

## Resurrection of our Lord, 2019

Luke 24:1-12.

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 for this Sunday is written in the book of Luke 24:1-12, which was in our Gospel reading before

**1 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. 2 They found that the stone had been rolled back from the tomb; 3 but, when they went in, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were troubled about this, suddenly two men stood beside them in clothes that were shining like lightning. 5 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? 6 He is not here; but He has been raised. Remember how He told you while He was still in Galilee: 7 ‘The Son of Man must be delivered to the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and rise again on the third day!’”**

**8 Then they remembered His Words. 9 When the women returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them. They told these things to the apostles. 11 However, these words seemed like nonsense to the Eleven, and they would not believe them. 12 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.**

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

Dear friends in Christ, Peace be with you.

Christ has risen!

**C He has risen indeed! Alleluia!**

Every year, we hear the story of the resurrection of Jesus. When you hear a story often enough, it's easy to gloss over many of the details of the story. We've heard the story so often that we think there is nothing new to learn. All kinds of people come to an empty tomb. One or more angels informs them that Jesus has risen. Everybody lives happily ever after. The End. As is the case for all the writings of the Bible, it's not that simple. There is always more to learn.

One of the things I didn't notice for a long time was the timing of everything. If we flashback to Friday, you may remember that Jesus died in the middle of the afternoon. Before Joseph of Arimathea could lay Jesus in His tomb, he had to obtain an audience with Pontius Pilate to get permission to remove the body from the cross. Then He and the other friends of Jesus had to actually remove the body, transport it to the tomb, and prepare it for burial. This all takes time. Ordinarily, that wouldn't be a problem, but in this case, the next day was a Sabbath. Even the work of burying a dead body was strictly forbidden on the Sabbath. There was no way to get that all done in time and do a half decent job of placing Jesus in the tomb. Sundown and the Sabbath just came too quickly. The timing of Jesus' death guaranteed that the friends of Jesus had to return on Sunday morning in order to properly care for the body of their dead friend. By arranging the timing on Good Friday so that the burial had to take place in a hurry, the Lord assured that there would be plenty of witnesses at the empty tomb on Sunday. And, in fact, all four Gospels tell us that the empty tomb was a pretty busy place from about the time that the sun came up until the middle of the morning.

Think of it. The first Easter was a swirl of activity and emotion. The women came to the tomb with spices and find that the tomb is open and the body of Jesus is gone. Then men show up who dress like lightning, and the men said to them, **“Why are you looking among the dead for Him who is alive? 6 He is not here; but He has been raised. Remember how He told you while He was still in Galilee: 7 ‘The Son of Man must be delivered to the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and rise again on the third day’** These men knew these women even though the women have never seen them before in their lives. And in the midst of all of this commotion, where do the messengers direct their attention? They directed their attention to the words of Jesus. The Holy Spirit inspired Luke to point out that everything has happened exactly as Jesus said it would. As we make our way through the Gospel accounts, we regularly read that Jesus was teaching His disciples, saying to them, **“The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, but after He has been killed, He will rise on the third day.”** [Mark 9:31.] The angels got Jesus' message exactly right.

There is something else that you notice when you get into the nitty-gritty details of the day of resurrection, you start to notice trends and patterns in the way Jesus showed Himself to His people. After a bit of study, it becomes evident that Jesus wanted His followers to believe in His resurrection because of His promise ... that His promise to rise was more authoritative than His actual presence. The angels said as much; "Don't you remember His promise to rise from the dead? When God makes a promise, He keeps it. Why are you looking for Him here in the place of the dead?" Even though His followers had not yet seen Him, they should believe that He is alive based on His promise alone.

Slowly the truth of the situation began to sink in. For these women, remembering the Lord's words brings them more fully into reality. With the words of Jesus, they begin to understand the strange new world that surrounds them. Empty graves and men who dress like lightning. Angels who have been with you all of your life. *"that's how the Angels knew who the women were!"* These things start to make sense: Jesus had talked about a heavenly kingdom. The world is God's, and God's kingdom has come. What about the pain of the crucifixion? Was this all a mistake? No, Jesus had told them: His betrayal and death were part of God's will. God so desired to save all people that He gave His Only Son to bear the punishment for their sin. And now, punishment is gone. Divine vengeance is over, and the open grave gives a glimpse of heavenly joy. Angels talk to humans. Humans speak to one another, sharing a message that saves every man, woman, and child. "God loves you. In love, He gave His life for you. And now He lives and reigns eternally."

