

Resurrection of Our Lord (Easter) March 27, 2016

LUTHERAN

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At either “Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Parma” or “Harold Weseloh”

March 24, 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

(Also presented as a part of the bible study/worship midweek service, 5:30pm, at the home of Robert Russo, a Puritas Lutheran Church member. E-mail puritaspastor@hotmail.com for details.)



<http://thecatholiccommentator.org/pages/?p=19939> The newspaper for the diocese of Baton Rouge

Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 458 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 195

“Christ Jesus lay in death’s strong bands”

"The seven verses¹¹ of Luther's [hymn](#) celebrate the [Resurrection of Jesus](#), with particular reference to a struggle between Life and Death. The third verse quotes from [1 Corinthians 15](#), saying that Christ's [Atonement](#) for [sin](#) has removed the "sting" of [Death](#). The fifth verse compares the sacrifice with that celebrated by [Jews](#) in the [Pascal Lamb](#) at [Passover](#). The sacrificial "blood" ("Its blood marks our doors") refers to the marking of the doors before the [exodus from Egypt](#). The final stanza recalls the tradition of baking and eating [Easter Bread](#), with the "old leaven" alluding again to the exodus, in contrast to the "Word of Grace", concluding "Christ would ... alone nourish the soul."

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christ_lag_in_Todes_Banden

Richard Massie translated this hymn and is author or translator of 88 other hymns. http://www.hymnary.org/person/Massie_R

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0sO4teQZd4> This video (over 7 minutes) includes an introduction by a previous Lutheran Hour announcer and gives detailed information about the hymn as it is played and sung.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4eLG4T1Mis&list=RDB4eLG4T1Mis#t=0> This is a cantata written by Bach based on this tune. It is one of several pieces he has built around this melody.

Isaiah 65:17-25, RCL; Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 65:17-25 (*next week, Acts 5:12-20, RCL; Acts 5:27-32*)

New Heavens and a New Earth

- ¹⁷ "For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth,
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.
- ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever
in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,
and her people to be a gladness.
- ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.
- ²⁰ No more shall there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not fill out his days,
for the young man shall die a hundred years old,
and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.
- ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them;
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
- ²² They shall not build and another inhabit;
they shall not plant and another eat;

for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,
and my chosen shall long enjoy^[a] the work of their hands.

²³ They shall not labor in vain
or bear children for calamity,^[b]

for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the LORD,
and their descendants with them.

²⁴ Before they call I will answer;
while they are yet speaking I will hear.

²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall graze together;
the lion shall eat straw like the ox,
and dust shall be the serpent's food.

They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain,"

says the LORD.

- a. [Isaiah 65:22](#) Hebrew *shall wear out*
- b. [Isaiah 65:23](#) Or *for sudden terror*

"The theme of a new creation, of a new Jerusalem, of joy replacing weeping, of life overcoming death abounds in this reading from near the end of Isaiah. The passage is part of the closing sequence not only of the third major section of Isaiah (Isaiah 56-66, known as Third Isaiah) but of the book of Isaiah itself. Some writers have drawn comparisons between Isaiah 65-66 and Isaiah 1, seeing these chapters as "book-ends" enclosing the whole and bringing it to a conclusion. Today's reading echoes the restoration of Jerusalem in Isa 1:26-27, and the image of the strong tree in Isa 65:22 recalls the oak in Isa 1:30. Other points could be added to enhance the sense that in Isaiah 65-66 not only do chapters 56-66 draw to a close but that all the themes of the previous 66 chapters, judgment, salvation, and further judgment, have their conclusion here with the promise of a new creation."

[http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/WebOTcomments/EasterC/EasterDay\(alt\).html](http://hwallace.unitingchurch.org.au/WebOTcomments/EasterC/EasterDay(alt).html) The Rev'd Dr. Howard Wallace, BE (UNSW), BD (Sydney Uni.), ThM and ThD (Harvard Uni.). Minister in the Uniting Church in Australia and formerly Professor of Old Testament in the [Centre for Theology and Ministry](#), Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

Psalm 16, RCL; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 (*Psalm 148, RCL; Psalm 118:14-29 or Psalm 150*)

You Will Not Abandon My Soul A Miktam^[a] of David.

16 Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.

² I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord;
I have no good apart from you."

³ As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones,
in whom is all my delight.^[b]

⁴ The sorrows of those who run after^[c] another god shall multiply;
their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out
or take their names on my lips.

⁵ The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup;
you hold my lot.

⁶ The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance.

⁷ I bless the LORD who gives me counsel;
in the night also my heart instructs me.^[d]

⁸ I have set the LORD always before me;
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being^[e] rejoices;
my flesh also dwells secure.

