

BULLETIN TEMPLATE: Minnesota Valley Church
Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
Date: Sunday, April 17, 2022
Church Year Date: Resurrection Sunday

Thank you dear musicians for your dedication to leading us in the worship of our great Savior. Pastor Tom

Prelude: Carol?

Call to Worship: Psalm 118:15-29

Hymn #104 “Christ the Lord is Risen Today”

Scripture Reading: Job 19:25-27

Hymn #111 “Low in the Grave He Lay”

Children’s Song

Reader: Jacob O’Flanagan

Epistle Lesson: 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

Confession of Faith: (please put on screen)

Apostles’ Creed: *I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth; And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate; Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven; And is seated on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; From where He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; The holy Christian Church; the Communion of Saints; the Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body, And the Life everlasting. Amen*

Chorus (#545): *Because He lives, I can face tomorrow, Because he lives, all fear is gone; Because I know—He holds the future, And life is worth the living, just because He lives. (2x)*

Greeting, Announcements, Prayer
Praise and Worship Medley

MESSAGE: “WHY ARE YOU CRYING?” John 20:10-18
Pastor Tom Olson, minnesotavalleychurch.org

I remember trying to comfort a man who was devastated by the death of his mother from cancer, I believe. He was angry with God for allowing it. His mother was a real living believer in Christ. I asked him some questions:

- Is your mother in heaven? YES
- Does she want to come back here? I DOUBT IT
- Do you really want her to leave heaven’s joy and return to her sick body? NO
- Why are you crying and upset? BECAUSE I AM SELFISH AND WANT HER BACK.

So often we cry because we lose quit looking up to God’s perspective and we lower our eyes to our own human perspective without the light of God’s Word. That is what we see in today’s Resurrection Sunday Gospel. I

think there are some important lessons here for all of us as we try to look at life in light of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

I. SADNESS: ABSENCE OF JESUS

John 20:10-13a Then the disciples went back to their homes, 11 but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

LINGERING: Mary Magdalene was sad. She just stayed at the tomb. Everyone went back to their homes after seeing that the tomb of Jesus was empty. But Mary lingered and wept. She loved her master and teacher, Jesus. She needed some answers.

ANGELS: Mary went over to the tomb and looked in again. This time there were two angels dressed in white. They were seated where the body of Jesus had been. These angels were happy. They knew Jesus had risen from the dead. They must have seen the victorious resurrection of Jesus as he victoriously marched out of the place of the dead back into the land of the living. It seems that Mary just could not grasp the promise of Jesus that on the third day He would rise from the dead. It must have been a mystery to the angels that her faith was so weak that she didn't believe He had risen from the dead and was very near. The angels simply ask a probing question, "WOMAN, WHY ARE YOU CRYING?"

QUESTION: That is a good question for us all. Mary was crying because she thought she no longer had Jesus as a friend and teacher. Many of you here today have lost a friend or loved one. It hurts to no longer have them with us. We have a photo of me and my grandpa in my office. He has been gone for some 30 years and I still miss him. We have photos of Sharon's dad and my parents up in our home. We really miss them too. Most of the people in my first little country church I served out of seminary are gone. When I stop at the cemetery and see their names on the tomb stones, I miss so much about them. We had wonderful visits and meals in their simple farm homes so long ago. You want to cry because you miss them so much. The absence of friends makes us very sad. I know that Sharon's mom in the nursing home not only misses her husband, but she misses her kitchen, she misses going to her little Hosanna Church, she misses her humorous and happy son Mark, who passed away from cancer. I know that part of her struggle with dementia is sadness over her losses.

Mary loved Jesus who did so much for her. The absence of Jesus in our lives makes us very sad. One of the reasons we get sad is when we are not close to Jesus. When Jesus is near, we have deep joy, even outrageous humor but when we draw away from him, we get somber and sad. *Psalm 16:11 "In Thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures forevermore."*

As long as Jesus is absent from our life, we will live in SADNESS.