The women could not keep this kind of news to themselves. They had to share the things they had seen and heard. The Holy Spirit brought the promises of Jesus to their minds. He had promised to rise from the dead and now He had risen just as He said.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ certainly demonstrates His power and authority. Many people have tried to communicate with the dead and not been able to do it. Now here we have someone who not only promised to rise from the dead, but actually pulled it off. This alone makes Jesus unique in all of history. Furthermore, this resurrection certified once and for all that Jesus has defeated sin, death, and the power of the devil. As God promised in Eden, the seed of the woman has crushed the serpent's head. This fact alone is reason to rejoice over this victory. But there is more!

Jesus promised to rise from the dead and He kept His promise. His resurrection means that there is nothing that can stop Him from keeping all of His promises. I can make a promise and get sick or have a flat tyre or have any of a number of other difficulties. Every fibre in my being can be dedicated to keeping my promises. Nevertheless, it's possible that circumstances beyond my control can stop me. The resurrection of Jesus Christ clearly demonstrates that there are no circumstances beyond the control of Christ. Not even death can prevent Him from keeping His promises.

Jesus promised to rise from the dead. Now hear some of the other promises that He made. "Truly, truly, I tell you that he who listens to My Word and believes Him who has sent Me has eternal life, and will not come into judgment, but has passed over out of death into life." [John 5:24.] **"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand."** [John 10:27-29.] **"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die."** [John 11:25-26.] **"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also."** [John 14:1-3.] These are but a few of the promises that Jesus has made. These are but a few of the promises that you know Jesus will keep because even death cannot hold Him or prevent Him from keeping His Word to You.

The lesson for us and our Catechumens today is that Christ's promises teach us that a day is coming when He will return to raise all the dead back to life. If you or I had to face that day based on our own good works, we would fail. For no one is able to earn salvation. But Christ has promised salvation to us based on His perfect life and His sacrificial death. He has promised that those who have the Holy Spirit's gift of faith will rise to eternal life. For it is by faith that we receive the benefits of Christ's work. We can have absolute

certainty of our eternal salvation, not because of anything we have done, but because we have the promise of Christ. And not even death can stop Him from keeping His promises. For He has risen from the dead just as He said He would. Amen.

Christ has risen! He has risen indeed! Alleluia!

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

## **Prayer of the Church**

### **The Resurrection of Our Lord 2019**

P Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

*Brief Silence.*

P Father in heaven, You raised Your Son Jesus Christ from the dead as the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. Fill all Your baptized people with the joy of His victory, and send us forth as witnesses to His resurrection. Lord in Your mercy...

**C Hear our prayer.**

P Almighty and everlasting God, since You have revealed Your glory to all nations in Jesus Christ and in the Word of His truth, keep, we ask You, in safety the works that You have begun in Your servants Caleb, Lianna and Eboney, and so bless their first Communion here today, so that they and Your Church may abound in Your mercy, may we all be defended against the adversary and serve You in true faith and be persevered in the confession of Your name; Lord, in Your mercy,

**C Hear our prayer**

P Father of mankind, prosper Your Gospel wherever it is preached throughout the world, that it may give and sustain faith in all who hear it, delivering them from the power of darkness and bringing them into the joyful kingdom of Your risen Son. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Lord of glory, Your Son established Your Church to be a refuge of peace in a troubled world. Raise up servants of Your Church in every place who will devote their lives to the spread of the Gospel and the service of Your people. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Lord of life we pray for all our congregations, support them in challenging times. Make them steadfast, abounding in the work of the Lord, and let their faith and zeal for the Gospel refresh and renew the witness of Your people everywhere. Bless all our pastors and their families of the A.E.L.C and ULMA, Continue to strengthen this congregation in the bonds of Christian love so that we may rejoice with all those who rejoice. Strengthen those that are in nursing homes, hospitals and care facilities that You would give them with unity of heart, mind and witness, that nothing may hinder the work You have called us to do. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C Hear our prayer.**

P King of the nations, remember in Your kindness all who bear authority in our land, and give them wisdom and integrity that they may serve our people according to Your will. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Rock of refuge in every time of need, hear the prayers of those who call upon you in times of distress, especially those who are lonely and homebound, the sick, the dying, and the mourning [*especially*]. May Your Son ever be for them their joy in sorrow, their health in sickness, and their life in death. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Bountiful Giver of all things, Your Son has prepared a feast of forgiveness and life for His people. Grant to all who come to His altar today a faithful share in His unending life. Lord, in your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P God of the living, receive our thanks this day for all Your servants who have departed this life in Your faith and fellowship and who now rest from their labours. Bring us by Your grace to share with them in the triumph of Your resurrection. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C hear our prayer.**

P Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C Amen.**