

**“Christ is Risen!”** Mark 16.1-8 The Resurrection of Our Lord 2021

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed. Alleluia!

In the Nicene Creed, which we will confess together after the sermon, we confess with our mouths what we believe in our hearts:

*I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.*

On this great day, the Holy Spirit holds before us just what we look for in heartfelt faith: The resurrection of the dead. St. Mark records the words of the angel spoken to the women at Jesus' tomb:

*And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” (Mark 16.6-7)*

Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome are the first to hear that Jesus has done just what he said: He's risen from the dead! What the women experienced, the apostles and other disciples will experience soon enough. St. Paul says of the resurrected Christ:

*...and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup> Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup> Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. (1 Corinthians 15.5b-8)*

Jesus reveals himself to his disciples after his resurrection. He reveals himself to them just as the angel promised the women at the tomb. And when Jesus reveals himself, he does so not as some disembodied spirit floating around like a ghost but as the glorified flesh-and-blood Son of Mary who is the Son of God. When the disciples see the resurrected Jesus, they see Jesus physically raised from the dead with his body and soul intact.

Today, as we gather in faith the angel speaks to us! Jesus is risen! Behold the place where they laid him. By this word, the resurrected Jesus reveals himself to us. And by his revelation, he instills in us a faith and a hope in a resurrection of our own.

In such a resurrection, faith, and hope, we fix our eyes on the risen Jesus, for

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nowhere else in heaven or on earth is the resurrection to be found. As we fix our eyes on Jesus, we see the future he has in store for us. In his resurrection we see our resurrection. In Christ's resurrection we see what life after death is really like. In Christ's resurrection, we see with our eyes what we confess with our mouths: the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come. St. Paul encourages us in our faithful confession of our eternal, bodily future:

*When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (Colossians 3:4)*

When Christ returns, we will rise from our graves. When Christ returns, the Spirit of God will raise us up at the command of our risen Lord. When Christ returns, we will see what we look for now: Our own bodies raised from the dead. Flesh and blood and bones and souls. All holy. All glorified. All perfected forever and ever and ever.

To see this final fulfillment of our resurrection hope, we steadfastly keep our eyes fixed on Christ, our risen Lord. Everywhere else we look, we see only death, the grave and the lonely isolation of sinful self-reliance and the perverse prescriptions of self-improvement. There is no hope in death. There is no future in the grave. There is no heavenly promise in making your own way or making yourself a better person. In these there is only sin, separation from God, and the denial of the resurrection we confess in the creed.

On this Easter day the Holy Spirit calls us to repentance that looks to Jesus and nowhere else. He calls us to repentance that recognizes death for what it is: the wages for our sinfulness. He calls us to repentance that sees the grave for what it is: the place where we return to the dust from which we were taken. He calls us to repentance that shuns reliance on self as the danger it is: the danger of eternal destruction for our bodies and souls. The Spirit calls us to such repentance by revealing the risen Christ to us.

In his resurrection, we see Christ conquer death for us and seal for us the promised forgiveness of all our sins. We see Christ break open the seal of our own graves and give new heavenly divine life to this dust that is our bodies. We see Christ lead the way out of isolation and into the blessed company of all the faithful: The communion of saints, where God serves us with forgiveness, life, and, salvation; and where we in faith serve, love, and help one another.

By his resurrection, Christ has conquered the power of death for us. Christ

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has wiped away the record of our sins. Christ has crushed the head of our old enemy, the devil. Christ has opened the path to heaven for us. Christ has shown us our own future: our own resurrection and our own eternal life.

While we await that glorious day of our resurrection, we hold fast to our confession. Daily we confess that we do indeed believe in the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come. Christ has promised us resurrection. And Christ will not fail in his promise, for he is faithful, and he will bring our longing for the resurrection to fulfillment at the culmination of the age.

From our lips today rings for the confession that has sounded from the lips of the saints through all the ages: Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us:

*Let us therefore celebrate the festival (1 Corinthians 5.7-8)*

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. And when he comes, on that great and glorious day we too shall rise and stand upon the earth, and in our flesh, we shall see Christ face to face. We shall live forever in glory with all the saints in light and with our own eyes: WE SHALL SEE GOD.

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Amen.