

The Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord
St. Mark 16:1-8
April 21st, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Is Risen!

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

There is a tendency among us, that is, mankind, to think that our sins are not that big of a deal. After all, we get away with so many things that violate the Ten Commandments; never having to face punishment either in our life, or in our own conscience. We do things every day that are contrary to the Ten Commandments, that we are not even aware are a breaking of the Commandments. For this reason, we have a tendency to think that certain behaviors, thoughts and words are okay with God, and are not sins. This attitude is even worse among non-Christians. Unbelievers commit all sorts of abominable acts in the name of “doing what I want.” Therefore, everyone has the tendency to think that sins are not that big of a deal.

But, as you know, this is far from the truth. Over the past week we have been presented with the proof that sin matters to the Lord God. We have seen as we read through each of the four Passions from the four Evangelists that God not only threatens to punish sin, but that He did punish sin. He poured all of His wrath over our sins, and the sins of the whole world, onto His Only-Begotten Son, our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. The cup of His wrath was emptied onto the body of our Lord + Jesus Christ on the cross. If the loving and merciful heavenly Father treated His Only-Begotten and Beloved Son this way on account of our sins, why should we ever think that our sins do not matter to Him? If the Lord God treats His own Son this way, how do you think you deserve to be treated?

If we need further proof that God demands payment for our sins; that He not only threatens to punish those who transgress His Laws, but exacts that punishment to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Him, just as He declared on Mount Sinai, we need only look to the lifeless body of our Lord + Jesus, and to the tomb into which He was laid.

Our Lord + Jesus was buried in a tomb; a grave. He went to the place that all of us will eventually end up—in a grave. We will all be worm food on account of our manifold transgressions against God’s Law. After this miserable life, in this body of sin, and in a life full of sin, we poor, miserable sinners will rest in a tomb. Just like our Lord + Jesus did.

The women who went to the tomb were well aware of this reality, even as we are all daily and often reminded that our lives will end up in the grave. These women did not go to the tomb expecting to find anything than the dead body of the Lord + Jesus. They went to anoint His body with spices and

perfume, as was the custom of the Jews. These things were not able to be performed because of the Sabbath which was fast approaching when the Lord died on Good Friday. Therefore, they rested on the Sabbath, as was required, then after the Sabbath, and before the sun went down on Saturday night they went and bought spices (aromatics is the Greek word), in order to anoint the Lord early in the morning. Their haste to do this quickly was because they knew that dead bodies decay very quickly. And so, they wanted to apply these spices to the Lord's dead body, so that His body would be preserved from decay a little longer, and that they might offer a final reverence for the Lord Who did and preached so many wonderful things.

Their care for the dead body of our Lord should serve as an example to us on how we should treat our own dead loved ones. We should treat the dead body with as much respect as we can, since this body was a gift from our Creator and Lord. If the women desired to treat our Lord's dead body with such reverence, we should treat the bodies of our loved ones with the same reverence.

It was this reverence for the dead body of our Lord + Jesus, and the care that these women expected to perform for our Lord's body, that they were not expecting to find anything in the tomb but the Lord's body. Their only concern on the way to the grave was who was going to remove the very large stone from door of the grave so that they could minister to the Lord's body.

When our loved ones die, and we go to the funeral, all we see is the dead body; all we see is the wages of sin. We see death. We see that life has been taken away. For those outside the Christian faith—for unbelievers—all they can do is despair. They have no hope in a resurrection from the dead. Even these women who went to the tomb of our Lord did not expect to find our Lord risen from the dead. They certainly believed in a resurrection, just as Mary, the sister of Lazarus declared to the Lord + Jesus when He came to raise Lazarus from the dead. But Mary, at that time, only believed in a future resurrection at the end of time. Just as Scripture teaches. These women also believed in a resurrection, but they were not prepared to actually behold it with their own eyes.

The resurrection of the dead was supposed to happen on the Last Day, not on Easter Sunday. But this is exactly what the women find when they reach the tomb. In fact, even before they saw the body missing, they could see from a distance that the stone had been rolled away. They could see this from a distance, because as the Evangelist St. Mark tells us, the stone was very large. Image what they must have felt and thought as they discovered an empty tomb and see an angel sitting where the Lord's body should have been. In fact, we do not need to image what they felt and thought, because the Evangelist St. Mark tells us. They were "*alarmed*." Literally, the Greek word means they were "thrown into amazement." You know that feeling when something is so shocking that your mouth drops wide open, that is what they felt when they saw the empty tomb. And when they left the tomb, they ran away because they "*trembled*" and were "*amazed*." The Greek words again add to our understanding, they were "full of tremors" and were "ecstatic." In other words, they were full of both terrible fear and extreme joy. They did not know what to think. This is not what they were expecting, for dead bodies do not rise from the dead of their own power.

The women who went to the tomb knew the consequences of sin, that it ended in death. We know the consequences of sin, and are reminded of it when our loved ones die. And we know that we too will face the consequences of sin in us and in the world.

But today our Lord takes away that threat of death. Death has no more dominion or power. It is stripped of all its authority. He showed the consequences of death by His lifeless body in the tomb. But now He shows by the empty tomb that sin and death no longer have power over us. This is why we can take comfort even in the midst of the death of our loved ones who die in the faith, for we know that the empty tomb of our Lord + Jesus Christ is just the first of all empty tombs of all those who cling to the Lord + Jesus in faith. We can rejoice for death no longer has dominion over us. We will all rise from the

dead on the Last Day. And we will live with the Lord + Jesus and all the saints who have gone before us in faith for all eternity.

Our Lord is risen from the dead. He is the firstfruits of all those who will rise from the dead. Just as He rose from the dead, we too will rise from the dead on the Last Day. Indeed, we have already died to sin. In our Holy Baptism we died to sin. And in our Holy Baptism we were raised again to a new life in Christ, free from the bondage of sin and death. Therefore, when we daily confess our sins and believe that we are forgiven for the sake of Christ's merits, we rise from the death of sin once more. When we remember our Holy Baptism and that we have been redeemed from sin and death through the waters of Holy Baptism, we can remember that we are a new creation; we have been raised from death.

Therefore, death has no more power over us. So that when we see our loved one lying dead in a casket at a funeral, we have all hope that just as they were baptized into Christ, their soul now rests with the Lord + Jesus in Heaven. And on the Last Day, their body will be reunited with their soul, as they are given a new, glorious body for all eternity. The same hope awaits us. We will be raised from the dead on account of our faith in the Lord + Jesus, Who is the first to be raised from the dead after He paid for our sins on the tree of the cross. On the Last Day, we will be given new, glorious bodies. We will be freed from the pain of sin and death. There we will eternally be thrown into amazement at the graciousness and mercy of our Triune God, and we will eternally be ecstatic that our Lord + Jesus has removed the power of the grave. So that we now will enjoy empty tombs, just like our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!