

The Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord
St. Mark 16:1-8
April 12th, 2020
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

When the Sabbath Was Past

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, Who didst deliver Thy Son for our offenses, and didst raise Him again for our justification: We beseech Thee, grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that He may rule and govern us according to Thy will; graciously keep us in the true faith; defend us from all sins, and after this life raise us unto eternal life, through the same, Thy beloved Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

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

When the Sabbath was past the women went and bought fragrant spices in order that they might anoint the body of the Lord + Jesus. This buying of spices took place on our Saturday night, after the sun had gone down, and a few shops would open so that people could buy essential items. Then very early in the morning the women—only a few of which are named—who ministered to the Lord's earthly needs during His ministry, came to the tomb to finish the job of preparing the Lord's body for burial, which was not able to be done properly because of the quick approach of the beginning of the Sabbath on our Friday night.

The women, however, never got to use these fragrant spices, for when they came to the tomb, they found that the very large stone had been rolled away, and when they had entered the tomb, they found it empty. The body of the Lord + Jesus was not there. The strips of linen in which He was clothed by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, were laid folded neatly on the place where His body had been laid. And to their great fear and amazement they saw an angel—with the appearance of a young man—sitting on the right side of the tomb (the place where the Lord + Jesus had been laid) clothed in a long white robe. This angel was the very picture of what we will look like in Heaven. He is a picture of all the saints in Heaven. We will be clothed with the white robes of Christ's righteousness—our baptismal robes—and the ravishes of time that wear upon our bodies will no longer be visible. We will have new and glorious bodies.

Our bodies when we die are prepared for burial. We dress our loved ones in their finest clothes, and the mortician uses makeup and his other arts to give the appearance to the body of a person sleeping. That body will decay and return to the dust from where it came. In Heaven, we will be given a new and glorious body, one that will not wear out or grow old. The women who went to the tomb, also wanted to prepare the body of the Lord + Jesus, in the same way that we do for our loved ones today. They had bought spices for this very reason. However, there was no need for the fragrant spices. There was no need to anoint the dead body of the Lord + Jesus, because He was not there. He is risen, as He said. They could see the place where the dead body of the Lord + Jesus had been laid, but the only thing that remained was the strips of linen in which He was clothed.

If you remember, six days before the Lord + Jesus ate the Passover with His Apostles, He was eating a feast in Bethany at the home of Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead after being dead for four days. At that feast Mary had taken a jar of very costly spikenard and anointed the head of our Lord + Jesus, while He sat at the table. Our Lord + Jesus told those who criticized her, that she had done this in preparation for His burial. His body was already prepared for burial by Mary in the home of her brother Lazarus. There was no need for the fragrant spices that the women brought for the Lord + Jesus had already been anointed. His body had already been prepared.

Therefore, when our Lord + Jesus declares from the cross on Good Friday that “It is finished” we can be certain that all things necessary for our atonement had been accomplished. And all things necessary for the preparation of His body for death had been fulfilled. There was nothing left to do. So, our Lord + Jesus after His work on the holy cross—after His suffering, shame and crucifixion—our Lord enters into the Sabbath. He rests on the seventh day from all His labors of creating salvation for us. He did the work of creating our salvation through His perfect obedience to the Law and will of the Lord God, and by suffering at the hands of sinful men an innocent death. Through this death He won life and forgiveness for all mankind. So that all those who believe on His Name are declared righteous before the Lord God. All those who cling to His works in faith are clothed with His righteousness.

This is how we prepare our bodies and souls for death. We have all died the first death through the waters of Holy Baptism. In that water of regeneration all that we have inherited from Adam and all that we have added there unto has been washed away and we are now clean and free from sin. We cling daily to the waters of Holy Baptism, daily living in those waters through our daily contrition over our sins. We daily confess before God, and before the pastor when Private Confession is offered, that we are indeed poor, miserable sinners, deserving of death; deserving of God’s eternal wrath and displeasure. But we also through that holy washing of rebirth and renewal daily rejoice that through the faith created in us by the working of the Holy Ghost we are a new creation. We have been raised out of the first death through the grace of our Lord God.

He has made us a new creation. For this reason, as new creations made through the waters of Holy Baptism, we desire daily to hear God’s Word, to talk to our Lord God through prayer, and hear what our Lord God would have us hear through the Holy Scriptures. He has clothed us with the white robes of His righteousness—the righteousness that He won through His perfect obedience to the Law and His suffering and death. Spiritually we wear those white robes wherever we go. Sometimes we soil those garments through our sinful thoughts, words and deeds. But our Lord cleanses those garments and makes them shine white again whenever in true contrition we turn from our works and turn to the works of the Christ. In His works we find forgiveness, life and salvation. Through His works, and our faith in them, He restores to us the white robe of His righteousness. Our sins are no longer credited to us.

This is something that we do every day of our Christian lives. It is something that we do throughout our lives as we strive daily to live lives worthy of repentance. Even when we fail, our Lord + Jesus through His Holy Ghost, lifts us up by convicting us with the Law, and showing us that salvation is found in Him alone. In this way we are preparing ourselves for death every day of our lives. Not only are we often aware that the day of our death is coming, but we also long for the day when the sin in this world that ravages our body will be done away with, and we will enjoy the eternal bliss of Heaven. We long for the day when we will be joined together with our Lord + Jesus in His Kingdom, and we will be reunited with all of our friends and fellow saints who have gone before us into that glorious Home, and have put on the new and glorious bodies promised to all those who believe on the Lord + Jesus.

We are assured of this because after the Sabbath was past; after our Lord + Jesus rested on the seventh day from all of His labors creating salvation for us, He arose again from the dead. He is no longer in the grave. He is not there. We can look into the empty tomb with the women who went to

minister to Him, and see that our Lord is not there, for He has risen from the dead. He is the firstfruits of all those who will rise from the dead. Because His grave is empty, on the Last Day, when He calls all of us to our eternal home in Heaven, our graves will also be empty. All the saints on Earth, will be called the saints of Heaven, and their graves will be empty. And we will join together with our risen Lord, Who sits on the right hand of God the Father, and with all the saints of Heaven and we will sing the eternal Liturgy of the Lamb in His Kingdom.

Until that day we prepare our bodies and souls for that day by coming to this holy house and hearing the Word of God preached into our ears. We come to hear all about what our Lord + Jesus has done for us. We come to rehearse the eternal Liturgy through our worship every Sunday and Feast and Festival day. Most importantly, we come to this holy sanctuary to find rest—to find a Sabbath—from the slings and arrows of the devil, the world and our sinful flesh. Here in this place we find our rest from our enemies—peace from our enemies—through the preached Word of God and the administered Sacraments.

Let us therefore, my dear friends, rejoice that we are able to come together and receive a foretaste of what Heaven will be like, as we hear once again about our Lord's resurrection from the dead. The stone of our graves has been rolled away. We will not taste death, but we will live with our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ for all eternity. Thanks be to God! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, Who by the death of Thy Son hast overcome sin and death, and by His resurrection hast restored innocence and everlasting life, to the end that we, being delivered from the power of the devil, should live in Thy Kingdom: grant that with our whole hearts we may confidently believe this, and in such faith ever thank and praise Thee; through the same Thy dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!