¹⁰ For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,
or let your holy one see corruption.^[f]

¹¹ You make known to me the path of life;
in your presence there is fullness of joy;
at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- a. [Psalm 16:1](#) Probably a musical or liturgical term
- b. [Psalm 16:3](#) Or *To the saints in the land, the excellent in whom is all my delight, I say:*
- c. [Psalm 16:4](#) Or *who acquire*
- d. [Psalm 16:7](#) Hebrew *my kidneys instruct me*
- e. [Psalm 16:9](#) Hebrew *my glory*
- f. [Psalm 16:10](#) Or *see the pit*

“Psalm 16 is a very problematic psalm, and for a gaggle of reasons:

1. Most scholars consider this to be a Song of Confidence or Trust like Psalm 23, yet it begins with a very lament-like plea for help in verse 1. Recent scholarship, helpfully, sees this "plea" as a devout desire for *continuing* protection in general rather than a specific request.
2. The intractable verses 3-4 are among the most untranslatable verses in the book of Psalms, if not in the entire Old Testament. Some translations, like the New Revised Standard Version and the Revised English Bible, take "holy ones in the land" and "nobles" as an orthodox community of saints towards whom the psalmist is positively disposed. Other translations, like the New American Bible, the New Jerusalem Bible, and the Jewish Publication Society's Tanak, take them as vile Canaanite deities that the psalmist rejects. It is impossible to decide which is correct. Regardless of one's decision in this matter, the psalmist is clearly opting for Yahweh over other gods... Read Mark A. Throntveit's complete commentary for additional scholarship about

this psalm. He is the Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, Saint Paul, Minn. https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=439

1 Corinthians 15:19-26, RCL; I Corinthians 15:19-26 or Acts 10:34-43
(*Revelation 1:4-18, RCL; Revelation 1:4-8*)

¹⁹ If in Christ we have hope^[a] in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied.

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. ²⁴ Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. ²⁵ For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

- a. 1 Corinthians 15:19 Or *we have hoped*

“1 CORINTHIANS 15:19. MOST PITIABLE

¹⁹*If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable.*

"If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable" (v. 19). In verse 16, Paul outlined four consequences IF the dead are not raised (a condition contrary to fact):

1. "Neither has Christ been raised" (v. 16).
2. Then "your faith is vain; you are still in your sins" (v. 17).
3. "Then they also who who are fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (v. 18).
4. Then "we are of all men most pitiable" (v. 19).

This is the fourth and final consequence if there is no resurrection. If there is no resurrection, then the only benefits we can derive from faith are those that we can gain in this life. There would be no future life, and therefore no future benefit.

We need to stop here and acknowledge that there are benefits to be gained in this life by faith in Christ. Just look at the people in your congregation. They might or might not be kings and princes—movers and shakers—but they are very likely better off than they would have been without faith. Many of them are devoted to their spouse and children, in part, because of their love for Christ. That has benefits for the whole family. Many of them try to love their neighbor because Christ told them to do that. That has benefits for the person who ends up with love

rather than poison in his/her heart, but it also has benefits for the community. Many Christians feel a great sense of purpose because of their religious beliefs. They can face illness and death with the assurance that God is with them even through the valley of death. Paul says that, if there is no resurrection, the only benefits we can experience from our faith are those that we experience in this life. However, we need to acknowledge that these are substantial.

However, there is another side to it. If there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christians are "most pitiable," because they have staked their lives on a lie. Being a Christian is a costly enterprise. Christians can expect to be persecuted for their faith (Matthew 10:16-25). Christ expects Christians to take up their cross and follow him (Matthew 10:38; 16:24). He expects us to leave behind things that we treasure to follow him (Matthew 8:22; 19:21). If we have made these sacrifices in behalf of a lie, then we are "most pitiable" because we have staked our lives on something that is not true. .."

http://www.lectionary.org/EXEG_Engl_WEB/NT/07-1Cor-WEB/1.Cor.15.19-26.exegesis.htm

Once again, www.lectionary.org, is a useful site to put the reading in context and to give detailed information about the reading itself.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZQsbMxwhA8> Handel's version of verses 21, 22

“The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 24th Chapter”

“Glory to You, O Lord”

Luke 24:1-12, RCL John 20:1-18 or Luke 24:13-49 (John 20:19-31)

24 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. ² And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. ⁵ And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” ⁸ And they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, ¹¹ but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter rose and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; and he went home marveling at what had happened.

“This is the Gospel of the Lord” ***“Praise to You, O Christ”***

“Preaching at Easter has its unique challenges and opportunities.

A typical Easter worship service is often a bit chaotic. Family members who have been away may be home for the holiday. People who rarely worship may come to church for the sake of tradition. The Easter story itself may seem all too familiar, yet those who try to preach it may wonder how anyone could possibly believe it. This challenge is precisely the opportunity. ***No preacher can make a listener believe that the dead rise. But God can and does work through the Easter message to evoke Easter faith. (Bold and Italics added)***

The account that is given in Luke 24:1-12 lends itself to a sermon in four steps.

1. The story begins with the obvious: Jesus is dead, and his followers assume that he remains dead (24:1-3). .. The discovery of the empty tomb does not lead to an easy change of perspective. It brings confusion, not clarity. Bodies that are dead presumably remain dead. The best one can do is to treat them with respect.

