

Service notes and sermon for Easter 3, April 26, 2020

Overview: The news of the resurrection invests us with holy awe. Led by the Spirit to believe in the resurrected Lord, we are filled with desire to speak of our hope to others.

Suggested Service is Service of the Word (CW p. 38).

Suggested Hymns: 147 “Like the Golden Sun Ascending”

417 “I’m But a Stranger Here”

160 “This Joyful Eastertide”

149 “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”

\* Please feel free to sing additional hymns from the Easter section: CW 141-168.

Prayer of the Day: O God, by the humiliation of your Son you lifted up this fallen world from the despair of death. By his resurrection to life, grant your faithful people gladness of heart and the hope of eternal joys; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

First Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 36-47 Peter preaches a message of repentance, faith, and baptism in the risen Christ to the people of Jerusalem. Many receive baptism and are added to the number of disciples. Thus the church is born and enjoys the blessings of fellowship and community founded in Spirit wrought faith by Word and sacrament.

Psalm is Psalm 67 (CW p. 91) As the Lord extended the church in the early days of its history, so the Church sings to her Lord to continue to bless her with growth to his glory.

Second Lesson: I Peter 1:17-21 Christians live in the shadow of the resurrection of their Lord as “strangers” and “in reverent fear.” There is an awe that encompasses them as they consider the sacrifice of Christ and his resurrection. Faith and hope are not mere attributes in this life; they are its very essence.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. Alleluia. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia. Our hearts were burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us. Alleluia. (Luke 24:32)

Gospel: Luke 24:13-35 Jesus appears to two of his disciples on Easter Sunday as they trudge to the village of Emmaus. Cast down in spirit, they receive new hope and understanding as Jesus, veiled from being recognized by them, opens the Scriptures to them and rebukes their doubt. In joy they recognize him in the breaking of bread and rejoice to spread the news of his resurrection. Our hope and faith are likewise renewed and sustained through the Word and in the sacrament.

Sermon Text: I Peter 1:17-21 “Since you call on a Father, who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.”

Sermon Theme: REJOICING IN THE RESURRECTION

Prayer: CW p. 126. Lord’s Prayer: CW p. 43.

I PETER 1:17-21

ASCENSION

4/26/2020

REJOICING IN THE RESURRECTION

EASTER 3

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

Most of you probably do not remember the old or ancient designation of particular Sundays; so you probably don’t remember the name for this Sunday. This Sunday was called “Jubilate.” Jubilate Sunday. Jubilate means “rejoice.” It was a continuation of Easter and a day to rejoice in our Savior’s resurrection from the dead. Readings, like the gospel reading from Luke, remind us that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead after completing the payment of his lifeblood for our sins.

Today we find ourselves gathered together to celebrate again the resurrection of our Lord. Today we are REJOICING IN THE RESURRECTION. In our text for this morning we are reminded of how we live so as to continue this rejoicing in the resurrection of our Lord. I Living as strangers II. Living in reverent fear III. Living as redeemed children of God.

Peter writes this epistle to Christians. He writes to Christians who had rejoiced when they heard the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ. They were Christians who had rejoiced over the Savior’s resurrection from the dead. They put their hope and their trust in him, knowing and believing that as he lived they also would live. They knew and believed that the Savior who died for them had also prepared for them a place in heaven where they would spend eternity with their risen Savior.

However, these Christians were also being persecuted. They were suffering for the name of Jesus and they were being robbed of the joy that should have continued to be theirs in Christ Jesus. Rejoicing in the resurrection was a nice thought, but it was a difficult task in the face of such persecution.

Peter writes to strengthen their faith and to remind them of the joy that is ours in any and all circumstances. The joy of the risen Savior cannot be taken away from those who are in Christ Jesus. The inheritance of eternal life in Christ cannot be taken away from those who remain faithful to Jesus. Peter was basically reminding them not to fear the devil or this world. They had the victory in Jesus Christ as shown by his resurrection from the dead. Peter reminds them that their present sufferings and sorrows were not worthy to be compared to riches of heaven that awaited them.

Along with this came a reminder to live as strangers in this world. This was not their permanent home and this was not the place that they would really feel at home. They were strangers here. They were different. They were Christians. They were Christians who rejoiced in the resurrection and who had the hope of eternal life.

They were not to be like others, reveling in the things of this world; but who had no hope beyond the grave. Their joy and their comfort would not come by being accepted by and approved of in a sinful world; but rather they were to live as strangers in this world and as people whose lives would be approved by God as they would one day be received into heaven. Living as strangers would not be easy, but that is the life of the Christian who follows Jesus and who has the hope of everlasting life.

