

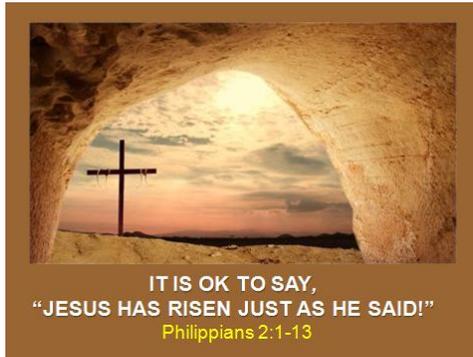
It is OK to say Jesus is Lord!

Philippians 2:5-11

By pastor Ken Keyte

Date: 24th March 2016

1



*He has risen just as he said!
He's risen, hallelujah!!!*

Since today is Easter Sunday, *this* is the day, *even more* so than any other day of the year, when it's *especially OK* to say, "*Jesus has risen, just as he said!*"

Along with churches all over the world, today we celebrate that *Jesus* has risen from the dead, *just as he said he would!*

To understand why it *is OK* to say, "*Jesus has risen, just as he said!*", I'm going to tell you *three stories*, each with a *distinctive pattern* to it, that tells us something about *why it's OK* to say *Jesus* has risen from the dead *just as he said*.

The *first story* is about a *protest march*, the *second* is about an *incomplete building project*, and the *last story* is about a *beautiful worship song*.

But it's the *pattern* of each of these stories that I want you to pay *extra attention* to, because the *pattern* of each story tells us

something about why it *is OK* to say, "*Jesus has risen just as he said!*"

The Protest March: *Family Violence It's not OK! It is OK to ask for help!*

2



Two weeks ago I took part in a *protest march*. I've *never* marched against *anything before* in my life, but a couple of weeks ago *I did!*

11am Saturday morning, on the grassy area beside the Te Puke squash courts a few hundred people from Te Puke *gathered together* to *march* through the *centre of town* and onto *Jubilee Park*.

Some people carried *placards* with one of the *two statements* the march was making:

Family Violence it's not OK! 2a

And:

It is OK to ask for help!

All sorts of people from our community took part in the march. The mayor, Western Bay District Councilors, school principals, teachers, the police, the fire brigade, Saint John's Ambulance, some neighbours from my street, probably some neighbours from your street, parents, children, grand parents, and *quite a few of you* marched with me in this *protest* against *family violence*.

"1,2,3,4 we won't take it anymore!"
We chanted as we marched through town.
"5,6,7,8 No more violence, No more hate!"

Upon reaching our destination of *Jubilee Park*, we gathered around the stage to listen to some *prominent people speaking out against family violence* and *speaking up for how victims of family violence can find help*.

I listened to the *first speaker* reporting some terrible statistics about family violence in New Zealand and Te Puke.

- 32 people are killed in New Zealand every year as a direct result of family violence!
- 9 of them are *children!*
- One quarter of family violence deaths are perpetrated by women, *three quarters* are perpetrated by *men*.
- 101,981 family violence investigations were carried out by the Police in 2014
- Last month in *Te Puke*, the police were called out to 48 family violence incidents.
- 1 in 7 young people report being harmed on purpose by an adult at home.
- 1 in 3 women experience physical and/or sexual abuse from a partner in their life time.
- It is estimated that 3/4 of interpersonal offenses by a family member are *not reported* to police, which means the *true* number of family violence incidents is about *four times* what I've just said!

These are *shocking statistics* aren't they!

Raewyn's and *my* perspective on these statistics is through the *number of kids we've fostered* (or been asked to foster when we haven't been able to!) *Each one* of whom is a *victim family violence!*

But while us *protest marchers* listened to these speeches, the *kids played happily* on the playground and the bouncy castle, *family members* munched on a free sausage sizzle, and browsed the stalls where all sorts of produce was for sale.

Among the stalls was an *information booth* carrying brochures about the *help that's available for victims of family violence*.

Mixing and mingling among the crowd, were *Te Puke's anti-family violence champions*, including *Roger & Sue Wilks* from our church!

Which is what the *other half* of the march was about.

The march, the placards, the chants, the speeches, all *reinforced the message* that *family violence is **not** OK!*

The bouncy castle, the playground, the information booth, the anti-family violence champions, all *reinforced the message* that: *It **is** OK to ask for help!*

Everything was patterned around this *two-fold message*:

*Family Violence is **not** OK!*
*It **is** OK to ask for help!*

But it's the *pattern of this story* I want you to pay *extra attention* to, because the pattern tells us *something* about *why it **is** OK to say*, "*Jesus has risen just as he said!*"

The *pattern* of *Te Puke's march against family violence* looks like this:



The cross represents *stopping family violence*
The upward arrow points to where *help is found*.

