

14 April 2010  
Easter 2 Midweek

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church  
Greenspring Village, Springfield, VA

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*"Set Your Minds Above"*  
Text: Colossians 3:1-7

Alleluia! Christ is risen! [He is risen indeed! Alleluia!] Alleluia.

St. Paul said to us tonight: ***"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."***

What does the resurrection of our Lord mean for your life? Mostly, I think, when we think about that question, we think about life after death and living in heaven and all that. And that's not wrong. One of the most important things about Jesus' resurrection from the dead is that we too will rise. That there is hope for us after our bodies fail us. That our tears of sadness at the funeral of a beloved believer will be replaced with joy and gladness on the last day, when our bodies are summoned from the earth by God and glorified. To know that our greatest enemy - death - has been defeated, is a great comfort.

But what until then? Does the resurrection of your Lord impact your life here and now? Affecting how you live, how you think, how you react to news both good and bad, how you use the things and gifts God has given you? Sadly, for some, the answer is no. The way they are living would be the same whether or not Jesus came, whether or not He died, and whether or not His resurrection ever happened at all. And as I said, that is sad, for the resurrection of Jesus gives us not only hope for the future, but confidence for the present, and peace in the midst of all that this world and life can dish out. *And it can dish out a lot!* But whatever it does, it cannot win. Your victory is assured.

The reason for that, according to these words from St. Paul tonight, is that you have been baptized. ***If you have been raised with Christ***, he begins, and then says, ***For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God*** - that's all baptismal talk. For the reality is that when you were baptized, you weren't just washed, but you were joined to Jesus in His death and resurrection. And so Good Friday became more than history. Easter became more than a good story. When you were baptized, they became *your* story. They became *your* reality. And you were given a new life to live. A new life set free from sin and death. A new life, like Jesus' new life, that is everlasting.

Now, it looks like the same old life, and feels like the same old life, doesn't it? Our bodies still get sick and still wear out and die. Because for now, Paul tells us, this new life is **hidden with Christ in God**. Hidden - which doesn't mean it's not real, just that we can't see it. For, in fact, if something is hidden, that means that it is there! Like when you're playing hide and seek - you can't see the person you're looking for, but you know they're there, just hidden. So it is with the new life you have been given in Holy Baptism - it's really and truly there; it's really and truly yours. It's just hidden now, under the old flesh and bones. And so, Paul says, **When Christ who is your life appears** - or, comes out of hiding - **then you also will appear** - or, come out of hiding - **with him in glory**. For on the last day, that new life that is now hidden will finally be revealed for all to see.

And if that be true; **if we have been raised with Christ** . . . how can that *not* affect how we now live, how we now think, how we now react to news both good and bad, and how we use the things and gifts God has given us? If it doesn't, or it seems not to in your life - and that happens to all of us - it can only be because we forget. *We forget who we are*. We forget the new life we have been given. We forget about the triumph of Christ. We forget, because the worries and problems and trials of this world and life can overwhelm us and fill our minds with fear instead of faith, with horror instead of hope, and with concern instead of confidence. And we get mired down by sin, right where satan wants us. Down in the dumps, to rob us of our joy and convince us that the new life isn't really hidden, but, in fact, not there at all.

And so, St. Paul says, **seek the things that are above . . . Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth**. By that he's not saying to live with your head in the clouds, but *to remember who you are*. And the reason why we can is because of what he says right in the middle of all that: **seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God**. For Christ is no longer on the cross, no longer in the grave, no longer bound to time and space as we are. No! He is seated at the right hand of God - His place of power, His place of authority, His place of victory. And He is there **for you**. To give you His life, to give you His forgiveness, to give you all that you need. And as He did not fail you on the cross or in His resurrection from the grave, so He will not fail you now.

So what fills your mind with worry? What fills your life with sadness? What is too great for you to bear? *Set your mind above*, remember who you are, and be at peace. For you are baptized, a forgiven child of God. You have already died and risen to a new life in Jesus, and His victory is your victory. So live in that joy, live in that love, live in that life you have been given. For the resurrection has changed everything. For Christ is risen! [He is risen indeed! Alleluia!]

In the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.