

31 March 2018  
Easter Vigil

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church

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“Rest”

Rest.

On the sixth day, God completed all His work. And on the seventh day He rested.

Likewise, on the sixth day, Jesus completed all His work for us, bearing our sin and dying our death. And on the seventh day He rested. One last day of rest, fulfilling the Sabbath, before His glorious resurrection tomorrow.

Rest, I think, is a lost art in our world today. We are so busy, we've forgotten how to rest. Even when we're not working, we're not resting. We're busy with our play, we're busy with devices, we're busy doing this, doing that. How often do we wake up in the morning and not feel rested?

But tonight, we rest. Tonight's service has no stripping of the altar, no descent into darkness, no outbursts of joy like we will have tomorrow. Tonight, we rest. But not by doing nothing. We rest as God intended our rest to be. We rest in His Word. That's why the Sabbath, after all. Not just that His people would not work - but that they would not work so that He could work in them; that they would rest in His Word.

So that's what we do tonight. We rest in the Word of God. Not because we're commanded, but because we can. Because we have peace. Because we know the battle is over and the victory will be celebrated tomorrow.

So let God's Word wash over you tonight. Soak it in. Yes, some of it you've heard before. But which of it will you hear again for the first time?

And then we'll remember our baptism, too. When we were joined to Jesus and made a part of His death and resurrection. That our consciences be at rest, assured that our sins are forgiven. And that when the promises God made to us in our baptism are finally and completely fulfilled, that will be the day we enter into the eternal rest of heaven. So we'll remember that, too, tonight.

And then finally we'll hear of the resurrection, at the very end. A little foretaste of the feast to come tomorrow.

But tonight we rest. A joyful rest. A peaceful rest. A confident rest.

And maybe by resting tonight, we can learn how to rest all the rest of the year. Which is not doing nothing, but resting in the arms of our Saviour. Resting in His work, resting in His forgiveness, resting in His love, resting in His promises.

Tonight, He embraces you with His Word and says, rest my child. From first to last, from creation to redemption, from death to resurrection, I have done it. I have done it all. I have done it all *for you*.

Rest.

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