

The Resurrection of our Lord—April 9, 2023

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The fast has ended and today is a festival of joy. What seemed like utter defeat on Friday is proclaimed to be the victory. Today the “amen” is proclaimed to you that you now stand righteous before the throne of God. Your sin has been atoned for and you are no longer God’s enemy. You are his redeemed, his saints. This day is the day of Resurrection. Sound trumpets and unfurl the banners. Proclaim with bold “Alleluias” the triumph of your King who has conquered sin, death, and the devil.

Dear people of God rejoice this day at the sight of the empty tomb. This is the day the Lord that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is your day because of your Lord Jesus, and so shall that final day be when your grave will be burst open and empty as well. This is yours today dearly baptized, for Jesus is crucified and risen just as he said. Together we sing:

488 He Is Arisen! Glorious Word



He is a - ris - en! Glo - rious Word! Now rec - on - ciled



is God, my Lord; The gates of heav'n are o - pen.



My Je - sus did tri - um - phant die, And Sa - tan's ar -



rows bro - ken lie, De - stroyed hell's fierc - est weap - on.



O hear what cheer! Christ vic - to - rious, Ris - ing glo - rious,



Life is giv - ing. He was dead but now is liv - ing!

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“And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.’” That sight on Easter morning is something none of you have seen. Your loved ones are buried in graves, and you go to where their bodies lay only there is no young man sitting dressed in a white robe telling you to not be alarmed as the grave is empty. That’s because you’re still on this side of the glory to come. You still see death and no resurrection. Tombs in your lives are still occupied.

That’s why, in your sin, this Sunday is hard to believe because it goes against everything you see and experience in your own lives. The devil knows this and capitalizes on it. He wants your experiences and your own senses to determine how you view and live your lives in this world and, in turn how you view God. Even in the Gospel reading you see the reaction of the women, “And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” What exactly this meant, it doesn’t fully say but one can gather from this text they were pretty shaken up. Frail, sinful flesh does that. It doesn’t expect those things like resurrection even when Jesus himself told them on more than one occasion this would happen as did the entire Old Testament. No, when you see death and bodies in tombs you just assume they stay there and if they aren’t there, someone or something must have taken it.

The resurrection of Jesus, though, preaches to you something extraordinarily different and foreign to this world and your own fallen understanding. It preaches first and foremost that all Jesus said and did was true and he accomplished what he set out to do. It really is finished. Your sin is atoned for and you are justified before God on account of him. Jesus is no lunatic or liar, to borrow from C.S. Lewis. Jesus is the real deal, and he makes good on his promises. He said he would be crucified and rise from the dead and that’s exactly what he did. The second proclamation is that he is the firstfruits of the resurrection. In 1 Corinthians 15, that great chapter of the resurrection, it states, “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.”

What this means is his resurrection is only the beginning. In Matthew’s account of Jesus’ death, it says, “And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” Even at that point, when Jesus died, there was a proclamation to the people that the death of Jesus was earth shattering or rather tomb shattering.

Now, after the resurrection of Jesus, you behold him risen from the dead and see the Lord will raise up the dead on the Last Day as you confess in all three creeds. On the Last Day, when the Lord returns in glory to judge the living and the dead all souls and bodies will be reunited. Even unbelievers will rise from their graves. They will go bodily to everlasting punishment. Believers, Christians, will bodily go into everlasting life, it’s a physical thing and not simply spiritual, in the new heavens and the new earth the Lord will create. On that day and in that place, there will no more be sin and all its consequences like sickness, suffering, and death. Temptation and the crafts and assaults of devil, persecution, and scoffing Christ and his church will be no more. That day, the day of resurrection, will be a glorious day that can’t come soon enough, and the Church prays for the Lord to return. In the Lord’s Supper, 1 Corinthians 11, tells you that, “For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

Still being in this world, though, the Lord doesn’t leave you without consolation and hope. In fact, it’s far from it! Jesus speaks those words of peace as you hear of his death for you and his resurrection from the dead proclaiming that you stand righteous before the throne of God. Jesus has baptized you into himself and covers you with all that he has done. When your sin stares its ugly head in your life or when the devil tries to accuse you as being outside of God and his kingdom, you boldly declare “I am baptized into Christ” with all the boldness spoken by the young man in the Gospel

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reading who said, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.”

