

Resurrection Day

Mark 16:1-8

Christ has risen!

C He has risen indeed, Alleluia!

Proper Preface,

But chiefly are we bound to praise Thee for the glorious resurrection of Thy Son; for He is our very Pascal Lamb, who was sacrificed, and has taken the sin of the world; who by His death has destroyed death, and by rising again has restored life; "Therefore..."

Hymns: 105, 89, 92, 100, [283, 286,] 88.

Introit: Psalm 16.

P Protect me, O God!

C For I have taken refuge in You.

P I have been saying to the LORD:

C "You are my Lord. Without You I have nothing good."

P As for the holy people who are in the land,

C they are the excellent people, and all my delight is in them.

P Those who run after another god will have many sorrows.

C I shall not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips.

P O LORD, You are my allotted portion and my cup.

C You are firmly holding what has been allotted to me.

P The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places.

C Surely, I have a delightful inheritance.

P I shall bless the LORD, who has given me advice.

C Even during the nights my inmost parts teach me.

P I have set the LORD before Me constantly.

C Because He is at My right hand, I shall not stagger.

P Therefore My heart is glad, and My glory rejoices.

C My body also will dwell securely.

P For You will not abandon My soul to Sheol,

C or allow Your Faithful One to see decay.

P You make known to Me the path of life.

All In Your presence there is fullness of joy. At Your right hand there are pleasures for ever.

Collect: Almighty God the Father, through Your only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You have overcome death and opened the gate of everlasting life to us. Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of our Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by Your life giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Isaiah 25:6-9.

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11.

Gospel: Mark 16:1-8

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for the sermon is the Gospel heard before, Mark 16:1-8.

1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices to go and anoint Jesus. 2 On Sunday they were coming to the tomb very early when the sun had just come up. 3 They asked one another, "Who is going to roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?"

4 However, when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back, even though it was very large. 5 As they went into the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting at the right side, and they were amazed.

6 He told them, "Do not be amazed any longer! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where He was laid! 7 Go, however, and tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you!'"

8 They went out and hurried away from the tomb, because they were trembling and bewildered; and they said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us in your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,
Peace be with you.

Is Jesus dead in our worship? There are some people who believe that Jesus died, but didn't rise, so that He remains dead today. For them, worship can be little more than talking about a dead man. I am not speaking about these people. But for us who believe He rose do we sometimes treat Jesus as if He were for all intents and purposes still in the grave?

Surely we confess that Christ is risen we say that He is alive but do we treat Him that way in worship?

In other words, we may talk about Him. We may say all kinds of nice things to praise Him. But it's almost like we're praising a picture, not a person. It's like He's up at the right hand of the Father unmoving, un-reacting. He may smile slightly as we use such beautiful adjectives to describe how nice He is. But He's not really involved in our worship. Sometimes He might as well be dead.

After all, it's not much different than most Australian funerals. They talk about the person who's gone. They praise how good they were. Sure they're in a better place, but that's far away. It's as if Jesus isn't there! There's no reaction from the casket to all those words. In the same way we often praise Jesus neither expecting nor receiving a reaction. Does it matter whether He's alive or dead when they worship Him that way?

If they talk directly to Jesus in prayer, it is a monologue. They speak, but Jesus doesn't answer, at least not in a way that they can hear. They say that Jesus answers prayer, but it's a silent answer. The same kind of answer you get from a corpse.

In the end, our prayers become less about Jesus. We become more concerned about what others think about our prayer. We love beautiful prayers. We love prayers that show how heartfelt and caring the pray-er is. We comment on how nice a prayer is, as if it was an artistic performance.

But the prayer wasn't addressed to us. It was to Jesus. So, do we treat Jesus as if He's not really listening?

When the word of God is preached, is it spoken and heard primarily as information and instruction? Is it merely data to which we may have a variety of responses? In other words, is it just talk about Jesus who is somewhere else, or who at the very least is silent and inactive? Instead it is expected that instead we are the ones who are supposed to be active making decisions, surrendering, changing our lives, etc. But if Jesus Himself does nothing in the sermon then He might as well be dead.

If Jesus does nothing in worship then in worship He is little better than a corpse. So it's important to ask, "Who is doing the work in the Service?" Is it us? What if anything is Jesus doing among us?

Or if Jesus does nothing then we are doing little more than offering spices to a corpse. The women at the tomb thought that their sweet-smelling tribute to Jesus was a good deed. In a sense, it was, at least their intention was motivated by love. But Jesus was not a corpse. To offer spices to a living Man was out of place and inappropriate. To treat the living Lord as a corpse was to miss the boat.

"But Pastor," you may object, "the women didn't know that Jesus was alive, so how can you blame them?"

Well that sort of makes sense, until you remember that Jesus told them He would rise, they failed to believe His promise to be alive, among them.

Do we remember that Jesus has promised to be alive among us? Not just present in a disembodied, inactive, silent way, but alive and working?

If we don't remember that, then we miss the boat. We turn worship into something it's not. Like the women at the tomb, we may be seeking some sort of emotional experience to help us through a time of sorrow. We may seek inspiration or comfort. We may seek to offer a tribute to Jesus as to a man departed, no longer with us.

All these purposes based on emotions are like offering spices to a dead bloke.

But our Lord is living, and active, and is among us. He's not just theoretically risen. He's here today, with purpose and power. He's not just standing around to accept our praises and prayers. He's not just posing majestically. He's doing something.

So, what is it? what is Christ, the Living Lord, doing in worship?

First, He is speaking. That doesn't seem like much, until you consider: He should be a corpse! Corpses don't speak! So even one word from Christ is amazing. Consider also that the Word of God's only-begotten Son is better than the word of any ordinary man.

