

ILC e-Journal, Spring 2018

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News and Notes

Illinois Lutheran Conference

The 2018 ILC delegate convention will be held on Thursday, June 21st at Our Savior, in Morris, IL. Trinity Lutheran Church of Ballwin Missouri will host the convention.

Lutheran Reformation Hour

Sadly, due to lack of response and adequate support funds, the Lutheran Reformation Hour has ceased all broadcasting. {Please see additional comments on page 7 of this ILC e-Journal.}

Trinity Lutheran Church of Ballwin, MO

Meeting place and time change: Please phone (314) 640-2477 or (696) 795-9511 for further information.

Eternal Savior Ev. Lutheran Church, Arbor Vitae, WI

Meeting place: Worship services are held in the Pastor's home.

Our Savior Lutheran Church, Morris, IL

Building improvements are currently underway.

Easter Sermon

Text:

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see

him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. (Matthew 28:1-8)

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

Our Scripture selection is one of the beautiful Gospel accounts of that which occurred on the first Easter morn. Therefore, God's Word positively provides us with the wonderful truth:

"JESUS IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD!"

With that as our theme may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Why we can be sure Jesus is risen from the dead
- 2) Why it is important Jesus is risen from the dead
- 3) What is the right reaction to the fact Jesus is risen from the dead

-1-

It was on a Friday, which we call Good Friday, that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world while nailed to the cross of Calvary, "And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him: Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children. When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple: He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered. And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed. And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre." (Matt. 27:55-61)

Hence, two women named Mary had witnessed Jesus' death and burial, for St. Luke's account informs us they "beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment." (Luke 23:55-56) Thus, the women planned to enter the tomb to further anoint Jesus' body on the day after the Saturday Sabbath as an act of love toward Him. It is at this point we enter upon that which is related in our text.

In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. (Matthew 28:1)

Yes, it was "very early in the morning the first *day* of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun." (Mark 16:2) So, the first Easter morning was very early on a Sunday; and, the women returned to the tomb as they had planned.

Undoubtedly, the two women named Mary hoped that the soldiers guarding the tomb would roll the great stone away to allow them entrance to the burial chamber so they could anoint Jesus' body with

the spices and ointments they had prepared.

You see, Roman guards were present because after Jesus' death and burial, "the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." (Matthew 27:62-66) Interestingly, by their actions the chief priests and Pharisees provided witnesses to the fact that Jesus' body had NOT been stolen away by His disciples.

And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. (Matthew 28:2-4)

Our text here informs us of the arrival of a holy angel at the sepulcher where Jesus' body had been entombed. The holy angels of God are quite powerful as the great earthquake indicates, for that earth-shaking coincided with the fact that *the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it*. The large disc-shaped stone that blocked the opening of the burial chamber was very heavy and normally took a few husky men to pry it up from the groove into which it was set and then roll it away from the entrance to the tomb. Nevertheless, the task of moving that stone was easy for a powerful holy angel.

The appearance of the angel of the Lord witnessed to the fact that he was a holy messenger of God. The angel's clean white bright appearance was indicative of his holiness.

The Romans soldiers that had been guarding the tomb were no match for the holy angel. Pilate's tough military men were afraid of the angel of the Lord when they saw him and saw what he did in opening the entrance to the sepulcher.

My friends, the sealed tomb where Jesus' lifeless body had been placed was now wide open and a holy angel sat upon the large stone that had once closed the tomb. The Roman seal that had been placed on the stone door was broken, and the soldiers were not about to get into a disagreement over the matter with the holy angel.

And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (Matthew 28:5-6)

Observe that we can be sure Jesus is risen from the dead since a holy angel – an angel of the Lord that cannot lie – said so. Note well that THE SAME JESUS THAT WAS CRUCIFIED IS THE RISEN LORD!

My friends, we can be sure Jesus is risen from the dead because the women saw that the place where His lifeless body had been lain was now empty. Thus, THE SAME JESUS THAT WAS CRUCIFIED IS THE RISEN LORD!

It's important that we also note what the angel did NOT say: the angel did not say that he came and opened the sepulcher to let Jesus out. No, Jesus was already risen and out of the tomb before the angel rolled the stone away, for the angel said to the women: *Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.* The risen living Jesus Christ is Lord; Jesus Christ is true God and true man now and forever; Jesus Christ, when bodily resurrected, simply passed through the sepulcher because the man Christ Jesus is our all-powerful Lord and God.

Recall that before Jesus' death He said: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *him*: and the third day he shall rise again. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (Matthew 20:18-19; John 10:17-18) Accordingly, we can be sure Jesus is risen from the dead because Jesus said He would do so and He had the power to do so. Indeed, THE SAME JESUS THAT WAS CRUCIFIED IS THE RISEN LORD!