That's the *pattern of the story* about the *protest march* that took place in Te Puke a couple of weeks ago.

The building project:

Trying to become famous and powerful like God, is not OK!
It is OK to find God for help!

4



The *second story* that tells us *something* about *why it is OK* to say, "*Jesus has risen just as he said!*", is about a *building project*.

The *population is growing*, houses are becoming *more difficult to find* and people are *moving eastward* in search of a *good place to live*.

Reaching a *place of plenty* they settle, begin building houses, putting builders to work constructing new homes in the *fast expanding city*.

"*Wouldn't it be great if we could establish this place as the best place on earth to live!*", the people are saying as they arrive and begin moving into their new homes.

"*Let's make a name for ourselves by building a tower that reaches to the heavens*", they decide.

And so plans are made, resource consent is granted, and construction commences on a *giant tower* that will reach to the sky.

All goes well at first on this *massive building project*, but since there's a *shortage of labour*, *immigrants* are employed from *foreign lands*.

The *local builders* don't like it and begin *complaining to their union rep*. that these foreigners are *taking their jobs!*

The *foreman* doesn't like it, and complains to the *project engineer* that he *can't communicate* with his building crew because they all speak different languages!

A *stop work meeting* is held to hear the complaints. Everyone thinks *they know* best shouting at each other trying to make themselves heard. But *no-one's* listening to *anyone* and soon *confusion reigns!*

Eventually they *give up on each other* and begin *moving away* in search of a *new place to live*, where it might be *easier to make a name for themselves* by building the *best place on earth to live!*

Genesis 11 says:

'But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.

Come let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

So the Lord scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.'

Like a sequel to the story about the tower of Babel, are the projects we attempt today, in an effort to become famous and powerful like God!

One of these scattered emigrants is a man named *Abram*.

To Abram God says:

"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and curse those who curse you; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

The rapidly expanding city, the failed attempt at making a name for themselves by building a tower to the heavens, the confusion of their languages, and the scattering of people all over all the earth, all *reinforce the message that:*

*trying to become famous and powerful like God is **not** OK! 4a*

But God's sending of Abram out to become a blessing to all peoples on earth, *reinforces the message that:*
*It **is** OK to find God for help! 4b*

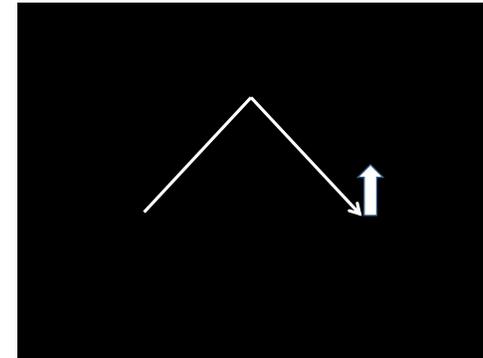
Everything in this story is patterned around this two-fold message:

*Trying to become famous and powerful like God is **not** OK,
It **is** OK to find God for help!*

But it's the *pattern* of this story I want you to pay *extra attention to*, because it tells us something about *why it **is** OK to say, "Jesus has risen just as he said!"*

The pattern of this *incomplete building project* looks like this:

5



An upward sloping line representing human effort to become famous and powerful like God.

A downward sloping line, representing how this brings confusion and distance between us and God.

And an upward arrow representing how we can find God for help!

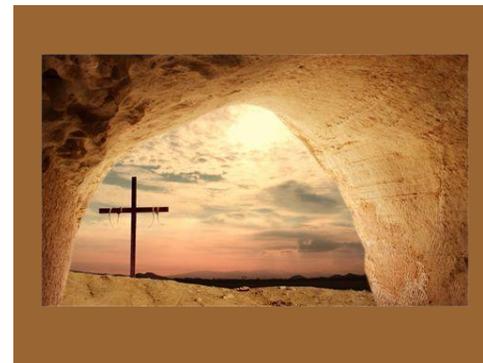
So that's the pattern of the story about the incomplete building project.

The worship song:

Selfish ambition, it's not OK!

It is OK to have the self giving behaviour pattern as Jesus Christ!

6



*The third story that tells us something about why it **is** OK to say, "Jesus has risen just as he said!", is about a worship song.*

Just about *every Sunday*, the church sings this *worship song* because the words *say so much* about how Jesus:

*You came from heaven to earth to show the way,
from the earth to cross my debt to pay,
from the cross to the grave,
from the grave to the sky,
Lord I lift your name on high.*

We *feel good* about our *relationship with Jesus* whenever we sing this song.

