

He is Risen, Indeed. You are Risen, Indeed.¹

Resurrection Sunday (YrB)

[Psalm 16; Isaiah 25:6-9; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8]

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POINTS TO PONDER

- 1. Death. Why doesn't anyone want to talk about this?**
- 2. Considering Christ's life, death, and resurrection, how should we view death?**
- 3. What might the saying, "if we die now, we live later" apply to our Christian faith?**
- 4. Paul writes in Galatians 2, "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live ..." What does this mean?**

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father, and our Lord and King, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Let us Pray: Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of Your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in Him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory, Amen.

What happened at that tomb? It seemed, perhaps, a small thing. It was confined in location and time. The location: a particular tomb on a hill outside of Jerusalem. Nothing necessarily remarkable about that. Point in time: a particular day, at the dawn of the first day of the week, the third day after a certain man had been executed by crucifixion under Pontius Pilate.

A confined location, a confined time. The crucified one on the first day of the week walks out of the tomb, alive! Death swallowed up in life in the person of Jesus.

But the particularity of it! It was done by a particular man, at a particular time, on a particular day. It is no normal thing, to be sure, this resurrection of a dead man. But will it matter for others? Will this particular name and life even be known by the philosophers in Athens? Will it matter to the farmer in Macedonia? How will it help the sinner in Cincinnati or Columbus or Charleston?

Isaiah gives a universal, all-encompassing traverse of the resurrection. It is the resurrection of a particular man on a particular day at a particular grave. But the resurrection, this defeat of death, bursts every boundary of peoples or nations.

THE VICTORY, THE RESURRECTION, OF THIS MAN IS FOR ALL SINNERS AND FOR EACH SINNER.

This victory is for every person covered in the veil of death that was cast over every person.

¹ Sermon study and resources: *Concordia Pulpit Resources*, Vol. 31, Pt2, YrB – contributor: Rev. Warren W. Graff, STM, lead pastor, Grace Lutheran Church, Albuquerque, New Mexico

The death-veil does cover all people. Isaiah says that there is **“the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.”**² So, no one escapes its terror.

Attempts are made to soften the terror of death. Death is sometimes referred to as a “natural process.” Some of the books and pamphlets handed out, for instance, by hospice organizations minimize death by describing it as a leaf falling to the ground. In this way, death is supposed to be “good” because the dead leaf provides nutrients for further life. But the leaf itself remains dead. No good news in that. Or others have taught that a person who dies a “good death” demonstrates virtue. This includes what I call the ‘Valhalla Syndrome.’ If a soldier or first responder dies in the line of duty ... well, he automatically goes to heaven regardless of his faith or lack thereof.

At the end of the day, though, death cannot be cleaned up. Death – without the resurrection – is the total negation of life. The person is forsaken by God, the Creator of life. Death is the sentence of the Law for the sinner. The Law, which “always accuses,”³ leaves the sinner in the steel grip of death. Isaiah speaks of the universality of this terror: it is a judgment without borders, a veil cast over all people.⁴

In our hearts – or maybe we would say, in our guts – we know this, don’t we? Maybe we try not to think about death much ... but think about death! Right now. Like the idea? The idea of you lying under that veil, that pall, draped over *your* casket? Not seeing your wife, your husband, your mom or dad, your kids anymore. Think about it. Or think back to when you stood over the pall-covered casket of a loved one. Death – without a resurrection – is a terror to all of us.

The rescue from death, the victory, is the swallowing up of the veil covering all people. The people are no longer under death’s blanket. And this rescue is forever. The salvation from death traverses not just all peoples and languages. It stretches backward and forward, spanning every generation. Isaiah reminds us that Christ **“will swallow up death forever.”**⁵ This is a full victory. The proclamation leaves no one out.

The terror of death fell upon one man: Jesus. For He is the Lamb of God, bearing the sin of the world, willingly giving Himself over to death on the cross. He is the one who says from the cross, as He is in death’s steel grip, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”**⁶

The victory is Jesus, the Lamb of God, atoning for the sin of the world by the shedding of his own holy blood and then, on the third day, being raised up from the dead by the Father, never to be subject to death again.⁷ The victory is Jesus making known this defeat of death even in hell,

² Isaiah 25:7

³ cf. *Apology of the Augsburg Confession, V, 7 (Lex Semper Accusat)*

⁴ cf. Isaiah 25:7 ~ “... the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.”

