

The Feast of the Resurrection of our Lord
St. Mark 16:1-8
April 16th, 2017
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Greenville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Is Risen! He Is Not Here

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.

The ending to the Gospel of the Evangelist St. Mark appears strange to our ears. “So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.” We may be tempted to foolishly say, “Silly women, don’t you know how great this event is for you?” We have, however, all the facts. We know the complete story. Imagine what it would be like for you if you went to visit the grave of someone you loved and an angel was there who told you, “Nope, he is not here. He is alive and well. Go check for him at home. Oh, and tell everyone else that he is alive, as well.” I would think we would want to check to see if we got hit in the head recently.

It is easy to fault the women who went to the tomb, since we have all of the facts of the situation. However, the only thing that these women knew is that the Lord + Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified at the hands of Pilate and the leading Jews, and that He was buried less than 72 hours ago. He was put into a grave on Friday. A large stone had been placed in front of the tomb. The tomb had been sealed, meaning the stone had been attached to the tomb in some fashion; Scripture doesn’t tell us how exactly the tomb was sealed. There was even a guard placed in front of the tomb. In short, the likelihood of the Lord + Jesus still being in the tomb was a fairly safe bet. That is, if He was a normal man, and not the Son of God; if He did not possess both a Divine and Human nature.

So then, we can sympathize with the fear and trembling of the women who went to the tomb, because this is not a normal event. How many people have seen someone who was pronounced dead, come back to life? Even when the person is scientifically dead for just a few minutes, it is a shock and surprise that the person was able to be resuscitated. Imagine if that same person had been dead since Friday evening. I believe a little fear would enter our hearts, just like these women who went to the tomb. For, these things are not supposed to happen. The dead are supposed to stay dead. They do not rise from death and live again.

Our Lord + Jesus Christ, however, is no ordinary man. He is both God and man. As soon as He died, the fate of death and darkness were sealed. As soon as our Lord + Jesus Christ died, He had conquered death and darkness; He had defeated the grave. He had burst forth the prison gates of Hell. He had made the tomb a place that could no longer hold us. He marched into Hell, as we confess in the Apostles’ Creed: He descended into Hell. There He proclaimed His victory over sin, death, and all

the powers of the devil and the powers of Hell. Then, very early on the first day of the week—today—He burst open His grave and stepped out of the tomb alive and well.

By this act He reveals to us that the tomb now has no power over us. Our tombs will be just as empty on the Last Day, when our Lord + Jesus will call us out of our tombs and give us glorified bodies, and take us to our home in Heaven to live with Him for all eternity. Death has been defeated. The powers of darkness have been defeated. They can no longer harm us. Our reality is in Christ + Jesus. Our reality is life with Him for all eternity.

Our Lord did not need to rise from the dead to complete our atonement. Our sins were paid for in full on the cross. By His suffering and death, He purchased and won us back from sin, death, and the powers of the devil. Our atonement was finished. So, our Lord + Jesus did not need to be resurrected for that reason. It is to our benefit that He does rise from the dead, for by it we are assured that His sacrifice on our behalf was accepted by the Father. By His resurrection, we are also assured that He has conquered sin and death. It gives our faith something to cling to.

This is what it means when we say “Christ was raised for our justification.” It does not mean that by the resurrection all men are now justified apart from faith, as some teach. It means that now that our Lord + Jesus has been resurrected from the dead, our faith now has something to cling to, and we are thereby justified by this faith. The quote from Martin Luther in the announcement section of the bulletin explains this further. On account of our faith in our Lord’s resurrection, we can now rejoice in the victory that our Lord + Jesus won for us. His resurrection assures us that He has defeated once and for all sin, death, the devil and all of Hell. He in turn gives us forgiveness of our sins, an eternal life and home, and guarantees us that we have forever been rescued from the evil powers that seek our overthrow.

This why we say today, and throughout the Easter season, “Hallelujah! Christ is Risen!” When we say that we are confessing that we believe that the power of the grave has been defeated. We are confessing that we will arise and be given a glorified body in Heaven, just as our Lord + Jesus has risen from the dead and now reigns with His glorified body for all eternity. When someone says, “Hallelujah! Christ is Risen!” he is confessing his belief in the resurrection of the dead, and that his home is in Heaven. Our response confirms our own belief that we will dwell with our Lord for all eternity. When we say in response, “He is Risen indeed! Hallelujah!” confirms that we also believe that our home is in Heaven; that death has no power over us; that we now live in the light of Christ, and no longer are trapped in the darkness of sin and shame. “Hallelujah! Christ is Risen!” “He is Risen indeed! Hallelujah!” is a proclamation that we are free from sin, free from the power of death, and that we have a Savior Who is not dead, but alive and lives and reigns in Heaven for all eternity.

“Hallelujah! Christ is Risen!” “He is Risen indeed! Hallelujah!” means we no longer have any cause to fear and tremble like the women in today’s Gospel from the Evangelist St. Mark. The women who went to the tomb, did not have the complete picture. They did not have all the facts, yet. We know now that our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ gladly and willingly fulfilled the whole Law and will of God for us, because we could not, and that He suffered and died the punishment that was rightly our on account of our many sins and transgressions, and He went into the tomb and Hell, so that He might break us free from both the powers of Hell and free us from the powers of death.

Rejoice greatly! Today, this specific day, the Day of the Resurrection of our Lord, is the Day that our Lord has made. He made this day for you! He made this Day so that you could know and believe that your sins are paid for, and that death no longer has any power over you. Therefore, proclaim your joy and your faith boldly, confidently by saying and responding to each other often during this Easter season, “Hallelujah! Christ is Risen!” “He is Risen indeed! Hallelujah!” For with these words you proclaim what the Lord has done for you, and you proclaim that death no longer holds any fear for you. Be not afraid! He is risen! He is not here. The Lord + Jesus is not in the tomb but dwells with you and I

in His Word and in His Sacraments, until we are able to join Him in Heaven to live with Him and all the saints who have gone before us for all eternity. "Hallelujah! Christ is Risen!" "He is Risen indeed! Hallelujah!" Amen. 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.