

## EASTER SUNDAY - April 9, 2023

**Readings:** Isaiah 25:6–9, 1 Corinthians 15:12–25, John 20: 1-18

### ***Christ's Resurrection Brings Us Life***

*"In Adam all die."* For we are all participants in the sin of Adam, who rebelled against God in the garden and brought the curse of death into the world. But *"in Christ shall all be made alive"* (1 Cor. 15:22). For He was faithful to His Father and destroyed death on the holy tree. Jesus, the Second Adam, now walks in the garden in the cool of the day and reveals Himself to the daughter of Eve (John 20:1-18). The risen Christ brings not the curse of death but the blessing of life, the resurrection of the body. He leads us through the baptismal sea to new life on the other side, conquering our mortal enemies in its depths (Ex. 14:10 – 15:1). In this way our Lord Jesus wipes away the tears from all faces. For He has swallowed up death forever. Let us therefore be glad and rejoice in His salvation (Is. 25:6-9)!

### **Sermon Transcript**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. He has risen. He has risen indeed. Alleluia!

That is why we are all here. It seemed a little bit odd as I was thinking about it. We sang this wonderful hymn of praise. Now all the vault of heaven, resound. And then immediately following that we start with a confession of our sins and go, "Wow, that's quite the juxtaposition between praising God and I, H poor miserable sinner." But that's exactly the reason why we celebrate because we know, as Paul said, if Christ did not rise from the dead, then we are still without hope and the sins are still upon us and we are still guilty of them. But we know with absolute certainty that Christ has risen from the dead. And because He has risen, we know that He has paid for all of our sins and we know that if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will and does forgive our sins.

And so we can confess before God with the absolute certainty that our prayers have been heard, our confession has been heard, and our forgiveness is assured. That is why we are here. It would be rather foolish for you all to be gathered here today, dressed up in all your finery and listening to me talk, if you did all of that and there was no purpose to it, that it was simply something that we did because it was the socially right thing to do, how awful would that be? It would mean absolutely nothing. Then if we do it week after week after week, and then in addition to all that, we try to live up to the commandments of God. We try to live holy lives. We conform our living to His standards. If Christ had not died, what's the point? We might as well eat, drink and be happy for tomorrow we're going to die and it does not matter.

But the fact of the matter is, it does matter. And so we rejoice in the knowledge that it has been done. On the cross, Jesus said it all. Some of his final words were, "It is finished." Our salvation was won. The forgiveness of all of our sins was accomplished. Not just the sins that we committed beforehand, but the sins that we haven't even thought about committing yet are also forgiven in Christ. The sins of our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren are forgiven in Christ. That is how sure and certain we are of what His sacrifice did. We know that we are the recipients of this forgiveness because we have been baptized into His death.

The old Adam in us, our sinful nature, has been drowned in the waters of baptism and a new man brought forth to new life. So, part of what we celebrate is because Christ died, death itself has no more power over us.

We have already died in Christ. Now, obviously not physically, but spiritually, we have died. We have died to sin and trespass. We have died to the fear of death. In our baptisms, we are sure that we already have everlasting life. This is why we as Christians do not mourn the death of a loved one who dies in the faith. Well, we mourn because we are sad that they're not with us anymore, that we cannot talk to them, that we cannot share our lives with them. So we do mourn, I misspoke, we mourn, but we do not mourn as those without hope. We're sad that we are no longer able to interact with them, but we rejoice that they are free. Let's face it, there's a lot to get free from, the pain and the sorrow and the suffering and the disease and the sickness and the illness and the accidents and everything else that goes on in this world. In this world, we will have trouble. That is a guarantee. But Christ says, "Take heart. I have overcome the world."

When we look at the world around us and we see the chaos that is in this world, we also rejoice that this is not the end of all things. This is not as good as it gets. I was talking with someone the other day, and this has happened a few times, but I asked how somebody was doing and they said, "Well, it's better than the alternative." And I thought to myself, "Well, it's better than one of the alternatives." But the other alternative is life with Christ, life with our loved ones, rejoicing forever more, without the fears and the pains and the sorrows of this world. That is why we as Christians can say, "To live is Christ and to die is gain." We don't go seeking our deaths. We don't go trying to die quickly, but we are not afraid of it either because we know in our deaths, we actually become alive, fully alive, fully realized, the eternal life that we have in Christ. You can go to any religion in the world, any religion out there, and it can generally give you a decent way of living. You can be a good person with almost any rules or regulations that any religious organization puts out there. But it's only Christianity that gives you the confidence and the hope in death, how prepare for a good death.

That is the difference between Christianity and all the other religions of the world is we know what happens on the other side, because our Savior has gone there to prepare a place for us. And so we can rejoice and we can be confident. In fact, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as odd as this may sound, is more reliable history than any other thing, any other event in all of our history. The eyewitness accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John can hold up in a court of law with no problem and can be shown to be very clearly true eyewitness accounts of the events that they report. We can stand firm on the knowledge that what we have received from them is indeed true. And because it is true, we rejoice. Because it is true, we gather together and we celebrate His resurrection. Because it is true, we can confess before God our sins, confident that they are forgiven in Christ. Because it is true, we can gather at the table and receive His real body and His real blood for the assurance of the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.

Because it is true, we know that when we read the words of Scripture, it's not just mere words, but they are living and powerful words that do the will of God because they are the Word of God. And that Word of God says in Isaiah that every tear will be wiped away by God. That is a theme that John later picks up in the Book of Revelation. Towards the end of his book, he reassures us again in quotes from this Isaiah 25 passage that God will wipe every tear from our eyes. This is what God wants us to know and be confident enough, that no matter what we face in this world, no matter how hard and difficult and painful and fearful it may be, we are not afraid because God is with us and He will be with us every step of the way in this life, through our death and into life everlasting once more. So hold firm to the promise of God. Praise Him and thank Him because He has risen. He has risen indeed. Alleluia

May His grace, mercy and peace be and abide with you always, now and forevermore, unto life everlasting.  
Amen.