

The Vigil of the Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord
St. Matthew 28:1-7
April 19th, 2025
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Is Risen from the Dead

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“And the angel answered and said unto the women, ‘Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek + Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, even as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.’”

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.

My dear friends, unlike us who count our days from midnight to midnight, the Jews count their days from sunset to sunset. We are shown this in the first Book of Moses, commonly called Genesis. Moses writes after each of the days of creation that there was evening then morning, a day. Therefore, the events which we celebrated on Thursday evening, for the Jews actually took place on Good Friday. Our Lord on that Friday washed His Apostles’ feet. He ate the Passover meal with them, and instituted the Lord’s Supper. He went with them to the Garden of Gethsemane where He prayed that this cup might pass from Him if it were possible; howbeit He also prayed that not His will but will of our heavenly Father be done. He was betrayed by Judas Iscariot with a kiss, and led away by a multitude with lanterns and weapons to first Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, then to Caiaphas himself. He endured two mock trials which brought many false witnesses to accuse Him, but none of their testimony agreed. He was finally charged with blasphemy because He spoke the truth about Himself, that He was the Son of God. These are all the events that He was awake and subjected to while it was still dark out.

When morning came, He was sent to Pontius Pilate. We are not told whether He had time to take a nap, but with the number of activities in the night, it is doubtful. He was questioned by Pontius Pilate while the chief priests and Pharisees accused Him of many things. The same thing happened before King Herod. He was then sentenced to be scourged, and then crucified upon a tree. He was crucified with two other malefactors, one on His left, the other on His right, and Him in the middle. He hung on the cross for six hours, from the third to the ninth hours. There was mocking and ridicule endured by Him. There was darkness over all the land. Then when He knew that all things were accomplished for our atonement. He cried, “It is finished” and gave up His ghost. This was His work of redemption. It was a long day. There are twenty-four hours in a day, and He was awake for most of those hours. Before the sun set on Friday, He was dead. Then He took His rest.

On Holy Saturday, the Sabbath Day, the day of rest, our Lord + Jesus took His rest of all of His

work of redeeming mankind from all of their sins. He had offered up His life as a ransom for ours, and fully completed the task. Then He took the hard-earned rest that He deserved. He rested in the grave. On Holy Saturday, the Church traditionally recognizes the Lord + Jesus resting in the grave. It is the second day of our Lord being in the grave. The first day being after He died on the cross on Friday, and was wrapped up in linen cloths, and laid in a new tomb into which no one had ever been laid. He was prepared for burial by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. They prepared His body for burial as it was according to the custom of the Jews.

Therefore, Friday was the first day of our Lord's death in the grave. Saturday was the second day of our Lord's death in the grave. After sunset on what we would consider Saturday, for the Jews it would be Sunday. After sunset the third day of our Lord's being in the grave was accomplished. He gave us the sign of Jonah, the Prophet. He was in the belly of the earth for three days, from Friday evening, through Saturday, into the beginning of Sunday. This is why we celebrate this vigil at this time. It is no longer Saturday, not only for the Jews, but also for the Church. For the Church also reckons its days from evening to evening. This is now the first day of the week. It is Sunday, the Day of the resurrection of our Lord. We hear on this day the history of our Lord's resurrection from the dead.

Late on the Sabbath day, that is after twilight on Saturday, being already the first day of the week for the Jews, the women went and bought spices, so that they might anoint the body of our Lord + Jesus first thing in the morning. Here is where the narrative from the Gospel of the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew begins. Very early on the first day of the week before sunrise, but when the first rays of light began to shine, the women went to the tomb to do as they desired. They wondered who would roll away the stone. But when they arrived, they discovered that there had been an earthquake, and an angel had rolled the stone away. When they came to the tomb he was sitting upon the stone. He told them that good news that the Lord + Jesus was no longer sleeping in the grave. He had risen from the dead. There was also an angel in the tomb who also shared the same message. He pointed out the linens in which the Lord had been wrapped.

He was not there. He is risen from the dead. Death has no power over Him. He lives and reigns for all eternity. His resurrection from the dead shows that the heavenly Father accepted the sacrifice that our Lord + Jesus endured upon the tree of the holy cross. His resurrection proves that all the hard labor of enduring agony, pain, misery, and death, accomplished our redemption with the heavenly Father. Now all those who trust in this sacrifice receive the remission of all their sins. They who cling to the Lord + Jesus in faith, are now free from death and the grave. His death means the penalty of death for us has been paid. His resting in the grave means that we also will sleep soundly in the grave, knowing that He has accomplished our salvation. And His resurrection from the dead, assures us that we also will rise again from the dead.

Death had no power over our Lord, and because of His works and merits, death no longer has any power over us. We will never see, nor taste of death, for our Lord + Jesus has destroyed Death's strong bands, and free us from the prison of the grave. He has unlocked the gates of Heaven for us, so that we may enter in and enjoy our eternal rest with the Lord + Jesus for all eternity. There we will rest from all of our labors that we endured in this life. All of the hardships and turmoil caused by sin, we will no longer endure, for we will be at eternal rest in the bosom of Father Abraham. There we will be joined with all the other saints who have also remained faithful unto death; all those who clung in faith to the Lord + Jesus and trusted in the gifts that were won by our Lord's death and resurrection.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us rejoice this night, or rather, this day. For this is the first day of the week, it is the Lord's Day. It is Sunday, the Day of the Resurrection of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Every Sunday is a remembrance of this Day. Every Sunday is a remembrance of our Lord's resurrection. We can rejoice and sing on this day, for it is the day that assures us of eternal life and salvation in our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. He has defeated death and the grave, and give all those who

cling to Him in faith life everlasting. 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!