

The Resurrection of Our Lord – Pr. Faugstad exordium & sermon
St. Mark 16:1-8: “No Surprises Here.”
April 5, 2026 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

In Nomine Iesu

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“If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1Co. 15:17).

If Christ has not been raised, all His promises were lies.

If Christ has not been raised, the Christian Church is a worldly organization created by men.

If Christ has not been raised, your Baptism did you no good.

If Christ has not been raised, you eat bread and drink wine in Communion and nothing more.

If Christ has not been raised, there is no place prepared for you in heaven.

If Christ has not been raised, the dead who are buried in our cemeteries will stay dead.

If Christ has not been raised, you got up early this morning for no good reason.

“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain” (1Co. 15:14), and you might as well ignore it.

If Christ has not been raised, you are of all people most to be pitied (1Co. 15:19).

If Christ has not been raised, all these things are true.

But Christ HAS been raised.

Since Christ has been raised, your faith is NOT futile, and you are NOT in your sins.

Since Christ has been raised, all His promises are verified.

Since Christ has been raised, the Christian Church shall prevail against the gates of hell.

Since Christ has been raised, you were raised with Him in the waters of Baptism.

Since Christ has been raised, you receive His living body and blood in Holy Communion for the forgiveness of your sins.

Since Christ has been raised, a place is prepared for you in heaven.

Since Christ has been raised, the dead who now sleep will also rise.

Since Christ has been raised, you have not wasted your morning.

Since Christ has been raised, our preaching is not in vain, and God’s powerful words of life enter your ears and heart.

Since Christ has been raised, you are counted among those who will inherit eternal life.

Yes, Christ has been raised. That is why we joyfully share the Easter greeting as the faithful have shared it for thousands of years:

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

We sing our festival hymn #348, “He Is Arisen! Glorious Word!”

He is arisen! Glorious Word!
Now reconciled is God, my Lord;
The gates of heaven are open.
My Jesus died triumphantly,
And Satan’s arrows broken lie,
Destroyed hell’s direst weapon.

O hear
What cheer!
Christ victorious
Riseth glorious,
Life He giveth—
He was dead, but see, He liveth!

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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Rom. 1:7, etc.)

The sermon text for today is written in the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. Mark. We read selected verses in Jesus' name:

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. And very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. / And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. But go your way, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you." / And they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. ^(NKJV)

These are Your words, heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. (Joh. 17:17)

In Christ Jesus, who did not do what people expected, but who did do what He said He would, dear fellow redeemed:

"Jesus is dead. He is gone." That thought haunted their minds ever since Friday afternoon when they saw Him breathe His last. They saw Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take His lifeless body down from the cross, wrap it in a linen shroud with spices, and bury it in a tomb nearby. They saw the men roll a stone across the entrance and depart. Then they went home, too, to observe the Sabbath rest.

These women had traveled with Jesus from Galilee and provided for His needs. They saw the miracles He performed. They watched Him cast demons out of people and raise the dead. They heard His powerful teaching. They believed that He was the promised Messiah. But now He was dead. What were they to do?

Overwhelmed with sorrow, they determined to serve Jesus one last time—they would give Him a more proper burial. They purchased and prepared spices and made their way early Sunday morning to the tomb. They shuddered thinking about the terrible wounds they would once again see on their Lord: the bruises on His face, the gouges from the crown of thorns, the holes in His hands and feet from the large nails, the gash in His side from the soldier's spear. They had no doubts about what they would find at the tomb: the dead body of Jesus.

They were in for a surprise, or really a series of surprises. They found the large stone rolled away from the entrance. Looking inside, they saw an angel waiting for them. He told them not to be alarmed. They wouldn't find what they were looking for because Jesus had been raised up. And He was on the move! They were to tell the Lord's disciples that He was going before them to Galilee, where they would see Him, just as He had said.

The women took off from the tomb, full of trembling, amazement, and fear. But why did they react like this? Why was this such a surprise? If your parents told you they were taking you to the zoo for your birthday, and that you would see monkeys, lions, and giraffes, would you be surprised to go there and see those animals? They might not look exactly as you imagined, but you wouldn't really be surprised. You saw what they said you would.

So why didn't the followers of Jesus believe Him when He said He would suffer and die in Jerusalem and then rise on the third day? The evangelist Luke records a longer message from the angel reminding the women about this: *"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise"* (Luk. 24:5-7). Jesus clearly told His disciples what would happen. There should have been no surprise. But they did not believe.

