

Sermon for The Third of Easter

Date: April 26, 2020

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

First Reading: Acts 2:14a, 36–41

Second Reading: 1 Peter 1:17–25

Gospel Reading: Luke 24:13–35

Sermon Text: Acts 2:14a, 36–41

Sermon Title: Jesus Rose!



Hymns:

LSB 464 – The Strife Is O'er, the Battle Done

LSB 468 – Am Content! My Jesus Ever Lives

LSB 482 – This Joyful Eastertide

Songs:

In Christ Alone

O The Wonderful Cross

Shout to the Lord

That's Why We Praise Him

Worthy Is The Lamb

Liturgy:

Divine Service: Divine Service I



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Text: Acts 2:14a, 36–41

Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, . . .
Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.” So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

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Grace to you in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus the Holy Christ of God. Amen.

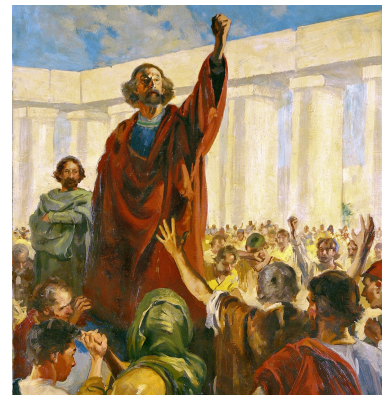
The fact that Jesus really lived, and that He was crucified and died at the hands of the Roman government are indisputable historic facts, confirmed certainly by the Bible, which is all the evidence we really need, but also by numerous non-biblical ancient historians. To deny the historic life and death of Jesus Christ is to simply deny reality! ...but what about Jesus' resurrection?

There are many people who will defend the historical facts of Jesus' life and death, but who do not believe in His resurrection. This sadly includes many preachers and professors, who claim to be Christians, but who deny the physical resurrection of Jesus. They do so, in general, because they reject the idea of miracles altogether and claim that they cannot rationally accept that which they do not understand and have not experienced.

The apostle Peter assures us that we can be absolutely certain that Jesus rose from the dead! He explains Jesus' death and resurrection were preordained by God, foretold by David, and witnessed by himself and many others!

We have no reason to doubt the most important event in human history! In fact the most important event in all of creation!

The first reading we heard today is part of Peter's sermon. He was preaching to a large crowd, who were in Jerusalem to celebrate the religious festival of Pentecost.¹ They had gathered outside because they had heard a "mighty rushing wind" and had come to see what was going on.² They listened to the disciples speak in their own languages concerning the "wonderful works of God."³ Then Peter begins his sermon by first explaining what was happening. An ancient prophecy of the prophet Joel was being fulfilled as the Holy Spirit enabled God's people to proclaim His wonderful truths.⁴



Then Peter proclaims:

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you

1 Exodus 34:22

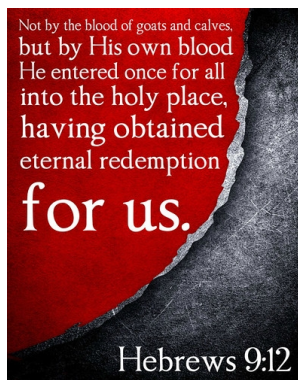
2 Acts 2:2

3 Acts 2:7-8, 11

4 Acts 2:16-21

yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.⁵

Notice Peter explains this event as “the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God!”⁶ Jesus’ death was part of God’s eternal plan to save all of mankind from sin.⁷ The centerpiece of that plan of redemption and salvation was the sacrifice of Someone so precious that atonement (the payment) would be made for the sins of the whole world. That Someone is the Messiah, and Messiah has come. His name is Jesus.



The author of the book of Hebrews tells us:

Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.⁸

but then proclaims:

Jesus entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of His own blood, thus

securing an eternal redemption.⁹

Peter states that Jesus’ resurrection had to happen because death could not hold back the Lord of Life! Jesus is “the resurrection and the life.”¹⁰ Jesus died, but was in the grave only until the third day. He was then raised from the dead. Forty days later He ascended into heaven. There He rules over all things above, on, and below the earth.¹¹ Saint Paul would later explain this powerful truth to the Ephesians:

God raised Jesus from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ... He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body...¹²



5 Acts 2:22-24

6 Acts 2:23

7 Ephesians 1:4

8 Hebrew 9:22

9 Hebrew 9:12

10 John 11:25

11 Matthew 28:18; Deuteronomy 4:39; Isaiah 40:22

12 Ephesians 1:20-23

Jesus' resurrection and ascension demonstrate that God's plan to save us, and Jesus' ability to help us, are real! That is why we can live our lives with confidence, even in these days of uncertainty! We can be absolutely certain that Jesus rose from the dead!

The final point is this. A Living Jesus, after the cross, was witnessed by Peter and many others! Peter said, "This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses."¹³ There is no more powerful testimony to the truth than that of an eyewitness. Peter and the other believers, standing there on that first Pentecost (about 120 of them¹⁴) had all seen and listened to Jesus after His resurrection. They could testify that He was risen from the dead.



In the Gospel lesson Luke speaks of Jesus appearing to His disciples on Easter Sunday evening. They were confused and frightened, not knowing what to believe and uncertain of what had happened. They had reports from the women of angelic messengers and a personal appearance by Jesus. They had eyewitness accounts by Peter and John who had seen the grave clothes lying there empty in an empty tomb. Mary Magdalene claimed a personal

meeting with Jesus. Two of their fellow believers had rushed into that room claiming to have seen Jesus as well, while walking to Emmaus.

Then Jesus appeared among them. He showed them the wounds in His hands and His side. He urged them to touch Him and see that He had flesh and bones. He ate in their presence. Then He instructed them to preach. When all of these reports failed to convince Thomas, Jesus dispelled his doubts the following week. There Thomas confessed, "My Lord and my God!"¹⁵

Paul reports that while in Galilee Jesus was seen by a crowd of over 500 people at once.¹⁶ Jesus was definitely alive which is why we still proclaim:

Hallelujah! Christ is risen!
He is risen in deed. Hallelujah!



There are many who deny the physical resurrection of Jesus. They claim that the disciples at best were hallucinating, or at

13 Acts 2:32

14 Acts 1:15

15 John 20:28

16 1 Corinthians 15:6

worse simply agreed to a deception. These suggestions do not hold with the facts. The disciples believed Jesus was dead and it took a great deal of evidence to convince them otherwise. The apostles of Jesus died as martyrs. You do not die to uphold a lie. Jesus did rise from the dead.

Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 15, Jesus' resurrection is the foundation of our faith. It confirms the forgiveness of our sins, the truth of the Gospel message we are to share, and the certainty of God's promise of everlasting life! We can be absolutely certain that Jesus rose from the dead!



Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!

Hallelujah,
Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed!
Hallelujah!

Amen.

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Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people