Many modern readers of the gospel might be content to do the same... he died. So we imagine ourselves called to hallow his memory with praise for his legacy, much as the women imagined themselves called to honor his dead body with spices and ointments. One would think that would be enough.

2. The women receive a word that runs counter to what they know to be true. "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen" (24:5). One might be tempted to linger over the description of these angelic messengers, but they are not the point. The focus in this section is on the message, not the messengers (24:4-7). What is most striking is that the women encounter the resurrection through this message. They are *told* that Jesus has risen, but they do not see the risen Jesus himself. What they have is a word, a message.

This brings the Easter experience uncomfortably close, because this is precisely what we have-- the word of resurrection. One would think God would work differently. It would seem so much easier to have the women come to the tomb and watch Jesus walk out into the light of a new day. And it would seem much easier for Jesus simply to appear in dazzling glory to us, who gather on an Easter morning generations later. And this is precisely where our situation is like that of the women on the first Easter: we are all given a message of resurrection, which flies in the face of what we know to be true.

3. The only logical response to such a message is unbelief. Experience teaches that death wins. The Easter message says that Jesus lives. When such contradictory claims collide, it only makes sense to continue affirming what we already know. This is what Luke reports in the next section (24:8-11). The women bring the message of resurrection to the others, and they respond as thinking people regularly respond: they thought that the message was "an idle tale, and they did not believe them" (24:11).

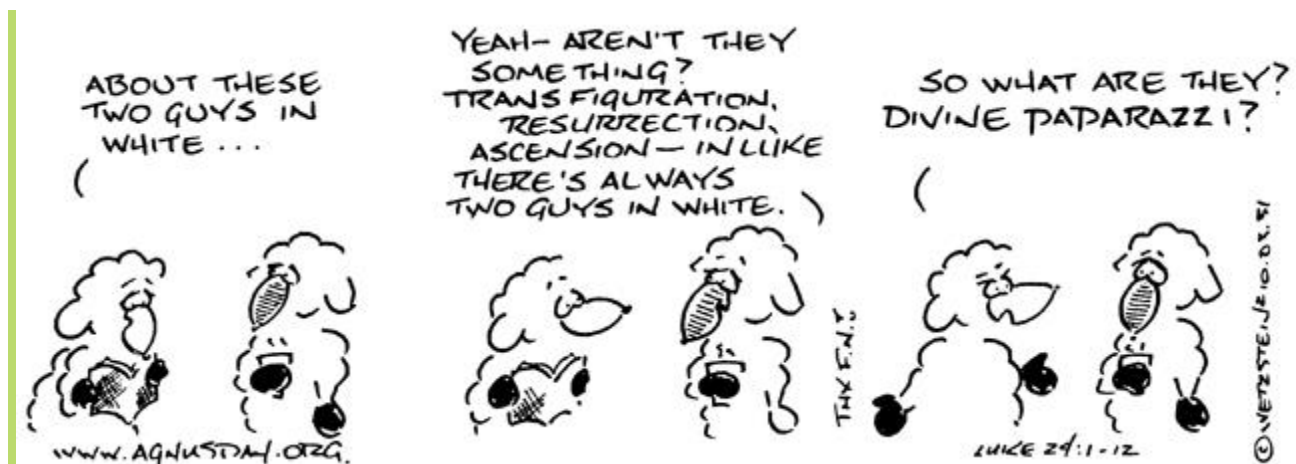
Unbelief does not mean that people believe nothing. Rather, it means that they believe something else. People say "I don't believe it" because there is something else that they believe more strongly... And the Easter message says, "Really? How can you be so sure?" Death is real, but it is not final. In Jesus, life gets the last word.

4. The Easter message calls you from your old belief in death to a new belief in life. The claim that the tomb could not hold Jesus, and the idea that the one who died by crucifixion has now risen is so outrageous that it might make you wonder whether it might--just might--be true. The apostles seemed convinced that the message was nonsense, nothing more than "an idle tale" (24:11). Death was death. Yet the message was so outrageous that Peter had to go and take a look for himself (24:12). He had to wonder, "What if it is true?"...

The Easter reading stops with Peter's amazement, but the Easter story continues far beyond, as God continues to challenge the certainty of death with the promise of life. Go ahead and tell God that you think it is outrageous to expect anyone to believe that Jesus has risen. Go ahead and tell God that you believe that death gets the final word. None of this is news to God. He has heard it all before. He simply refuses to believe it. "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" God wonders. "Through the living Jesus I give you the gift of life. Why would you think that I would offer you anything less?"

http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=558 Craig R. Koester is Vice President of Academic Affairs, Professor and Asher O. and Carrie Nasby Chair of New Testament at Luther Seminary.

As with the Palm Sunday Gospel from Luke you will notice some of the details of Easter morning are not included. Like the Christmas story, we are used to the combined Gospel version. Read the other three Gospels for the rest of the story. (Apologies to Paul Harvey)



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