

Date: April 12, 2020, *The Resurrection of Our Lord*
Text: Exodus 14:13a, 29-30a; Matthew 28:1-10a
Title: “Don’t Be Afraid!”

Introduction: “**2** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:2). Amen. The text for *The Resurrection of Our Lord* is taken from our Old Testament and Gospel readings this morning, “**13 And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD...”**” ²⁹ But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. ³⁰ Thus the LORD saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians,” “**5 But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified.**” ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay...⁸ So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid;”

Death is terrifying. The Children of Israel knew this when they were trapped between the Egyptian army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them. Jesus’ followers knew this as they dealt with the fallout of His crucifixion in the days afterward in Jerusalem. I know this every time I feel a sharp pain in my chest and I run my fingers over my surgically implanted defibrillator. You know this, when you face the fact that someone you love is dying, and there is nothing you or the doctors can do to prevent it.

Death was part of the punishment God pronounced on Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden when they rebelled against Him, “^{17a} And to Adam he said...¹⁹ By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust,

and to dust you shall return.” God was forced to evict them from the Garden, so they would no longer have access to the tree of life and live forever. (Genesis 3:22b-24)

God’s Answer for Death: God knows when His children are afraid, and His merciful, loving heart goes out to us. And so He said the Children of Israel, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord.” (Exodus 14:13b) As Pharaoh and his mighty army of 600 chariots pursued their former Hebrew slaves through the dry ground of the Red Sea, “^{27c} the LORD threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. ²⁸ The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, not one of them remained.”

God’s messenger (angel) calmed the terrified women at Jesus’ empty tomb, “^{5b} Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.”

To all of our fears today, God gave one overwhelming, everlasting answer: He raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus is the first of the human race to rise from death, never to die again. God provides us this assurance in Romans 6, “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.” (Romans 6:9-10)

But Jesus will not be the last human to rise from death! Jesus is the guarantee of our own resurrection from the grave. Everyone who trusts in Him as their Lord and Savior will share in His victory over sin, *death*, and the power of the devil. We can boldly proclaim along with St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, “^{51b} We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment,

in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. ⁵³ For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: “Death is swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵ “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Cor. 15:51b-57)

This is the answer to all our fears—fear of cancer, the COVID-19 pandemic, diabetes, depression, heart disease, financial ruin, or inclement weather. We have a Savior who loves us and has conquered the power of death. We will never again face death alone because Jesus is with us “to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20b) **Jesus is with us now, in ordinary bread, ordinary water, ordinary wine, and ordinary word.**

And He will bring us back to live with Him for all eternity in heaven, as we hear in 1 Thessalonians 4, “¹⁶ For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord.” (1 Thess. 4:16-17)

Conclusion: And we pray this morning, “Almighty God the Father, through the resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, You have secured peace for our troubled consciences and calmed our fears. Grant us this peace evermore that trusting in the merit of Your Son, we may at last come to the perfect peace of heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

P He is Risen! C He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

“7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7). Amen.

Offertory - *LSB 588, Jesus Loves Me*