

Hallelujah! Christ is Risen! <The Lord is Risen Indeed – Hallelujah!>

Peter has a very impactful sermon in our reading this morning – I must admit to a little bit of desire that my sermons could have as great of an impact – so I hope and pray you are blessed by these thoughts this morning.

Peter begins with “I truly understand that God shows no partiality...” It is true: God shows no partiality. God's heart is turned toward whoever rightly honours God and acts justly. We can break what we heard from Peter into three sections: What Jesus Did, What was done to Jesus, and What Jesus wants done:

1.) WHAT JESUS DID:

He preached peace; He came with the Holy Spirit and with power; He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. Jesus is Lord of all.

2.) WHAT WAS DONE TO JESUS:

He was put to death by hanging on a tree; but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear,

3.) WHAT JESUS WANTS DONE:

That we eat and drink with Him, that we preach to the people and testify that He is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead, that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.

We rightly honour God when we do what Jesus wants done, and act justly.

Christ is Risen, Alleluia!

As Paul tells us, this means that you, too, have been raised – in Christ. And as you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for your life is with Christ in God.

The truth of life in Christ must be lived out in the routines and rhythms of life. To confess Jesus Christ means a way of living. There is an expected way to live that bears witness to the truth of the gospel within a person. Paul continues his writing with a series of admonitions, but to cut to the chase: in everything you do, from when you wake until when you sleep, do it to love God with all your being, and to love your neighbour as yourself. For in Christ, you are a new person – freed from the shackles of sin.

Mary went and saw the empty tomb. She saw two angels, though in her distress she did not recognize them as such. She even saw our Lord, though she did not recognize Him either, until He directly addressed Her by name. The disciples, who had lived with Jesus on a daily basis for three years, did not recognize Him as Lord and Saviour until after He had risen – and then, only then, were their eyes open to what He had been meaning in all that He had said and done – and all that had been written of Him in holy scripture.

We have it both easier and harder – for we start by being told, effectively, “Jesus is Lord and here is why.” The disciples, despite the many many ways that Jesus announced He was Lord, didn't comprehend this until they had the privilege and horror of living through His death and Resurrection –

we get the privilege of being told upfront that He is Lord and Saviour, which the disciples didn't; but we do not get the privilege of living directly with Him in a physical manner like they did, even living through the death and resurrection.

In both cases, though, I think neither of us understands – we nor they – until we finally realize Jesus is talking directly to us, claiming a decision upon us.

Just as He did to Mary Magdalene that morning, today He looks at you, directly in your eyes and in your heart, and says your name.

And when He does that, it is up to you how you respond. You can look away, as many do – you can mock Him, as many do -- or you can eat and drink with Him. You can preach to the people and testify that He is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead. You can testify that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. You can accept the Holy Spirit, and walk, fearfully and with trembling, in its power: for the Lord has seen you, and you have seen the Lord. You can love God with all your being, and love your neighbour as yourself.

Christ is Risen – and if you believe, you too are raised in Christ. Let us all live accordingly – all glory be to God.

Hallelujah! Christ is Risen.

Amen.