Good morning to all the Pine Ridge Family.

I hope you are enjoying this Sabbath day. While we seek out activities and forgotten chores the Jews among us are seeking a day of rest. They are supposed to spend as much time in Synagogues or study or reading the Torah. Most lean to the liberal side of Judaism and just relax. After all, we have conveniently given them Sunday to do all their chores.

But what were Jesus’ disciples and His family doing on this day after the crucifixion? At the time Jesus died they should have been beginning the high Seder meal to commemorate the Exodus from Egypt. There would have been celebrations into the night and Temple worship the next day. I think we can conclude that they did not participate this time. Although it was a requirement for each Jew, fear would have kept them away from discovery at the Temple. Grief and confusion would have overwhelmed them. They even feared to flee the city back to their homes in Galilee because leaving the city during the feast would have caught the attention of the gate guards. So they stayed inside, hidden away from the world they had just been so bold in.

All of us have felt like this sometime. Our direction and future has been kicked out from under us. We have been betrayed, or abandoned. For a time we cannot perceive a way forward. One minute the disciples were planning out their position in the Kingdom of God and now they fear being discovered by some random guard or betrayed to some Pharisee. They had given up everything to follow Jesus. That path had been to a cross and a tomb. Now they have nothing.

We should not quickly leave this feeling because, in life, we do not quickly leave these stages. No one comes into our lives and speaks a word and everything becomes suddenly all right. The situation is never instantly changed. We grieve and we pray and we hope, but it does take time.

We have passed the low that Peter, John, James and the rest had. We have a hope that they did not have yet. And that hope sustains us in the darkness. Just as we know the end to *this* story, we know the end to *our* story. We can say with Paul, “For me to live is Christ and dying is gain.” This doesn’t mean we do not suffer or face discouragement. It does not mean that only un-spiritual believers get discouraged. What it means is that when we find ourselves in this trial be remember the strong hand of our God. He is about to answer the grief of the apostles with an impossible answer. He answers our grief with an impossible answer too. The sinner whose sin cannot be paid for, no matter how much we try, is paid for by God Himself. *What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written,
"For Your sake we are being put to death all day long;
We were considered as sheep to be slaughtered." But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:31-39*

In Christ Pastor EA