

***Risen Christ Lutheran Church
Arvada, Colorado***

Sunday Family Devotion in Absence

***Second Sunday of Easter - April 19, 2020
Lutheran Service Book (LSB)***

OPENING HYMN *LSB 487 "Come, You Faithful, Raise the Strain"*

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

INTROIT *Psalm 81:1, 7a, 10, 16b; 1 Peter 2:2a*

Like newborn infants, Alleluia,
long for the pure spiritual milk of the Word. Alleluia.
Sing aloud to God our strength;
shout for joy to the God of Jacob!
In distress you called, and I delivered you;
I answered you in the secret place of thunder.
I am the LORD your God,
who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.
Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it;
and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Almighty God, grant that we who have celebrated the Lord's resurrection may by Your grace confess in our life and conversation that Jesus is Lord and God; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

OLD TESTAMENT *Ezekiel 37:1-14*

¹ The hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me out in the Spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of the valley; it was full of bones. ² And he led me around among them, and behold, there were very many on the surface of the valley, and behold, they were very dry. ³ And he said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" And I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophesy over these bones, and say to them, O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the LORD." ⁷ So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I prophesied, there was a sound, and

behold, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ And I looked, and behold, there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them. But there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then he said to me, “Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to the breath, thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live.” ¹⁰ So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood on their feet, an exceedingly great army. ¹¹ Then he said to me, “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are indeed cut off.’ ¹² Therefore prophecy, and say to them, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the LORD.” (ESV)

GRADUAL *Adapted from Matthew 28:7; Hebrews 2:7; Psalm 8:6*

Christ has risen from the dead.

God the Father has crowned him with glory and honor,
He has given him dominion over the works of his hands;
he has put all things under his feet.

EPISTLE *1 John 5:4-10*

⁴ For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. ⁵ Who is it that overcomes the world except the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? ⁶ This is he who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not by the water only but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree. ⁹ If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. ¹⁰ Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. (ESV)

HOLY GOSPEL *John 20:19-31*

¹⁹ On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.” ²⁴ Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.” ²⁶ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.” ²⁸ Thomas answered him, “My Lord and

my God!”²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”³⁰ Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (ESV)

SERMON HYMN *LSB 470 “O Sons and Daughters of the King”*

SERMON

Sometimes in this life, it seems like everything is against us as Christian people. We go through difficult times such as the one we are all going through right now. We are under orders by the state and county authorities to “stay at home” except for “essential” business. We cannot meet at church in groups of more than ten congregants at a time (while we encounter hundreds of people at the grocery store). That seems random. Is there an anti-Christian bias against Christians by some in the government? It certainly seems so. After all, one of our three main enemies is the unbelieving world, as is the devil and our own sinful nature. Then, at times it even seems like God himself is against us. Things don’t go for us – in this life – the way that we think God should do things to and for us. We expect the best and are surprised when things go wrong. Then in our hardship, we question his presence with us and his love for us. Why did he allow this virus to spread and cause so much havoc? Why has God allowed so much death, and suffering, and financial loss, and violations of our freedoms? Is God punishing us? Is God punishing me for something that I did? Sometimes, it seems like not only the devil, the world, and our own sinful flesh are against us, but God too.

That is the way that the ancient Israelites felt in the Old Testament reading for today. They had repeatedly rebelled against God and he did punish them. He cast them out of his land, his good promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. He banished them into exile in a foreign land where they were oppressed by their enemies. When all hope seemed lost, the Lord sent his prophet Ezekiel to proclaim to them that they would be restored. Likewise, in the Gospel reading for today, the disciples had locked themselves in a room out of fear that the Jews and religious leaders would persecute them for being followers of Jesus. They were confused and troubled because their Lord had been crucified. Even after his resurrection, they were filled with doubts; and it seemed like God wasn’t doing the things he had promised. Why were these things happening? Why are these things happening? Is God punishing us? Is God punishing me for something that I did? There is so much trouble, and chaos, and fear.

But Christ comes to us, just as he did to his first frightened and confused disciples, and proclaims, “Peace be with you!” Peace. In fact, the peace that Christ gives is so important to us as his Christian people that he says it three different times in the Gospel reading. “Peace be with you!” Christ’s peace that he gives to us is not peace with the world, or the devil, or our sinful nature. Rather, it is a three-fold peace that we have with *God* through his absolution of our sins, with our fellow *Christians* through the forgiveness and love we give to one another, and within our *hearts* through faith. This faith is worked within our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit who helps us to believe in our salvation in the crucified and resurrected Christ. Jesus says, “blessed are all who have not seen and yet have believed.” John tells us, “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” So, we do not trust in what we see happening around us, nor do

we trust in our own thoughts; but we only trust in what our Lord says and does for us and our salvation . . . even when we don't understand what is going on. Sometimes our loving Father does punish us for our own good in order to discipline us, like the Israelites. Sometimes he causes us to go through times of confusion, doubt, and fear to strengthen us and share his peace with us, like the first disciples. But it is through faith in Christ alone, trusting him and believing him, that we conquer and triumph over our suffering, trouble, and problems. John affirms this in the epistle reading for today when he says, "everyone who has been born of God [that's Baptism language] overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

Dear friends, our faith overcomes the world, and the devil, and our own flesh because it receives. Our God-given faith receives the Holy Spirit through the Word, Baptism, Absolution, and Communion. You have been Baptized and you are continually receiving the Word. Soon, we will all be able to receive Absolution and Communion together again. Until then, "the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus." Amen!

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER HYMN *LSB 482 "This Joyful Eastertide"*

COLLECT FOR THE WORD

Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them that, by patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless us and keep us.

The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us.

The Lord look upon us with favor and give us peace. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN *LSB 603 "We Know That Christ Is Raised"*

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR NEXT SUNDAY: Ezekiel 34:11-16; 1 Peter 2:21-25;
John 10:11-16.

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