

Lessons for Easter Sunday, The Festival of the Resurrection

March 31, 2024

Psalm 16 ~ *A prayer of David expressing trust in God in the threat of death and confidence in God's care.*
Isaiah 25:6–9 ~ *God will destroy the power of death and provide a victory feast and security for his people.*
1 Corinthians 15:1–11 ~ *The most important teaching St. Paul passed on is the fact of Jesus' resurrection.*
Mark 16:1–8 ~ *Mark's account of the resurrection does not hide the consternation of the women.*

GATHERING THE TEXTS: "The Lord's Right Hand has done Mighty Things"

Today the "Alleluias" burst forth in our worship as Christ breaks forth from the tomb! The prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in the victory Jesus won over death when he died for our sins and rose again. That last enemy has been defeated and will be destroyed when Christ returns to put all things under his feet. This victory was announced in the simple words of the angel: "He is risen! He is not here."

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERVICE: Alleluia! Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of the universe. You have raised up our Lord Jesus Christ 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! You made Him who had no sin to be sin for me, so that in Him I might become Your righteousness! Amen.

STEWARDSHIP THOUGHT: Because Jesus has destroyed the power of death over us, nothing has an ultimate hold on us but God's love. Now even the material things by which we often define our lives are themselves defined by how they may be used for God's kingdom.

OFFERING PRAYER: Alleluia! Jesus lives! He is risen from the dead!
Lord, You gave Your life for us; and You conquered as You said!
Now receive our heart-felt thanks with these offerings that we give.
He is risen from the dead! Alleluia! Jesus lives!

CONVICTION AND COMFORT: We know the power of death; we see it all around us. We have heard God's promise that He will destroy the power of death and wipe away the tears from all faces. We have heard the words of the angels: "He has risen! He is not here!" Yet while we pay lip service to what Paul declared was of first importance, that Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and on the third day was raised, we don't always live our lives by that victory in the face of all suffering. Thanks be to God, He has raised up our trembling hearts with the assurance of His promise.