

April 16, 2017  
Easter Sunday  
Matthew 28:1-10

He is Risen! (He is Risen Indeed; Alleluia!) Lutheran question—what does this mean? In answering this question, as usual we focus on ourselves. And that's fine. It's actually one of the rare times in Christianity when focusing on yourself is okay to do. But just for a change of pace, I'd like to focus on what He is Risen means for Jesus as a human person.

Admittedly, that's not the easiest thing to do. Jesus is after all 100% divine, fully the unfathomable God of the universe whose thoughts and ways are beyond us. But Jesus is also 100% a human being, He joined our humanity in every way to do this wonderful work of salvation in our human flesh and He didn't give that up when He rose and ascended to the right hand of the Father.

So think about what the resurrection means for Jesus Christ as a man. Death lies defeated in His rear-view mirror! It's not even a concern anymore! And death is the ultimate curse for sin and tool of Satan, so all those other awful things tied to sin lie powerless in His wake also. Sickness, disease, injury, want, sadness, mourning, frustration—every fallen thing of all creation is a has-been, a gone thing.

Now of course Jesus is interceding for us before the Father and is reigning as King with all things under His feet. You can't separate the divine from the human—it's all Jesus. But when I try to think of how His human experience changes post-resurrection I'm like, "Wow. Think of all the awful stuff that's just no more for Him."

That's not an easy thing for us to get our minds around. Our world is fallen and under the dominion of sin and death; as John writes, "The whole world lies under the power of the evil one." We have trouble envisioning a context without death and affliction always in the offing. We have to worry about health, safety, threats of disease and harm. We have to be concerned about people doing evil to us and we constantly have to fight against the temptation within to wrong God or others ourselves. Imagine if you woke up this morning and none of that was possible; it all was fixed—it all was gone. That's how Jesus wakes up...or would if He slept—you know what I mean.

But "He is risen!" doesn't just apply to Jesus because that reality is not only for Jesus. There is a very simple truth you can state every morning that is in fact that very same reality: "I am baptized!"

We tend not to think of it this way because the resurrection of Christ, well that was earthquakes and the huge stone being rolled away, the shocking discovery of the empty tomb and angels announcing, "*He is not here, for he has risen, as he said.*" We think, "My baptism was nothing like that—it was just some guy splashing water over my head when I was a baby and making my cry."

But God established baptism, attached His promise to baptism, commanded baptism in order to accomplish a very singular thing by baptism—to attach you to "He is risen!"

St. Paul writes, "*Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*" Before our epistle reading today in Colossians he wrote, "*Having been buried with Christ in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.*" And then continuing into today's reading, "*If*

*then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”*

“I am baptized” and “He is risen” are in a way one in the same thing. “I am baptized” is to be baptized into Christ: His death and the present and enduring reality of His resurrection.

In this is comforting, wonderful hope. Baptized into Christ you can look at any of the symptoms of sin in this world and say with certainty, “That’s bad, but I’m baptized and despite the here and now, that’s in my rear-view mirror.”

This is the reality of the risen Jesus; sin, death and Satan lie stomped to a pulp in the wake of His atoning death and victorious resurrection. Baptized into Him, this is your reality also.

It applies to your sins and failures before God. Yes, they are bad. But in faith you repent of those sins, appeal to that baptism and know its forgiveness; those sins are no more—they’re dead in Christ’s empty tomb.

It applies to the afflictions of injustice, evil, physical hurt, unavoidable decay and emotional pain that inevitably plague us in this life. Yes, they are bad. But they can’t touch the new life you have in the risen Christ gifted you in baptism. They are an unpleasant echo of the bad which stands defeated by the risen Jesus!

Your very death itself...what of it? Jesus has been there, done that, and kicked its behind into the grave and left it there as He stepped right out again! Death is bad, but for those baptized into the one who defeated death, death is also powerless!

In a way I don’t want to sound so flippant about the nasty realities of life in this world that assail us on a daily basis because they are bad, they do hurt, and they do vex our souls. But this is why Jesus gave us the church to proclaim the Gospel truth of Christ crucified and risen, why He gave us the solid promise of one baptism for remission of sins, why He gave us the ongoing Holy Supper of His body and blood to strengthen our faith—so that knowing the reality of “He is Risen!” we can actually be kind of flippant about all this bad stuff.

“He is Risen!” is what it is. It is Jesus Christ standing victorious on the other side of death, all the bad defeated, all the wrongs righted. By virtue of your Holy Baptism, you’re this very day standing right there with Him.

So fellow redeemed, fellow baptized, this wonderful Easter Day and for all the days ahead in this life and beyond let us joyfully proclaim the truth, “He is Risen!” and know the truth of that statement doesn’t stop with Jesus. “He is Risen, thus, so am I!”

Hallelujah and Amen.