

Without the Resurrection...

John 20:19-31

The Second Sunday of Easter, April 28, 2019

Immanuel Lutheran Church, Broadlands

Without the resurrection of Jesus, Thomas would not be convinced. Without the resurrection of Jesus Thomas would not be able to examine the body of Jesus. Thomas would not have been able to put His finger into the marks the nails. Thomas would not have been able to put his hand into the side of Jesus where Jesus had been stabbed with a spear. Thomas would not have seen Jesus and knelt before Him and confessed, "My Lord and my God," if Jesus had not been raised from the dead.

Without the resurrection of Jesus, none of the apostles would have seen Him. None of the apostles would have touched Him to see that He was not a ghost, but rather a resurrected man. None of the apostles would have eaten breakfast with Him in Galilee. None of them would have gone out to preach, if Jesus had not risen from the dead.

Without the resurrection of Jesus none of the apostles would have risked their lives to preach Jesus and His message. They would not have had any evidence for a life beyond this one without the resurrection of Jesus. Without such knowledge they would not have gone out and risked their lives to preach a message that Jesus Himself said would surely bring them persecution and even death. Why go out and preach something that will get you killed unless you know that there is a resurrection to life beyond this life?

Without the resurrection of Jesus the apostles would have had nothing to preach anyway. Without the resurrection of Jesus, Jesus is just one more crucified Jew put to death for political reasons by Roman oppressors. If Jesus is just one more Jew put to death for political reasons by Roman oppressors, then His death does not propitiate. His blood does not atone. There is no forgiveness for you or anyone if Jesus is not risen from the dead.

Without the resurrection of Jesus the apostles would not be able to preach forgiveness. Without the resurrection of Jesus the apostles would have no life after death to promise to people. Without the resurrection of Jesus there would not have even been anyone in the first place to send them out. Oh, Jesus sent them out to preach before He died, but that was only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Jesus does not send them out to the whole world until after He rose from the dead, so without the resurrection Jesus does not send His apostles. You do not receive their preaching. You

believe in whatever god your pagan ancestors would have believed in or whatever modern myth the believers in scientism could give you.

Without the resurrection of Jesus there is no forgiveness. You are not reconciled to God. Without being reconciled to God there is no reason to forgive each other and be reconciled to each other. Without the resurrection you will still need to justify yourself before whatever standard of justification you are using. You will have to live up to your own standards or God's standards, that is whatever god it is that you would worship, or your parents' standards or your neighbors'.

Without the resurrection of Jesus, baptism contains no promise and the Sacrament of the Altar contains no body of the Lord. The preaching of the preacher is vain. He is just making it all up to get a salary or he might actually believe it.

Without the resurrection of Jesus the Church would not exist at all. Without the preaching of the apostles there would be no church. There would have been no congregations formed across the Ancient Near East. The apostles would not have bothered to write any of what Jesus said and did down.

And even if there was a church it would be useless to support it. Without the resurrection of Jesus the money you put in the offering plate is useless. You are supporting an institution that does nothing. You do not need to the Church to teach you values or ethics. Those who believe in scientism can do that and they do that. You can take a values or ethics class at the University of Illinois. They will present to you all of the options for how you may live your life. Your politicians can tell you how to live your life even as we are trying to them how to live theirs. You do not need the Church for these things. If Jesus is not raised, baptism is vain, the Sacrament of the Altar is vain, and preaching is vain, why pay a preacher and support an entire institution with your hard earned dollars if Jesus is not raised from the dead?

If Jesus is not raised from the dead, then frankly there is no God. The whole point of God is that He is supernatural. Why have a god, if you are not going to have a supernatural one? If you are not going to have a supernatural god, you may as well not have a god at all.

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is evidence that there is a God. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead makes all of the other supernatural things that happen make sense as supernatural things. The miracles that are in your Bible don't make sense unless Jesus rose from the dead. Only if God can raise dead people, does talking donkeys and fire falling from heaven seem plausible and not only seem plausible, but also have meaning.

