

Sermon for Easter Day – The Resurrection of Our Lord, 8.iv.2007, 10:00 a.m.
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saint James the Apostle / Bregue, Pennsylvania
Isaiah 65:17-25, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24, 1 Corinthians 15:19-26, Luke 24:1-12
Holy Communion, LBW - Setting 2

J. J. !

Grace to you and peace from God Our Father and
from Our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

✠Amen.

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

A blessed Easter to you!

Let us hear again this verse from the
Easter Gospel according to Saint Luke:

Then they remembered his words

-Luke 24:8

Jesus' words, the *remembrance* of His words about the crucifixion and resurrection, enable the women at the tomb to understand what they see, and what they do *not* see. Understanding the empty tomb together by hearing and remembering the words of Jesus, this tiny community of female witnesses then go and tell the Eleven leading Disciples, the Apostles remaining after Judas' betrayal. Since they are women, their testimony is not sufficient in Israel. For that reason, Peter goes to verify what the women have said. He sees what they saw, though there is no mention of angels, and he remembers the same words of Jesus the angels proclaimed to the women, and from that seeing and remembering the Easter Gospel goes out into all the world, even to us.

Without the words of Jesus' prophecy, the empty tomb and garments are just that, and nothing more. *With* the words of Jesus, heard and remembered not by one but by a community of His Disciples, that emptiness is seen to be the event of His rising, the wheel of history is reversed, and hope now has the last word. When Peter runs off on his own to see what the women saw, he does so because of their testimony. In his astonishment, the beginning of faith, he joins the new community of faith begun in them.

Think back to the first time you remember hearing the meaning of Easter explained to you. Not one of us heard the Easter Gospel alone. Somehow, in some form, whether in the circle of our families, in Sunday Church School or Vacation Bible School, or in

the worship service of the Church, we have heard this message with others, with and in the Church in some form. The testimony of the Church continues throughout our lives, just as it has down through history, just as it will until the end of time. The witness of others to the power of God in raising our dead humanity to new and eternal life in the Son of Man and Son of God, Jesus Christ, is still there and it surrounds you on all sides today, even when it seems difficult or impossible to believe on your own. When your experience is one, not of an empty tomb, but of an empty place at the table, an empty space in the bed, of one who is not coming home after their last deployment overseas, or of no one to make that weekly phone call to anymore, then there will likely be

moments when it is more than you or I can bear to recite that part of the Second and Third Articles of the Creed where the Church confesses: "and on the third day He rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father . . . I believe in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen."

In the face of emptiness and death, remember the words of Jesus with others who also remember. Like Peter, let your life be borne up and moved to hope by the testimony of other witnesses. Like Christians of every time and place, let your affirmation of the Easter Gospel be gathered up and punctuated in the whole Church's AMEN!

Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed!
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Alleluia!



Now to Him Who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made of us a Kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. ✠Amen.

S. D. G.!