As you face death, the death of those in Christ whom you love you have that same Easter confidence too and you have a new life in Christ even as you go through this world. In Romans 6 God tells you, “Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Dear Christians, gather this morning and listen to your Lord and the proclamation that he, the crucified one, is risen. Rejoice in what a day this is indeed. The Gradual has that Psalm you often hear people quote. “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” It’s often quoted in terms of each day in this life. And while that’s true it’s even far greater and really gives meaning to each day the Lord grants you. That Psalm was a prophesy pointing to all Holy Week and the Resurrection of Jesus, this day, Easter Sunday. Right before that verse of the Psalm the two verses before it proclaims, “The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” Then right after that this is said, “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar! You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!” This day, the day of resurrection, is the day the Lord has made, and he has made it for you.

What joyous day indeed! Jesus is crucified and risen, the text in Mark is more vivid than the translation of the ESV. He still is the crucified one and he has risen. Both of those statements are true, and thanks be to God because this is your redemption God has won for you and you have this very day. Have the confidence of Job amid all his suffering as he confidently said, “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!”

As you gather this morning and hear that your Lord’s tomb was indeed empty, and he is risen know what you have and what your future holds. This is an extraordinary day. “This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it.” Jesus is risen and that changes everything. Even as you face death you know the end of the story for you. Jesus is risen and so shall you. Your sin is forgiven, and you have eternal life. Behold the resurrection of Jesus and fear not your sin, the devil, hell, nor death and its sting. See Jesus crucified and risen for you and cling to those words of the Epistle reading telling you what it to come. Cling to them as a burr sticks to a wool coat. Look at the graves of those you love who died in Christ and yes, even as you think about your own grave hold before your eyes those words of what has been done and what will be.

Eternal life is yours and it’s not just some spiritual thing but real physical eternal life with the Lord and all of God’s people forever. Death has been defeated and no longer has a claim over you. You are baptized into Christ and his victory is your victory. Your body has been redeemed by God who made atonement for your sin. Where there is the forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation. The resurrection of Jesus preaches all of this to you.

Embrace and hold fast to what you have even now in this life. You have been set free as a Christian. The world is viewed differently to you now because you are in Christ. You know that the things of this world are temporary, but

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God's word is eternal. As you go through this dying world you are no longer slave to it but rather a new creation in Christ who will not pass away. You know that as terrible as things may get here or even as good as they may be your future is a glory beyond compare. Your future is future of life.

What a boldness to live this life because Jesus is crucified and risen from the grave. Everything around you with of its fury, suffering, and misfortune you shrug off. Why? Because Jesus is risen, and you know what you have in him. Even death for you is something to not be feared because just as the tomb couldn't hold him, it can't hold you. Death has been overcome and lost its sting. When you face death and the death of a Christian, you can mock it and say, "what a wimp you are death, what a total loser for you have lost! The tomb of Christ is empty, and I am covered in him who has done this for I am baptized, and I will live forever. Even when my body is laid into the tomb my soul goes to be with Jesus and though my body may decay the Lord will raise it up on the last day to immortality and incorruption and in my own flesh, I will see God face to face. Be silent death! You have been conquered; Christ has done it!"

Dear brothers in sisters in Christ, what a day! Today you celebrate the resurrection of your Lord. The victory is yours and that's an eternal victory in body and soul. What a joy this day! Awake your heart with gladness! Now after gloom comes sadness! Your sin is forgiven, and you are an heir of eternal life. Feast this Easter Day on Christ, the bread of heaven. The Word of grace has purged away the old and evil leaven. The Scriptures have been fulfilled, Jesus did just as he said he would, and he promises you that you are his and you will be with him forever. You are safe from evil, you laugh to scorn sin, the devil and hell. And death? Death can't scare you because it has lost its sting, its power is gone even if it may try to trick you into panic and thinking it has, its words are empty and meaningless. See your body and know it has been redeemed by Christ and will be raised just as Jesus is and you will see him face to face in the joys of Paradise.

This is the Gospel of Easter and it's all for you, "Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?' The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.