II. CONFUSION: IGNORANCE ABOUT JESUS

John 20:13b-15 "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 "Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

CONFUSION: Mary was confused. The angels had told them that Jesus was risen from the dead. But I imagine those words made no sense to her. You would think that the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead might have helped. But she was confused. Her ignorance was the kind we get when we don't let our faith predominate our lives and we try to "lean on our own understanding." Then we just end up in a sort of paralysis. **Faith in the promises of Christ is the key to a vibrant life.**

CECIL: The old missionary from Africa that Sharon worked with lost his home, the clinic, the school, the church and everything they spent a lifetime building up in Liberia. It only took a couple weeks of war and it was all gone. They were sort of homeless in their old age. Yet Mr. Hodgson had strong faith and he joyfully accepted the hand of God and pondered on how God would use the situation for good. He was not confused because he believed the promises of God above all else.

ABRAHAM: Abraham was the same way. He was childless but believed the promises of God that out of him would come a large nation. Even at age 100 he obeyed God and Sarah conceived in her advanced age of 90 and Isaac, the child of promise was born. He wasn't confused. He got the victory by faith.

RESURRECTION LIVING is all about believing the amazing promises of God and walking in that faith without wavering. People who hang on to the promise of eternal life in heaven can have great peace and stability, even in the last days of their lives. But you have to look up. As long as Mary looked down, she thought Jesus was a gardener. But when she looked up, SHE KNEW JESUS WAS THE RISEN SAVIOR.

I like the poem, "His purposes will ripen fast unfolding with each hour. The bud may have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flour." We are CONFUSED when we are ignorant about the Resurrection of Jesus.

III. JOY: AWARENESS OF JESUS

John 20:16-18 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

AWARENESS: When Mary thought that Jesus was the gardener, she was grieved. But when Mary LOOKED UP, heard his voice and cleared the tears from her eyes, she realized it was Jesus, alive. Her sorrow instantly turned to JOY. This brings me to the final point: JOY IS THE AWARENESS OF JESUS. Mary was instantly transformed in every way. She was not longer searching for a dead body to embalm, but she was talking to the Lord and going to the disciples with the good news, ***"I have seen the Lord."*** She simply ***"told them the things He said to her."***

PRINCIPLE: This principle holds true in our lives as well. When we are focusing on our problems, which are very real, we will only be miserable. But when we remember that God is with us and watching over us day and night, the joy returns. ***"The peace of God that passes all understanding guards our hearts and minds."*** How and when does this happen? It is ***"in Christ Jesus."***

ABIDE: John 15:5 puts it another way so well: ***"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."*** Jesus is the J IN JOY! Before I met Jesus, personally as my Savior, I didn't have the JOY of salvation. When I get my eyes off of Him and lose awareness of His presence, I lose that joy.

- Jesus is the WORD of God by whom all things were created.
- Jesus is the LAMB of God who takes away the sins of the world.
- Jesus is the SON of God who reigns at the right hand of the Father.
- Jesus is the SERVANT of God who is in heaven preparing a perfect place for you and me.

SURROUNDED: To be aware of His presence is to have peace and joy surround our lives, even in the toughest times. Do you have that peace? When he said, ***“I will never leave you nor forsake you,”*** he meant it. Don't let life steal the joy of His presence from you.

CONCLUSION: There is nothing wrong with crying. The angels did not rebuke Mary for crying. But they did ask her to **WHY ARE YOU CRYING?**

- Are you crying at the loss of a loved one? That is OK. But if they were believers, they have it much better and would not want to come back here. You cry for yourself, not for them.
- Are you crying at the loss of finances? That is OK. But what is God's promise? He promised to provide for us and He always does. We are heirs of a wealthy king!
- Are you crying about loss of health? That is OK. But don't forget that God promises the healing we need and a new and perfect body in heaven.

Go ahead and cry because loss is hard. But when you are done crying, get back into the awareness of the presence of Christ and let the joy of the Lord return to your life. **REMEMBER THAT THE MINUTE YOU STEP INTO HEAVEN, YOUR LOSSES WILL BECOME GAINS, YOUR PAIN WILL BECOME PLEASURE AND YOUR CRYING WILL BE TURNED TO SHOUTS OF JOY!** Why? Because **CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN, INDEED!** Amen

“Now may the peace of God that surpasses all human comprehension, guard your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus.” Amen

Hymn #527 “I Serve a Risen Savior”

Closing Prayer & Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Hymn #545 “Because He Lives”

Postlude: