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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
April 4, 2021
Easter Sunday

Scripture Lessons: Isaiah 25:6-9, 1 Cor. 15:19-26; Mark 16:1-8
Hymns: 191; 198; 193; 200:1,2,5,7,8; 207:2

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

Sermon Text: Romans 14:9

For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might
be Lord of both the dead and the living. (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: It's Still All About Our Redemption! --

In our midweek Lenten meditations this year we were focused on
the passion of our Lord Jesus and the truth of this gospel as it
presented in Luther's Explanation to the Second Article of the
Apostle's Creed. We were led by the Holy Spirit to comprehend so
much of the truth as we considered week after week the wonders
of our redemption secured for us by our crucified Savior. We
considered each phrase of this confession of faith in Jesus, starting
with how He redeemed us who were lost and condemned sinners,
until we got to the exact cost of this redemption, that it was indeed
accomplished through His innocent suffering and death.

We are gathered together here on Easter morning to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. If the account of Jesus' mission on earth ended with the cross and the grave our redemption would not have been secured. We need to conclude our meditations with the truth of a Risen Savior, and yes, we will be lifted up to the pinnacle of spiritual joy, realizing the wonder of grace that is found for us in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It completes the message! In fact, one might very accurately say that Jesus' resurrection seals the deal! Our redemption is guaranteed and assured because He who redeemed us with His holy precious blood and innocent sufferings and death, --

THEME: He Is Risen from Death, Lives, and Rules.

I. He Died and Rose Again.

That is stated so clearly in the opening words of our text: "*For to this end Christ died and rose.*" (v.9a) Indeed we have covered well in our meditations and already this morning the necessity for Jesus to die . He "*gave Himself a ransom for all.*" (1 Timothy 2:6)

The faith we hold so dear and precious is a complete gospel that brings us the message of redemption from sin and death and the hope of everlasting life. For this gospel to bring us the assurance of forgiveness and everlasting life we need to comprehend the wonder of Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead. The Apostle Paul wrote the truth of this being essential to our salvation in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. In that marvelous resurrection chapter 15 we read: "*And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!*" (1 Corinthians 15:17)

There were some that had come into the Corinthian congregation and caused much trouble, for they taught that the need for a teaching about resurrection was not necessary to the gospel, and was in fact not something we should expect for ourselves.

In denying the resurrection of people's bodies, they were denying Christ's resurrection, for Jesus was and is and shall ever be true man, **with a body**. If there is no resurrection then Jesus did not rise, and the gospel becomes only something about this life. That would be sad indeed. In fact what Paul teaches us is that if Jesus

didn't rise **we are still in our sins**. If Christ did not rise the gospel isn't real. The resurrection of Jesus is essential to the gospel! Paul wrote to the Romans "*Christ was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*" (Romans 4:25) This Scripture reports the wondrous news of God receiving Jesus' sufferings and death as the full payment for the sins of the world. We are forgiven! We are declared righteous, and we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sadly, many Christian denominations have fallen into this same error regarding Jesus' resurrection. This includes the largest of Lutheran denominations in America today. They teach that it is not necessary to believe that Jesus *physically* rose from the dead. They teach a spiritual resurrection of Jesus, not a bodily resurrection. What it comes down to is that they say that what was raised on Easter morning was the "idea of Jesus." If that were true, we would still be in our sins!

But Christ **is risen** from the dead! Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Praise the God of our salvation! Hallelujah!

II. He Lives Again.

Once again we review the wonderful truth presented so succinctly in our text: "*For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again.*"

Yes, the truth is clear. We have a living Savior! Jesus lives! That is our confession even as it was the confession of Job, who lived many centuries before the Messiah came, and yet he believed in a risen and ever-living Redeemer. We confess with Job:

*"I know that my Redeemer **lives**,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
²⁶And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,
That **in my flesh** I shall see God,
²⁷Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!"* (Job 19:25-27)

First, by faith we understand that Jesus rose and lives forever. He did not rise that He might die again later. He rose and **lives**. This is the truth of resurrection. It is not resuscitation. It is

RESURRECTION! And we rejoice in the hope of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Jesus boldly taught the truth of our hope of everlasting life. On the night He was betrayed, just hours before His sufferings and death, He taught His disciples very simply and plainly, *“Because I live, you will live also.”* (John 14:19) This is the truth that comes to us on this Easter morning. **Jesus lives** and so we shall live also!

