

The Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord
St. Mark 16:1-8
March 31st, 2024
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Be Not Amazed

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 Risen! (He is risen indeed! Hallelujah!)

My dearly beloved friends, the Sabbath rest is over, the Day of the Resurrection of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ is here! The Old Testament Sabbath, Saturday by our reckoning, was strictly adhered to by the Jews. No work was done on the day. It was a day of rest; to rest in the mercies and compassion of the Lord God. The observance of the Sabbath rest on Saturday was only a shadow of the true Sabbath rest that we observe today. The Old Testament allusions and images of things to come were only the flame of a candle. The things to which they pointed was the sun. The sun plays a very important role in the narrative of the Resurrection of our Lord.

St. Mark writes that the women prepared spices on the Sabbath. In another Gospel, we are told it was in the evening. They prepared the spices and ointments for our Lord’s body while it was dark. They even came very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, to see the sepulchre. The women came in darkness and as they discovered that the Lord + Jesus had risen from the dead, the light of the sun increased more and more. The resurrection of our Lord brought light into the world. The resurrection of our Lord, like the sun, gave great light to those who dwelt in the darkness of sin and death. He has delivered us out of the darkness of sin into His marvelous light. He brings us into the light of His resurrection. His resurrection opens up the grave. His resurrection opens up the way into eternal life in Heaven.

This is why the Sabbath rest of the Jews was only a foreshadowing of things to come. This is why it was only the flame of a candle to the sun. For the day of the Resurrection of our Lord has become

for us, and all Christians, the day of the celebration of eternal life. Today is the Day of our Lord's Resurrection. It is the Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord + Jesus Christ, if we go by its official title. But every Sunday is a small remembrance of this day. We meet for worship, and gather around our Lord's means of grace every Sunday because it is on this day that our Lord has made salvation for us. It is on this day that our Lord has secured our forgiveness from sins. It is on this day that our Lord + Jesus clears the path for our poor, miserable sinners to join Him forever and ever in the glorious realms of Heaven.

Every first day of the week—every Sunday—is a remembrance of what our Lord + Jesus, the Christ did on this day. He thoroughly defeated death and Hell. He has bound our old enemy, the devil, in chains. He has descended into Hell on the Sabbath, so that He might seal His victory over death and the grave. Today, on the first day of the week, on Sunday, He walks out of the grave revealing to us that our graves now hold no power over us. Death has no power over us. The devil has no power over us. Sin has no power over us.

We no longer walk in darkness. No longer in the darkness and gloom of sin and death. We have come to the tomb of our Lord + Jesus and found it empty. The women came to the tomb and found it empty as well. They pondered on their way who would roll the stone away, but when they arrive, they found the stone rolled away, and a young man sitting in the tomb on the right side, and wearing a white robe. He was the image of what our own resurrection will look like. In the full vigor of life and clothed in white robes. Just as the Scriptures describe the saints. They wear white robes and carry palm branches, and sing the praises of the Lamb of God in His Kingdom without end.

He told them that the Lord + Jesus was not there. "Be not amazed" he said. How can one not be amazed? He Who was crucified, dead, and buried is no longer dead and buried. He was not there! He had risen from the grave. The stone had been rolled away, not so that the Lord could get out, but so that we might look into the grave and see that it was empty. The women who came to the tomb early on the first day of the week beheld the empty tomb. They fled from the tomb in trembling and astonishment. Such was the sight of the empty tomb. Sts. Peter and John would also come after the women got over their initial fear and told them. They both ran to the tomb and saw that it was empty just as the women said. How could one not be amazed?

The resurrection of the dead was not a common thing. Even our Lord + Jesus only raised three persons during His entire time on earth, before His own resurrection, that is. In each resurrection the length of death increased. The first resurrection He performed was the daughter of Jairus. She had only just died. And He raised her up saying that she was only sleeping. The next resurrection was the young man who was the son of the widow from Nain, this resurrection appears in our Gospel readings for the Church's year. This young man was being carried in the bier to the gravesite. So, he had been dead long enough for them to prepare the body for burial. The third resurrection that our Lord did was the raising of Lazarus, which has been mentioned a few times during this past Holy Week. He had been dead for four days. His body had begun to decay. As his sister said, it had begun to stick.

In each instance, the Lord's work of resurrection was even greater. They were events that would amaze anyone. And now, our Lord performs His greatest resurrection. He raises Himself from the dead. He gave up His life when the atonement of our sins was finished, and He took back His life after He stayed in the grave for three days. Death has no power over Him. He is the author and perfecter of life. If He has this kind of power over death, then we need not fear death and the grave. If He can raise Himself from the dead, He can certainly raise us up on the Last Day. Be not amazed! For our Lord + Jesus is risen from the dead. Be not amazed that we too will all be raised from the dead.

The darkness of sin and death no longer have any more hold over us. Be not amazed at this, for our Lord + Jesus has come into this world to bring life and immortality to us. He has come into this

world, come in the middle of night, at midnight, to win for us forgiveness, life, and salvation as this first day of the week began to dawn. We now walk in the light of the day. And this day has become the day the Lord hath made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This day is the beginning of an eternal day in Heaven. We observe and commemorate this day of the resurrection of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ, every Sunday.

For every Sunday we remember and proclaim through our Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine His crucifixion and death. We remember and proclaim the sacrifice that led to this day of resurrection. Therefore, my dearly beloved friends, let us keep this feast as St. Paul wrote in his first epistle to the Church at Corinth. Let us keep this feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Let us humbly confess our sins, and hunger and thirst after righteousness. For when we examine ourselves, we find nothing in us but only sin and death. Therefore, our Lord + Jesus has given us a meal in which our faith may be strengthened, and in which we may remember that by His sacrifice on the tree of the holy cross we now have life and immortality.

He has risen from the dead! Be not amazed. For He will also raise us up from the dead, even as He daily raises us from the dead on account of our Holy Baptism. Each new day we are raised out of the darkness of sin and death, and brought into the new light of the Christ. We are made a new creation by the Holy Ghost, on account of our daily repentance and faith in the Christ. In the waters of Holy Baptism, we have already been drowned and killed. All that is evil within us has been buried in the tomb of the Christ. Our tomb now stands empty with the tomb of the Lord + Jesus. For we will all be raised from the dead on the Last Day, and we will wear the right robes of our Lord's righteousness, and carry palm branches, and sing hymns eternally in Heaven declaring the victory that our Lord + Jesus has had over death, sin, and the whole host of Hell. Let us step out of the darkness into our Lord's most marvelous light and sing and rejoice that He has bestowed these great things upon us. Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! (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!