They did not believe because they failed to see the big picture. They could not understand what benefit the death of Jesus could have. They wanted to keep things the way they were. Jesus was doing wonderful work. If Palm Sunday was any indication, He was gaining momentum and followers. If He died, all that work would come to a screeching halt. His death was the last thing the Jews and the whole world needed.

Because they couldn't understand the purpose of His death, which was to redeem the world of sinners, they missed the significance of His resurrection. Something similar happens today. We are generally clear about the purpose of Jesus' death—He died on the cross to pay for our sins. But we are not always so clear about the significance of His resurrection.

Jesus' resurrection proves that He is the Son of God, and that everything He said is true. If He could predict His own resurrection and then come back to life, who can doubt the accuracy of anything He said?

Jesus' resurrection also shows that His Father accepted His sacrifice for sin. Romans 4:25 says that He *"was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification."* Both things were necessary, His death and resurrection. If He had died and stayed dead, that would prove He was not God and that His sacrifice was not sufficient. His resurrection declares to the whole world that sin is paid for, death is defeated, and we are accounted as innocent before God.

Jesus' resurrection is also a preview of our resurrection. Because He lives, we who trust in Him will live, even though we die (Joh. 11:25, 14:19). This resurrection victory was handed to us at our Baptism. The apostle Peter writes that Baptism is not about getting clean on the outside. It is deeply spiritual, *"an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ"* (1Pe. 3:21). The water-and-Word of Baptism is full of the forgiveness of sins and the righteousness of Jesus precisely because He has risen. St. Paul writes that through Baptism, *"just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life"* (Rom. 6:4).

In Baptism, we received Jesus' resurrection victory. We received the full inheritance of His righteousness and life. We are destined for heaven with Him! But that is easy to forget while we are still here on earth. We often fail to see the big picture. We struggle with sin and the guilt it produces in us. We have doubts and sometimes even crises of faith, when we wonder if God really loves us. We don't feel much like we're "walking in newness of life." Our death is getting closer and closer, and we're not sure we're ready for it.

Without the death and resurrection of Jesus, no one can be ready for death. Death is battling nearly .1000, with the exception of people like Enoch and Elijah whom God took directly to heaven. The rest of humankind from Adam to the present has had to die. "*For the wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23). We are sinners, so we will die, everyone in this room, unless Jesus returns first.

But we believers don't look at death like the women looked at Jesus' death, as though it were final. We don't cling to the remains of the dead like the women wanted to cling to Jesus. Instead, we cling to Jesus' Word, His promise. He promised His disciples that He would rise from the dead on the third day, and He did. He promises us that He will come again on the last day to raise us from the dead, so He will.

On the last day, it shouldn't surprise us when we "*see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory*" (Luk. 21:27). It shouldn't surprise us when we see the holy angels with Him, the same angels who shared the good news with the women at Jesus' tomb. It shouldn't surprise us when we see all the graves in our cemeteries opened up. It shouldn't surprise us when we find no one in the caskets. But we won't even have time for that investigation, since we will be caught up "*in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air*" (1Th. 4:17).

This is what sets us apart from the world. This is why we do not "*not grieve as others do who have no hope*" (1Th. 4:13). We know that death is not final. Jesus put a stop to death's terrible reign. He let death devour Him, so He could tear open its insides and free everyone stuck in its dark belly. On the last day, His clear voice will wake us from our temporary sleep. We will blink our eyes and take in the light coming from the One who is Light and Life.

His same voice that will wake us from death is the powerful Word you are hearing today. He tells you today that your sins are forgiven. He paid for them on the cross and left them buried forever when He rose from the dead. He tells you at the altar, "*This is My body; this is My blood for the remission of your sins.*" He gave you this Holy Meal for your strength and comfort until He comes again.

The angel said to the women, "*You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here.*" But the angel would tell you something different about the presence of Jesus in His Word and Sacraments. He would say, "*You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! And He is here!*" He is here to distribute the riches of His grace to you and prepare you for His visible return.

He has done everything you need for your salvation. He tells you everything you need to know. So when He comes again in glory and leaves your grave empty by calling you to His side, it will be no unexpected surprise, just exceeding, everlasting joy.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.

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