

Sermon - 04-04-21
Acts 10:34-43; 1 Cor 15:19-26; Mk 16:1-11
Resurrection Life! – Easter Sunday

Christ conquered sin and death! This is our inheritance, no matter where you or I started. It is as though a wealthy relative wrote you into her will – and now you have it made. The riches are super-abundant life now – and eternal life to come. Our inheritance in Jesus Christ. How does Jesus make a difference here and now?

A tall burley trucker with jumper cables around his neck went into the local tavern. He ordered a hamburger with fries and a cold drink. The tavern keeper said, “Well, I’ll serve you, but don’t start anything!”

Jesus **started something** in us! The life He has given us – He gives it **to all** who hear and believe Him by His saving grace – this salvation. He gives New Life so you can pass it on. You are His witness! Jesus did not establish an institution. In our time, we have come to think of the church as an institution. The icon for a church is usually a building – large or small, with a steeple and an image of the cross on top, in front or on the sides.

The church is not a manmade structure of wood, brick or stone. No, the church is a gathering of people of all kinds, from every lifestyle, race and language. This gathering – the church – first met in homes, in caves, even out in the woods or countryside. Only later did the people build a building just for the church to meet in. Many churches in the world do not have a building at all.

Why are we here today? Like the Greeks who came to the apostle Philip, we have come to see Jesus. We long for the truth, for justice or fairness in our lives. We also come because some have said “God is Love.” Yes! And God is powerful to break down old barriers and make us witnesses that He is love – He is just – He is powerful.

Listen to the proof from witnesses of the truth:

The Apostle Paul shows us that Jesus Christ is the One who breaks through the barrier of death. He has defeated that final enemy – and we do not need to be afraid of it anymore. If you depend on your sharp wits to save you – or your talents or your money – or some other worldly source of safety and security – or if you think you can just keep your head down and slide into home base – you believe a lie. All those things are counterfeit. They are tools of the great deceiver -- that is, Satan. Christ gives New Life! Everybody will know about it!

Another witness, the Apostle Peter stood up to tell everybody that God shows no partiality to any kind of person – a person who **never** does thus-and-so – a person who **always** does thus-and-so. Anyone who hears about the Lord Jesus – how he healed and liberated and loved all those He met along the road – anyone can become His disciple and receive the free gift of abundant life now. Life that never ends. Warning: trusting Him will change you! Resurrection life is New Life! The old man or woman, boy or girl must pass away.

Now, Paul was a trained preacher -- and Peter was a fisherman who learned to share the Good News by just opening his mouth and talking about Jesus everywhere he went. You could say these two were experts. Maybe you think you could never be such a witness of the truth of Christ. Then, listen to the testimony of a person who saw the stone rolled away. A person who saw the empty tomb. Mary Magdalene met the Risen Lord there in the cemetery garden (John 20). She thought He was the gardener, digging around the shrubs. She is no public speaker – she is not a theologian or Bible scholar. She loved Jesus. Love and devotion are her only credentials. And the Risen Christ chose **her** to be the first eyewitness of His resurrection from the dead. The angel proclaimed, “He is not here. He is risen.” John tells us Jesus looked at her and said, “Mary!” She saw at last that it was Him and she said, “Teacher!” Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” Mark writes that at first the women ran away in terror. But Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord.” Mary **started something** with her witness. And you can too.

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At the resurrection we leave behind old life – old habits – old thinking – and we step into the light of Christ. **Now** is the time to live that New Life – and to share it. We are transformed – we become citizens of Christ’s Kingdom by faith in Him. This is the inheritance – the treasure nobody can take away from you. Here’s the thing: The more you give it away, the more you have it. Jesus is alive now, at the right hand of our heavenly Father. In Him you are alive – with resurrection life – real life – now and forever. Tell somebody! Amen.