This is our hope and our comfort in the face of temporal death. Jesus made sure He had the opportunity to present this truth by allowing His dear friend, Lazarus, to die and be buried. He comforted Martha with these words of resurrection truth: *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. (John 11:25-26)* He asked Martha that important question, *Do you believe this? She said to Him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.”* (John 11:26-27)

By the grace and power of the Holy Spirit we share Martha’s confession. And please note that her confession is a complete confession. To believe that Jesus is the Christ is to know and believe that Jesus **both** died and rose again, and lives forevermore.

He is our hope of everlasting life. The wonder of gospel truth is that we **shall** rise again, and more, we who live now and believe in Jesus as our crucified and Risen Savior shall not die! Understand this marvelous truth. We have life in Jesus’ name, and even though our bodies shall return to the dust from which they came our spirits shall be received into the glory of heaven. We possess this eternal life right now by the power and grace of Jesus’ resurrection. He is the resurrection and the life. We have **life** in His name because He lives forevermore!

Now let us go to some key words in our text we have read a number of times but have seemingly passed over: *“for to this end.”* What was that goal or purpose that Jesus had before Him as He went into His sufferings and then died on the cross, was buried, and rose again the third day?

It is this: that --

III. Jesus Rules Over All.

When God spoke in the words of the prophets of Jesus' resurrection, it was with this victorious declaration of Jesus being exalted to rule. In Psalm 2 we read:

“Yet I have set My King
On My holy hill of Zion.” (that's Jesus)

⁷“I will declare the decree:

The LORD has said to Me,

‘You *are* My Son,

Today I have begotten You. (That is Jesus' resurrection)

⁸Ask of Me, and I will give You

The nations *for* Your inheritance,

And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession. (Jesus reigns)

(Psalm 2:6-8)

Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by His resurrection. Paul started the Epistle to the Romans with this powerful assertion: “*His Son Jesus Christ our Lord ... was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,* ⁴*and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.*” (Romans 1:3-4) This teaches us of the supremacy of Jesus over all things. Jesus, the very Son of God, **RULES!**

Again we read in Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

“*He (God) raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,* ²¹*far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.* ²²*And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over **all** things to the church,* ²³*which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.* (Ephesians 1:20-23)

To know the majesty and might and dominion of Jesus is in place, and that He rules over all for the good of His Church, this is a powerful comfort for us as we see the opposition to the gospel rising even in our own country, as well as around the world. Our Risen Savior still has **all things** under His control. We need not fear; Jesus is watching over us in all our ways.

Remember that it was **to this end** that Jesus died and rose and lives, that He might be Lord of the dead and living. This brings us confidence of faith for living in this world and for **leaving** this world. Jesus went before us into the grave, and He rose triumphant **from the grave** on Easter morning! His victory over death is ours. He is Lord of the dead and living. When it is time for our bodies rest in the grave, we may go to that grave with the confidence that Jesus shall command our bodies to arise on the Last Day. Since He is Lord also of the dead, our bodies shall rise triumphant at His command that we may ever be with the Lord.

This is what Jesus does. This is who our Redeemer is! He rules as long as the earth remains! He rules for our eternal glory. All the Church's enemies are subject to Him down to the very last one, and of that last one we are told: "*For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.*"²⁶ *The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.*" (1 Corinthians 15:25-26) We possess the hope of life everlasting because we know Jesus is Lord over the dead and living!

And so we confess and rejoice with the hymnwriter:

He lives triumphant from the grave.
He lives eternally to save.
He lives all-glorious in the sky,
He lives exalted there on high.

He lives and grants me daily breath;
He lives, and I shall conquer death;
He lives my mansion to prepare;
He lives to bring me safely there." (The Lutheran Hymnal 200:2, 7)

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. (Romans 15:13)