But you may object, "Where is Christ speaking? We can't hear Him. We can't see Him."

Well, Jesus gave a little promise while He was on earth. He said to His disciples, "**He who hears you, hears Me.**"

When a Minister of Christ speaks God's Word, indeed, when anyone speaks God's Word, it's not truly them who speak, but Christ Jesus the Lord is speaking.

Soon enough, the women at the Tomb would meet Jesus Himself face to face. But even sooner, Christ spoke to them through the first Easter Minister, the angel, who proclaimed, "**Do not be amazed any longer! You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where He was laid!**"

What a powerful message! Who could preach a better sermon? For it's the Word of Christ that gives power to sermons.

So Christ not only speaks, but His spoken Word has great effect. It takes away fear. What shall scare us, when sin is destroyed by the crucifixion of Christ? What shall frighten us, when Satan and hell cannot touch us, clothed as we are in a long white garment, like the angel's - a garment of Christ's own righteousness? Why should we tremble, when death itself is conquered?

The Tomb is an open door through which we enter, the stone rolled away, and no threat left in that cold sepulchre. The door Christ opened is the entryway to Paradise, so that Death itself is a friend and blessing to us.

These graves yards around us are only comfortable beds in which our bodies will enjoy a restful and pleasant sleep.

So, Christ, who is living, is here. He speaks, and His Word forgives sins. His Voice banishes darkness and the Grave. His proclamation of victory sends Satan away in panicked fright.

See how active Christ is in Worship! That's why we Lutherans like to call Worship the "Divine Service". The praise we offer, the money we give, the prayers we speak; all these things are tiny and insignificant compared to the Voice of the Living Christ.

Since He is alive, and He is here, then He can offer us His Body and Blood to eat and drink for forgiveness, as He promised. What is greater than Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ?

But that comes later, in the church building. Will we miss it, because we ran off to do other things?

What St. Mark doesn't mention is that before the angel spoke to the women, Mary Magdalene ran away to tell the disciples. She missed the first Easter proclamation, because she thought there was something more important to do.

Will we miss the Easter Proclamation because of family? Is cooking or is the children's receiving and eating chocolate eggs more important than the Lord Jesus? Or perhaps we may become tired, or bored, and simply choose to miss the Word of Christ?

Will we forget that Christ is alive, and ready to meet us in His House? If the Lord of the universe suffered crucifixion for us, and rose from the dead, so that He could bring redemption to us, will we decide there is something better to do?

We sinners were spiritual corpses, fit only to be embalmed with spices. Our sinful decay made us fit only for eternal death. We could offer nothing to God to make up for our wickedness. After all, a dead body does nothing but lay there. Certainly, we could not roll back the heavy stone that sealed us in our spiritual graves.

But Christ came to reverse all that. He gave us His own life. He entered our tomb, and embraced our death. He raised us from lifelessness and rolled away the heavy stone of our sins.

This mighty, active Christ did all that. Shall we act as if He is not here in Worship? Or shall we act as if He does nothing but receive our praises?

No, let us eagerly meet Him. Let us receive from Him all the wondrous gifts of grace He showers on us. Let us eagerly anticipate, and quickly run, as a child with joy to open a present.

For this, even now, is His Voice speaking to you forgiveness and life and salvation. At this moment, the living Christ is giving you incredible blessings in the preaching of this Word.

Let us rejoice in this Risen Christ, now and forever, into the Age of Immortality that He has won for us.

In His Name, and to His glory. Amen.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Amen.

3rd Hymn: 92,

Prayer of the Church The Resurrection of Our Lord

P Rejoicing in our Lord's victory over death and the grave, let us call upon Him for His help and deliverance on behalf of the people of God and all people.

Brief Silence.

P Lord Jesus Christ, You conquered death for all. Allow the news of Your victory to be proclaimed here and throughout the world, that all who are surrounded by death, may be rescued by Your gift of life. Give zeal and joy to all who proclaim Your saving Resurrection..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord Jesus Christ, You have swallowed up death forever. The eye-witnesses of Your resurrection could not be silenced from proclaiming You even when threatened with death. Sustain our persecuted brothers and sisters in true faith and the bold confession of Your salvation..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord Jesus Christ, You removed the veil of death that is spread over all nations. Give wisdom and zeal for truth and justice to all in authority over us, and to those governing other nations. Lead them to protect the

lives of our unborn brothers and sisters, to punish wrongdoers, and to maintain what is good..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord Jesus Christ, You are the captain of our salvation. Defend our Police, State Emergency Services, Doctors and Nurses and our military personnel and their families Grant them and us rest in Your abiding victory over death..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord Jesus Christ, You are the first fruits of the dead, never to die again. With Your Word and Body and Blood comfort those who are ill, recovering, facing surgery, depressed, or troubled. According to Your gracious will give them healing or strengthen them to accept their afflictions. Give all of us confidence that on that last day You will wipe away all tears from the eyes of Your people..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord Jesus Christ, You were dead, but behold You live. Your resurrected body gives us a promising preview of what will happen to our bodies on the last day. Grant peace to those near death. Refresh and sustain all hospice workers that they may provide Your loving care to the dying, never hastening death, but alleviating pain and surrounding the dying with love..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Lord Jesus Christ, You died for our sins and were raised for our justification. Let all who commune on Your true Body and Blood this day receive You in repentance for sins, in certain knowledge that Your resurrected Body and Blood are here, and in joyful confession of all You have taught us. Keep us from receiving You to our harm, but instead give us forgiveness and love for one another..... Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P All this we ask, Lord Jesus Christ, in joyful confidence that You have conquered death and the grave, and because You live we shall live also, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

4th Hymn: 100,