

Valley Christian Church

Second Sunday of Easter

April 19, 2020

SCRIPTURE

John 11:1-6; 17-27

MEDITATION

“I am the Resurrection and the Life”

See Insert for Meditation

HYMN

“Because He Lives”

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Most rulers are born in palaces;
People: Jesus was born in a stable
Leader: Most rulers never work for a living;
People: Jesus was raised in a carpenter’s shop
Leader: Most rulers ride about in fine carriages;
People: Jesus walked wherever he went.
Leader: Most rulers die in a bed;
People: Jesus died on a cross.
Leader: Most rulers reign from a throne
People: Jesus reigns from people’s hearts.
Leader: Most ruler’s rule for a lifetime;
People: Jesus rules forever. He is the Resurrection and the Life.

HYMN

“Amazing Grace”

*Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind, but now I see.*

*’Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear,
And Grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.*

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come.
’Tis Grace hath brought me safe thus far
And Grace will lead me home.*

INVOCATION

O God of sunrise, let this be an hour of sunrise in our hearts, when all things are made bright and new. Drive away the shadows of discouragement and loneliness. Raise us up from beds of weariness and despair. Outfit us with joy and excitement for a new day, when we shall walk in the way of the one whom we know as the Resurrection and the Life, Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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SHARING JOYS AND CONCERNS

PASTORAL PRAYER

O Lord, in life, we are surrounded by death: the death of hope, the death of promises, the death caused by the Coronavirus, the death of those we love, the death that works in our own bodies. Therefore, we give you thanks for the gospel of Jesus Christ, whose message is not death but life; the life of the spirit, the life of faith, the life of love, life for the broken, life for the diseased, life for our dear ones, life for us. Help us to turn our backs on death and move forward in living for Christ, living for those around us, living for the world, living for the Kingdom. Teach us to live every moment of our lives in the presence of Christ. Come reign over us, for O Lord yours is the Kingdom forever and ever. You are the Resurrection and the Life. Amen.

CALL TO COMMUNION

As we come to communion in the comfort of our home, may the bread which is broken bring life to us. May the holy cup, poured out for all, be our salvation.

COMMUNION HYMN

“In This Very Room”

*In this very room there’s quite enough love for one like me,
And in this very room there’s quite enough joy for one like me.*

(over)

*And there's quite enough hope and quite enough power
to chase away any gloom,
For Jesus, Lord Jesus is in this very room.*

COMMUNION PRAYER

O God, when we look at the bread and cup, our hearts are almost too full for words. To think that you have given your only Son to suffer and die on the cross on our behalf and then this bread and cup as a reminder of your grace, is quite overwhelming. Please feel our gratitude for this special moment. Let your Holy Spirit come upon us, assuring us of forgiveness, lifting our eyes to new challenges for ourselves and this church, and binding us together in love and fellowship. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

Partake of the holy communion
(Bread, juice or whatever is available to you)

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

On the night He was betrayed Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said,
"This is my body that is broken for you. Take, eat and do this in remembrance of me."
In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it often in remembrance of me"

SHARING OUR OFFERING WITH GOD

Share your church offering with the church by mail.
Thank you for your love gifts.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

There is no way, O God, that we can repay you for what you have done for us in Jesus Christ, or for what you continue to do for us day by day. Our gifts are but tokens to say, "We love you God." Amen.

BENEDICTION

May the risen Lord, the Resurrection and the Life, take away the darkness and make the sun shine in our souls
May He use us to touch the lives of others and may His name be praised now and forever. Amen.



*I am the
resurrection,
and the life.*

JOHN 11:25

MEDITATION
Sunday, April 19, 2020

“I am the Resurrection and the Life”

In the morning scripture of John, when Jesus arrived on the scene, He was first approached by Martha, one of Lazarus’ sisters. She was very upset because Jesus had not come soon enough to save her dear brother from death. She said, “Lord, if you would have been here, my brother would not have died.”

Jesus answered, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me though he die, yet shall live. And whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.”

Take a close and careful look at Martha. For our response to the presence of the living Christ is like that of Martha. Her first words to Jesus were, “If you would have been here, Jesus.” What Martha is saying to Jesus was, “You blew it Jesus. You really botched this one up, Lord. If you had only come when we sent for you then my brother would have never died. But no, you did not listen to me. Instead you come in your own time and now my life is in ruins.”

How often we follow Martha’s kind of thinking. When life gets tough, we run to God saying, “Come now, God, my life is a mess. Come now, God, I have reached the end of my rope and I do not know where else to turn.

And then maybe life stays rough. Maybe things do not straighten out like we think they should and we say like Martha, “God you are just too late. If you had been here sooner, if you had only come when I called, events would have turned out so differently. You could have saved me so much trouble, so much grief and pain.”

And sometimes we are so busy telling God how badly He has botched everything that we do not hear what He says to us.

“Martha, Lazarus will rise again. I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me though he die yet he shall live.”

You see what Jesus said to Martha was simply this, Martha, I am here now! Life has come now! Martha, I do not live on your timetable or by your rules, but Martha, I live by God’s rules.

How easy it is to be like Martha. How easy it is to demand that God meet our requirements, at our convenience and on our schedules. But if we listen to the words of Jesus we know that in Him God comes to us, not always in the way that we want Him to come, Nevertheless He comes. And He is with us, if we are willing to be still and hear what He wants to say.

When I served as Interim Minister at Union Christian Church in Tuskegee, Alabama, there was a wonderful plaque on the wall in the Fellowship Hall.

The words on the plaque read, “It is not the number of breaths we take, it is the number of moments that take our breath away”. And this is so true.

It is especially true this day with Jesus who comes in His time and power saying, “I am the resurrection and the life.”

This indeed is a breathtaking moment for us. May we have the eyes of faith to see it, the ears of faith to hear it, and the hands of faith to embrace it and celebrate it. For He is the resurrection and the life! Praise be to God.

