

**Sermon for The Resurrection of Our Lord**  
**Luther Memorial Chapel, Shorewood, Wisconsin**  
Pastor Michael Larson  
4/12/2020



*Readings: Job 19:23-27; 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Mark 16:1-8*

*Lord God, heavenly Father, who delivered up Your Son for our trespasses and raised Him for our justification: we ask You to give us Your Holy Spirit, and by Him to rule and guide us, sustain us in the true faith, and keep us from all sins in newness and purity of life; and through Your Son, Jesus Christ, awaken us after this life to life everlasting. Amen.*

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

In our Gospel this morning, three women go to the tomb of Jesus. The sun is rising. The Sabbath is past, and now they undertake the job of properly preparing the body of Jesus for burial. But as they approach the

tomb they're struck with a surprise. The giant stone covering the entrance of the tomb has been rolled aside. They look up and see a man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe. This angel saw the terror in the eyes of the women. He comforted them, saying, "Don't be afraid. You're looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. But He's risen; He's not here."

Today, on this wonderful feast of Easter I want to begin with a simple question. *Why did Jesus have to rise from the dead?* Now, we know for a fact that Jesus rose from the dead. We know and believe that to be true and we confess that wonderful truth every time we gather for worship. We even know in our hearts that Jesus rising from the dead is really important! But this morning let's just deal with the 'why' of it all. WHY, why, why did Jesus have to be raised from the dead?

So, what do you think? Why did Jesus rise? When I ask this question, the most common response is, "well, because He's God!" Otherwise, folks explain His rising from the dead as a result of His raw power and strength. You might think of Jesus as a WWE wrestler. He just plain overpowers death by sheer might and main. Now, I would never say anything to downplay the significance of the power of Christ! Who, after all, is stronger than Christ our Lord? But when it comes to the meaning and significance of Jesus rising from the dead, brute strength and sheer power just doesn't really get to the heart of things.

Why did Jesus have to rise from the dead? Well, to understand that we really need to go back. Way back! All the way back to the very beginning of things, with our first parents, Adam and Eve. They lived in the splendor of paradise. Their lives were totally dependent upon the very Word of God which was the fountain and source of their lives. Their lives depended upon it. And they were warned that in the day that they turned away from that life-giving Word, the very moment they sinned, death would enter in and begin working. Sadly, that's just what

happened and the sin of Adam brought sin and death upon the whole creation, including Adam and all his offspring. That means you and me.

Ever since, this whole creation has been reeling - subjected to decay as a consequence for man's sin. Sickness, war, violence, suffering, even global pandemics. Yes, even Coronavirus, all remind us that we are dying sinners in a dying world in need of salvation.

On Friday we gave special attention to our Lord's death, a day which we Christians rightly call "good," because on that day our Lord accomplished what Adam could not: the forgiveness of sins and the justification of the sinner before God. The sin of Adam brought sin and death upon all creation. But now, the righteous act of Christ, in the once for all sacrifice of His flesh upon the cross, brought forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation in the place where sin, death, and condemnation had once reigned. Paul put it this way: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" and "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification."

Why did Jesus rise from the dead? Here's why. Our Lord Jesus had to rise from the dead because *His death actually paid the price for sin demanded by the law*. Therefore, He didn't rise from the dead simply because He was too powerful to remain in the grave. He didn't break out of the tomb just because of sheer power. Instead, Jesus rose from the dead precisely because His death *actually took away the sins of the whole world!* Remember that death came into the world through sin. So what happens when sin is taken away? Well, death dies!

That angel who is announcing the resurrection of Jesus in our Gospel this morning is also announcing the forgiveness of sins right along with it! This is the connection I really want you to see today. That's why we really treasure those words of the Catechism when we pray, "where there is forgiveness of sins there is also life and salvation!"

What does Jesus resurrection have to do with your life? Everything really! You see, through your baptism into Christ you are joined to Jesus death and resurrection. You are raised to newness of life with Him. Paul writes that Jesus, “being raised from the dead, is the first fruits of them that sleep,” meaning that for those who are baptized into His blessed name, death is nothing but a short nap - a short little sleep! Your eyes too will flutter open and you’ll rise too! For the same Lord Jesus Christ who ascended will return at the Last Day to judge the living and the dead. Then every knee will bow before Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord. A blessed and joyful Easter to you all! In the name of Jesus.

