

Sermon Title: "Easter Sunday"

Prelude

UMH #302 "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"

UMH #327 "Crown Him with Many Crowns"

Congregational Reading: UMH #320 "Easter Day"

Apostle's Creed UMH #881

Scripture

Matthew 28:1-10

John 20:1-18

Sermon: "Easter Sunday"

Lord's Prayer

UMH #322 "Up from the Grave He Arose"

Closing Prayer and Benediction: Number 6:24-26

Postlude

Questions:

Who are the first people to see Jesus resurrected? Who are first few people He shows Himself to? Why is this significant?

Jesus had pronounced over and over again that He was going to die and be resurrected.

Even though He had done many miracles, why did no one believe Him?

The resurrection of Jesus is easily the most important event in human history. Why? What is your right response to this?

Memory Verse: Matthew 28:6 "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said."

“Easter Sunday”

Pastor Jacob Hanson

04/04/2021

Opening Prayer

Good Morning Beloved, He is risen! (He is risen indeed!) Welcome to our Easter morning worship, and welcome to the most joyful service on the Christian calendar. Beloved, today we remember and celebrate the most important event in all of human history: Jesus’s resurrection. After being beaten, scourged, crucified, and laid in the tomb for three days, Jesus has resurrected Himself. Having been pierced through for our transgressions, after being sacrificed for the sins of us who call upon Him, here now we celebrate the glorious truth that our Savior indeed lives. Today’s message is one of joy and hope for all who believe. Joy that is so scarcely imaginable that it actually brings trembling with it. As we can see in our two accounts of His resurrection this morning, there is much to be joyful for.

Our first account came from the Gospel of Matthew. The first people we read who come to the tomb are Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. In the other accounts we see that there was also a woman named Salome with them, and potentially more. They have come to the tomb early in the morning to look upon His grave and to hopefully prepare His body for proper burial according to Jewish custom. He had been hastily wrapped and laid to rest on Good Friday, but because it was the night of the Passover with the Sabbath to follow, they could not be there on Saturday to do what needed to be done fully. When they arrive at the tomb they see the unimaginable take place. “And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.” Just as there was an earthquake when Jesus died, so too is there one here when He is raised. An angel rolls back the stone of the sealed tomb, and the guards who were posted there by the Pharisees faint from fear at what they see. The angel tells the women who love Jesus something that is unbelievable, something so joyful it cannot be imagined. He said to them “Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was laying.” They hear for the first time from the angel that Jesus lives.

Beloved we celebrate Easter every year as we should, and we talk about this time a lot in the church, but it should never lose its wonder on us. God in human flesh, who was killed for our sins, rose again. This is the mark of divinity. Everything else Jesus does plainly shows that He is God, but this above all else proves it. It also proves that our sins have been washed clean. For the women who first witnessed Jesus (Matthew says they first met Him on the road back to tell the disciples), there is great joy in knowing that He lived.

For us there should be too, because it marks that our sins have gone to the grave with Him at the crucifixion and that our souls are redeemed and raised up with Him at the resurrection. Today marks a day of joy, for if you call upon Christ and follow Him, then your sins are forgiven you. If you have received that free gift of salvation from Him and become His, then your sins hold sway on you no more. You are made new, you are redeemed, just as it was said in Isaiah 43:1 “But now, thus says the Lord, your Creator, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel, ‘Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are Mine!’” Jesus’s resurrection proves this Beloved. Our second account that we read came from the Gospel of John, and it gives us a little more insight into this incredible joy that we hold.

In John 20 we pick up where Matthew left off, with the women going to find the disciples. In particular we see that Mary Magdalene, having already witnessed this (but scarcely being able to believe her eyes understandably) finds the disciples John and Peter and races with them back to the tomb. John and Peter when they arrive peer into the now open tomb and see that the grave clothes Jesus had been wrapped in were lying there undisturbed. It is clear to them that Jesus’s body hasn’t been stolen, that He hasn’t gotten up and unwrapped Himself after being in a trance or a coma from blood loss, no it is clear that something far more miraculous has happened. The response of John? Verse 8 says “So the other disciples who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.” He believed Beloved, finally he came to believe. They had not understood that Jesus would rise from the dead, although He had said as much numerous times and it is recounted in scripture. How could they? No one had ever done this, and although they saw and heard Jesus do everything, they also had seen Him laid into the tomb dead just three days earlier. We take it for granted Beloved that Jesus lives and that He rose from the dead, but these folks had no idea. It is so unbelievable and so unimaginable to these two disciples (Peter and John were the closest to Jesus by the way!) that they actually run from the tomb in fear according to the Gospel of Mark. It won’t be until later when they see Jesus that the reality of the situation finally takes hold. For Mary Magdalene though, she is blessed to see Jesus a second time and to come to the truth early that He indeed does live.

“But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb.” We may question why she was weeping after having seen the angel roll away the stone and seeing Jesus on the road back to tell the disciples, but honestly can we blame her for not believing her own eyes? She too had been there to see Jesus crucified; had been right at His feet. She had seen with her own eyes Him be pronounced dead and placed in the tomb. To see all of this happen would have been terribly frightening, both because of the power involved and because one would think themselves insane. How could you believe your own eyes that the person you loved most who had been murdered was again alive? As we read, she assumed that the body had been taken and that her mind was playing tricks on her.

One of the angels in the tomb asks her “‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.’” She assumes that all she is seeing is a hallucination, and she assumes that He has been taken or stolen away. It is at this moment that Jesus comes to her to proclaim the Good News of His resurrection in a way that she cannot help but know is true. No hallucination, no mind games, no secret plot to steal His body, the truth is that Jesus indeed lives.

“When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are your weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, ‘Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Mary!’ She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, ‘Rabboni!’” When Jesus called her name, she finally saw through the tears and the amazement to see that He indeed was alive. He had done the impossible, had proven His divinity, He had risen from the dead.

From this point you have probably heard the rest of the story before. Jesus appears to the twelve disciples and shows them His hands, feet, and side to prove it is Him resurrected. For the next forty days He teaches them and reveals Himself to several hundred followers, again proving that He is alive and resurrected. From there He ascends to heaven, sends down the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, and is currently seated at God’s right hand until judgement day comes when He will judge the living and the dead. For us, the joy in His living is found in the fact that He has saved us from our sins. When judgement day comes and He judges everyone according to their actions, those who do not follow Christ have to pay their own penalty of eternal damnation. For those of us who cling to Jesus and who follow Him, our eternal home is not judged by our own actions but by His sacrifice. He makes us clean. Beloved, the joy of Easter, if you remember nothing else, is that our Savior lives and by His resurrection we do too. Praise the Lord that He is risen! (He is risen indeed!) Let us pray,

Closing Prayer