

**REMEMBER THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED FROM THE DEAD****Sermon for Easter Sunday 2019****2 Timothy 2:8**

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 our sermon today is 2 Timothy 2:8: **Remember that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, and is a descendant of David, according to my Good News!**

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

Dear friends in Christ,

We heard in our Gospel Reading for today that when some of the women arrived at the tomb early Easter morning, two men stood beside them and greeted them with four unbelievable words of truth: *“He has been raised!”* These two men were angels, and one of them told the women that this miracle should come as no surprise to them. He said: **“Remember** how He told you....” (Luke 24:6).

How many times did Jesus say that to His followers during His earthly ministry? Probably not enough! Probably not enough for followers who are described in Scripture as being slow to believe and afraid, people with doubts arising in their minds.<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle Paul, whose words we have before us this joyous morning, also told young a pastor named Timothy to **“Remember.”** These were some of the last words that St. Paul ever wrote. He knew that his work on earth for the Lord Jesus was nearing completion, that soon he would suffer a martyr’s death at the hands of the Romans. What does a person about to die think about? Childhood joys? Memories of teenage freedom? Professional accomplishments? Friends? Family? This is what was on Paul’s mind: **“Remember that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, and is a descendant of David.”**

In contrast to what much of the religious world thinks, the heart of the Christian faith is *remembering* - remembering what God has done for us. The main message that God has for us is not “Go and do!” but rather “See and believe!” That is what we remember this Easter morning - the great things our Lord Jesus Christ had done for us so that through faith in Him we might have the forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

In reality, we really can’t do anything else. What else can we do this morning but go to the empty tomb, look inside, and ponder with amazement what this means for us? There’s nothing else we can do, and there is nothing else we need to do. God, *“who is rich in mercy,”*<sup>2</sup> has done everything for us. Sin, death, and hell have been defeated. Christ Jesus has been raised in victory - the guarantee that all our sin is paid for, and the guarantee that by His power He will also raise from death all who trust in Him. It is He, as St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians, who *“gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”* (15:57).

How could we possibly forget those great things? Jesus hasn’t changed over the centuries, and the nature of His disciples hasn’t changed too much either. Today, we still have fears and doubts, and are also slow to believe.

This gives us all the more reason to listen to what God the Holy Spirit says through St. Paul this morning: **“Remember... Jesus Christ.”**

“Jesus” is the name God Himself gave to His Son. The name Jesus means “Saviour.” Jesus came to this earth in the quietness of Christmas on a violent mission - to do battle with the forces of hell. Throughout His earthly ministry, He undid what sin and Satan had done; He healed the sick, drove out demons, and raised the dead. On Good Friday that battle reached its final, decisive hour. In one of the hymns that Luther wrote, he said, *“It was a strange and dreadful strife when life and death contended.”* Remember the writhing agony of the cross, as God and Satan went head-to-head for the eternal possession of your soul. It was a struggle to the death, and by the end of the day, Jesus the Son of God lay dead in a tomb. However, the hymn goes on, *“The victory remained with life; the reign of death was ended.”*<sup>3</sup> He has risen! He is alive, and death is dead.

<sup>1</sup> Luke 24:25; Matthew 28:10; Matthew 14:31

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians 2:4

<sup>3</sup> Hymn 89, “Christ Jesus lay in death’s strong bands.”

**“Remember... Jesus Christ.”** *Christ* means “the Anointed One.”

This is the One whom God anointed to be our champion. He is the Messiah; all the prophecies of Scripture are fulfilled in Him. There is no mistake. This is the One, the only One, who has God’s own approval. Why would doubts rise in our minds if our Christian faith is the right one? Jesus is the *Christ*; this does not just mean He is the one that God appointed to suffer and die; He is also the one God appointed to rise and live forever and ever. Jesus has risen and ascended to the right hand of God, where He rules all things in heaven and earth, and if He has the power to rule all things, He has the power to save those who believe in Him.

Paul writes, **“Remember that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead.”**

If there is perhaps one word that creates more doubt, more uncertainty, and more fear than any other, it is the word *death*. We know it’s a part of life. We know that it’s coming - to friends, to family, to spouses, to me. It is said that fear usually is caused by the unknown. Death is very well known, but it still fills us with fear. Why?

