

Easter Sunday
March 31, 2024
RISEN INDEED, ALLELUIA!
I Corinthians 15:1-11

Why are you here?

I mean honestly, there are so many things you could have been doing with this 3/4/5-day weekend depending on how much time work lets you have off.

Many of us know that you could have been golfing, I knew as early as last Tuesday it was going to be a low of 55 and a high of 82 with nary a cloud in the sky. What better day could there possibly be for golfing?

You could have taken the kids on an early morning hike in the Ocala Forrest. Maybe you would see the ever-elusive black bear, or a Florida panther, or a turkey with her adorable pullets dutifully following her across the hiking trail.

Maybe you could be doing what the young hipsters are doing - hitting up the local high-end breakfast venues for brunch and mimosas.

I know many of you, just like me when I had little boys, came for the Easter Egg hunt. I know many of you, just like me, can't wait to see the little boys and girls in their Easter Sunday outfits.

I know many of you, like many in my family, made it here because even though you can't be in church regularly you know Christmas and Easter are the high holy days you just don't want to miss. The hymns are just too good, the festival of the event is just too impressive, and everyone is talking about it in the news, this is the place to be!!!

And not one of those reasons are a bad reason for you being here today, because ultimately you know you are celebrating something special. You are ultimately celebrating that *HE IS RISEN...HE IS RISEN INDEED ALLELUIA!*

But in our epistle today, Paul is making a whole other point about why you are here today. It goes back thousands of years before this resurrection that we celebrate, happening over 2,000 years ago for us today. And specifically speaks to the foreknowledge God's people had that

Christ would die on behalf of our sins.

It started with Psalm 22, 1,100 years before Christ was born, that told us concerning our Messiah Jesus, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me...” the last words Jesus spoke in the Gospel of Mark.

These very words showed us Jesus became sin on the cross. He was left by his Father to die, with every sin we ever committed and every sin we will ever commit, so that we would never suffer the punishment for all our sins in eternity.

But that’s not all. Isaiah 53 and 61, over 700 years before Christ, show exactly how He would preach in Luke 4 for the first time and how he would be crucified with undeniable detail for proclaiming Himself to be one with the Eternal Father, His Father!

Oh, many have suggested God never had a Son, and yet Proverbs 30:4, 1,000 years before Christ, tells us, “Who has ascended to heaven and come down?

Who has gathered the wind in his fists?

Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?

Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is his name, and what is his son’s name?

Surely you know?” JESUS!!!

You bet we know; He is the reason for every season!!!

And if that were not enough, wait, there is more!

We have Jonah the prophet, over 700 years before Christ. He was swallowed by a great fish, as good as dead (in his own words), and spit out to live and preach another day, after...ready for this...THREE DAYS! A sign that Jesus said was a precursor to Him in the grave for three days both in Matthew 12 and Mark 8; likewise, coming from the depths of Hades itself to preach another day.

Hosea 6, 700 years before Christ, uses the same language, saying, “after 2 days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.”

Who lives? Job 19 concludes with that amazing Hymn of Easter, “For I know that my Redeemer lives and at the last He will stand upon the earth.”

At least 2000 years before Christ, and possibly even 3,000 years before Christ, Job knew God would die and live. Job saw Jesus and knew that his Redeemer would live!

(Pause)

Every Easter I pour over my suits getting ready for the celebration of this day. I usually waffle between my linen suit or my seersucker suit. It's an important ritual for me because of my past.

I so remember worshipping at Shepherd of the Hills in Littleton as a teenager. That was the day we all made sure we wore our sport jackets and or suits. We were not too sophisticated in those days, so a blazer with khakis was the typical uniform each year. We did usually get a new tie and shirt to go with our outfit, so we looked a little shinier and newer than the year before. Fashion moved quickly in the 80's and we had to keep up. But no matter the attention to detail, no matter the cologne, or new hairstyle, we just couldn't compare to the glory of the girls in their Sunday dresses, white gloves, and broad flowing hats. No doubt, that was what most of us boys looked forward to seeing on Easter Sunday with the hopes that we would get a seat across from our favorite girl at the church breakfast.

I know, pretty shallow, especially for Easter Sunday.

But I also know that no matter what any of us were wearing, it compared little to the head covering neatly folded and linen wrappings that Peter and the boys would run to find in Jesus' tomb, laying where His body formerly lay dead.

Despite the sharpness of our Sunday attire, it compared little to the shining robes the angel wore in the empty tomb, waiting for Mary to discover it empty, and explain to her what it meant.

Despite all the hymnody, the breakfast fare, the fun of the Easter eggs, and beautiful lilies adorning our altar, it means nothing without the real reason we are here today.

It may not be the first reason we came, but it is the only reason we need.

Because more than 2,000 years before Christ, and for more than 2,000 years since His death and resurrection, we know deep down... ..the only thing that needed to be done...to forgive our sins...was accomplished on that cross and He redeemed us...no matter how unredeemable we may feel.

Because He lives, we live.

HE IS RISEN...HE IS RISEN INDEED,
ALLELUIA!

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