

“A week later [Jesus’] disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.’ Thomas answered, ‘My LORD and my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.’” John 21:26-29.

Dear Christian friends,

Once again, we will celebrate the Passion and Resurrection of our LORD. Within the annual Church cycle, we recall the suffering and death of Jesus and rejoice at the news of the resurrection of Jesus. The Passion and Resurrection of our LORD are the highest festivals the Church can celebrate. These celebrations certainly surpass the Nativity of our LORD (Christmas). It is the meaning of these events of Easter that truly reveal God’s desire and God’s activity toward us.

Baptism is the sacrament through which God bestows His eternal grace upon our lives by uniting us to the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. Jesus is our Savior by virtue of God’s grace and mercy extended to us. Lutherans generally have a very good comprehension of Jesus Christ as Savior. Jesus Christ as LORD is less developed or understood or lived.

When Thomas was first told that Jesus had risen from death, he doubted. Thomas was a very good, rational man. He wanted evidence. When Jesus presented that physical evidence Thomas’ response could only be one, “My LORD and my God.” Jesus in his resurrection appearance to Thomas became more than just a teacher. Jesus became the over-seer and ruler for Thomas. That transformation of status is evident through the witness that Thomas’ life gave in his living for Jesus. Jesus Christ was LORD for Thomas.

The lordship of Jesus for the baptized is witnessed in the life of the baptized. Christ Jesus as Savior is enacted through his death and resurrection – the events we recall at Easter. Christ Jesus as LORD is his living presence in the baptized from the moment of our baptism to our last earthly breath. Jesus Christ as LORD is confirmed in our discipleship! Luther confirms this in his explanation to the Second Article of the Apostles Creed.

Luther writes, “What is it to, ‘become a LORD?’ It means that [Christ Jesus] has redeemed me from sin, from the devil, from death, and from all evil. Before this I had no LORD and King but was captive under the power of the devil. I was condemned to death and entangled in sin and blindness. ... Those tyrants and jailers now have been routed, and their place has been taken by Jesus Christ, the LORD of life and righteousness and every good and blessing. He has snatched us, poor lost creatures, from the jaws of hell, won us, made us free, and restored us to the Father’s favor and grace. He has taken us as his own, under his protection, in order that he may rule us by his righteousness, wisdom, power, life, and blessedness.”<sup>i</sup>

As Christ Jesus daily presents himself to us, revealing his glorious presence amidst our doubts, may our hearts and lives exclaim like Thomas, “My LORD and my God.” Christ Jesus comes to bring all God’s goodness to bear blessed fruit in and through us. A most blessed Easter and renewed discipleship.

In Christ forever,

Pastor Kevin.

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<sup>i</sup> “The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther” The Book of Concord The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert. Fortress Press, Philadelphia. ©1959. P. 414.