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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
April 1, 2018
Easter Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Ps. 118:19-24, Job 19:23-27; Is 25:6-9

1 Corinthians 15:1-8; John 20:1-18

Hymns: 191; 728:1, 3; 210; 198; 189; 200:1-2, 6-8; 207:1, 2

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Mark 16:1-8

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ²Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" ⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. ⁵And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

⁶But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."

⁸So 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. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth.
Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our Crucified and Risen Savior,

dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: The Redeemer of the World!

That the theme of our midweek Lenten meditations this past several weeks. We started with a meditation upon the Redeemer of the World Anointed. Remember that devotion way back on Ash Wednesday when we considered the stunning testimony of Mary of Bethany coming into the formal dinner where her brother was a guest and her sister Martha was busy cooking. She broke open that expensive bottle of ointment and anointed the Lord Jesus both on His head and on His feet. Jesus declared that she had done this anointing for His death.

Yes, Mary, who had earlier sat at Jesus' feet listening to Him, was perhaps the only one who grasped the situation that had to play out in the coming days of the following week. That anointing had happened only a little more than a week before Jesus' resurrection. We ended our Lenten meditations just a couple days ago on that Friday we call "Good." That Friday was indeed good for us, but a day of unimaginable horrors for the Lord Jesus; a day that ended with Jesus yielding up His spirit. Jesus' body was then buried in the sepulcher of a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea, so that even in His burial the Scriptures would be fulfilled. Jesus went before us, showing us the way through death and the grave. Jesus did all this as our Redeemer, the Redeemer of the world who was crucified, died, and was buried.

As far as Jesus' enemies were concerned that was the end of Him. As far as the world is concerned that should be the end of the story, but we know that if that were truly the end of Jesus we would not be here. We would not be "Christ believers" for He would not be the Redeemer the World. So it is that the Holy Spirit fills our hearts with great joy and wonder this morning as we worship and bow down before --

THEME: The Redeemer of the World – RISEN!

These faithful dedicated women we read of in our text present to us a lesson in discipleship, a lesson in --

I. Devotion to Our Crucified Redeemer.

These faithful women were also faithful to observe the Sabbath. As soon as the Sabbath was over (what we would refer to as Saturday evening) they went out to the marketplace to buy what they needed to give Jesus, their beloved Lord, a proper burial. By then it was getting dark and they needed to wait until morning to go out to the tomb. They arose very early, and began their sorrow filled trek out to the tomb as day was breaking so that would arrive at the tomb by sunrise. Caring for their Lord in His death was important to them, very important indeed. They had witnessed His sufferings and death, and also the hurried manner of His burial. They loved the Lord and would honor Him in His death.

Even though they did not yet comprehend the message of the resurrection and how all this fit together for them and their salvation, they knew Jesus as Lord and Christ. They honored Jesus with their hearts and with their possessions, even as they had in His life. These were the women who had followed Jesus throughout Galilee, and had provided for many of His needs from their temporal blessings. Jesus came **first** in their lives.

On this Easter morning this is a significant lesson for us. There are many things that we can do in our lives that are fine and good. There are many ways for us to use our temporal resources that are God-pleasing and good stewardship. There are many activities that can fill our days, and our holidays that are not wrong in and of themselves. The lesson we learn from these faithful women is to value the Lord Jesus and what He endured for us and our salvation **more highly**. Our service to the Lord comes **first**. It is our **highest** priority for the use of our time, for the use of our resources, for the strengthening our families. We do have the message of our completed salvation with God's promise fulfilled in Christ's death and resurrection. By the Spirit's enlightenment this gospel is comprehended in our hearts and minds, and yet we seldom see the level of devotion demonstrated by Mary and Mary and Salome, and the several other women who accompanied them.

On this Easter morning as we gather to celebrate the wonder of our Redeemer's resurrection, may we also be renewed in our zeal for this great salvation which is ours in a crucified and RISEN Jesus!

This is news that we should not take for granted. This is news that never grows old. This is news that is as amazing today, as spectacular today as it was on that first Resurrection Day for those devout women who were filled with --

II. Amazement at a Risen Redeemer.

In their eagerness to give their Lord their final act of devotion these devout women only realized as they were approaching the tomb that they had overlooked a rather significant detail. The tomb was closed with a large stone fashioned like or from a large bottom millstone, fitted in a groove before the door of the tomb to create a tight and secure seal. It was not something easily moved, but required two or three strong men to roll the stone to the side so that entrance could be gained. Our text explains their concern with the comment that the stone was very large. So as they approached the tomb they were more than surprised, they were alarmed to see the stone had been moved away from the opening of the tomb. It was at this point that Mary Magdalene, in her alarm, jumped to the natural but wrong conclusion that led her to hurry back to Jerusalem and report to the disciples that Jesus' body had been stolen.

