**3/31/24**

**He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!**

**Mark 16:1-8**

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.” (Psalm 19:14, NRSV) (2) **Amen.**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSV) (2) **Amen.**

Good Morning and Happy Easter to each and every one of you out there on the conference call, and to all of you gathered here in the pews. Thank you for being persistent with us in your Lenten Journeys. Thank you for not losing hope and having the faith that Jesus would finish the story and claim victory over death and the grave. Thank you for being there as Jesus entered in on the colt on Palm Sunday and got the welcoming befitting of our one and only true King. Thank you for hearing about the foot washing and the humbling story of Jesus showing the disciples how to treat and love one another. Thank you for being there in the garden as Jesus was betrayed by one of his very own. Thank you for getting mad at Judas with me, but forgiving him in the same breath. Thank you for being there with me and hearing the very cock crow twice as Peter admittedly denied knowing Jesus three times. Thank you for being there for the trial of Jesus and shouting crucify him with me in one of the darkest and most humiliating hours. Thank you for walking on the road with Jesus during his march to Golgotha carrying that very symbol of death and destruction that would eventually and forever become a mark of victory. Thank you for listening to the Seven Last Words and extinguishing the candles with us and being there as Jesus eventually breathed his last. Thank you for making it through the earth trembling and the curtain in the temple being torn in two from top to bottom. Thank you for being there and hearing even the Centurion admit that, “Truly this man was God’s Son!” (2) Thank you for traveling to the tomb where his body would be laid to rest, but only temporarily. Thank you for knowing the entire story and journeying yet again through the joy and the pain, the sorrow and the frustration, the confusion and the mystery. Thank you for joining us yet again for one of the most amazing days in our church calendar year! It is Easter! We are Easter people! We get to be excited! We get to be ever so thankful that our Lord and Savior finished the story. He claimed that victory and stayed one with his Father and one with the Holy Spirit throughout the entire journey. Of course, that did not mean he did not show us his human traits, and that did not mean that he did not cry or question things at times. That is what makes the story even more so relatable. That is exactly what makes the story even more so believable. Without all of this we would just be worshiping another deity or another symbol, and not the real and ever-present God that we get to honor and worship and love as he became one like you and I. Thank God, he knew the scriptures, and in knowing them he was still willing to complete the story and take the burden off of our very shoulders. He knew that we could not manage sin on our own, and he showed the compassion and love that only our Lord Jesus Christ could show through defeat and victory so that you and I could be saved for eternity. Praise be to God for that! Praise be to God that we have this building and we have technology and we have one another to celebrate Easter! Just as we heard in our Introduction to Service this morning that “this is why we gather: to proclaim, witness, praise, and affirm the liberating reality of Christ’s death and resurrection.” (1) Yes, we affirm that death had met its final sting, that the stone had been rolled away, and that He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Now, I could very easily stop my sermon right there, and I could end with possibly one of the longest paragraphs I have ever written in my entire life. However, I would be discrediting you and I if I did not finish things and share about today’s Gospel Reading as well. So, with that being said, here we go.

Today we hear of three women travelling to the very tomb that they had witnessed Jesus being laid to rest in following his death on the cross three short days ago. They were going there at the earliest they could in observance of the culture and all of the rules of the time. They were going there to pay homage and to anoint Jesus’ body. However, what we come to realize, and what they even come to realize is that “They were on cruise control. Death was a common part of life for them. All too frequently they had dealt with the death of a family member or friend.” (3) just like you and I. For a split second it seems that they had forgotten what Jesus had reminded them of in scripture several times. They had simply forgotten that He was not only human, but He was divine. He was not letting the grave claim Him, but He was going to rise and walk out of the very tomb that would hold any other body and any other human being.

So, when they walked up to the tomb and saw that the large stone had already been moved aside, that very stone that they had even debated how they were going to move in the first place, then fear and worry actually set in. As they thought to themselves, this must have been the very act of grave robbers that had come and stolen the body of Jesus. How dare they do this to our Lord and Savior? So, they went to work as detectives in an effort to figure out what exactly happened. They entered the very tomb and were startled by a young man wearing a white robe sitting there. Then, they must have been thinking, who in the world would sit here and gloat about stealing the body of Jesus? Now, it only says they were alarmed in our text from the Gospel Reading today. However, I am not too sure this word summarizes all the feelings they had, and all the feelings you and I had as we heard this story unfold yet again. I am sure the feelings of shock, anger, confusion, frustration, rage, and fear were experienced, that is to just name a few. As they were greeted, and kind of set at ease, they were reminded of the scriptures. They were reminded that even though he was crucified, and that here is where his body laid temporarily, that he has been raised and is no longer here as you would commonly find others that you have tended to following their death. Now, as if this was not startling enough, as if this was not too much to even comprehend or believe for that very moment despite being aware of scripture, they were also given marching orders. They were told to go and share the good news with others, they were commanded to go and tell Peter and the other disciples that he had gone ahead of them to Galilee and would meet them there just as he had promised.

So, just aswe had talked about this in the text study last Monday with a few other Pastors, this is where we come to recognize failure yet again. These women, just like several men in the past as well, had failed! They had failed to heed the command provided to them by the angel sitting in the tomb. They had failed to go out and reassure others of what they had seen and come to know. They had failed to even utter what they had experienced. They had failed to set others at ease just like they had been set at ease. They had failed to share the story of life after death. They had failed, as they were human just like you and I. However, this is exactly where we also come to recognize grace for the terror and amazement spoken of in our Gospel Reading were very real! However, through the temporary failure grace would indeed allow them to prevail once they got a chance to really grasp and understand what had just happened and what they had just heard. As simple as it may have sounded to just go out and share things with others, it really was not. This was something that never happened before! This was something that seemed too good to be true! This was something that for all intents and purposes was unbelievable despite knowing what the scriptures had foretold and exclaimed! The eventual fear we hear about to end our Gospel Reading today would turn into excitement and joy. These women could not keep this to themselves. They would eventually share the good news that they were commanded to share. This is exactly where we get to experience what Martin Luther indeed referenced as the Priesthood of all Believers. In a time where the witness and words of women were not even heard or trusted, this is exactly and only what we all had to go on! These three women witnessed something that no one else did! They were the first ones there! They were the ones reminded of what indeed happened! These three women were the very ones that would go and eventually tell the story to Peter and the other disciples and proclaim the forever message that we shout and exclaim today and every day forward…. He is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Amen.

**References**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year B 2024

 March 31st, 2024

 Resurrection of Our Lord

 Easter Day

(2) Bible.com

(3) SermonCentral.com

 Surprised Series

 Contributed by Kevin Ruffcorn on Apr 24, 2012

 Scripture: Mark 16:1-8

 Denomination: Lutheran

 **Mark 16:1-8**

 Christ is risen! Jesus is alive, and God has swallowed up death forever. With

 Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, we may feel

 astonished and confused, unsure of what to make of the empty tomb. But this is

 why we gather: to proclaim, witness, praise, and affirm the liberating reality of

 Christ’s death and resurrection. In word and feast, we celebrate God’s unending

 love, and depart to share this good news with all the world. Alleluia!

 The resurrection of Jesus is announced, and the response is one of terror and

 amazement.

 1When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James,

 and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint [Jesus’ body]. 2And

 very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the

 tomb. 3They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us

 from the entrance to the tomb?” 4When they looked up, they saw that the stone,

 which was very large, had already been rolled back. 5As they entered the tomb,

 they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they

 were alarmed. 6But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for

 Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look,

 there is the place they laid him. 7But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is

 going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” 8So

 they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them;

 and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.