Without the resurrection of Jesus there is only this life. There is nothing else. There is only death that awaits you. There is nothing else. Without the resurrection of

Jesus from the dead, it won't matter how much money you made or how successful you were. It won't matter that you were a better farmer than other farmers. It won't matter that you were a better investor or business man than other people were. It won't matter how much land you owned. It won't matter if I was a better pastor than other pastors. It won't matter if our congregation was a better congregation than other congregations were. If Jesus were not raise from the dead, it won't matter what our average attendance was or how much we took in in the offering plate. Without the resurrection of Jesus you are simply going to die and then the people who remember you will die. If you are successful enough, they might build a monument to you, but beware of monuments. We remember the monuments to Lincoln because he is important to us and he is recent in the scope of world history. Which of you remember the monuments to Pertinax, or even remember who he was?

Without the resurrection of Jesus from dead, all is vain, not just the institutions of the Church, but all of life is vain. Go to your graves. Mourn your dead and do it alone without hope in the world.

But Christ is risen from the dead! He is the first fruits of them that sleep! Death has been conquered. A new creation has come to light.

Jesus is not just one more crucified Jew who died under Roman oppression. He is the Son of God who was propitiating God's wrath. His blood does forgive.

Jesus did appear to His apostles. He appeared to Thomas even in his unbelief. Thomas did examine Him as did the other apostles. Jesus did send them out to preach.

Because Jesus is risen from the dead, the apostles knew that death had been conquered. They risked their lives and gave their lives to preach Jesus. They risked their lives and gave their lives for Jesus because they knew that death had been conquered. They had seen and felt with their own eyes and hands that death had been conquered.

The apostles knew that Jesus had taken away their sin. They knew that Jesus had forgiven them. They therefore went out and preached that forgiveness to others. Congregations formed and the faith was passed down even to us. The very existence of the Church itself stands as testimony to the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, for without His resurrection none of this would have existed in the first place.

Jesus raised from the dead and so the apostles wrote down what Jesus said. Everything He said is now important and valuable worthy of our attention each and every day, worthy of our preaching each and every Sunday.

Jesus is risen from the dead and so Baptism actually works. It actually forgives. It actually bestows resurrection. Jesus is risen from the dead and so His body is present for you to eat in the Sacrament of the Altar. And it is not a waste of time to put money

into the offering plate to support the ministry of the one who rose from the dead!
Contribute all you want! Not one penny will be wasted because He is risen from the dead!

Since Jesus is risen from the dead, death is conquered. That means that there is everlasting life waiting for you in the forgiveness of your sins and in your resurrection from the dead. There is hope in this dark world of a better world and a better place to come!

Since Jesus is risen from the dead, there is peace. There is peace between you and God and between you and each other.

Now last Sunday I asked you that if you had been among the original disciples would you have gone to Galilee to meet Jesus? The reason I asked that was to get you to think about how you live your life. Do you live it believing that Jesus rose from the dead? Or do you live it believing that Jesus did not rise from the dead. This Sunday I have given you a number of differences between those who believe that Jesus rose and those who do not. Those who believe that Jesus rose believe that the institutions of Jesus including the Church are the most important things that exist because they are. Those who do not believe that Jesus rose from the dead, do not employ His institutions in the Church because there is no point to them.

If you were among the original disciples and you had heard that He rose from the dead and how He had promised that He would meet you in Galilee and you believe it, you would have left Jerusalem immediately and traveled the forty or fifty miles to Galilee to go meet Him. If you did not believe it, you would not have bothered, which is why the apostles sat around in Jerusalem until they saw Him. It was only after they saw Him that they believed such that they would go to Galilee to meet Him.

Now I am telling you this Sunday, if you were among the original disciples go to Galilee! You will not be disappointed! Go to Divine Service, you will not be disappointed!

Christ is risen!