

“The Resurrection -- God’s Plan For You ”

Matthew 28:1-10

Christ is risen!! He is risen indeed!! Alleluia

This morning, we witness new life. We hear the words of faithful witnesses who told of that wonderful and amazing morning, but it didn’t start that way. Throughout the Lenten Season, we have been speaking about God’s plan. We have heard how Jesus repeatedly told His disciples that the Son of Man would be betrayed, mocked, beaten, and lifted up on the cross. Why? Because that was God’s plan.

But they didn’t believe God’s plan. The Eleven were not there; Judas was dead; the women came to the tomb, but only to finish the burial ritual. They didn’t expect the joy of the resurrection. But God had a plan.

Do you expect the joy of the resurrection? We hear the words from the Old and New Testament, but do you really expect that joy for you? The day of Easter is about Christ, but it is also a reminder that God has a plan for you. Just as we have, in regard to Christ, these past few days, we have been faced in our lives with

the reality of death. Easter morning reminds us that, in Christ, we have the reality of life.

New life has already begun in you. In Baptism, God literally raised you from the deadness of your sin. Easter is a very good time to discuss Baptism. Easter and Baptism go together so well. They are both about life. They are both about forgiveness. Just as the light of Easter morning dawned on the empty tomb of Christ our Lord and the world became a different place – God’s plan of salvation was complete. So also, in Baptism, the light of Christ shined into the darkness of your life and changed you forever – God’s plan of salvation is complete, although we have yet to experience the fullness of the inheritance of the Kingdom of God.

Easter is about Christ having died and being raised back to life. In Baptism, our Old Adam drowns and dies in the water and the Word -- and we are raised to a new life in Christ. After that first Easter morning, all the sin of the world was paid for and God’s faithful never need fear punishment for that sin ever again. So also in Baptism, our sin is done away with, never to be brought up again.

However, following Christ’s death and resurrection, problems still remain in the world. There are still wars, famine, disease, natural disasters; people still suffer injury and many generations

have been called out of this life. Christ's death on the cross did not turn the sinful world back into the Garden of Eden. Sin remained and will remain until the last day when all things come to an end and Satan and all those in league with him are finally and forever banished.

The sacrifice made on the cross and the subsequent resurrection on Easter morning frees us from the guilt of our sin and ensures us that when we are called out of this life, that the grave will not hold us either, but we will be joined with our Lord for all eternity. That has been and remains God's plan.

Your Baptism is a big part of God's plan. It certainly washes away all sin. However, it doesn't mean that all of your troubles are over. Satan will try all the harder to stand between you and your Lord. And there will be illness, and injury, and problems, and unless the Lord returns within our lifetime, even the youngest among us will grow older and eventually die.

But you see Baptism and Easter are not events that guarantee long life on earth, they are gifts from our Lord guaranteeing His faithful children eternal life in heaven. We hear of the glory of Jesus and the glory of heaven -- the angel who was sitting on the stone which had been rolled away: "His appearance was like lightning, and His clothing white as snow [Mt. 28:3].

The great connection between Easter and Baptism is that God's baptized faithful -- you are dressed in that same glory and righteousness in the eyes of our Father in heaven. The risen Christ rolls back the stone and He is arrayed in the glory of heaven -- His righteousness shines forth for all to see.

Just like I told you last week, as we celebrated confirmation, you can't see it this morning. But that is how God sees you right now. You are beaming with the righteousness of the risen Christ. Last week we gave the four girls the white garment to symbolize Christ's righteousness upon them. They are not the only ones beaming with the righteousness of Baptism.

This Easter morning, like every morning since the day of your Baptism, you arose dressed in the glory and righteousness of Christ. Everything that God has done leading you to where you are today has all been a part of God's plan for you. Amen.
Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.