The fear of death comes from the knowledge of sin, which we either learn from the Bible or from our own conscience. Deep down we know that there is a God and that He is holy, good, and just. Deep down we also know that each of us has failed to perfectly do what He requires: to live a holy and sinless life in perfect love for Him and every other human being, and Scripture rather bluntly draws the inevitable conclusion for us: We die because we have sinned. That’s what fills us with fear. We were created to live in harmony with God, but our sins bring God’s wrath and judgment. Our sins separate us from God and His love, peace and joy. Our sins bring upon us God’s sentence of “guilty of eternal death.” What shall we do?

**“Remember that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead.”** Out of the tomb came the One who has paid for all our sins. He carried our sins to the cross and left them in the tomb. All our sins are gone! They are dead! They are buried! Out of the tomb came a holy Lord Jesus Christ. On the cross, He had been covered with our sins and had suffered death, but now He is alive - the proof that God has accepted His sacrifice.

Jesus’ resurrection is the very foundation of our faith. That’s what we celebrate today. His resurrection gives us certainty about our forgiveness and all the promises God has made. Look what God has done for you! You can trust Him with your life and with your soul! Furthermore, seeing **Jesus Christ, who has been raised from the dead**, creates unshakable faith and hope that is ours no matter what happens in our earthly lives.

What about cynics and unbelievers. What do they do at Easter? On this day when the Christian church joyfully celebrates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, what do they do? Probably lots of things, but not once do they take the time to remember the true meaning of Easter. To them, Easter is just another time period off work, where they can relax and sleep in over a long weekend, or as another opportunity to “eat, drink, and be merry.” Easter has no spiritual meaning for them. What are such people going to do or think about at a cold graveside, where everything seems so final, so *meaningless*? It is precisely at that point that our Christian faith holds on to the promise of Jesus: *“I am the Resurrection and the Life. The person who believes in Me will live even if he dies,”* (John 11:25).

That is our faith, our hope, and our joy, and so that we may always have faith, hope, and joy - even on the darkest of days in this world – **“Remember that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead.”**

Finally, **“Remember that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, and is a descendant of David.”**

Jesus comes from a king. He is a king. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. Heaven is His throne and earth is His footstool.<sup>4</sup> He commands and rules all things by His powerful Word, and this same King with all power protects us. In this same letter to Timothy, St. Paul writes, *“The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and will save me for His heavenly kingdom,* (2 Tim. 4:18).

However, there’s another reason we rejoice this morning that **Jesus Christ is a descendant of David**. David was a king, but David was also a man. So is our Lord Jesus Christ. It wasn’t just the Son of God who came out of the tomb on Easter morning, but also the Son of Man. It was a human being, fully like us, who rose from the dead. By His resurrection, we are given a glimpse of the glory that will one day be ours when Christ, by His almighty power, calls us out of our graves to glory everlasting. We won’t look as we do now - the slowly aging body that gradually reveals its own weakness and decline. We won’t feel as we do now - the hurts, the pains, the handicaps, the illnesses, the diseases, the death. We won’t ache as we do now - from shattered dreams and disappointments, from failures and

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 66:1

shortcomings, and from sadness and grief. Rather, “*we shall all be changed,*” Paul writes the Corinthians, “*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet,*” (1 Cor. 15:51-52).

Jesus Christ, who by His resurrection shows that He has power over death, will raise from death all people and glorify the bodies of those who trust in Him. Look at the human body of David’s Descendant when He came out of the tomb. We will be like Him, and what Job confessed we also believe: “*After this, my skin will surround this body, and from my flesh I shall see God. I myself shall see Him for myself. My own eyes will see, and not as a stranger!*” (Job 19:26-27).

Finally, regarding all that we have said this morning, St. Paul says, “**Remember that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, and is a descendant of David, according to my Good News!**”

In reality, this is not just Paul’s **Good News**, or my **Good News**, or your **Good News** - as if these were some privately held religious opinions. No! This, rather, is *the Gospel*, the eternal *Gospel of Jesus Christ*. It is God’s own Good News, His message of peace and hope to the world. He is the One who has spoken these things, and because God Himself has said it, it is true! He spoke these things to Paul; in grace, He has spoken them to us. Our faith in Him is secure and solid. For this **Good News** is *rock* and not *shifting sand*.

So, remember this **Good News** always, for by it we are saved. Remember always what God has done for us. “**Remember that Jesus Christ has been raised from the dead, and is a descendant of David.**” Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Amen.

