

Lessons for The Festival of the Resurrection

April 16, 2017

Psalm 16 – A psalm of trust in God in the face of great danger in this life and for victory beyond the grave.

Acts 10:34-43 – Jesus ate and drank with those he had chosen to give witness to his victory over death.

or Jeremiah 31:1-6 – God promised to restore a joyful Israel after the exile and return his people to Zion.

Colossians 3:1-4 – Joined to Christ in death and in life, we now live for him.

Matthew 28:1-10 – Angels at the tomb told the women Jesus was alive; they then became messengers as well.

GATHERING THE TEXTS: A Sure and Certain Hope

The two Marys just missed witnessing the resurrection, but an angel told them what had happened; their Easter joy was interrupted by Jesus' greeting and his message for disciples to meet him in Galilee. St. Paul proclaimed that already in this life we are joined to Christ's death and alive with him in glory! The angels at the tomb sounded as though it were unimaginable that the women could doubt the fact of Jesus' resurrection!

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Alleluia! Lord Jesus Christ, you are risen from the dead! You have given me victory over sin and death. Help me live by that victory in the face of all suffering and sorrow. Alleluia! Alleluia!

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: Our greatest assets are the new lives we have, joined to Christ through our baptism into his death and sharing with him in his victorious resurrection. Our minds set on things of heaven guide how we use all our possessions in giving witness to the life that is ours in Christ our Lord.

OFFERING PRAYER: O Lord, though dead with Christ, we live in him,
our lives made new and freed from sin.
Now set our minds on Christ above
and bless these gifts to show your love. Amen.

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: The concern in the lessons for Easter is not whether we believe or doubt the resurrection. The issue is being joyful witnesses of Jesus' victory over death and the effect of that victory in the lives of his people. We were not present with the two Marys at the tomb as they were commissioned to "tell the disciples," nor when they heard Jesus' joyful greeting and his command, "tell my brothers." We may think we have nothing to tell, but we have sat at the meal with Jesus, received his body and blood, and been chosen to give witness of his victory over death. That witness is best made in the life we live, with our minds set, not on earthly things, but on the things of heaven.