

Victory
March 31, 2024

Our Savior is Way Lutheran Church

Pastor John Scott

Christ has risen. He is risen indeed, Hallelujah!

During our Season of Lent, we have been talking about how Jesus is for you, and that Christ is for you. And today, we see this fulfillment. Everything that He has done has been for you, to bring you from death to life, to bring you from hurts to healing, to bring you from brokenness to wholeness. Everything that He has done has been for you today.

There are things on your mind and heart that remind you of that brokenness, that remind you of all the things that are unfulfilled. But today in this place at this time, you have a moment to think about Jesus, but what He has done for you and all of the things He is currently doing within you today.

We hear the story from John. We have been using John throughout all of Lent talking about how yeah, His, His uniqueness, His unique perspective gives us a different view. And did you hear the gospel reading today? It was a little different maybe than you have heard before. It has a unique story in it. The story that we are going to focus on today.

We have walked from Palm Sunday through the Last Supper. And even on Friday and darkness, we left here waiting for this morning when we could say Christ is risen. Today, a new king has begun His reign. All the old ways are gone. His ways are now our ways. His kingdom is now the kingdom that we live in. It is a kingdom filled with grace and mercy, a kingdom filled with peace. With wholeness, a kingdom filled with great joy and beauty. This is the kingdom of God that Jesus has ushered in. It happened all early on this Sunday morning when it was still dark, and Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, and the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She looked inside, then the disciples ran; they looked

inside, and what did they find? Absolutely nothing. They could not figure it out. They did not know. They did not quite understand what was going on. But what had happened was that the king of this new kingdom had conquered death. on Good Friday, He died for each and every one of us for all of the sins that we have ever committed and all that we ever will, He took them upon Himself, paid for them, and conquered them. Because the grave was empty, because the tomb was empty, that means that Jesus is alive. It means that Christ is risen—He is risen indeed, Hallelujah!—That means that death has no power over Him anymore. This is what He gives to each and every one of us, that yes, although we may feel the sting of death, it has no power. It has no lasting power. The kingdom of God has made sure of that. His victory is enough, but these all sound like abstractions.

These all sound like big things that maybe we think about on days when we are feeling that little existential crisis that we have every once in a while, but I think it is more than that. I think this is an everyday faith. I think this is an everyday thing. Every day good news for you to take on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and all of the days.

Because this was not something just abstract with the tomb being empty. You see, Jesus was for each individual person, including you, including Mary. You see, in John's gospel, He gives us this glimpse into Mary's experience with the empty tomb, with the risen Christ. Mary turned to leave because she, well, could not understand what was happening.

She did not know what had happened. She thought that Jesus had been, well, His body had been stolen, taken away, or whatever. She had no idea. She turned to leave after these angels had told her that something new had happened. She still could not see through the tears, but she saw someone standing there. John tells us it was Jesus, but she did not recognize Him.

And Jesus says, why are you crying? Who are you looking for? She thought He was the gardener—if there is anything more normal than this, I do not know what there is. How often have we turned around and seen people and thought they were somebody that they were not? How often

are we mistaken people for people whom they were not? How often if we look to Jesus and wonder who He is?

On Easter, Jesus shows us exactly who He is, because right here, He takes the scales off of Mary's eyes. He simply does this by calling her by name. He knows her. He knows what she has been through. He knows what she struggles with. He knows what struggles she has with her faith. She knows what struggles she has with Jesus and with the people. He knows. And yet He calls her to be with Him to be a part of His kingdom by name. He knows all of who He has made her to be. And when He says her name, Mary instantly recognizes Him. She knows that it is Jesus. She knows that it is her savior.

You see, this is Easter for me and for all of you, that Jesus knows you. He knows who you are. He knows what your struggles are. He knows what joys you have. He knows the way that you celebrate and see beauty in this world. He knows the opportunities that you have to share grace and mercy with the people around you. He knows how you have done that in incredible ways and made incredible impacts on the people around you. He knows this. And He calls you by name to be His, to be a part of His kingdom. His kingdom is for you.

In the end, Mary Magdalene took all of this, when she knew that Jesus knew her, she believed. And she went and told the other disciples exactly what Jesus had told them, told her to say. And she starts off with, I have seen the Lord, and I think this is fitting. She did not say, "Oh, I thought He was the gardener." I thought He was this, I thought it was that—no more of that. That was all gone. That was the old Mary. This is the new Mary, the one who has seen the resurrected Christ, who knows that Christ has risen. And all she can do is say, "I have seen the Lord," and speak of His goodness and His grace and His mercy and His calling to the people around her.

I hope today that as you celebrate Easter, wherever it is you are going after this, how-ever it is you are going to celebrate, I hope that you see this clearly that Jesus is for you, that He knows you, that He loves you, and

that He calls you to be His. And in His kingdom, you have been given incredible things to do with the people that you have brought with you today, or the people you are going to see later on, or the people you see tomorrow when you go back to work, He has given you opportunities to share a couple of things, to share that Christ has risen and with kind actions and words to show them exactly what His kingdom is all about. Will you do it perfectly? No, that's okay. We know that Jesus has already conquered all of those things. Instead, He gives us Himself, and He calls us by name. In the end, you are greatly loved. All that Jesus did, He thinks was worth it. It always will be just for you. Let's close in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your son to die for us and to conquer death by rising, by being resurrected to this new life. We thank You that He has chosen by His grace to give this new life to each one of us. That as He calls us by name, as He knows each and every one of us, He gives us grace, He gives us mercy, He gives us unfailing love.

So that as we go through this life, we would remember each and every day that we are part of His kingdom. Not only blessed by living in this kingdom but there to be a blessing to all of those around us. May we be bringers of life. Amen. And of joy and of peace to the people that we see each and every day in the name of Christ, who is risen indeed. Hallelujah.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.