

WELCOME 17th April 2022 – Easter '22 C

Luke 24:1-12

I never get tired of these words: *CHRIST IS RISEN!*

We're glad you're here this morning...we celebrate just like this every week...

BUT TODAY is special...It. Is. Easter & *CHRIST IS RISEN!*

Please stay with us after worship...morning tea & hot cross buns are not far off & that'll make the morning complete!

There's an **old** saying... "History is written by the winners." When two cultures clash, the loser is obliterated, & the winner writes the history to glorify their cause & disparage their conquered foe. What did Napoleon say, "What is history, but a fable agreed upon?" Maybe...

But today...We celebrate a victory that first & foremost re-writes the future for you, for me & for all **creation**. *CHRIST IS RISEN!* Re-writing history is easy – we all do it... But *CHRIST IS RISEN* to rewrite **you**...past – present – future...to transform **you** ... today tomorrow & every day after. **Your** heart was the hill he was prepared to die on. From the beginning of time, the Father's only desire has been to share the fullness of his life w/ **you**. His eternal plan from beginning to end is for **you** "to dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Promised from forever...Jesus Christ crucified, risen & ruling over all things by God's grace & love...destroys death, forgives sins, & defeats the power of evil that plagues all humankind. From this day forward the door for us is wide open from bondage to freedom, from despair to hope, anxiety to peace, frustration to joy & from death to life...to a new & eternal future.

The final pages of human destiny are written in words like these:

"Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Remember what he told you back in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinners, be crucified, & rise again on the third day."

He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin & alive for righteousness. By his wounds you are healed.

Once you were like sheep going astray.

But now you have returned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls. – 1 Pt 2:24-25

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord Jesus Christ, you conquered death, rose from the dead & are alive for evermore.

Help us acknowledge your loving presence with us at all times - in all things
Help us remember

- that you are with us in every time of perplexity to guide and to direct us
- that you are with us in every time of sorrow to comfort and counsel us
- that you are with us in every time of temptation to strengthen & inspire us
- that you are with us in every time of loneliness to cheer and befriend us.
- that you are with us even in death to bring us to you & your glory on the other side.

Make today that day...when all things are made new & your life bears full flower & fruit in us...in your Name, for your greatness & the work of your kingdom we pray.

AMEN

Let's celebrate our eternal future by singing...This Life I Live

EASTER '22 C – UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE: A PLAN OF VICTORY

"If it's too good to be true..." ...it probably is. You know that. I know that. Certainly the disciples knew that (even if they'd never had an email promising \$\$\$ from an old missionary made rich by the king of Wakanda...just send your bank details) Which is why **ALL** the gospel accounts of this very day are consistent about 2 things:

1) No one was sitting there waiting for Jesus to rise from the dead. No one expected resurrection. Not one of the attentive devoted followers – who heard Jesus say multiple times this moment would come – not 1 jumped for joy & shouted *Hallelujah!* Not 1 of them, on hearing their friend master Lord had vacated the tomb raised to life again, gave high 5s danced a jig & said, "I knew it! Just like he said!" Not 1. They didn't camp out outside the tomb waiting for the stone to roll away. The women go to the tomb to pack Jesus' body in spices/drench it w/ oil not to get him ready for his grand re-entrance to Jerusalem but to mask the smell of decay...to fake-away the stench of death. No one was sitting there waiting for Jesus to rise from the dead. **WHY?**

a. What makes believing the resurrection difficult? not just them but you & people you know I get it...we can drive out to a dozen cemeteries w/in a few Ks of here & folks are still there. We have seen, heard about, & experienced ourselves enough senseless tragedy in this world...we are almost immune to the rez. What are the 2 certainties in life? "death & taxes." We don't ever say, "resurrection." Our functional picture of the world around us is: this is all there is there ain't no more. Even angelic reminders penetrate only so far because they go back to the 11 & the guys all think they're hearing "nonsense" – "idle tale". *Gk word is ἵηρος – "delirious"*

2) The tomb was empty & the **only** explanation was "He has been raised like he told you." No one saw the moment Jesus' heart began beating & his lungs began breathing. No one witnessed the moving aside of the grave-cloths & Jesus standing up. Nowhere does the NT offer any rational description for what happened behind the stone tomb-door. All we get is "He has been raised like he told you." "Remember...?" this was always the plan...humility...self-giving...sacrifice...victory by resurrection...Remember what he said...

At most points in our lives...we have only God's Word to cling to. Jesus is not here like he was there in the flesh sleeping on the other side of the campfire. All we have is his word...As Lk recounts the gospel...Jesus' life begins as Mary says to Gabriel, "Let it be to me according to your word." Here again they're offered only Jesus' word. In 1 Cor 15 where Paul gives us the basic NT sermon...the framework for all NT witness/evangelism...**I** passed on to you what was most important & what had also been passed on to me. *Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, & he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.*

"Remember...?" this was always the plan...the basic call from Jesus to you me his church was always & still **is**...*Follow me*. The life of conforming our lives to Jesus is the core of our work in this world...To remember his word, to cling to his promises, to be shaped by him...into his life..."Remember...?" Jesus said the Father's desire to save & bring you home to his heart was stronger than death...It is. Jesus said death would not hold him forever...It didn't. Jesus told his friends he would come to them again on the other side of the grave...and on that bright new morning every promise he ever made proved true.

Ok...given all the reasons...and there are *good* ones for being skeptical doubtful or even downright disbelieving that the rez is true...**b**. What would be possible if it IS true?

w/o the resurrection, Christianity is just wishful thinking, & takes its place alongside all other human philosophy & religious speculation. Jesus Christ didn't come to this world to make bad people good; He came to this world to make dead people live...to grow his life humility...self-giving...sacrifice...victory by his resurrection in us.

Jesus walked into death & out from his grave like no one else in history. He promised all who trusted his powerful love for abundant life here & hereafter would receive that life. He declared every human life precious & valuable in the name of God who is Love. Once death is destroyed no other power can have power. Once death's grip is broken no other bondage can hold you. Once forgiveness & freedom have been granted, there is no prison where you must remain. Once the power of sin death & the evil one are defeated the war is won. Once new life breaks forth from Jesus' grave, old life/dead life/sin life/captive life/hopeless life/just getting through life is gone forever.

Remember...cling to & live from...Death is not the end. Nothing can separate you from God's passionate love for you, & his passionate desire for your good. The same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead can redeem & transform every life...no matter how ruined broken distressed. Re-writing history is easy – we all do it...But **CHRIST IS RISEN** to rewrite **you**...to transform **you** ...today tomorrow & every day after...The door is wide open from bondage to freedom, from despair to hope, anxiety to peace, frustration to joy & from death to life...to a new & eternal future

Your future...of all creation is written beginning with words like these...**God** *in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, & through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven & on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. – Col 1:19-20* **He** *personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin & alive for righteousness. By his wounds you are healed. Once you were like sheep going astray. But now you have returned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls. – 1 Pt 2:24-25* **CHRIST IS RISEN**