

The Resurrection of Our Lord

31 March 2013

Luke 24:1-12 -- A SERMON AT THE CEMETERY!

It could be any day... you go to the cemetery. You go to the grave to pay your last respects. It's someone you love. It's someone you lost. But the Word you hear are not words of the lost and the dead. They are Words of the found and the living. These Words are spoken by the preacher to you at the graveside sound like this... *"My own eyes have seen the salvation which You have prepared for all people... I know My redeemer lives... I am the resurrection and the life... everyone who lives and believes in my will never die."*

The day is today... you go to the cemetery – with those women who saw where Joseph and Nicodemus laid the body. You go to the tomb to pay your last respects! It's someone you love. It's someone you lost. But the words you hear are not words of the lost and the dead. They are Words of the found and the living. These Words are Easter morning Words and they are spoken to you by TWO preachers. They are heavenly preachers – angels. They have a message from heaven. You expect to see the dead and carefully buried corpse of Jesus! These preachers, however, have something to tell you.

Very early in the morning at this burial place something strange has happened. Something unexpected! The Women who went to properly prepare the body of Jesus with perfume,... ***"found the stone rolled away from the tomb."*** That's good because they were worried how they were going to open it anyway. But something is not right. The whole setting looks upset. They looked in and ***"They did not find the body of the Lord Jesus."***

What's happened? It must have been terrifying. Has the grave been looted by robbers? Are the thieves still in there? Or has the body been disturbed, defiled and destroyed by His enemies? Jesus was so hated by His opponents!

The women wondered and wondered. They talked and talked. Examining every angle. Trying to figure it out.

"While they were wondering about this," more of the unexpected! The last thing in the world you'd ever imagine to take place at the cemetery in this ghastly and appalling situation! Who would have ever guessed? Not the women! And certainly not you or me!

"While they were wondering about this" --- conjecturing – speculating -- guessing -- all of a sudden, from out of nowhere, those TWO powerfully stunning heavenly preachers showed up! Angels! Messengers from heaven! Gleamingly white like lightning shining brightly!

They're not there to just sit and stare at or call attention to themselves – or to worship! (The women fear them! They won't look! Flat on their faces they fall!)

THE ANGELS ARE IN THE TOMB FOR A REASON! THEY ARE THERE WITH A SERMON IN THEIR MOUTHS! THEY ARE PREACHERS! SENT TO PREACH A SERMON AT THE CEMETERY!

The Lord sends them! They come with an external Word from the Lord! For the women! And for you!

The sermon goes like this. ***"Why do you look for the living among the dead?"*** Did you catch that? ***"The living"!***

But they're not done preaching. Listen. ***"He is not here."***

No kidding! We see that! That's why we're so perplexed! So what happened to Him?

“If you’ll let us finish we’ll tell you! He is not here. HE HAS RISEN!”

Risen? How can that be?

“Here’s how. Don’t you remember the Lord’s own words? His preaching? He told you time and time again and especially in Galilee that this would all happen! That it HAD to happen! This is what Jesus said and we quote: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’”

Amen. The sermon ends! The angels did their job! The Lord’s Word got preached! Delivered! Put into the ears of their cemetery congregation. ***“Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of Christ,”*** (Romans 10:17). The Lord’s Word preached does what it was sent to do! ***“Then they remembered the Lord’s words.”***

Notice that all their wondering – all their talking to themselves – did nothing! It took a sermon – an external Word of the Lord – to bring about faith! To finally trust what Jesus said He would do and do for them and for their salvation!

They can’t keep this good news to themselves. Off they go! To tell the Eleven and the other disciples the truth of Jesus’ resurrection! Over and over again they proclaim what they had been told! The ***“all things”*** of Jesus suffering, death and resurrection, the empty tomb and the sermon of the angels from heaven!

Sadly, the Eleven and all the others, ***“did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense!”*** As if the women were delirious! Not reliable! Not credible!

Peter hoofs it to the tomb. Takes a look inside. He sees the “strips of linen lying by themselves.” If only Peter would have remembered that as a Baby Jesus was wrapped in strips of cloth! Peter marvels! He’s astounded! But he just doesn’t know what to make of it all! ***“He went away wondering to himself what had happened.”***

He too needed a bigger dose of preaching! And he’d get it. Later on that day by the Lord Himself! The very crucified but risen Lord Jesus with a meal of broiled fish and a sermon that finally opened his mind to understand the Old Testament. Jesus told Peter and the other apostles: ***“This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,”*** (Luke 24:46).

You too get big heaping helpings of preaching so that you’re not left wondering what all this means! Sunday after Sunday messengers are sent to you. For almost 56 years here at Christ, Platte Woods the Lord sends preacher after preacher – that is – The Word to your ears and life and heart. And, at times, that Word of life is spoken in the places where we meet death – in the hospital, at the bedside, at the grave. Those words preached are not words of death they are an external word from the Lord for you, namely, ***“It is true! Jesus is risen just as He promised! He appeared to Peter and all the apostles as well as hundreds more. Even to the apostle Paul! And He did it for you! Death has been defeated! It has no power over you!”***

That divine forgiveness for you is for the long haul. His forgiveness spoken and given to you today in the Sacrament will see you through your grave to the resurrection of the body and life everlasting! The sermon at the cemetery, the one you have visited, or the one where Jesus was buried, is where the sermon of life – not death – is preached.

Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed! For you and for your salvation! Alleluia! Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.