#### PRAYER FOR EASTER SUNDAY

Heavenly Father, we thank and praise You for Your mercy in raising from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You for the assurance His resurrection gives us of all our spiritual blessings.

Give us today the radiant joy of the first Easter. Fill our hearts with its glorious good news and precious promises. Make us glad that You have raised Christ, who was delivered because of our offences in order that You might reckon us as righteous before You. We praise You that, because of His resurrection from the dead, You will also raise us, and that death has no more power over us.

Grant us a living faith, free of all doubts, faith that accepts the sure evidence of His resurrection. Give us power to confess our risen Lord Jesus with our mouths. Grant that we may be faithful unto death, and receive the crown of life. Equip us through Christ, our life, who now sits as a human being like us, at Your right hand, with power to live the new life, with our minds on Him, our heavenly treasure.

Guide us by Your Word as we make our way through this world, so that we may walk in Your ways, trust in Your promises, and experience Your richest blessings in this life and the one to come.

Look in mercy on our homes. Fill our families with a sense of Your goodness and providence. Teach them to rejoice especially in the gift of endless life in Your risen Son.

Rule the nations of the earth, and lead them to be obedient to You. Direct the lives of all people, that they may fear and love You, and know the risen Lord, who has the words of eternal life.

We pray for Your Church. Grant that everywhere it may have faithful and true shepherds, who proclaim the Gospel with conviction. Give all believers greater confidence because of Jesus’ resurrection.

Grant us a rich measure of Your Spirit, provide us with power, willingness, to do Your will, and the courage and ability to make your Gospel known to others. To Christ be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

#### THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD, Easter Day

Isaiah 65:17-25

<sup>17</sup> “For look! I am creating a new heaven and a new earth. The earlier things will not be remembered or come to mind. <sup>18</sup> However, be glad and rejoice for ever in what I am creating! For look! I am creating Jerusalem to be a joy and its people to be a delight. <sup>19</sup> I shall rejoice over Jerusalem and be glad about My

people. The sounds of weeping and lamentation will no longer be heard in the city. <sup>20</sup> No longer will there be a baby in it who lives for only a few days or an old man who does not live out his days. For anyone who dies at a hundred years old will still be a young man. Anyone who fails to reach a hundred years old when he dies will be regarded as cursed. <sup>21</sup> They will build houses and live in them. They will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. <sup>22</sup> They will not build and have someone

else live there. They will not plant and have another eat from it. For the days of My people will be like the days of a tree, and My chosen people will enjoy what their hands produce. <sup>23</sup> They will not toil for nothing or bear children for sudden calamity.”

For they will be the offspring of those whom the LORD has blessed, and their children will be with them.

<sup>24</sup> “I Myself shall answer even before they call and I Myself shall hear while they are still speaking. <sup>25</sup> The wolf and the lamb will graze together. The lion will eat straw like the ox, but the snake’s food will be dust. They will not do any harm or destroy anything anywhere on My holy mountain,” the LORD has said.

1 Corinthians 15:19-26

<sup>19</sup> If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all other people. <sup>20</sup> However, now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup> For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a man. <sup>22</sup> For, as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. <sup>23</sup> However, each one in his own turn: Christ is the first-fruits. After that, when He comes, those who belong to Christ. <sup>24</sup> Then the end will come, when He hands over the kingdom to God, the Father, after He has put an end to all dominion, authority and power. <sup>25</sup> For He must reign until God has put all His enemies under His feet. <sup>26</sup> The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

Luke 24:1-12

<sup>1</sup> On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, some women went to the tomb, carrying the spices that they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> They found that the stone had been rolled back from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but, when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were troubled about this, suddenly two men stood beside them in clothes that were shining like lightning. <sup>5</sup> The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. The two men asked the women, “Why are you looking among the dead for Him who is alive? <sup>6</sup> He is not here but has been raised. Remember how He told you while He was still in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> ‘The Son of Man must be delivered to the hands of sinful men and be crucified and rise again on the third day!’”

<sup>8</sup> Then they remembered His Words. <sup>9</sup> When the women returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup> The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James, and the others with them. They told

these things to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> However, these words seemed like nonsense to the Eleven, and they would not believe them. <sup>12</sup> However, Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He bent down and saw only the strips of linen. Then he went away, wondering to himself about what had happened.