

The Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord
St. Mark 16:1-8
April 9th, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
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.

Sermon Text:

And entering into the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he saith unto them, "Be not amazed: ye seek Jesus, the Nazarene, who hath been crucified: He is risen; He is not here: behold, the place where they laid Him!"

Prayer in Pulpit before 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 Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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.

Hallelujah! Christ is Arisen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! Abraham, the patriarch of the people of Israel, took his son Isaac, at the Lord God's request, to a mountain of which the Lord God directed him. There he was willing to sacrifice his son, his only son, Isaac. How could he do such a thing? He could only do it if he believed on one thing: that the Lord God would raise his son from the dead. This willing sacrifice of Abraham was a foreshadowing of things to come. The heavenly Father also was willing to sacrifice His Son, His Only-Begotten Son upon the altar of the tree of the holy cross. This sacrifice of the Lord + Jesus took place on the same mountain upon which Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac.

The heavenly Father also can offer up His Beloved Son on the altar of the cross because He knows that death has no power over Him. The Son of the heavenly Father would conquer death. Death would not have dominion over Him. The grave would not have dominion over Him. He would rule and dominate both death and the grave. For the Lord + Jesus is the Author of life. He is the Creator and Maker of all things living. Therefore, how could death contain Him? How could this Son of God be held in death? He could not be held by death. Just as Isaac would not be held by death if Abraham had been allowed to go through with the sacrifice.

We too, are now no longer bound by death. Death has no more dominion over us, for the Lord of life has conquered death once and for all. The grave is empty. He is risen! We too will rise from the dead. We will rise from the dead and be given new and glorious bodies on the Last Day, for our Lord +

Jesus has conquered death and grave once and for all. The holy Scriptures are full of pictures of this truth. We heard many of them last night in the reading of the twelve prophecies in the Easter Vigil Service. We had heard about Abraham willing to sacrifice Isaac because he believed the Lord God, the Author of life, could raise his son from the dead. But we also heard about the Prophet Jonah, who was swallowed by a large fish. Like the Lord + Jesus, Who was in the belly of the grave for three days, the Prophet Jonah was in the belly of the large fish for three days. Both of these are signs of our own resurrection from the dead. These both point to the fact that we, who cling to the Lord of life in faith, will not remain in the grave. He is risen, and so too will we on the Last Day.

We also heard from the Prophet Ezekiel. The Lord God Jehovah had taken him to a valley filled with a great multitude of the dead. There was nothing remaining of this great multitude but a valley of bones; a valley of very dry bones. The people in this valley were as dead as dead can be. And our Lord God asks the Prophet Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" This is the same question we are bound to ask when we see our loved one in the casket. Can this mortal shell be made alive again? The Prophet Ezekiel's response to the Lord God should be our response when we see death and wonder if life can come out of it: "O Lord Jehovah, Thou knowest."

That is to say, "Yes, Lord, Thou canst make this person alive again, even has Thou hast promised us from the beginning." And we know the rest of the story, for the Lord God told the Prophet Ezekiel to preach to the dry bones, and they became alive again with their bodies restored to them. Such is the picture for us of the resurrection of the dead. Such is the truth that the Lord God has power over death and the grave. It cannot contain us, for the Lord God will not allow it to contain us.

We also have the testimony of the three young men whom Nebuchadnezzar threw into the burning fiery furnace because they would not bow down to any false god, but clung in faith the only true Lord God; the only Lord and God Who could deliver them from the burning fiery furnace. This fiery furnace is a picture of the fires of Hell. This is why the three young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, could not be harmed by the fire. For on account of their faith in the Lord God the fires of Hell had no power over them. They were rescued alive again, untouched by the fires of the fiery furnace. Faith also saves us in this way. The faith we have, which was created in us by the Holy Ghost, clings to the promise of life that our Lord God has made. The fires of Hell will not consume us, for we will not be in Hell, but we will be with our Lord and Savior in Heaven.

Time does not permit to go through all of the images of holy Scripture that point to our salvation; which point to the truth that death has no dominion over us; that the grave will not keep us. For the holy Scriptures promise us life and salvation throughout its pages. Holy Scriptures points us to our heavenly home—to the resurrection of the dead—throughout its pages. And we know this is true because of the Gospel reading we have today. We hear from the Evangelist St. Mark, but all four of the Evangelists record that our Lord + Jesus rose again from the dead.

The four evangelists are in agreement that death and the grave did not have dominion over the Lord + Jesus. He is risen! See the place where He lay. The place is empty. There is no body. There is no death. There is only an empty tomb and a Savior Who is alive and bears the marks of our atonement in His hands and feet and side. All the other testimonies in holy Scripture that showed that our Lord God was the ruler over life and death, were all pointing to this one point in time, when the Lord + Jesus, He Who was willingly sacrificed for the atonement of the sins of the whole world on the tree of the holy cross by His heavenly Father; Who willingly offered up His life as a ransom for our own; Who suffered and died, and was buried, was raised again from the dead.

He gave up His Spirit willingly on the cross. He died when He knew it was finished. He committed His Spirit into the heavenly Father's hands. Here He takes up His life again. This is the power and authority that He has over death. He dies when He wants, and takes up His life again when He wants.

This is why Abraham believed with all his heart that the Lord God could and would raise his son Isaac from the dead, if he had sacrificed him. For the heavenly Father sacrifices His own Beloved Son knowing that He will raise Him again on the third day. He is risen! He is no longer in the grave!

This is why we can also have such faith as Abraham did. If the Lord God could raise Isaac from the dead; If He could raise the Prophet Jonah from being in the belly of the fish for three days; If He could bring to life an entire valley of dry bones; And if He could rescue the three young men from the burning fiery furnace, among many other examples we do not have time to share, then He can also raise us and all of our loved ones from the grave. He can give to us new and glorious bodies as He has promised. He has promised that we will live with Him for all eternity. He has promised that all those who die in the faith will be with Him and all the angels, and archangels, and all the company of Heaven forever and ever in our eternal heavenly reward.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us give thanks this day that the victory parade that was celebrated by the multitudes as He rode into Jerusalem is now a victory parade of eternal life. For He will cloth us all in the white robes of our Lord and Savior's righteousness, and give us palm branches to carry in the eternal victory parade. There we will join with all those who have gone before us in the faith and sing the eternal liturgy. We will sing forever and ever that the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sins of the world, is worthy to receive glory, and honor, and praise. For He has destroyed death once and for all. He has burst open the grave. Death no longer has dominion over us. The grave no longer has dominion over us. For He will raise us to life again, even as He raised Himself from the dead. Even as He lives, so too will we live with Him forever and ever, world without end. Hallelujah! Christ is Arisen! He is risen indeed! Hallelujah! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, 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!