But then *one day* a letter from our *founding pastor*, (who's now a missionary overseas), arrives.

It's an *encouraging letter* and we're *happy* to hear it being read out in church.

But then the *tone* of the letter becomes *more serious* as we listen to these words:

7

Phil 2:1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.
³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

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The words prompt me to think about the person I *wasn't getting along with anymore*. We *used to work well together*, but then a *major dispute* between us has meant we *no longer see eye to eye*. We've become *bitter rivals* and now people have been taking sides.

Yet this letter from *Pastor Paul* is urging us to *have the same attitude*, the *same mindset*, the same *self-giving behaviour pattern* as *Jesus Christ!*

Reminding us what this pattern is like, Paul then recites our *favourite worship song* about Jesus:

8

Phil 2:6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!
⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place, and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

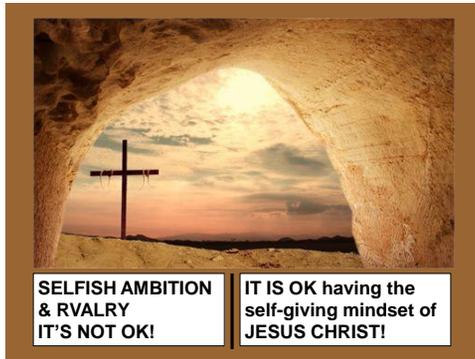
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⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The *nature and status* of Jesus as *God*,
 his *self giving act* of becoming a *human servant*,
 and his *obedience to death* on a *cross*.
 These all *reinforce the message* that *selfish ambition and rivalry* are
not OK, because they're *inconsistent* with the attitude and
 behaviour pattern of *Jesus Christ!*

But then God's *exaltation of Jesus to the highest position!*
 giving him *the name of greatest honour!*
 before whom everyone will one day acknowledge him as *Lord of all*,
 These all *reinforce the message* that **is OK** to have the same *self
 giving mindset* as *Jesus Christ!*

Everything in the story of this *worship song* is *patterned around this
 two-fold message*.

9

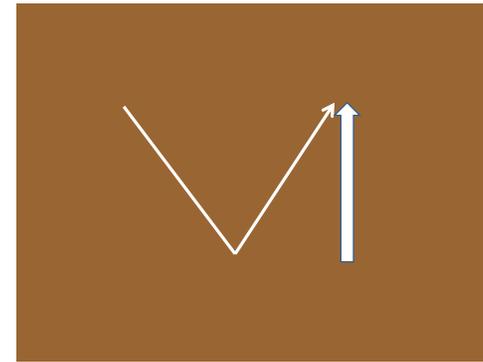


Selfish ambition and rivalry are **not OK!** **9a**
It is OK to have the same self giving mindset as *Jesus
 Christ!* **9b**

But it's the *pattern of this story* I want you to pay *extra attention to*,
 because it tells us *something about why it is OK* to say, "*Jesus has
 risen just as he said!*"

The *pattern* of this *worship song* looks like *this*:

10



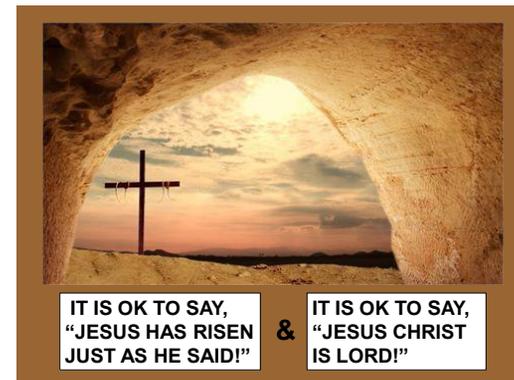
The *downward sloping line* represents Jesus *giving up his position
 in heaven to become a human servant* who was then *crucified*:
 for *our family violence*,
 for *our faulty attempts at becoming famous and powerful* like *God*,
 and for *our selfish ambition and rivalry*.

The *upward sloping line* represents how *God has raised Jesus from
 the dead* promoting him to the *highest position* as *Lord of all!*

This is to who the *upward arrow* points,
 pointing to and reaching our *source of help*.

God does so by *transforming our family violence*,
our faulty attempts at becoming famous and powerful,
our selfish ambition and rivalry,
 into the same *self-giving attitude and behaviour pattern* as *Jesus
 Christ!*

10



That's why *it is OK to say Jesus has risen from the dead, just as he said!*

10a

That's why *it is OK to say, Jesus is Lord!*

10b

Because **this** is how *our salvation is worked out in you and me, 'for it is God who works in us to will and to act according to his good purpose'*, writes the Apostle Paul.