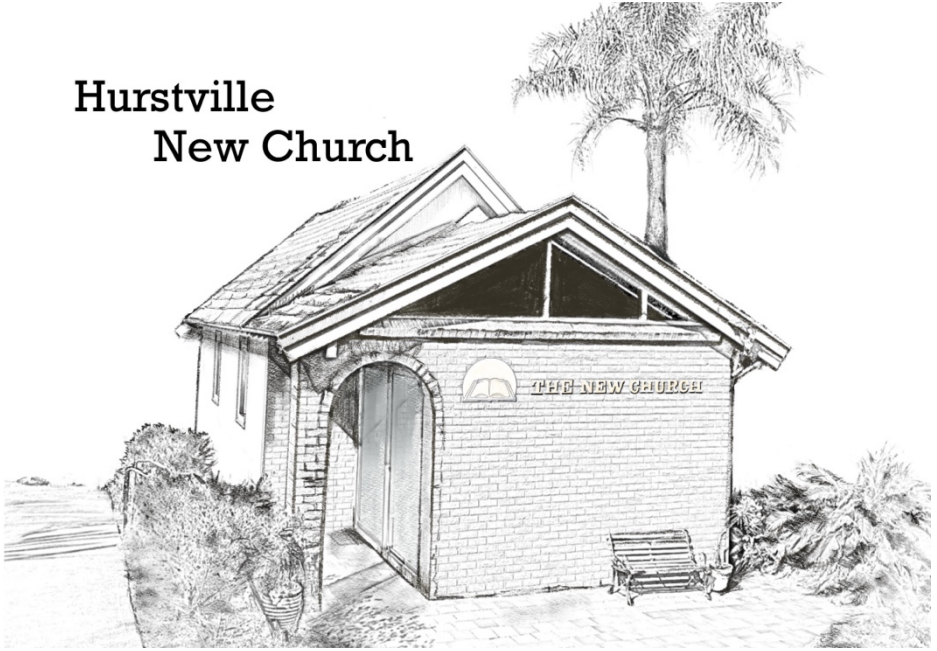


Hurstville New Church



The New Church Newsletter Hurstville Society May 2025

From Death to Life

By Rev HyunJin Yang

We are created in such a way that as far as our inner being is concerned we cannot die. This is because we can believe in God and can also love God; so we can be joined to God by faith and love, and to be joined to God is to live forever. (The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine 223)

This year's Easter topic was dying for the sake of life. This may sound to be counter-intuitive, as the former can't seem to connect with the latter, nor does it have anything to do with that. And yet, the story of the Lord Jesus was different. He died on the cross so that He could be fully united with the Divine itself, that is, life itself. In other words, He achieved life through and by dying on the cross and resurrecting the third day. In that sense, dying for the sake of life can make a perfect sense.

We can also understand it this way: Jesus cast aside the last single bit of His human humanity, so that His Divine humanity could fully come forward. The human humanity was the one that Jesus inherited from the mother, and the Divine humanity was the one that He gradually acquired through His glorification from His Divine in Himself. Thus, He gave up on or cast aside the former through the death on the cross (and other numerous temptations He went through). But He was risen with life itself (See Doctrine of the Lord 12, 35:1).

Thus, we may say that at the heart of the Easter story and the Lord's resurrection is an idea that giving up on something or even facing death doesn't mean risking and losing everything. This idea can extend into and be applied to our daily lives. This was one of the ideas I brought up on Easter Sunday as well, and the example I offered for the children's talk was chocolate. I had ten Easter egg chocolate. Instead of eating them up for myself, I laid aside my own need and desire of them, and that was when a new idea and a new wish for what I could do with them came in. I thought it would be much desirable, and it would make me much happier if I gave them away for the kids. So, did I. In a sense, by the act of giving them away, the chocolate or my experience and joy of eating it died on me. However, that allowed for something else to be possible – all seven kids being able to eat it. It turned out to be the happiest choice not only for them, but for me.

