

He Lives

Easter Sermon – April 21, 2019

Easter faith is nothing else but faith in the resurrected Jesus Christ.

Today we will focus on three things. First: who the resurrected Jesus Christ is. Then, what is the faith in the resurrected Jesus? And then, what are the benefits for us who believe in the Resurrected Jesus Christ?

1) Who is the resurrected Jesus Christ?

Mary, who first comes to the tomb of Christ at the dawn of Easter, had a hard time to find out what happened at the grave. At first, she saw that the tomb was empty. Then, she saw two angels in the place where Jesus' body was lying before.

When Jesus stood behind Mary, she thought that He was the gardener. Finally, Mary recognized the Lord, who was crucified, died, was buried, and now Jesus is alive. Mary saw Lazarus coming out from his grave, and probably she saw the 12 years old daughter who was resurrected by Jesus, and the widow's son resurrected by Jesus. Mary greeted the resurrected Jesus just like before. Mary did not recognize the situation that arose through the resurrection. She wanted to hug Jesus. She did not realize that Jesus' resurrected body was different than His body was before He died.

Lazarus, the 12 years old child, and the young man came back in the same body, but Jesus' resurrected body was totally different. On Easter, Jesus did not come back into the body which would deteriorate and decay again. He came back into a glorious body. He was recognized, but His body had no barrier to go through a wall or to show up suddenly somewhere, even in a room. This is why Jesus said to Mary not to touch him because He was untouchable. (John 20:17a)

You have to trust everything that Jesus said because, after He died, He resurrected. Everything you see about Jesus, you have to see in the light of the resurrection. You can be convinced that God accepted Jesus' sacrifice because God resurrected Him from the dead. You can be sure about eternity because it is prepared by the resurrected and eternal Jesus. The Easter Faith is the faith in the resurrected Christ, which can confess joyfully: I know that Jesus has risen from the dead.

You can't believe in Jesus saying that "I believe everything until Friday, but no longer." The Christian faith is an Easter faith. Faith in Jesus Christ, who conquered death.

2) BELIEVE. You have to believe in the resurrected Christ. You cannot see Him here and now, but you have to believe in Him and in the mystery of Easter.

At the beginning, Mary did not believe. It did not cross her mind that the resurrected Christ was standing before her. She saw the living Jesus, she looked at Him, but she still could not believe that it was Jesus. She saw the empty tomb; she was talking to the angels, she saw that in the tomb everything was nicely folded. She could not believe it because she was focusing on resurrection only from her mind's perspective. Everything that she saw was not enough for her to believe. She was focused on certain things that she could not understand, she could not imagine, and she could not explain. She had a hard time to believe that God is bigger than her small mind. She thought she knew the truth, what can or what cannot happen.

This is how so many people today cannot get to the point to BELIEVE because they are focusing on resurrection only from their minds' perspective. They believe only in those things which can be touched and proven logically, but do not want to believe what others saw and touched and witnessed.

In the name of our Creator and sustainer God, I am telling you, I, His ordained servant, that Jesus is here now with us. You cannot recognize Him with your eyes, you cannot touch Him with your hands, but you can with your faith.

I am inviting you to give up believing only in those things that you can prove because, despite all your logical arguments, EASTER IS THE TRUTH. Our Lord Jesus Christ lives. About this truth, only God can convince you. But for that you have to come to God with an open and humble heart, acknowledging that you are human and He is God. I don't understand the resurrection logically either, but I do BELIEVE in it. It is not a problem if we cannot explain it. We just have to believe in it.

Mary's spiritual eyes were opened when the Lord called her by name:

"Mary!" This is how people can come to faith today. I have heard so many times

after worship people saying: “You were preaching **to me** today” or “everything that you said in the sermon, was talking to my heart.” You have to know that it was not me talking to you, but God was talking to you through me, through His ordained servant. Not the preacher, but the Lord, the resurrected, living Christ is speaking to you personally.

He is saying to you now: "Do not be afraid because I have redeemed you. I called you by your name, you are mine!" (Isaiah 43:1b) He wants to talk to you every day, every hour. Please be ready to listen to Him.

3) Let's see **why it is important to have a personal FAITH and to believe that HE LIVES?** In other words, what are the benefits of this Easter faith?

Look at Mary - without faith: She is standing next to a grave being so confused. How worried she is, how sad she is. Whoever does not have a living Christ, can be full of worry, anxiety, and hesitation as Mary was around Jesus' tomb.

Mary was dealing with all kinds of earthly problems, like:

- who would roll the stone away? - and the stone is rolled;
- the enemies, the bad guys, the soldiers should be there – they were gone;
- where is the body of Christ? – it is resurrected;
- she is crying instead of rejoicing.

No wonder, that people, who cannot believe in the resurrection even today, are so confused; they cannot find their peace and their questions are not answered because they are searching in the wrong place. Without believing in Jesus, in some situations, we could lose our minds.

Jesus turned towards the desperate Mary with so much love, calling her by her name: Mary, “why are you crying?” (John 20:15a).

Dear beloved, there is no reason to cry if you realize that Jesus is alive! He is standing behind you now. Look at him. You just have to turn your problems towards Him. In this way you will be able to come to believe that Jesus is risen, Jesus lives!

Believing, with a living faith you will be able to confess: I know that my Saviour lives! If any earthly things are torturing you, tell yourself: I know my Saviour lives! If you are standing in a cemetery over a tomb, then tell yourself: I know my Saviour lives! If the last night falls upon you, when the great darkness, the darkness of death, comes, say again with confidence, boldly, happily, with Easter faith: I know, my Saviour lives!

I know that my Saviour lives, His glorious home is waiting for me;
He's waving to me and promises to crown me after the struggle.
That homeland fills my soul, for the Lord will soon call you: "Come home with me, my child."
The Lord waits with his extended arm: rest, rest, calm down.