

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Rev. Martin Eden

Easter 2
Saturday, April 6, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, April 7, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.

“I Am a Poor Miserable Sinner”

1 John 1:1-2:2

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

Those words from St. John, “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,” are very familiar as they are a part of the opening liturgy of what is known as Divine Service Setting I – which we used last week and is a part of our regular rotation.

We are so blessed to be part of the richness of the liturgical life of our church. It is a wonderful thing that the Holy Spirit has guided people throughout the years to construct liturgies that are based upon Scripture itself. However, we can read something or say something so often that we lose sight of the value or the meaning of what we are saying.

Because we were blessed to begin our Divine Service today with the Rite of Baptism, we did not begin our worship confessing that we are “poor, miserable sinners.” Instead, we were reminded that not only those baptized this weekend, but we have renounced the devil and all of his works and all of his ways. And we

have been washed clean of all of our sin in the waters of Holy Baptism.

We look at the words of St. John, “if we say we have no sin”; if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. That is, if we say that we have no sin, then we are lying to ourselves and trying to lie to God, which never works because He knows all things. And we know how we are, which is why Satan’s message of false comfort that “you are fine just the way you are” is so unsatisfying.

Paul tells us, “We have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.” He comes with a gracious gift. When you are feeling like a poor, miserable sinner (because you are); when you are feeling broken, worthless, terrified, aimless, do not settle for pop culture emotional medicine.

Feel-good messages like Barney the dinosaur telling us again and again, “Everyone is special” doesn’t actually bring any comfort or healing. When I’m feeling broken or useless or feeling like a loser, handing me a participation trophy doesn’t help. Pop culture emotional medicine doesn’t fix what is broken.

The world tells you, “Don’t worry. You are special. You are doing just fine.” The Internet is filled with fluff messages. When I am feeling worthless, miserable, broken, do not tell me that I am doing fine. I need to hear that I am

loved by God and forgiven. I need to hear that God actually has a plan to fix my brokenness.

The world judges only according to the lowest common denominator. We are told that as long as we can look around and see people doing worse, or doing worse things than we do, then we can feel pretty good about ourselves. The pop psychologists tell us that we are all supposed to say: "I'm OK. You're OK."

God tells the people of the world: "You're not OK. And because you're not OK, I needed to send My Son to suffer and die on your behalf." Our Lord is telling us, "What I want you to say is not 'I'm OK,' but that 'I am a poor miserable sinner who has sinned in thought, word, and deed. Because 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'"

We are to renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways. We come before our Lord with the intent to amend our ways and turn away from our sin. We come to our Lord and cry out, "Father, please forgive me."

There is good news in the words of St. John. John writes, that if anyone does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense – our advocate, Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins. He is the propitiation, the One who satisfies the justified anger which God has toward our sin.

For our sake, the Son of God was born of the virgin Mary, suffered under

Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into Hell, and on the third day He rose again from dead; He ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; where, as John tells us, He speaks to the Father in our defense – as our advocate.

Our relationship with God is that we are accused criminals and He is our Judge. But in God's court, when people throw themselves on the mercy of the court, we find mercy. When a person in humility says, "I am a poor miserable sinner...I deserve both present and eternal punishment, but I am heartily sorry for my sins and sincerely repent of them," Jesus intervenes on our behalf, acts as our defense attorney, and tells the Judge, "This person should not be punished; not that you are innocent, but because the punishment for your guilt has already been suffered by Me."

And we are declared not guilty. We are declared righteous in His sight. That is how forgiveness works. That is how sins are washed away in Baptism. They are, as John tells us elsewhere, washed away in the blood of the Lamb. 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.