We can apply this to numerous other examples in trying to understand the concept that death is not a total loss, but that it is a beginning of

something new. For example, it is observed that from 50 to 330 billion cells in our human body die and be replaced by new cells daily. We are also told that this death and life cycle is crucial in maintaining a healthy organism and preventing disease.

What about pruning dying stems or pest-infested branches of a plant? We prune them because leaving them can harm the rest of the plant and attract more pest on the healthy parts. We prune them, because it can preserve energy that can maximize the productivity and vigor of the plant, which encourages overall growth of it.

This may be a bit nuanced, but how about our black hair turning into white hair? As we age, we may see our once black hair turning gray. We may think that we are losing black hair or that we no longer have it. But we can also look at the other side of it and think that it may as well be a sign of becoming wiser, rather than of aging.

How about passing of a day? Though a day or today passes away, another day or tomorrow will always lie ahead of us, as a new day.

These examples can indicate to us that giving up on something or even facing death doesn't always mean a total loss. We can't expect that death of something will always circle back to its own life in the same form and quality just as the constant replacement of old cells with new cells does. But we may say that death is like a doorway to something new. It can allow for something else to be born in the place of itself, like a new and healthy branch that sprouts in the place of the dying parts that have been removed.

Then, how about our death in the world? Some may or the world may think that our physical death or death of our body means death of our being, that is, cessation of our existence. And yet, it is a common belief and faith in Christianity that there is life after death. In a word, death of our body doesn't kill our being, the spirit and soul of who we are. Our life continues in the next life.

Not only that, but there is also hope of eternal life in the Lord's kingdom for those who lives and believes in Him. The Lord Himself says this: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:24-25).

The New Church teaches exactly that. The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine 223 sums it up as follows:

We are created in such a way that as far as our inner being is concerned we cannot die. This is because we can believe in God and can also love God; so we can be joined to God by faith and love, and to be joined to God is to live forever.

In many ways and for many reasons, we can't say that death is for nothing. Rather we can confidently say that death is not the end of all, but it is more of a doorway to something new.

Without a doubt, life following death is one of the very keywords for celebrating Easter. This time of every year, we are reminded that death is not the end, but it is a new beginning of something else, just as Jesus' death on the cross was not the end of the story, but the beginning of all things new. There is so much we can celebrate about that victory and the gift of life that the Lord invites us to. We are also encouraged to think how the Lord's resurrection and the principle of a new life emerging at the end of death can apply to us. As we've considered in this article, we can find how the concept can work in many other areas of our lives. Easter is a gift for another reason: it reminds us that a seed of a new life in some form is often encoded in death, and that there is always hope for something else new to emerge at the end of something.

Washing One Another's Feet (6th)

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. (John 13:14)



We did it! After the first Sunday of April, ten of us participated in the feet washing practice as part of “Washing One Another’s Feet” service. It was not unprecedented, as some of us remember having it here in Hurstville Society in the 90’s. I thought I might have scared some people off from attending with the first announcement made on the prior Sunday and another one made in the Weekly Update. It turned out to be not true. 😊

To be fair, it was not supposed to be comfortable – allowing our feet and dirt of them to be seen and cleansed by one another. In that sense, the feet washing practice in nature has something akin to allowing part of us that we want to hide from others to be seen and forgiven by one another. The feet-washing was the reminder of the fact that forgiveness is needed for one another especially for flaws and mistakes that we get to carry with ourselves from living our natural life – the ones that we don’t necessarily intend on but cling to us like how dirt and filth cling to our feet. That was what we had in our mind.

At least for me it was a heartwarming experience. We stepped out of our comfort zone a bit. We served one another and shared something that was extra special because it was almost once a life-time experience. Or we could make it as one of our traditions that we can do annually. But I would say that making it as a customary tradition wouldn’t serve us much, if we don’t incorporate the teachings for forgiveness and our forgiving atmosphere in that practice.

Below are a couple of more pictures of the event.



The best part of it without a doubt was Matthew's washing Huijing's feet. It was a precious moment for mother and son.

