

1 Peter 3:11-20

4th Sunday of Easter
Christ Lutheran Church
The Rev. Mark T. Frith

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Platte Woods, Missouri
Preaching Substitute for Christ Lutheran

IN NOMINE IESU

“Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. **Live such good lives** among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. **Submit yourselves** for the Lord’s sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. **Live as free men**, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; **live as servants of God**. Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king. Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.” 1 Peter 3:11-20

Dear Friends of Christ the Savior,

It is a pleasure to be with you today. I serve today in place of your pastors for this one Sunday while they are away on a ministry planning retreat with several of your congregational leaders. My job today is serve up the grace of God revealed in the gift of Jesus’ resurrection. Without the gift of the resurrection your lives, my life, would really be left in a sorry state. Yet, that is where most of us live, in the context of lives all around us in sorry states of existence. You see it all around you in our world and common environments. You may even see sorry states within your own life, even though the victory of Jesus Christ over sin and grave claim something wholly different.

The Bible readings selected for today provide more food for our souls, nourishment and encouragement for lives lived as Christians in a 21st Century world. The reading I invite you to spend some time with me this morning is from 1 Peter, chapter 2. St. Peter the disciple is the person God used as the author and bearer of God’s heart and God’s love for us. [A few years ago I was inspired by a widower who helped his grandsons appreciate their grandmother’s life at her funeral. His name was Pete. Oh boy, Pete loved his grandsons. Several times at the funeral home visitation Pete would be milling around talking to people who came to pay their respects, and then all of sudden he would think of something that he wanted one or all of his grandsons to know, and he’d say, “Johnny, come over here, I need to tell you something. Look at your grandmother...you see that lapel pin on her blouse?” Then he would say, “Johnny, I want you to know something about your grandmother and what she thought of you. You remember that and be good young man. It matters how you live.” Those boys learned something that day, but I have a feeling that grandpa always had a lesson for them, any time they saw him.](#)

St. Peter writes a little bit like Grandpa Pete. Listen to a portion of this lesson once again. We listen again, because it is God who is talking to us. “Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. **Live such good lives** among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits you.” St. Peter is encouraging us to live our lives as Resurrection Christians. Peter’s point is that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of the world’s sin and death’s defeat changes the way Christians see their lives. Christians are welcomed to live their lives with divine purpose. When Christians live this way, Christians are a gift of the resurrection to the neighborhood around them, the workplace about them, the classroom enrolling them. There are at least four “life points” that we are given to learn and become disciplined in living as resurrection Christians. [These are the four: 1. Living such good lives that God is glorified. 2. Living lives of submission to authorities. 3. Living lives of gospel freedom. 3. Living lives as servants of God.](#)

These “life points” would make for a great series of sermons or studies because we struggle so much with them. These resurrection life points would be good as a sermon series or study because the lives of people living in this neighborhood of Christ Lutheran struggle in their sorry states and perspectives. The resurrection news of Easter is so good and so wonderful, specifically because everyone around us is practically dying and losing ground every week. That’s the reason Jesus came. Jesus came to bring life where there was and is no life. God’s purpose for your life is to be that light that so many others need, whether they know it or not. Finally, that’s the reason we Lutheran Christians believe so strongly in the Bible as the pure Word of God and the strength of the Holy Spirit. Just as Jesus took on flesh to make the grace of God plain and simple, God gives you and me life on this earth so that His grace might continue to be rooted in flesh, everyday flesh and blood.

“Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits you.” Living lives of goodness brings God to everyday light for us and others to see, behold, and finally worship. [Someone said it like this: Imagine that you were walking past a burning house. You see and know that someone else is inside the burning, dying house. In that circumstance you would do everything you could to get them out. You see the deadly, destructive situation...and you can’t just walk away.](#) We live in a world where 6.5 billion people live, but 4.5 billion people don’t have a clue about Jesus their Savior. 4.5 billion people are headed for destruction and cannot change that sorry state on their own. How many people do you see, maybe talk to every day but never breathe a word of salvation to them?

I know that speaking the good news of Jesus seems to be a difficult thing for many of us to do. But consider the state of people’s lives and their destination apart from Jesus Christ. The urgency is real, even if we find it difficult to engage in conversation practically. How do you bring conversations around to the place where you can speak of Christ? Of course, you provide a life style that paints a picture of Jesus in your life. Its is called living the four resurrection “life points” Life Point number one: Living such good lives...that...people may see your good deeds. The point is not that you and I will ever live such great/good lives so that we look good in and of ourselves. The point is not to gain some gold star in God’s grade book. Striving to live good lives helps to show others how we, ourselves, war against sinful desires that create such a battle within us.

You and I cannot conquer our sinful desires. Only Jesus Christ is able to conquer sin and its desires. The battle rages within us. So easily we lose those battles many times. Yet the Gospel, the Good News from God is that victory is still won. We depend on Jesus and His power to render forgiveness and regeneration on a daily basis. What a great message to declare to our neighbors, friends, co-workers, and classmates of the battle within us, yet the victory locked with Christ--His death and resurrection. How important it is to share with others how we struggle with our desires to serve ourself. That is the good life--wounded, weak, yet victorious in Christ . That is the good life we can share with others.

Our God calls us to gather together on the Lord’s day so that we might commune with him. But not with Him alone, with each other, too. How good it is to share with one another our struggles. Here we partner together and hold each other accountable. We share with brothers and sisters in the faith our faith struggles, our sin struggles. Here we partner together to prop one another up. We vow with one another to amend our sinful lives.

Here at Christ Lutheran men can covenant with one another to be better husbands. Wives can covenant together to be better wives. Here youth can meet with one another to talk with one another and prop each other up to better honor our fathers and mothers. Here as business men and women we can covenant together to set up heathy standards of conduct in business. Here, as laborers and workers in our community we pray together, with one another, to be faithful workers of the labor force. That’s what we do and why we come together in the Lord’s name. This is how the world can see the goodness of God at work in our lives as resurrection Christians.

By the power of the Gospel, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, proclaimed upon our lives, we have a message to tell in our conversations with everyday people, not just Sunday morning people. One last sports analogy, if you will. [Imagine you’re locked in a football game as a player. Your team is neck in neck with the opposition. The score is tied going into the last quarter of play. The whole season and reward hinges on your winning. You begin to worry about the outcome. You worry that if you make one mistake the whole game could be lost. And then, by a miracle, it is whispered from on high: “By the way your team is going to win the game.”](#) By some miracle you are able to confidently believe it. Just

think how that changes your perspective. You begin to enjoy every second of the last quarter because you know the outcome. In fact, you hope the last quarter slows down so that you can enjoy every aspect and every play. You become a stronger, more confident player because you know the outcome.

My friends, we know that our time here on earth ends victoriously because Jesus death and resurrection has secured the victory over sin and death. Nothing is able to separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus, says St. Paul. The only competition is sin, satan, and death. Every other person on earth is really an opportunity to tell of this good news. "Live such good lives...that others might honor the Father when He comes for the final visit."

Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, to life everlasting. Amen.