



HE IS RISEN

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz
Easter Sunday, April 12, 2009 Luke 24:44 to 47

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

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

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

I read about some students who wanted to better understand being *homeless*. They said they wanted to raise funds to help homeless people – but especially they wanted to experience what it must be like to be homeless. That sounds pretty good, doesn't it, to do the most powerful and most memorable kind of learning – to learn by experience! Well, it all sounded good at first. But what they did was spend *one night* – not a month or a week or even a three day weekend – but *one night* – camping out in cardboard boxes. I'm not saying you can't get chilled to the bone – even hypothermia – being outside in the very cold – through the night. But one night – is like a lock-in! Then they gave students up to \$150 in *what? Monopoly* money – that they could spend on all kinds of stuff – like cardboard boxes to sleep in – *extra* blankets – and if you worked with a friend or two – you could pool your money and get a burning barrel and bundles of nice clean dry firewood. And if you were *really* uncomfortable – that *one night* – you could spend money on a nice hot meal and even half an hour inside – where it was toasty warm – to warm your feet and your hands! Don't misunderstand – I'm not saying their *hearts* weren't in the right place. But to experience real homelessness – means you have *no home*. You have to scrounge your own cardboard box. You can go into the public library or the mall to warm up – until they close – or more likely and sooner than that – people complain that you smell – and they throw you back out. Homeless means you pay attention to which way the wind is blowing – so you sleep beside the right wall of a building – so that that wall will be between you and the cold damp wind and rain or snow! Homeless people don't have *Monopoly* money to buy a hot meal or bundles of campfire wood at *Kwik Trip*. And homeless people aren't just homeless for one night – nor a three day weekend. They are homeless for months or years or decades! When Jesus came to save us from sin – he didn't just spend *one night* or a three day weekend as a human being. He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Nine months

later he was born. Someone cut his umbilical cord. Someone rubbed him with a soft cloth and probably salt – then wrapped him in swaddling clothes. Jesus nursed and was changed and bathed and fed. He was carried down to Egypt – then all the way up to Nazareth where he went to school and worked in Joseph’s carpenter shop. When Jesus was 30 he became a Rabbi – walking all over Israel – sleeping outside – with only his cloak – his overcoat for a blanket and a pillow. Jesus never owned a home – never owned a place to lay his head. When he was put to death in the most horrible way the human mind has ever conceived – he had nothing but the clothes on his back – and his enemies gambled for them – before he was even dead! Jesus became true man – through and through – to take away all our guilt and shame. This Easter Morning we are here to celebrate:

Jesus Christ Is Risen Today!

1. *All of Scripture is fulfilled*
2. *All nations are saved by Him!*

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” This would not be simple. There are *over 300* places in the Old Testament that promise what the Messiah would do to save us from our sins. The promises started with words first spoken to the serpent who came out of eternal destruction to the wondrous Garden of Eden. Remember what the LORD said? **“I will put enmity between you and the woman – between your offspring and hers. He will crush your head and you will strike his heel!”** Genesis 3:15 Over the following thousands of years the LORD narrowed the field. The Savior would be descended from Adam and Eve. He would be descended from Abraham – descended from Isaac – not Ishmael – descended from Jacob not Esau – descended from Judah – not one of his many other brothers. The Savior would be descended from Jesse – and from Jesse’s son David – who would sit on his throne in Jerusalem. The Savior would not be some golden child – some *Wunderkind* – who constantly worked miracles – to make his life a tip-toe through the tulips. Jesus’ tortured death was painted in a most graphic way. They would bruise his face till it didn’t even look human any more. They would pull out his beard. They would pierce him – with the scourge – with a crown of thorns – with nails through his hands and feet – and even after he was dead – they would pierce him with a spear to his heart – bringing a sudden flow of blood and separated water. Not one of his bones would be broken. He would be numbered with transgressors – put to death between two robber/thieves. His grave would be with the rich. Prophecy after prophecy fulfilled--powerful proof that all our sins are washed away.

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. Only the Holy Spirit can enable us to understand God’s Word! I was driving home from Madison the other day – when I heard a talk show – featuring one of those very popular professional atheists. A man from England who has made a career of arguing that all religion – any faith – is not only foolish but actually and literally hurtful and dangerous. This man who literally hates Jesus says people who believe in Jesus are motivated by ignorance, fear and superstition. This man doesn’t understand. Oh, there is no doubt he knows God’s Word. He has read the Bible – quite literally from cover to cover. He knows the story of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah. He knows the lives of the Judges – Samuel, Ehud, Othniel, Samson and Jephthah. Do you appreciate the irony – the absolute irony – if an enemy of the Gospel should know God’s Word much better than we who are believers – we who *love* Jesus? How wrong would that be? Do we appreciate the fact that the cover of *Newsweek* magazine – this Holy Week--has a cross on the cover – only to claim the end of the Gospel in America? We who love Jesus need to live such lives in this sin spoiled and sin infected world – that people who try and say such things ought to be ashamed! We need to read

our Bibles—to study God’s Word—confident that the Holy Spirit will open our minds to rightly understand law and gospel!

