

# Ascension Lutheran Church

Pastor Godkin's Sermon for the week of April 4, 2010

## God's Ways Are Beyond Our Expectations (Luke 24:1-12)

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen. The text for today's homily is from the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Luke:

"Behold, two women stood by them in dazzling apparel. <sup>5</sup>And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup>He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, <sup>7</sup>that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise." <sup>8</sup>And they remembered His words."

This is the Word of God.

Dear friends and fellow redeemed, I am so glad you're here today. You have come to church on the most exciting day of whole church year. Today we celebrate the heart and centre and the very foundation, the meat and potatoes, if you will, of our Christian faith.

St. Luke's account of the resurrection is quite simple and to the point, it's quite brief with almost just the bare bones in terms of details. But the message is the most exciting news in the whole Bible.

Within these few simple words is something we would not expect. It is something the disciples did not expect. It was early on that Sunday morning. It was the third day after Jesus washad been crucified on the Friday. And for the disciples, that Sunday started off as a day of mourning. Some of the women who had followed Christ had brought spices to anoint the body that had once performed a stounding miracles but now lay lifeless in the tomb, or so they thought.

But when they got there they found two things they didn't expect: the first thing is that the hugest stone that sealed the tomb had been rolled away; and the second thing is that Jesus was not there! What happened? It says the women were perplexed. And then they had another surprise. Two women appeared to them in dazzling white clothes. And they were angels.

The women and all Jesus' followers needed a reminder that He was more than just another good teacher. His words were prophetic and they are from God. For He is God in the flesh. And the angel spoke these words back to the women at the tomb. They said, "Why do you seek the Living One among the dead? He is not here, but has risen, as He said."

It's interesting that the angels had to remind them of this. It is not what the people were hoping for. They did not expect to find Jesus alive again even though He said He would rise. It seemed just too much to believe in the face of their grief.

The sceptics of the world claim that the resurrection was simply an inventive story that the church made up to give a sense of hope. But the truth is that the tomb truly is empty.

event to this day. No one will ever find the bones of Him. They are simply not there because He is the Living One, as St. Paul writes.

God was doing something that was new that no one could have expected. As we apostles heard the news that Christ had risen the tale, like a fairy tale, once upon a time type stuff. Nobody expected it and when they first discovered it they didn't believe it. Indeed, this is no made up story to make the church feel better because the resurrection was beyond the wildest imaginations. Sometimes the truth is stranger than fiction.

Friends, the resurrection shows us that God works in ways that are beyond our expectations. Modern medicine is making discoveries every day and finding cures and treatments for more and more diseases. But as of yet there has been no cure discovered for that age old problem of death. It's beyond the world's expectation to actually be able to cheat death. But, in fact, there is a cure and it is spiritual. God goes beyond medical science and the confines and limits of our worldly thinking.

Jesus is the first person to have ever experienced resurrection life. That is why He is called, "The Living One". "The life He died He lived to God." He will never die again. That could not be said about any of us because we are all mortal. We are all in the process of dying. Every sickness and every injury and every tragedy are a reminder that the heavens and the earth have not yet been renewed. Jesus Himself is the Physician and the cure for the bodies. His life is your life and because He lives you also will live.

In the spring time when we plant our gardens in the ground and then it rises to give life to plants and perhaps fruits and vegetables. In the same way, Jesus is the One Seed that goes into the ground. Jesus went into the tomb and sprang to life again. And He is the Seed from whom the new heaven and new earth will grow and through whom God will cause it to start with a seed. These seeds go into the ground and then rise to give life to plants and perhaps fruits and vegetables. In the same way, Jesus is the One Seed that goes into the ground. Jesus went into the tomb and sprang to life again. And He is the Seed from whom the new heaven and new earth will come forth.

We call Easter and Good Friday the most important days in the church calendar. Why is this? It is because in the death and resurrection of Christ God took the worst of the world and reversed it. God let happen to Jesus the very worst that is in and out of us. He was crucified, horribly and yet God reversed it. He was our worst and then He rose from the dead. The resurrection is the quintessential victory for both for Christ and for you and me.

In John 16:33 Jesus said to His disciples, "In this world you will have trouble but take heart, for I have overcome the world." This means that through sickness, tragedy, setbacks, we still have the ultimate victory over the worst of the world. Thanks be to God!

The Good News is that the worst that the world can do to ourselves God will reverse that in Jesus. He has forgiven our sins. He raises us to new

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