

# “The Living One, Alive for You”

Today should be a terrible day. It should be the anniversary of a funeral.

The women arrived this morning to prepare the body of our Lord for His burial. They were faithful to rest on the Sabbath according to the Law, but today they are faithful to their Lord in giving Him the burial that He deserves. They come in faith, or maybe naivety, assuming they will, somehow, roll away the stone so they may pay respect to their teacher and their friend.

Today, we should have arrived in black, with bands around our arms and casseroles for Mary and those closest to the Jesus. Today should be an anniversary when we mourn.

But we too arrive at the tomb, astonished at what we find—the stone rolled away already, no one needing to break a sweat or throw out their backs—and we are even more astonished at what we do not find—the body of Christ our Lord.

The Living One, the one who instigated the life of mankind and has sustained it 24/7 since that moment, the one who took on the flesh of the people He created, only to be put to death and have His flesh fail Him, is missing.

I can only imagine the panic that started to flair up in their chests, the questions that arose in their minds and the broken sentences that poured from their mouths. “Is this the right...” “Has He been stolen?” “We didn’t dream this up...” Two men, dazzling in their brilliance of God’s reflected glory appear to answer their questions and enlighten them to the situation.

Though the plan seemed to go wrong only a few short days prior, they remind them that this is precisely what had to occur; this happened just as Christ had said it would. Remember! It was God’s divine plan, the destiny set forth for Christ, to suffer, to be crucified, but also to rise. The disciples rejected this possibility when Christ first announced it, yet that unfathomable plan has in fact proven true in the fact that the tomb is empty.

And it's not empty because anyone has stolen the body away or because they took a wrong turn and found the wrong grave; that which was just a body has been transformed and it has risen, Christ is dead no longer, but once again He lives as the Living One.

And brothers and sisters in Christ, He rose as the living one for you.

If Christ has not been raised from the dead, if they showed up and preserved His body in spices and linen until it finally decayed, then you should all put on your jackets and go for an early lunch. If Christ remained in the tomb, then our 80 years here are the most we can look forward to—because if Christ didn't rise, ain't nobody gonna rise. He loved purer, He cared harder, He acted wiser, and He lived more righteously than any of us combined.

But don't worry. Because we do not need to ask what happens if Christ didn't rise because He did. We aren't gathered to remember the day on which His funeral was held. We don't gather weekly to have eulogies because we miss Him and mourn Him by remembering some nice things about Him. We are gathered here today and every Sunday because Christ still is the Living One and He is here with us, giving us His gifts, joining us to Himself.

He first connects us to Himself, to Life in our baptism. There we died with Him, dying alongside Him a death to ourselves and to our sin as the water is poured over us, but there, from the waters, we also arose. When someone approaches the font they travel from Good Friday to Easter Sunday in the span of seconds, and in that moment their mortal life is removed, and Christ's eternal life bestowed upon them.

So we live in Christ, the Living One. In the face of our sin that would accuse us, in the face of suffering that would hinder us and bring us despair, in the face of death that threatens us, we live in the Living One, certain that nothing today or tomorrow can seal us in our tombs, no matter how deep they bury us or how abroad they spread our ashes.

Because He is not here in His tomb but is Risen, we too shall not be shut in. Our flesh will be planted like a seed for a time in our tombs, but because Christ has risen we too will rise never to die again. Our bodies and souls will be reunited as we inhabit the new heaven and earth; and never will we die again.

But He doesn't just give us this life and expect us to stay in it, to manage it perfectly and care for it. Instead, He gives us of His eternal life repeatedly so that we wouldn't forget about this beautiful treasure we have, that we wouldn't neglect it and find ourselves outside of it. To you and to me, those who have been made capital A Alive, He renews this life every time we approach His table and receive Him, given for us.

Here the food for our souls is served; Here Life is placed into our hands, into our mouths. Here Christ gives us of His Life-giving sacrifice that we would receive such a gift—this is for you.

For the troubles of life try to rip you, mind, body, and soul, away from your Lord who gives you life. Our sinful selves still spurn the idea that we need to be saved—they'd love to just live wild and free and sinful. And Satan would love nothing more than you to live your days only to die apart from Christ and then to die eternally.

But Life was crucified so that this need not be the case. So come receive His gifts so that you may be held by Life eternal until that day when you get to experience Life Everlasting with Him.

Some days this doesn't make any sense. I know that some days you feel just like the disciples, hearing this crazy news that some good guy didn't stay dead. It seems like it could be an idle tale, a false story used to placate the masses when they feel helpless. A placebo effect that eases suffering.

But Christ didn't forsake the disciples when they dismissed the women's words. He kept proclaiming this Gospel to them until those who didn't believe became those who believed, until those who questioned became those who understood. He came to them in the words of the women proclaimed repeatedly. He came to them through the Words of the Old testament which split open to

reveal a much deeper meaning. He came to them in His own Words as He stood in their midst, and He came to them in the breaking of the bread.

He promises to do that to you as well. When doubts overwhelm, don't worry, because the Living One has not forsaken you; He remains the source of Life and He chases you down wherever you go to give to you that Life, His Life, the Life that will have no end.

And He will sustain that Life in you no matter how good or bad you're doing in this week, no matter how strong or weak your faith is, no matter how steadily your heart is beating.

No matter what, Christ, the one who meets us, the one we pray to, the one who has made promises abundant to us, is the Living One. He is the author of Life and the giver of life and the sustainer of Life, He is the one who has won your Life eternal and He has promised to protect that Life for you. A few days He died to steal away your sin; today He rose to win for you life everlasting. The Living One is alive for you.

He is risen.

He is risen indeed.

Alleluia.