Good Friday Evening Service (18th)



Although it is called ‘Good’ Friday, we still may say that the event that took place – Jesus’ death on the cross – was tragic, especially when we look at what the people did to Him. It is still called “Good” because what the Lord achieved through the crucifixion was not at all tragic, but rather an ultimate victory over death and the everlasting hope for our salvation and resurrection.

In my mind, commemorating Good Friday leans more towards reflecting on the tragic aspect of the story, with an emphasis on what people did to the Lord, or what our evil and falsity could do, while Easter Sunday focuses on the latter – the victory and hope. With that in mind, our Good Friday service followed along the narratives as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, from chapter 19, and from 22 through 23 accompanied by music interspersed. Holy Supper was included in the service, as our readings reached the Lord’s last supper with the disciples and institution of the Holy Supper in chapter 22.

It was a quiet and peaceful evening. Ten of us gathered in person, with a couple of more joining livestream online. Before the night passed, I received two messages about the service and other thanks notes.

“It was really beautiful, sombre but serene.” – Heulwen

“More meaning to lessons being taught.” – Owen and Margaret.

I was glad to know that the atmosphere of the service came through even to those who were joining online. I think this is what we can experience when we allow the Lord’s Word to talk to us.

Easter Sunday (20th)

It was wonderful to see you all! It was by far the largest gathering of the year as compared to our regular Sunday attendance falling anywhere between from eight to thirteen. I know it is not always easy for some to travel up to Hurstville, and it was remarkable to see the congregation in that extended way.

The extra blessing was that we had seven kids joining the service and our annual Easter Egg Hunt: Aneria, Azalea, Evie, Lily, Riley, Lucy, and Claire. I have found that the service and our social time afterwards were livened up by the kids' laughs and running around. Thank you all for coming. For Easter Egg Hunt, fifty eggs were hidden. I believe all of them were found. Thanks to Ellen who prepared the Easter eggs and hid them.



Waiting for the Egg Hunt to start!

Upcoming Pastor's Visits

My first visit to Perth is scheduled from the 16th to 18th in May. I am excited to meet with people in the Perth group, get to know them, and serve them. I will be visiting people, teaching a class on Saturday, and leading Sunday service on the 18th accompanied by Holy Supper. My absence for Hurstville Society's Sunday service on the 18th will be substituted as a lay-led service.

I am also looking forward to my upcoming visit to Canberra on the 30th through the 31st. I will be visiting two groups, offering Holy Supper and a worship service for one group. Please expect reports on these two visits in the next issue of Newsletter.

Check with Brian O' Neill

If you seek help from a mental health profession, Brian could be your guy. This is a friendly reminder for New Church people of a Telehealth consultation service provided by Brian O'Neill, an ordained minister of the New Church in Australia. Full information about this offer initially went out in the 2024 November Issue of the Newsletter. For those who can't hold of it, I am copying the following:

Brian brings over 30 years of experience in the mental health field, with a proven track record in diverse areas including:

- Mental Health (Senior Fellow in Mental Health, University of Wollongong)
- Dependence Issues (Director of Drug, Alcohol, and HIV/AIDS)
- Working with Veterans (Clinical Director Veterans Affairs, SA)
- Adolescent and Family Issues (Chair of Queensland Youth

- Early Psychosis Project)
- Workplace Issues (Workcover)
- Relationships including reconciliation, separation, and parenting (Senior Manager Relationship Australia, NSW)

Brian's extensive expertise and genuine desire to help make him an invaluable resource for anyone seeking guidance and support. If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health concerns, we encourage you to reach out to Brian. He is here to listen, understand, and provide the professional care you need.

To schedule a Telehealth appointment with Brian, please obtain a referral from your GP, and then contact him directly:

- **Phone:** 0478686701
- **Email:** oneillpsychology@gmail.com

Birthdays!

Happy Birthday to, Naomi Heldon (20th), Matthew Cooper (25th), Daniel Walsh (27th), Brian Walsh (31st)



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