

Sunrise Worship, March 31, 2024

Prayer: This morning, this joyous morning, we journey to the tomb with Mary Magdalene and discover the stone is rolled away. An empty grave remains to prove my Savior lives. With joy, we discover that Christ Jesus has risen. Come, let offer praise and thanks to God for fulfilling the resurrection promise.

Why Am I Here, It's Cold Out Here?

As I mediated on what God would have me say to you this morning, I would come back time and time again to the same theme. What would bring the church family out this early in the morning to what we call a Sunrise service? What would cause people to come and sit in there still cold but warming vehicles to get to church for a Sunrise worship service at 7:00 am? Who or what is worthy enough for this kind of devotion? Our scripture this morning tells us who is worthy of all of this and more. It tells us who is worthy, and it also tells us why the Son is worthy.

We are gathered here this morning at a very special time of day. We are here at "sunrise." Sunrise is the instant each and every day at which the upper edge of the sun peeks and appears over the Eastern horizon very early in the morning. We call it a "sunrise" because the "sun" appears to "rise" from the distant dark horizon into the sky.

For us, the sunrise means...

Fresh Start: each sunrise signals that a new day is beginning which means a fresh start

Optimism: each sunrise means the last day is past and we can hope for a better new day in the present

New Life: each sunrise for some reason is a picture for us of life beginning again and new; John describes a scene in Heaven of a search for someone who was worthy to begin the process of the final judgment. God looked around and saw no one worthy of this honor.

Then one of the Elders told him to look, The Lion of The Tribe of Judah was worthy. The one who had been sacrificed for the sin of all humanity. Jesus Christ was worthy!

Jesus was the only one in all of heaven, earth and under the earth who was worthy to start this process. He was the only one worthy of the praise and honor that they gave Him. They wrote songs about Jesus and sang them just like we did this morning. They praised what He had done for humanity, and they worshiped Him. Just like we are doing here this morning. Jesus was the only one that they would do this for. Jesus is the only one that we will do this for. We are here this morning to praise and honor and remember what Jesus Christ did for us.

Let me remind you again of why we are here this morning. On Friday of what we call passion week, Jesus was crucified on a cross. He died on that cross for the sins of all humanity.

God had always required the shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus voluntarily placed Himself on that cross so that He could die for you and for me. He told us that if we accept this sacrifice that our sins will be forgiven, and we will be seen as righteous by God. We will be in a right relationship with God. He was taken off that cross and buried. He was dead. He was dead and buried and everybody thought that it was over.

Jesus had been a great teacher. An exceptional Rabbi but now He was dead. All of His followers were confused. What do we do now. On Sunday though all that changed. What happened on Sunday changed the course of humanity.

You see, on Sunday, Jesus Christ came out of that tomb. The women who loved Jesus went to anoint His body and they found that the tomb was no longer sealed, and that Jesus' body was gone. Angels appeared to

them and told them that they shouldn't be looking for Jesus there. They told them that Jesus had risen from the dead and that they should go and tell His disciples that He would meet them in Galilee.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:6 that Jesus appeared to over 500 of His disciples after the resurrection. He did this so that we would believe that He had risen because of the witness of so many people. He's alive, I'm sure the women told the men when they saw them. He's alive, I'm sure Peter and John cried out when they saw the other apostles. He's alive I'm sure all these others who say Jesus cried out when they saw Him.

Folks we are here this morning because Jesus is worthy of our honor and our praise. Jesus is worthy of this small sacrifice of our comfort.

Why are we up so early with the sunrise, because **Jesus Is Alive** this morning. Thanks be to God! Shout, halleluah and celebrate, Jesus is alive this morning!