

Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed!

Today I'm proclaiming Good News from the Gospel reading:

- Firstly: Christ is not among the dead, he is with the living
- Secondly: We, as his disciples, can promote this good news together
- According to the callings that God has given us
- Thirdly: We find Christ where he promises to meet us.

Let's start with the first point:

- *Christ is not among the dead, he is with the living.*
- This is how our reading begins: **After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb.**
- All the resurrection accounts have different details
- And focus on different people.
- In Matthew we have the two Marys.
- What we know about them
- Is that there are going *to see the tomb*.
- They are going to the place of the dead.

When someone has died

- It seems that death has the victory,
- And the tomb is the symbol of that victory:
- It is silent, closed up, and lifeless.
- Human strength can do no more than look at the tomb
- And contemplate the apparent victory of death and the grave
- Over all our hopes: it seems that death is stronger than love.

But with God, death does not have the victory

- This is how the narrative develops: **And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow.**
- The word 'angel' means 'messenger'
- We'll think more about this.

- But notice for the moment what the women experience:
- An earthquake: their world is literally shaken,
- And I think we do well to understand this symbolically as well.
- The angel rolls the stone away:
- So, the message of the resurrection
- Starts with the unsealing of the tomb.
- And the appearance of the angel is like bright light
- In the darkness of dawn:
- The resurrection is light in the darkness of death.

The narrative goes on:

- **For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.**
- You might remember about the guards:
- Matthew records that they were placed there
- At the request of the pharisees and chief priests
- To stop any attempt to remove Jesus' body
- And falsely claim a resurrection.
- Just a note about the resurrection in the Gospels:
- Certain things are presented as knowable by all:
- Especially the empty tomb: this is presented
- As what we might call an historical fact,
- In principle open for all to consider:
- The guard at the tomb; the pharisees, the Roman officials.
- But the angel, and especially the risen Christ
- Are only truly encountered by those with faith.

The angel, as a messenger of God, addresses the women: **But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.**

- The women are looking for Jesus among the dead
- But he has been raised.
- The angel invites them to see the empty tomb,
- To see the place where his body was.
- But then they hear God's word for them.

This brings us to the second point:

- We, as his disciples, together promote this good news together

- According to the callings God has given us.
- Listen to how the reading goes on:
- **Then go quickly and tell his disciples, “He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.” This is my message for you.’ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples.**
- The angel gives his message to the women,
- And his message has a command:
- To tell the disciples that Jesus has been raised from the dead,
- And to tell the disciples that they will see him
- In Galilee, where he is going.
- So, the women are brought into the promotion of the Gospel:
- First the angel, the messenger from God, hands on his word,
- Then the women take this same word and run to tell the disciples.

Let's pause here.

- Notice in the resurrection account how different people
- Serve in harmony in promoting the good news about Jesus.
- The angel, the women, and the disciples,
- All carry the same good news,
- And they do it according to the vocations
- That God has given them.
- Even the detail of the women running to tell the disciples
- Invites us to consider how we can actively hand on the message
- To those God places in our lives.
- If we are parents or grandparents, God gives us people
- With whom we can share the Easter message.
- As friends, as co-workers, as neighbours
- God gives us different opportunities to promote the good news.
- Even being here, being together in the presence of the risen Lord
- Is part of the promotion of the gospel.

This brings us to the third point:

- We find Christ where he promises to meet us.
- Listen to how the narrative concludes: **Suddenly Jesus met them and said, ‘Greetings!’ And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.’**

- When the women encounter the risen Christ
- They worship him: to worship the risen Christ
- Is to worship God.
- But notice how he confirms the message
- Spoken through the angel: to tell the disciples to go to Galilee
- Because it is there that they will see the risen Christ.
- Jesus does not say why it has to be at Galilee,
- Just that it will be there that they will see him.

Let's pause here.

- On the one hand, we confess that God is everywhere,
- And it's part of our Lutheran tradition to confess this about Jesus:
- That because he is truly God,
- He shares in the divine attribute of ubiquity.
- But we don't encounter God in the same way everywhere,
- Rather, when we meet him where he promises to be
- Then we experience that he is alive,
- And that his life gives us life.
- So today think about Jesus words, 'This is my body...
- 'This my blood...', and think about the way that he promises
- The forgiveness of sins as you eat and drink.
- Christ promises to meet you here, at this altar,
- To encounter him as your risen Lord,
- And to receive the gift of the forgiveness of sins,
- And where there is the forgiveness of sins,
- There is life and salvation.

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

- We have received good news:
- Christ is not among the dead, he is with the living
- We, as his disciples, can promote this good news together, according to the callings that God has given us
- We find Christ where he promises to meet us.

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