

21 April 2019
The Resurrection of Our Lord

St. Athanasius Lutheran Church
Vienna, VA

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“One Man”

Text: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26; Isaiah 65:17-25; Luke 24:1-12

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

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Death's strong bands (LSB #458) look awful strong.
The cemetery looks very final.
And it doesn't take much.
A tiny germ can cause it.
A misplaced step can send you tumbling to your death.
A drunk driver.
A tree limb with good aim blown down by a powerful storm.
Or maybe just old age. But that, too, is part of the curse.
What qualifies as old age for us was just getting started for the people who lived before the flood.

And one man caused it all, Paul said today. One man. Named Adam.
Because of him there is sin.
Because of him there is death.
Because of him are all those things Isaiah mentioned today.
The sound of weeping and the cry of distress.
The infant who lives but a few days and the old man who does not fill out his days.
Or the old man, the old woman who lives, but their memories are taken from them.
Houses built and vineyards planted, but their builder and planted dead before they can enjoy them.
There is labor in vain and children for calamity.
Wolves that eat lambs and lions that devour oxen.
Death and destruction.
Because of one man. One man.

This is the life you live and the death you will die.
Life as we know it.
Mourning for loved ones lost.
Fear of our own end, and how it will come, and when.
Maybe slowly, maybe suddenly. No one knows.

We only know that it will. Come.
Because of one man. One man. Named Adam.

But the good news that we are celebrating today is the second half of Paul's sentence.
For as by a man - one man - came death, by a man has come also the resurrection from the dead.

Because of one man. One man. Named Jesus.

Because of Him, death's strong looking bands are broken.
And cemeteries are mere resting places.

Because of him there is forgiveness.
Because of him there is life.
Because of Him all those things Isaiah mentioned are reversed.
Heaven and earth will be made new.
Mourning and sadness will be replaced by joy and gladness.
And death will be destroyed.
Because of one man. One man.

This is the life that is waiting for us.
Life that we know not yet, but we know the promises.
We don't know when that life is coming either.
Maybe soon, maybe a long time from now.
We only know that it will. Come.
Because of one man. One man. Named Jesus.

That is what the women discovered when they went to the tomb on Easter morning.
They knew only Adam.
So they went looking for death, but they found life.
They went looking for the old, but they found the new.
They went sad and mourning, but they left . . . well, not joyous yet, but almost.
They were still frightened, marveling, and perplexed for now.
But the joy was coming.
The joy of life.
The joy of the one man who has come to ***put all enemies under His feet.***
And ***the last enemy to be destroyed is death.***

It is only a matter of time. Not if, but when.
For He is, the one man is, Paul said, *the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep*, not died.
The firstfruits of those who will awaken, rise, from this sleep.
Meaning the first of many still to come.
Still to come, for while His tomb is now empty, ours are still full.

But it will not always be so.
For the day is coming when our death, too, will be destroyed.
And we will awaken from our sleep in the bed of our graves and rise from the dead as surely as He did.
Alive as surely as He is.
This one man. This conquerer. Named Jesus.

For yes, the hymn is true: *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today* (LSB #457).
And so we have hope for more than just this life.
For Christianity is not about improving the world and it's not about living a blessed life, and Easter is not about starting over or trying again - if it is, then as Paul says, ***we are of all people most to be pitied.***
That's just putting lipstick on a pig.
Christianity is about more than that. Much more.
For it's not about living a better life or even a blessed life, for however long your life lasts.
It's about dying a blessed death.
It's about living each day in the confidence of Easter.
That whenever, however death comes to us, because it will, it matters not.
Because it's not the end and it can't win.
In fact, it has already lost.
Because of the one man. The one man. Named Jesus.

The one man, Adam, didn't do much for you. And what he did do . . . well, thanks but no thanks.
But what he did, we're stuck with.

But the one man, Jesus, think of all that He has done for you.
He was born for you and lived a perfect life for you.
He was baptized for you, and has baptized you, to wash away your death-causing-sin and give you the promise of His resurrection.
He healed the sick and raised the dead - pictures of what He will one day do for you as well.
He became sin for you, so that in Him you might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).
He offered His life for yours on the cross, with your sin and condemnation, and He now offers the same Body and Blood to you on the altar, for your forgiveness and salvation.
He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven to reign as king.
And He isn't going to stop until He ***destroys every rule and every authority and power; until He has put all enemies under His feet.***

Relentless. Dedicated. Committed.
Those are the words we would use for that today.
We simply call Him: Saviour.
That one man. Named Jesus.

That's the vision Isaiah saw, that caused him to write what he did, what we heard today.
That gave him such excitement and joy.
Because in his day, like in our day, we see so much trouble, so much destruction, so
much death.
And it can rob us of the excitement and joy of life.
But Isaiah saw the reality that is coming.
The new heavens and the new earth.
The life and joy that awaits us.
Because of one man. One man. Named Jesus.

So Tuesday, we're going to bury one of our own.
Phyllis Martin. Founding member of Saint Athanasius.
And we'll be sad, because what the one man did, that one man named Adam, showed up
again last week.
His death and destruction showed up again.
But we're also going to rejoice and sing Easter hymns, because we know she has fallen
asleep in Jesus.
And the promises Jesus made to her will be fulfilled.
The Body and Blood Jesus gave to her was His pledge that her body and blood will rise
from the grave.
And the sign of the cross placed upon her in baptism and repeated so many times over the
years marked her as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.
And so we'll rejoice in those words and promises of the one man, of Christ Jesus.
For hope in Christ will never be disappointed.

The women who went to the tomb that first Easter morning forgot those words and
promises and so were disappointed and frightened and perplexed.
So the angels told them, reminded them, proclaimed to them, Jesus words and promises.
Remember, they said.
He said it, and He did it.
And what He has said to you, He will also do.
He called you His child, as you are.
He has absolved you, and you are forgiven.
And one day, that one man, that one man named Jesus, is going to say *rise!*
And you will.
Death will be destroyed and there will be only life for you.
Life with Him, and the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven.
Because of one man. One man!

Who annihilated death.

Who cast down the evil ones.

Who overcame sin.

And will empty the tombs of their dead.

One man. Risen from the dead.

Yes, *Christ is risen!* [He is risen indeed! Alleluia!] *Alleluia!*

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

Now the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.