Confusion and increasing alarm was present for the other women as well, for when they gazed into the sepulcher they saw something beyond anything they could have anticipated. We know from the other gospel accounts that there were actually two angels sitting at the spot where Jesus' body had been laid. Our text focuses on the one who spoke to the women telling them: *“Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. ⁷ But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.”* (v.6-7)

Don't be alarmed! Seeing the stone rolled away was alarming! Seeing the angels in their brilliance and glory, was alarming! Not seeing Jesus' body was alarming. Nothing was as they had expected! But this was so for the most wonderful reason, **Jesus is Risen! He is risen indeed!** But this is all contrary to human experience. Of course it is! Jesus was born into this world. He suffered and died and was buried that He might destroy the power

of death forevermore. Jesus is RISEN and death has lost its power! This is the most glorious of all news. Our Redeemer LIVES! The Redeemer of the world is RISEN from the dead. His word is sure and His promises are true. “Jesus was delivered up because of our offences and raised because of our justification.” (Romans 4:25) Even as Jesus lives forevermore WE are saved forevermore!

The news of a Risen Lord was not something that was to be contained and kept to oneself. The women were told to go and tell Jesus’ disciples. Oh, they had so very much to tell. This was so much for them to comprehend even for themselves. For their blessing Jesus would appear to them briefly on the way back into the city to confirm the truth that our Redeemer Lives (Matthew 28:9,10). Even then this was overwhelming, but these faithful women did as instructed. They hurried back to Jerusalem, for they had news to share, the greatest truth to tell.

If you are shaking your head at the women’s response that they were alarmed, and shook up and overwhelmed, maybe that’s because we have become a little jaded to the truth of the resurrection. Is this still the greatest thing that you have ever heard? I mean EVER HEARD? Or is your reaction, “Well it’s really wonderful, but I don’t really think about it that way, like it’s the greatest thing I’ve ever heard.” Well it is, and it should be exceedingly important and still **exciting** for us to hear, that Jesus is not in the tomb but is RISEN. This is the **best** news, the **very** best news you have ever heard for you as well as for all the people you know and love. Do you talk about it with them? Ever? A lot? Hardly ever? This is news we must never, ever tire of, either in the sharing or the hearing, for this news of a Risen Redeemer brings life to those who hear.

What about the emotions that are reported in these women as they leave the sepulcher? While Matthew reports that they also possessed great joy in their hearts, (Matthew 28:8) our text reports that “**they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.**” (v.8) What they had heard and seen was amazing, over the top amazing! Of course this was overwhelming for them. While they weren’t shouting “Jesus Is Risen!” to all who passed by them, they were filled joy and excitement at the wondrous truth. And they were taking the news

to the assigned recipients of that news, that the disciples might hear first of the wonders of the resurrection.

It is my prayer for you, and for me as well, that we might still this morning feel that same excitement, that same amazement at the wonders of Jesus' resurrection. May it fill our hearts with wonder and with joy so that we also may proceed as the Lord directs in this life:

III. Following the Ever Living Redeemer through Life.

Jesus sent them home. Jesus sent them home to Galilee and promised that He would be there for them. And so we know Jesus appeared to them there by the Sea of Galilee where a number of the disciples were got together to go fishing. It was a very special appearance that contained both messages of forgiveness and assurance of the Lord's presence and blessing in the lives of the disciples. It was also as a message of mission and purpose. It was at that appearance in Galilee that Jesus prepared Peter not only for his life's work as an apostle, but also for the martyr's death that he would die. Peter would face life and death with the Lord by his side, for Jesus' word of promise was true. The night before His death Jesus had told the disciples that He was about die, but He would rise again. Jesus promised them: "*But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.*" (Mark 14:28)

Jesus' word of promise is true, always and forever. His word of promise is there for you and me as well. We gather here to celebrate the Day of Resurrection, the resurrection of Jesus, the Redeemer of the world! But it is not only here that we are with Jesus, or that He is with us, any more than Jesus' presence was with the disciples only as long as they stayed in Jerusalem where Jesus had died and rose again. He rose to life to live forevermore and promised us all, "*Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*" (Matthew 28:20) So even as Jesus directed the disciples to their homes in Galilee with the assurance that He would be there, so He also directs us to our homes and our lives and our callings with the assurance that as our Risen Lord and our living Redeemer Jesus abides with us with His presence and His blessing. Nothing shall overtake us without our Jesus being present to sustain us and bless us and bring us safe to our heavenly home.

So even as we rejoice on this Easter morning to know the Redeemer of the World is Risen, may we also go forward in our individual lives with the assurance that Jesus has given our lives direction, purpose, and blessing, for the Redeemer of the World is Risen and abides with us always. Hallelujah! Amen!

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)