He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations...” Jesus suffered and died to save us. Would you suffer—endure terrible physical and mental and emotional hurt and harm to save someone else? It is terrible to read—from time to time—someone in horrible distress—and no one helps them. It has just come to public light—that it happened almost two years ago in New York. A young woman was on a subway train—all alone at 2 in the morning—when she was attacked. Was there *no one* to help? Oh—there was a man in one of those bullet proof booths selling tickets. He saw the lady being attacked—their eyes locked for at least 5 seconds. (Think about that—a thousand one, a thousand two, a thousand three) The lady being attacked thought—*thank goodness*—he will help me! He pushed a button—that made a light blink back at headquarters—wherever that is—saying they could use a police officer down in the subway! Right away—he did that. He pushed that button. Then what did he do? *Nothing...absolutely nothing!* What *could* he do? The lady thought—at least—at minimum he will yell on his speaker thing—“Stop! Stop it! *This is wrong!*” He didn’t. The lady got dragged down the steps by where the trains run—to be horribly unspeakably attacked. A train pulled up. “Aha! Surely now someone would help!” She saw the driver of the train. She saw him. *He saw her!* Surely he would do something. He did! He pushed this little button that signals—*a little help here!* Then he drove away. Oh, you would think—what are the names of those two guys? Get them into court! What they did—what they failed to do is criminal! Oh, an earthly Judge said—those workers did what they were trained to do—*push that button!* What else are they *supposed* to do? They don’t have guns and badges and handcuffs—like the people who got there—*10 minutes later*—according to when the first guy pushed his button! They scared the attacker away. They *never caught* him. The harm he did—will not go away—until the lady he attacked goes to Heaven. You would be *risking your life to intervene*—wouldn’t you? I don’t know...but it doesn’t say any where that this attacker was armed—say with a gun to shoot you if you came anywhere near—or a knife to cut you or stab you! You know—if that woman being attacked was *your wife—your daughter—your grandchild—your sister—your mom—your—fill in the blank*—would *you* do something? Heaven help the attacker—if it’s someone I love! Think how much Jesus loves you—that he died—gave up his life—to save you! What does Jesus want in return? He wants you! He wants you to read His Word at home! He wants you to come to Church—to worship Him—to thank Him! He wants you to dedicate every moment of your life to Him. And he wants you to live by him forever! Jesus wants all of you—*forever!*

Jesus told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.” Jesus died and rose again to take away the sins of the world. Jesus redeemed us. He ransomed us! Imagine being the captain of a huge ship off the coast of Somalia. Imagine being taken hostage by pirates—men with automatic weapons and rocket propelled grenades. Imagine if it was someone you knew—someone you loved who was taken hostage. What would you do? I heard relatives of a person taken hostage. Do you know what they said? We are *keeping our fingers crossed!* What? You know—you take your middle finger and mush it behind your pointer finger—both hands! This helps *how?* Imagine another relative who says—we need as many people as possible—and I thought—here it comes—*pray* for our loved one—pray for our brother—our friend. No—they said—as many people as possible need to *send positive energy—positive thoughts* toward them! Again—*what?* How do you do that? You know—you sort of aim your brain in the direction of the Indian Ocean—and shoot some sort of mental rays in that direction? How in the world is that going to help? How sad! How tragic!

How blessed are we – to know that Jesus loves us and forgives us? How blessed are we to know that when there is danger – horrible terrible danger – that there is a powerful difference between physical danger and spiritual eternal danger. *How blessed are we* to know that Jesus is always with us? How important is it for us to share God’s Word with everyone everywhere – so that they too might know that peace and comfort and calm that comes from Jesus’ powerful forgiving love!

Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. All nations! That would include faraway places like the Amazon Rainforest! When Uncle Terry was here – a few weeks ago – we visited while having lunch. He’s working on some more books – picture books about Jesus--for people in the rain forest. One of the things that people in the rain forest worry about – is – ok – so Jesus took all my sins away. *I get that!* But what about on Friday nights--when a person drinks a whole bucket of fermented juice and river water and gets drunk--and they *know* it’s sinful! What about when they get angry and lose their temper and lash out with hurtful physical violence and their Heavenly Father sees them? What about all the times when they know something is horrible and hurtful and wrong – and their Heavenly Father knows? What if Judgment Day came – in the middle of their being bad? What if they fall into quicksand – when they have had too much to drink – and they fall in head first – and panic and try to get out – and suffocate – and die? Then what? Is dying while you are doing something wrong something *you* think about – when you wake up at 2 or 3 in the morning and can’t sleep – or is this only a fear a thousand miles away – when you wake up because the Toucans and the monkeys are making noise? Uncle Terry has begun to draw people in the rain forest in a poncho – a great *white* one – with a golden cross over the heart. **As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.** We are clothed with Christ! We need to get past that way of thinking that says – *most of the time I’m being good!* Most of the time – like the 59 minutes I spend in Church – I am being *very good*. I am focused on singing hymns loudly and sincerely. When I pray I squeeze my eyes tight shut. I listen very carefully to the Bible readings – following along in the bulletin. I listen to the sermon and take a copy home to review during the week! I *always* remember my envelope. I always stay through the blessing. I always shake hands with the Preacher. *I even usher!* Most of the time *I’m being very good?* **No we aren’t!** We sin all the time. The best we got – is like rags of dead blood! We aren’t good most of the time. We fall short of the perfection God demands. When we do the right thing – often times it’s for far less than good motives! The simple truth is – we are doing sins all the time – all the time! And the powerful Gospel news is – we are forgiven all the time. We are children of God – adopted children of our Heavenly Father – wearing the invisible poncho of Jesus’ forgiving love. Jesus Christ is risen today! Amen!

To God alone all glory!

Rev. Anthony L. Schultz