

The Resurrection of Our Lord

Matthew 28:1-10

04/09/2023

“He is Risen” (He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!)

In the small catechism of 1529 Luther said of the first commandment that we should fear, love, and trust God above all things.

This is the natural order of all things spiritual today.

First, we fear! We fear death, we fear chaos and uncertainty, we fear just about anything that changes the natural order of things for the negative.

But, we should fear God first. He is the divine power of the universe that created it, and He is the divine power that can destroy it in an instance.

Kind of like the first time our father or mother got really mad at us and said, “I brought you into this world and I can take you out and make another one just like you!”

I think we all knew deep down that would never happen, but we also knew who was in charge at that moment!

They were fearsome indeed!!!

But than love came, in the person and work of Christ. He lived with us as one of us. He taught us and made us part of His family.

Finally, as God Himself in the flesh in our midst, showed us, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down His life for his friends.”

And that’s exactly what made Friday Good, Jesus showed us that love by dying on the cross there that day, instead of us.

As 1 John 4:18a says, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” There is, no love, more perfect than the love our Heavenly Father showed us through His only begotten Son Jesus Christ.

So, we no longer fear the ultimate divine power of the universe, rather we love Him.

And because of this love, we can trust Him too.

We can trust Jesus, and we can trust His Word, over and against anything the world has to say ever again.

Unfortunately, many, even in our Gospel account today, have no such trust; even though Jesus foretold His resurrection from the dead.

Matthew 16:21 Tells us, “From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be *raised up on the third day*.”

Matthew 17:22-23 recounts that, “...while they were gathering together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men; and they will kill Him, and *He will be raised on the third day*.”

Mark 9:9 details that, “As they were coming down from the mountain, He gave them orders not to relate to anyone what they had seen, until *the Son of Man rose from the dead*.”

And finally, in Mark 10:33-34 Jesus says, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and will hand Him over to the Gentiles. They will mock Him and spit on Him, and scourge Him and kill Him, *and three days later He will rise again*.”

(Source: <https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/topics/Jesus-Foretelling-His-Resurrection>)

As clear as Jesus was in nearly every account of Jesus’ resurrection, they did not trust His words.

They came expecting to mourn their dead friend, they came expecting to treat His dead body with perfumes to cover the smell of death and decay.

And even when they found the tomb empty, they assumed they must have simply moved His body elsewhere.

The officials were no different, knowing Jesus said this would happen; they prepared by posting guards, guessing the disciples would come and attempt to steal the body to perpetuate a fraudulent resurrection, rather than trust; that Jesus, would in fact, rise.

So much prophecy from Jesus and so little trust from the people that even *saw Him* raise the dead.

The early church father Peter Chrysologus (died 450 AD) put it perfectly concerning this lack of trust, “The stone was placed because of unbelief, so the Angel removed it to reveal the truth.”

And this truth, a shocking development for everyone concerned, truly unbelievable in their eyes, was undeniable in its effect!

First, the Angel of the Lord appears with an earthquake to roll the stone away and reveal that truth!

Here God showing His power over the heavens above and now the earth below even controlling the tectonic shift of the plates of the earth!

An act reminiscent of our Lord when He calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee, and the shocked disciples said, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?”

The answer is undeniable in both instances, ‘GOD’ is! Who He always was, always is, and always will be.

Second, the battle hardened soldiers placed there to deal with any contingency flat out froze!

Their can be no greater failure for the soldier sailor and marine than to freeze in combat! That only shows the team they cannot possibly count on them when they need them the most.

The rigors of training to overcome that freeze moment helps to mitigate the possibility of that happening. Months of drill, and repetition can be accessed in the most stressful situations because it takes little thinking to get back in formation and towards basic function.

But sometimes the fear is so great all the training in the world fails to overcome and the soldier flees, or freezes.

Years ago, when I was still living in Colorado, a coworker of mine told me the story of a time he was hiking in the Mountains with his sons.

As they made their way down the trail out of nowhere a massive Moose ran onto the trail causing my coworker to yell at the top of his lungs, “RUN Boys!!!” Mike fled, his oldest son fled, but his youngest son simply stood there, frozen in place, completely unable to move even a single muscle.

Now I don’t know whether the moose was shocked that Andrew stayed in place, or whether the moose was just as startled as they were; but he didn’t do what Moose are known to do, and that is: charge anyone they saw and give them a healthy dose of their massive antlers.

Instead, he sauntered off, never to be seen again that day. As Mike and his oldest son got back to Andrew, they all agreed he got lucky that day, because the moose could have easily killed him.

I think that might make most of us freeze in abject fear too!

So, the soldiers in our Gospel today were terrified beyond belief and their lack of faith froze them too!

What is freezing us today, where has our lack of Faith gotten us? Do we seek to trust the internet more than the words of our Lord? Do we trust our friends and family more than the familiarity of Jesus? Do we only look inside of ourselves rather than look at the tomb that no longer holds our Lord?

Let go of that fear, love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul, and trust Him above all.

In this season of Easter, we will look at all the evidence that demands THE verdict, that Jesus is risen from the dead.

And then we will no longer fear, rather love, and trust Him, because He is indeed risen from the dead.

HE IS RISEN (He is Risen indeed, Alleluia)

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