And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. (Matthew 28:7-8)

Observe that we can be sure Jesus is risen from the dead because the women testified to the fact as they were commanded by the angel of the Lord; and, Jesus would visibly show Himself to His disciples in Galilee. Thus, THE SAME JESUS THAT WAS CRUCIFIED IS THE RISEN LORD!

-2-

As we continue to ponder our text in the second part of this sermon, let us see why it is important Jesus is risen from the dead.

Look again at verses 5 & 6: **And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. (Matthew 28:5-6)**

Note it well: THE SAME JESUS THAT WAS CRUCIFIED IS THE RISEN LORD! Oh, it is important that Jesus is risen from the dead because in addressing Christians the Apostle Paul writes: "if Christ be not raised, your faith *is* vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, *and* become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are

Christ's at his coming." (1 Corinthians 15:17-23)

Realize that Jesus Christ's bodily resurrection is proof positive that our sins have truly been paid for in full with His holy and precious blood, for Holy Writ reports that Jesus our Lord is He, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." (Romans 4:25; 5:6-10) Yes, "the blood of Jesus Christ [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

Therefore, the Holy Bible promises: "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." (Romans 10:9-11) So, it is important Jesus is risen from the dead because it is proof positive that HE IS OUR ONE TRUE SAVIOR!

Furthermore, it is important that Jesus is bodily risen from the dead since it is proof that He has the power to raise our bodies back to life on the Last Day and will certainly do so, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Philippians 3:20-21) Fellow Christians, eternal life is ours according to soul and body because Jesus has saved us.

Our future is wonderful, thanks be to Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord, for "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. [For] Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (1 Corinthians 15:54-57; Acts 4:12) So, I repeat: it is important Jesus is risen from the dead because it is proof positive that HE IS OUR ONE TRUE SAVIOR! Jesus is our living life-giving Lord!

-3-

As we look once more at the last verse of our text in the third part of this sermon, let us see what is the right reaction to the fact Jesus is risen from the dead.

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word. (Matthew 28:8)

The two ladies named Mary who had arrived at Jesus grave-site as it began to dawn that first Easter morn had a right reaction to the fact that Jesus is risen from the dead. The women did not stand there arguing with the angel or questioning the validity of the words he spoke. No! The women

BELIEVED the WORD as is evident from the fact *they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.*

The women were fearful in that they had seen an angel of the Lord, they had been spoken to by him, and they had seen the open sepulcher and the empty place where Jesus' body had lain. However, the very same women were filled with mega-happiness over the fact the Lord Jesus was alive, for He had bodily, victoriously risen from the dead. Additionally, the women obviously had no doubts about the truth of Jesus' bodily resurrection since they ran to bring Jesus' disciples the astounding joyful news of the living Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh beloved, you and I need to have a right reaction to the fact Jesus is risen from the dead: we need to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ bodily rose from the dead that first Easter morn, and that He lives and reigns to all eternity; we need to fear God in view of His awesome power and amazing grace; we need to be greatly joyful in knowing that our sins are fully and freely forgiven us for Jesus' sake; we need to be extremely happy in knowing the limitless love the Lord Jesus has for us undeserving sinners; and, we need to rush to tell others about our living Lord and Savior when we have opportunity to do so.

But oh, how we in weakness so frequently fail to witness in word and deed for our Lord. Let us therefore daily and sincerely repent of all our sins; let us place and keep our full trust and confidence in Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord; and, let us go forward with grateful hearts, striving to live a life of thanksgiving to God for His grace shown to us in Christ Jesus, as we look forward to the day when our own bodies will be changed, raised to new life in glory when we shall dwell with the Lord face to face forever in heavenly bliss because Jesus is risen from the dead. Amen.

m.e.l

Reminders & Notes

The 2018 ILC delegate convention will be held on Thursday, June 21st at Our Savior, in Morris, IL. Trinity Lutheran Church of Ballwin Missouri will host the convention. Please plan to attend.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity! *It is* like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, *even* Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; As the dew of Hermon, *and as the dew* that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, *even* life for evermore.” (Psalm 133:1-3)

Sadly, the Lutheran Reformation Hour has terminated all broadcasting due to lack of adequate financial support. We thank the LRH staff for all their work through the years in serving our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We are grateful that the Lutheran Reformation Hour mission endeavor endured for the many years that it did, for many souls were touched by the doctrinally sound Scriptural preaching of pastors Wayne Popp and Richard Shekner.

Please note that select sermons can be heard on the ILC website “sermons” web-page. Also, see ILC “Journal” web-page for back issues and Topical Bulletins.

www.illinoislutheranconference.org

Jesus says:

“If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31-32)

“...blessed *are* they that hear the word of God, and keep it.” (Luke 11:28)