

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Quincy, IL
Rev. Marlin Rempfer

Easter 7
Saturday, May 31, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.
Sunday, June 1, 2025, at 9:00 a.m.

“It’s All About Jesus”

Acts 1:12-26

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

The Gospel lesson for today is somewhat strange because it takes us back to the upper room before Jesus’ death and resurrection. Yet it fits perfectly with what God wanted to happen after his resurrection and ascension.

The Gospel lesson is a prayer by Jesus. He prays: “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word.” Notice it says: “Who will believe in Me” You see it really is all about Jesus.

Today’s sermon is about four men mentioned in Acts 1. They are all different. They are all loved and valued. But it is not about them it is about Jesus.

The first man is Peter. From Peter we learn that it’s not about the messenger it’s about Jesus. After Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciple’s instructions were to wait in Jerusalem until they were given power for their task of preaching about Jesus. The 11 remaining disciples and 109 other men and women, who were followers of Jesus, are together in a room in Jerusalem.

Who is that stands up to give this group some direction. Peter! Peter becomes the main messenger for the Christian Church, the main preacher on Pentecost, the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

Peter is a curious choice. This was the man who fell asleep in the garden of Gethsemane when Jesus specifically asked him to stay awake and pray with him. This was the man who boldly said, “Even if all the others deny you, I never will”

Then within hours he denied Him three times. This was the man who was reprimanded by Jesus for violence in the garden of Gethsemane, for doubt when walking on water, and for opposing Jesus when he said he would go to Jerusalem and be killed. How is it that this man stood up to be the messenger?

He's perfect! Because it is not about the messenger. It is about the message. Peter couldn't get up and say, It's about me. Look what I've accomplished and you can too. You can go out and be victorious in temptation, walk on water, remain faithful even when others are falling. You can do it. That is the message you might hear at some graduations.

Why was Peter qualified? because it's all about Jesus. Life is full of struggles and failures too. Discipleship is hard. Satan is strong. Temptation often gets the upper hand. That's why it's all about Jesus. He didn't come to show us how to succeed. He came because we have failed and we need Him, a crucified, bleeding and resurrected Savior. When we deny Him, don't trust Him, contradict Him, He still opens His arms and His nailed pierced hands to forgive.

It is not about Peter, it is not about the messenger, it's all about Jesus.

We also learn a lesson from Judas. Sad to say this is a lesson learned from a tragedy. The lesson we learn is that it is not about our past.

It's a sad story, one that we may know well. Judas was one of the 12. He agreed to betray Jesus to his enemies for 30 pieces of silver. Having done that he thought he had to do something about his sin and that led to despair. He took the money back and threw it on the floor in the temple. No matter how much good Judas would do after his sin, he couldn't unbetray Jesus. The sin is still there and so is the guilt. The same is true for our sins. When we have sinned, it is not about us. By our efforts, our changes, our promises we can't undo what we did, unsay what we have said, or unthink what we have thought. We can't change enough, be nice enough, or do enough to ease our conscience. It's not about our

past it is about Jesus' perfection.

Tim Bergling, known professionally as Avicii (Aveechee) was a Swedish DJ and singer who took his life at age 28 (in 2018). His family said, "He really struggled with thoughts about the meaning of life and happiness. He could not go on any longer."

He was on top of the world from the world's perspective but was still unhappy and felt his life had no meaning. I can guarantee you that there is One Who loved Judas and Who loved Avicii.

We give thanks for the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, that cleanses us from ALL sin. Jesus says, "Come to ME all who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Again Jesus said, "WHOEVER comes to me, I will not turn away". What an invitation! That is why we sing, "Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, O lamb of God I come". It's not about our past but about Jesus' perfection.

Learn it from Peter, Learn it from Judas. Learn it from Matthias. Who? Matthias, you know Matthias right? He's the one God chose to replace Judas. He went on to, just do lots . . . You remember all those stories right? You know the truth? Matthias is never mentioned again in all of Scripture. That is exactly the point. It's not about our performance.

One of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection. In the resurrection we find the assurance of our salvation and the basis of our hope.

We don't know what Matthias did. We don't know where he went. Here's what we do know. He was a witness to Jesus' resurrection. God chose him to be one of his 12 apostles, 12 men sent out to preach the Good News about Jesus. It is not about our accomplishments. It's about what Jesus accomplished for us in His life, death and resurrection.

Finally, one more, a man named Justus. He was the one who was not selected. How do you feel when you are not selected? Justus tells us that it not about our position.

Often times in congregations people are hurt when the lot doesn't fall to them, when they are not selected. But Justus continued to serve God. He is mentioned in Acts 15 where he carried a letter to the churches. He is mentioned in Colossians 4 where he is an encouragement to Paul. It is not about position but about the proclamation of Jesus.

You might be a leader like Peter, little known Matthias, or an encourager like Justus. One thing's sure: you have failed like Judas. You might be the president of synod or a Sunday school teacher, you might be a dynamic Christian speaker or a stay-at-home mom. No matter who we are we need to remember it is not about the messenger, the past, our performance, our accomplishments or our position. It is about the message, the perfection of Christ, the accomplishment of Christ and the proclamation of the Good News about Jesus.

Who knows what God has in store, or how He will use us in his kingdom. Whether it is as one who is disabled, a Peter, a Matthias, a Justus, a preacher, or a mother. It's not about our recognition or honor. It's not about our name it's about HIS name.

It doesn't matter whether you are three or 100, dynamic or introvert. You are loved and valued by God. You are forgiven in Christ. Wherever God places you, it is your privilege to tell others that it really is all about Jesus. Amen

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