

## ***“Remember How He Told You”***

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Christ IS risen, but how can we be sure? If only we could see what has been reported to us. If only we could be like Thomas who saw – and could stick his fingers in the hole of the nails.

Peter has heard the report. The stone was rolled away – the women went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus – and they told the disciples what the angels said. “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.”

Peter hears the report – the Lord’s message through His messenger angels – but Peter doesn’t simply say, “Amen” – he goes running to the tomb!

What “good news” to hear that Jesus who was crucified has been raised to life again. That’s the Gospel – which is, literally, the “good news / report / announcement.” “He’s not there,” the women said. “We looked, we checked every nook and cranny – His body is not in the tomb.”

The Gospel tells us why – but the Gospel is foolishness to sinful man. There could be other, logical reasons why the body was not there. They found the tomb open, with the stone rolled away – and the Jewish authorities had been spreading the rumor that Jesus’ disciples had stolen the body away ---- but these disciples know that is a lie.

Maybe the women were looking in the wrong place – after all, it was a chaotic, stressful day – and it was getting dark. Maybe they got the wrong tomb. No, these women know better. They were there when Jesus was crucified. They saw Him die with their own eyes. They saw where He was laid. Make no mistake about it – HIS tomb is empty.

No, there is only one possibility – the very thing that God has announced through His angels ..... the Gospel. “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.”

The same Jesus Christ who told His disciples ahead of time that He would be raised to life again on the third day – has told YOU, His disciples, that He will resurrect your body to life everlasting on the Last Day.

Like Peter, you’ve heard the “good news” – but unlike Peter, you can’t go running to heaven to check things out. No, all who are Christians, Christ’s disciples – are to live by faith, not by sight. We live, and hold onto, that which our Lord has promised – even though our experiences, our sight, our reason, tell us something else.

Oh, how we’d love to be able to go to our loved one’s grave and see that it’s empty. But that wouldn’t be enough. Even though Jesus promises that those who die with faith in Him are in heaven – part of us would still want to peek into heaven, to see them standing there with Jesus.

At least Peter, and Thomas, and the rest of the disciples and the women actually get to see the resurrected Jesus. They get to see, and hear, and touch Him. They get to spend forty days, walking around with the resurrected Christ, and then see Him as He ascends into heaven.

Earlier when I said that the Gospel is foolishness, I was simply referring to what the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians – “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Cor. 1:18)

This report of Jesus being alive was shocking, to say the least. I can’t imagine what kind of state the women and the disciples were in – after all they’d been through. The angels are talking about a dead man – Jesus, who had suffered terribly at the hands of His captors – and then died a cursed death upon the cross.

Jesus was dead – no doubt about it – just ask Mary, John, the other women, the centurion in charge of His crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who buried His body. Risen? Every fiber of their body told them that was “foolishness.”

And so it is with you. Do you believe God’s report about your death? He told Adam that in the day he ate of the fruit of that one tree in the garden, he would surely die. And contrary to what God says – man says – “Adam didn’t die when he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” At least, that’s the way man sees it.

God says to you that “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). You confessed that you have sinned. Do you believe His report? Or do you live by sight, saying – “I’ve sinned, and I didn’t die”?

If only we could see what the Lord reports to us! That “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God” – that we were all once “dead in our trespasses and sins.” (Rom. 3:23 and Eph. 2:1) If only we could see that when Jesus forgives our sins, He is taking away death. If only we could see what the Church continually confesses – the resurrection of our bodies and the life everlasting. We’d go running to see that!

Dearly beloved, “Remember how He told you” – how Jesus has reported to you the Gospel of your salvation?

It is His life-giving Word that does such wondrous things – not my persuasive preaching, or your own logic. His Word does what it says – even if man, in his wisdom, thinks it’s foolish. He is faithful – and just as He was raised to life again on the third day, just as He said – so all He has promised you is faithful and true.

God the Holy Spirit works through the Word of God to create and sustain faith in Jesus Christ. Remember how He told you? Christ IS risen from the dead – and all who are baptized into Christ are baptized into His death AND resurrection.

Remember how He told you? “I am with you always.” He promises that when you hear His called preachers speaking His Word – you are hearing HIM – so this very day, you have heard the resurrected Christ deliver His Gospel to you, when He said, “I forgive you all your sins.”

Remember how He told you, and tells you – this is my Body, this is my Blood – “for you ... for the forgiveness of all your sin.

That is why Christians continually gather around the Gospel of the Lord. For where the Holy Spirit is at work – there is the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints – there Christ forgives your sins – and with His forgiveness, His promise to resurrect your body to life everlasting on the Last Day.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, may we ever rejoice to hear and receive the Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

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