

A New Lump

1Corinthians 5:6-8

The Resurrection of Our Lord, April 1, 2018

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

In order to understand the full significance of the resurrection of our Lord there are two things about reality that you must understand.

The first thing about reality that you must understand is that sin and death are the same problem. When we sin we do not function the way that we ought to function. Sin is rebellion against our creator. Sin is telling the creator that we would rather be the creator ourselves and that we would be better at it than He is. Sin is the car telling the manufacturer that the manufacturer made the car incorrectly. Sin is the tractor telling the manufacturer that the manufacturer made it incorrectly. Sin is human beings who are created trying to pretend as if they are not created. They are denying their own reality as created beings. They are trying to dictate the way that reality ought to be on their own. They establish their own rules for living and never mind whether or not they accord with God or not. They establish their own salvation as humanity as a whole operates under the delusion that they can define salvation for themselves and be their own savior. And then every individual human within humanity follows the mass of humanity without thinking into the delusion that they can possess the knowledge of good and evil for themselves, that they can dictate what good and evil is for himself or herself and no one can tell them any different. And then when the true and living God does speak to humanity, humanity responds by saying, "You did not say that right. You should have said it this way." Or humanity arrogantly says, "You did not say that in a way that was new and fresh to me. You need to say things to me in a way that I can receive them." This is the depth to which humanity has sunk. This is the pride of life. This is the dysfunction that humanity is involved in.

When I say dysfunction or when I say that the creation is not functioning the way that it should, I am not saying that there is a piece or a part that is not working somewhere. This is not like having a flat tire or a broken arm. This is not where most of the thing is working, but some of the thing is not. To be in rebellion against one's creator such that we deny the creator's existence and go off and worship ourselves and exalt our own desires above the word of the living God that creates and sustains us is the depth of the depravity in which we are in. It is like the car rolled off of the assembly line and then all of its pieces fell apart and separated from each other and began to rust into unusability. Technically the car is still there, but it is in need of resurrection. That is how we are. Technically we are still human but we are in need of resurrection.

The individual violations of the commandments that we do are exhibitions of our rebellion against the creator. Dishonoring one's parents, murder, adultery, theft, falsehood, and covetousness are all expressions of the fact that humanity does not work the way that it should. If humanity worked the way that it was created to work, then there would be no dishonoring of one's parents, no murder, no adultery, no theft, no falsehood, and no covetousness. In fact it would not even occur to us to do those things. There would be no fornication and no malice. It would not occur to us to do those things. The reason those things flow from our hearts and then into our actions is because we are broken, dysfunction. We do not work the way that we should.

And because we do not work the way that we should we die. The final result of a dysfunctional humanity is death. Because we don't work the way that we should, the inevitable result is death when we stop working altogether.

That is the first part of reality that you must understand in order to understand the full significance of the resurrection of our Lord.

The other thing that you must understand about reality in order to understand the full significance of our Lord's resurrection is this: Jesus is completely and authentically human.

In our congregation we have become accustomed to the confession that Jesus is God. Two Sundays ago when I did the children's message with the children I showed them various pictures of God. I showed them one picture from Michaelangelo that depicted God as an old man with flowing hair and great power. I asked the children if that is the way that they viewed God. Some of them said no. And when I showed them the Google search of images about God and there were all of these images of God on the iPad, one girl pointed to a portrait of Jesus and said that is God.

It is well that she should have done so for Jesus is God come to us in human flesh. This demonstrates how well in our congregation that we confess the divinity of our Lord. In a world that constantly denies His divinity we must constantly confess it against that world so that they understand the real significance of Jesus from Nazareth.

But the full significance of His resurrection cannot be understood unless we understand also that Jesus is fully and authentically human. Jesus is not God wearing a costume of humanity as if His humanity were not real and only His divinity were real. Jesus is not God pretending to be a human so that when you touch Him God makes sure that you feel what feels like a human to you. If that were the case then the ministry of Jesus would have been one big long hoax where we think we are dealing with a human when in reality we are dealing with God. Jesus is not a hologram where God is projecting humanity into the creation so that we may interact with him. Jesus is not an avatar for God, where God is off in a control room somewhere controlling a body that we call Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus is authentically and genuinely human. He declares Himself to be human. His apostles with His authority declare Him to be human. He demonstrates His humanity by submitting to God's law. He is subject to temptation. He lives by faith. The Gospels testify to His drowsiness and slumber. They testify to His hunger and thirst. They testify to His flesh and bone even after He rose from the dead.

The divinity of Jesus does not set aside His humanity, just as we insist that His humanity does not set aside His divinity.

So when Jesus rises from the dead a human being is rising from the dead. He is a human being who is operating the way that He should operate. And if death is the inevitable conclusion of a human being not operating the way that a human being should operate, then resurrection is the inevitable conclusion of someone who operates the way that they should operate.