You and I do not face the same persecution that some of these early Christians faced on a daily basis. You and I live in a country where to a great extent we are free to believe and to exercise our faith. We are even free to speak the truth of God and his Word most of the time. Sure there are times we are labeled as bigots, or homophobes, or close-minded, or extremists, but we do not usually face a threat to life and limb. We do not face the same persecution as those early Christians.

At the same time we do need to ask ourselves if we are living our lives as strangers in this world. Do we spend too much time trying to fit into the world and being accepted by the sinful world around us? Do we keep silent at times about the truths of God's Word because we want to be comfortable living in this world? Do we sometimes rob ourselves of the joy that is ours in the resurrection of Jesus because we are not living as strangers in this world?

When you live your faith and when you stand up for the truths of God's Word, you will be a stranger to the world. People will wonder how you can believe what you believe, because to the natural man the Word of God is foolishness. When you and I live and act in a manner that is consistent with the world and its values, then we give credence to the thought that God and his Word is foolishness.

When you and I live as strangers in this world, then we are the odd ducks. Living as strangers we will find that often-time we do not fit in with what people in the world think or what they are doing. When you see what is going on in our world, and all too often in our lives, how can we be comfortable in this world? Live as strangers. Live as strangers who have not put their hope only in what this world has to offer. Live as strangers, rejoicing in the resurrection of your Savior. Live as strangers here – knowing that you will be right at home in heaven one day.

Secondly, live in reverent fear. This means that we are not in awe of the world, but in awe of our God. We are not living to the world's standard, but to God's standard. We do not fear the world and what will happen to our body one day—namely that it will die; rather we fear God, who has the power to destroy both body and soul forever.

Living in reverent fear really cuts both ways. First, it is good and right that we should fear the wrath of God for our sins. The law of God certainly cuts us to the quick when we see that by his law, we have lived all too comfortably with the world and its ways. We know that we will not be free of temptation while alive on this earth. We dare not become complacent about sin and the temptation to sin. God's law reminds us to fear the Lord.

At the same time we stand in awe of God for what he has done. We have great respect for our God and we show it by adherence to his Word. We honor God above all things and we place the utmost importance on hearing and learning his Word. We show respect for God's ways and God's answers, rather than those of the world; because we know that God is greater than anything in the world. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts and his ways higher than our ways. God is the greatest. We love him because he first loved us. It is with him that we want to be comfortable.

Too often we live in the fear of what those in this world may think of us. We strive for earthly status, for success, for fame, for wealth and for reputation. The world is a partial judge of who and what we are. God is an impartial Judge who is able to see beyond the surface and beyond the facade. God sees us for who we really are. God peers into our hearts. God knows what motivates us to do this or that. God knows when we fear rejection by the world. God knows if we are being superficial in our allegiance to him. Live your lives in reverent fear of the Lord.

Finally, living as redeemed children of God. This again is who you are. Peter paints just a beautiful picture of our salvation in Christ and the price Jesus paid for our salvation. It is an excellent reminder of all that is important in this world and for the next. *“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you by your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”*

This world and everything in it perishes. Whatever you strive for in this world and whatever you do accumulate, it will perish. Even these bodies that we occupy will perish. But the good news is that this perishable will be made imperishable and this mortal will put on immortality. This will take place because Jesus redeemed us by his precious blood. No amount of gold and no amount of silver in this entire world could remove from you or me the guilt of our sin. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin. Jesus redeemed you and me by shedding his holy precious blood.

The empty way of life is really the chasing after the things of this world. You can literally accumulate anything or everything in this world and yet, without God your life would be empty. You could achieve any amount of fame or fortune, and still your life would be empty. There would be a void that you could never fill and that can only be filled by the knowledge of God and the faith that Jesus Christ has given his holy precious blood for your forgiveness and your salvation.

Had Jesus not rose from the dead that first Easter morning; you and I and all people would be left to that empty way life. As the hymn-writer Johann Rist wrote concerning our Savior’s death on the cross, *“O sorrow dread, our God is dead.”* But God the Father accepted and approved of the sacrifice of Jesus for our sin and raised him from the dead, and glorified him in the resurrection. Our joy and our rejoicing is that Jesus is not dead. He is risen! That calls for rejoicing and for celebration today, tomorrow, and throughout our lives. He lives! He lives!

These early Christians were a lot like you and me. We all too often put our faith and hope in this world and in things of this world. We worry about our place in this world, our success, our fame, our reputation, our acceptance. We seek joy and happiness, money and possessions; things that perish with time. We put our time and efforts in securing things, in seeking constant entertainment, and the joy of the moment. What it does is rob us of the real joy of the resurrection. Let us continue rejoicing in our Saviors’ resurrection by living as strangers, living in reverent fear of God and by living as redeemed children of God. That is the most blessed and joyous life you can have, now in time and forever in heaven, for Jesus’ sake. AMEN.