⁵ Isaiah 25:8 ~ “... and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces ...”

⁶ cf. Mark 15:34, Matthew 27:46, Psalm 22:1

⁷ cf. Romans 6:9 ~ “We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.”

proclaiming to the demons their defeat that he accomplished at the cross as St Peter reminds us⁸ and we confess in the Second Article of *The Apostles' Creed*.⁹

And more, He made it known on earth, giving Himself to be seen in the flesh by Cephas and the Twelve, then by hundreds of eyewitnesses.¹⁰ He who spoke life to the first Adam¹¹ now stands up out of the grave as the new Adam. "He is risen; he is risen, indeed!" **"Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here."**¹²

The One who stood up out of the grave lives up to His name, Jesus. The name *Jesus* is derived from the name *Yahweh* – the one Isaiah calls "Yahweh of hosts" or "Lord of hosts"¹³ – or as my Hebrew professor translated it, "General Yahweh." Yahweh is God not of the dead, but of the living. With His name, He gives all that He is: He is the God **"who was, who is, and who is to come."**¹⁴ He is the God who causes all life to be.

With His name comes all that He has promised. He has promised the atonement of sinners.¹⁵ He has promised the resurrection of the body.¹⁶ He has promised that this salvation is an eternal feast of victory for all peoples: **"And He will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations... And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth."**¹⁷

This salvation is universal in the sense that the Redeemer has atoned for the sins of all. Those who walk away from the atonement accomplished by Jesus do not negate the atonement, for Jesus, the Lord of life, did no deficient work. Instead, those who walk away refuse Jesus' atonement and choose instead to cling to self-justification.

The location of salvation's accomplishment has particularity. It is not anywhere and everywhere generally, but it is located at a particular time and place. It is on a particular mountain – Mount Golgotha – at a particular time – under Pontius Pilate.

⁸ cf. 1 Peter 3:18-19 ~ **"¹⁸ For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹ in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison ..."**

⁹ **"He descended into hell."**

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:5-6 ~ **⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. ⁶ Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep.**

¹¹ cf. John 1:1-4 ~ **¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.**

¹² Mark 16:6

¹³ cf. Isaiah 25:6

¹⁴ cf. Revelation 4:8 ~ **⁸ And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"**

¹⁵ cf. Isaiah 53; especially v5 ~ **"But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed."**

¹⁶ cf. Job 19:25-27 ~ **²⁵ For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.²⁶ And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!**

¹⁷ Isaiah 25:6-8 (emphasis added)

But the salvation accomplished at a particular time and location is now delivered not generally, not in a way that is unsure and uncertain to a particular sinner. It is delivered with full, locatable particularity, delivered to a particular sinner at a particular time and place, in the manner specified by the Savior.

The name promised by Isaiah – ‘Yahweh of hosts,¹⁸ the name crucified on the cross – ‘Jesus of Nazareth,¹⁹ the name who defeated death, standing up out of the tomb,²⁰ is now the name proclaimed to the sinner. As St. Paul puts it: **“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved ...”**²¹

And it is the name proclaimed in the Gospel. You are given the name. You now bear that name of crucifixion and resurrection, for He put it on you in Baptism. In your Baptism, everything He accomplished on the cross, everything He did in breaking the bonds of death and walking out of the tomb, is now joined to you.²² When it is you or your loved one in that casket, Jesus’ death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead belong to you as surely as to Jesus because you have been baptized into his name.

His victory over death, His righteous standing before the Father, His joy of the eternal feast – Beloved, it is your victory over death, your righteous standing, your eternal joy. He is risen; he is risen, indeed. He walked out of the tomb. You do not belong to the tomb. You belong to His resurrection. You are risen; you are risen, indeed! You know it now by faith; you will know it then by sight.²³ Amen.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”²⁴

¹⁸ cf. Isaiah 25:6 ~ **“On this mountain the Lord of hosts ...”**

¹⁹ John 19:19 ~ **“Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.”**

²⁰ ⁶ And he said to them, **“Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.**

²¹ 1 Corinthians 15:1-2a

²² cf. Romans 6:3-10 ~ ³ **Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.**

²³ cf. 2 Corinthians 5:7 ~ **“... for we walk by faith, not by sight.”**

²⁴ Romans 15:13