

Week 2  
12/6/2020

## **The Butterfly**

Matthew 28:1-10

Would you believe that one flap of a sea gull's wings would be enough to alter the course of the weather forever? Chaos theory, used by mathematics, physics and economics and other sciences as well, predicts that miniscule events, even the flap of a sea gull's wings or even a butterfly, are enough to change weather patterns around the world forever. Those flaps of wings create wind and temperature changes which, in turn, cause wind and temperature changes on larger scales to make changes that impact the world in ways we cannot even imagine.

We hang a butterfly on our Chrismon Tree today to remind us that the death of Jesus, almost 2000 thousand years ago, has resulted in changes in the world over the centuries and across continents and has impacted hundreds of millions of people. You and I and many others have been impacted by God becoming a human being in Jesus. I cannot even imagine what my life would be like without Jesus and I wonder if you can either. What would life on earth for humanity be like without Jesus' saving grace?

Believing in Jesus changes people and changes the world. It has been true in other countries and the change has been made in the U.S. as well, that no combat military positions in the U.S. can exclude women. I wonder if that is a change that Jesus' teaching would make. I wonder if war and violence and hate and prejudice are part of Jesus' teaching. Jesus has come and will come again. May Jesus' second coming result in ways that we cannot even imagine: transformation of the world into the fulfilled Kingdom of God.

## **The Dove**

Mark 1:9-11

There was a movie made back in 2015, "33," about the 69 days that 33 miners spent trapped underground from the collapse of a gold and copper mine in Chile. It shows their struggles to survive with limited food and water or hope for rescue. I, personally, can't imagine any more frightening thing than being buried alive. The thought gives me nightmares.

The dangers weren't just lack of food and water, but also lack of air. The movie reminds me of another story about two men who were trying to make their way out of a mine without light, in complete darkness, to guide them. For them, the barest of breeze in an otherwise still air led them to follow that breeze to the surface.

In a world of confusing ideas and theories and swirling and sometimes contradictory advice, it can be difficult to find our way home. The Holy Spirit is described in Scripture as a dove or a flame or even as a wind, so we hang a Chrismon in the shape of a dove to point the way to God: a symbol of the wisdom of God which breathes into us and points the way to God – which points our way home and salvation.

## **Ichthus (The Fish)**

Luke 5:1-11

Shortly after Jesus was crucified and ascended into heaven, shortly after more and more people began believing in Him, there was a great persecution in the Roman world. People were being killed just for being a Christian. It was dangerous for anyone to know if a person was a Christian and for the wrong person to know could mean torture and death.

Known colloquially as “the sign of the fish,” it is reported that in early times the ichthus was used by Christians as a secret symbol that all would recognize, whether scratched on walls, rocks, or sand. It has been suggested that when a Christian met a stranger on the road, he/she sometimes drew one arc of the fish outline in the dirt. If the stranger drew the other arc, both believers knew they were in good company! The symbol may have also been used by early Christians to mark tombs or even meeting places in a house church.

You can often see “the sign of the fish” as jewelry or on bumper stickers. It is, most simply, made of two intersecting arcs, the ends extending beyond the meeting point so as to resemble the profile of a fish. Sometimes you will see an acronym printed inside. Ichthus is an ancient Greek word for fish, so Greek letters are used to form the phrase: “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior.

Iota (i) is the first letter of Iesous (Greek for Jesus)

Chi (kh) is the first letter of Khristos (Greek for Christ)

Theta (th) is the first letter of Theou (Greek for God, or “God’s)

Upsilon (u) is the first letter of Huios (Greek for Son)

Sigma (s) is the first letter of Soter (Greek for Savior)

Wearing or displaying the ichthus is still a good way to tell people that you are a Christian and a way to tell people about Jesus.

## **The Chalice**

John 1:1-5

Celebration of Communion