Many of you have asked me what happened to those other people that Jesus raised from the dead? Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. He also raised the widow's son at Nain from the dead and Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha. Many of you have asked me what happened to those people? The reason that you ask is because the Bible does not say, but it does not seem that they are here today. And the fact that they are not here today would indicate that at some point after Jesus raised them, they died again.

Therefore the resurrections that Jesus performed were to demonstrate that He could raise the dead. But even with those resurrections death still had the last word on them. They died again. The same is true of those individuals whom the apostles and prophets raised from the dead.

When Jesus rises from the dead, He is the first human being to rise and not die again. He lives! And because Jesus is the first human being to rise from the dead and not die again, His resurrection

demonstrates that the creation has been fundamentally changed. Death is no longer the final destiny of those who are human. Sin is no longer the final status of those who are human. Humans are capable of living without sin and without death. The resurrection of Jesus proves it so. And now that He has risen from the dead, for the first time since Adam, there is a human being working the way that He should work.

The creation has something fundamentally new in it.

It is into this Jesus Christ that you have been baptized.

Our Lord's resurrection is all very fine and well for Him and our Lord's resurrection is worthy of our everlasting admiration and praise, but it does not benefit us unless His resurrection is conveyed to us. The resurrection of your Lord was conveyed to you when He baptized you.

When He baptized you He gave you the gift of repentance. The gift of repentance is the gift of death and resurrection. So what did you memorize in the catechism? What does such baptizing with water indicate? It indicates that the Old Adam in us should by daily contrition and repentance be drown and die with all sins and evil desires and that a new man should emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever. Where is this written? Saint Paul writes in Romans, chapter six, "We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father we too may live a new life."

Did you hear that? He baptized you into His own death. He baptized you into His own crucifixion. This is what our Lord meant when He said, "Anyone who would come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me." He is talking about the day when He baptized you into His death and burial. When He baptized you into His death since His death was a death to sin, your death in baptism was a death to sin. You are dead to sin! You are dead to the dysfunction that is on humanity. But you are alive to God. When you are alive to sin, you are dead to God, that is you are dysfunction and will die. But when you are alive to God you work the way that you should work according to the new man or the inner man and that means that you live! Christ did not baptize you into His death without also baptizing you into His resurrection. Just as His death and resurrection are inseparable so also your death to sin and your resurrection to a new life are inseparable. This is the repentance that He granted to you when you were baptized.

You are a new creation in Christ Jesus. You are a new lump.

In 1Corinthians, chapter five, God talks about a new lump. He is talking about you as a congregation. He is also talking about you as individuals. You, Immanuel Lutheran Church, are a new lump. Christ has baptized you into His death and resurrection. He has therefore restored you according to your inner man to the way that you were created to be. You are a new lump! There is no sin imputed to you according to your inner man. You are a new creation in Christ Jesus. Because you are a new creation in Christ Jesus the only place you can wind up is in your own resurrection at the end of time when Christ returns again in glory and in life everlasting with Him because that is the way that He created you to be!

You are a new lump! Since there is no sin imputed to you, you are a new lump! You are righteous before God. There is no sin in you according to your inner man. If that is the way that you are, then live that way according to your outer man! Live the new creation that Jesus has brought about by His resurrection!

Don't you know that if you let the old leaven go it will spread? If you let the old leaven go of fornication and malice, dishonoring one's parents, murder, adultery, theft, greediness, falsehood, gossip, covetousness, all it will do is spread. It will spread like gangrene in the new lump until finally the

dysfunction kills it in damnation. If you want to be damned, simply let the new man go and live according to the old man. Let fornication and malice go in your members. Let dishonoring one's parents go. Let murder, hatred, envy, harm, adultery, lust, pornography, greediness, love of money, theft, falsehood, running each other down, and covetousness, let it all go and you will be dysfunctional until finally the master throws you out of His house because you are useless.

But Jesus is risen from the dead! The creation is new. If the creation is new, you are new. If you are new, then you are new lump without any leaven of sin in you at all. Live that way! Live functionally. Live the way that God created you to be!

Jesus worked throughout all of His ministry. His work was to bring about the new creation by taking the dysfunctionality of the creation upon Himself and when He did, it killed Him. When it killed Him the work of taking the dysfunctionality of the creation was completed and He declared that it is finished. And just like the old creation was completed on a Friday so also the new creation was completed on a Friday. And just like God rested after the work of His first creation on a Saturday so also He rested in the tomb from the work of His new creation on a Saturday. And just like the creation got going on a Sunday so also the new creation gets going on a Sunday!

So let us feast this Easter Day on Christ the bread of heaven! The old evil is purged away. New life now is given! And let us not feast in this new creation on the old leaven of fornication and malice. But rather let us feast this Easter Day and every day of the new creation on the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth!

In the Name of Jesus. Amen.