### **The Prayer of the Church**

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

All glory to You, dear Father in heaven, for You have fulfilled Your Word and brought Your holy servant Jesus, our Lord and God, through death to resurrection. His resurrection is proof positive that He defeated sin, death and the devil on the cross. Let this news of redemption spread far and wide, that the joy of the Easter Gospel would be received in faith throughout the world. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All thanksgiving to You, dear Father in heaven, for You have adopted us into Your divine family through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Baptized into Christ’s death and resurrection, we have died to sin and risen to new life. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit, that we would live lives of daily repentance and faith, ever clinging to Jesus, our living Redeemer, for forgiveness, life and salvation. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Father in heaven, unite in joy all Your holy churches gathered to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, and give comfort and assurance to all

who are isolated that in the communion of all Your saints, they raise with angels, archangels and the whole Church in heaven on earth the song of Christ's victory. Put an end to all division and false doctrine. Raise up preachers and singers in every place to shout this good news and sing alleluias without end. Make the name of Jesus heard in every corner of the earth this glad day. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Father in heaven, You have given our risen Lord all dominion over the works of Your hands. Grant that all who bear earthly authority would exercise their offices with humility, restraint and integrity for the well-being of all and for the preservation of Your Holy Church. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Father in heaven, we implore You to visit the sick, the suffering, the homebound, the grieving and all who stand in need. Whatever their trials, comfort them with the knowledge that their Redeemer lives, and that nothing can separate them from the love You have for them in Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Father in heaven, bless those who approach the holy altar on this most holy day, that they would receive the mystery of Your Son's very body and blood in repentance and faith, and to their abundant blessing. Give comfort and certainty for those who long for Your Supper and believe Your Son's holy testament, that they may know they have what Christ says: forgiveness of sins. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

All praise to You, dear Father in heaven, for You have opened up to us the way to eternal life in the resurrection of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. We give You thanks for all those who have gone before us in the faith and now rest from their labors. Keep us in that same faith, and embolden us by Your resurrection to be fearless in the face of disease, chaos, loneliness and every sorrow of this world. Give us, with Job, the solemn expectation to cheer us: our Redeemer lives, and we, too, shall be resurrected and glorified to live with Him in His eternal Kingdom; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our resurrected Lord, who

lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### Hymn of the Day: Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands



1 Christ Je - sus lay in death's strong bands For our of - fens -  
 2 No son of man could con - quer death, Such ru - in sin  
 3 Christ Je - sus, God's own Son, came down, His peo - ple to  
 4 It was a strange and dread - ful strife When life and death



es giv - en; But now at God's right hand He stands  
 had wrought us. No in - no - cence was found on earth,  
 de - liv - er; De - stroy - ing sin, He took the crown  
 con - tend - ed; The vic - to - ry re - mained with life,



And brings us life from heav - en. There - fore let us  
 And there - fore death had brought us In - to bond - age  
 From death's pale brow for - ev - er: Stripped of pow'r, no  
 The reign of death was end - ed. Ho - ly Scrip - ture



joy - ful be And sing to God right thank - ful - ly  
 from of old And ev - er grew more strong and bold  
 more it reigns; An emp - ty form a - lone re - mains;  
 plain - ly saith That death is swal - lowed up by death,



Loud songs of al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!  
 And held us as its cap - tive. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Its sting is lost for - ev - er. Al - le - lu - ia!  
 Its sting is lost for - ev - er. Al - le - lu - ia!

5 Here our true Paschal Lamb we see,  
 Whom God so freely gave us;  
 He died on the accursèd tree—  
 So strong His love—to save us.  
 See, His blood now marks our door;  
 Faith points to it; death passes o'er,  
 And Satan cannot harm us.  
 Alleluia!

Now His grace to us imparts  
 Eternal sunshine to our hearts;  
 The night of sin is ended.  
 Alleluia!

6 So let us keep the festival  
 To which the Lord invites us;  
 Christ is Himself the joy of all,  
 The sun that warms and lights us.

7 Then let us feast this Easter Day  
 On Christ, the bread of heaven;  
 The Word of grace has purged away  
 The old and evil leaven.  
 Christ alone our souls will feed;  
 He is our meat and drink indeed;  
 Faith lives upon no other!  
 Alleluia!