

Resurrection Sunday
April 21, 2019

THE SAVIOR'S EMPTY TOMB GIVES US A FULL VIEW

I. Romans 4:25	The full view of God
II. 1 Corinthians 5:6-8	The full view of life
III. John 14:19	The full view of death

Hymns: 150 – 144 – 406 – 157 – 145:3-4 – 146 – 147:1,5 – 160 – 152

Memorial Ev. Lutheran Church - Williamston, Michigan

“He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.” (Romans 4:25)

In the name of Jesus, our crucified and risen Savior, risen from death this glorious morning *as* He said He would and *when* He said He would, fellow sinners saved by His innocent sacrifice and assured of that by His triumphant resurrection,

They aren't available in many stadiums because there aren't any in many stadiums today. But in old stadiums like Tiger Stadium, there were discounted tickets for seats with “obstructed views”. The thick beams that supported the upper deck rested right in the middle of lower deck seats. How frustrating to watch the Tigers in person, but a beam blocked your view of the pitcher, second baseman, and right fielder.

That's what the devil wants to do with us this morning. The old evil foe tries to seduce us into believing, “We went to church this greatest Sunday of the year. We heard the Word, so we're good with God!” The devil knows what happened the first Holy Week. He also knows there's more to Christianity than knowing the events that took place. He knows what power they have for us. That's why he tries to block the full view from us.

Let's not settle for an obstructed view of what happened this weekend so many years ago. Let's not be satisfied with, “Jesus died. Jesus rose. Let's head home!” The Savior's empty tomb gives us a full view of the most important truths in the world!

I

The Savior's empty tomb, as we just heard from Romans, gives us the full view of God.

How God deals with sin seems like a contradiction. Is He a crooked judge who fixes speeding tickets for His friends? Does God simply ignore guilt and sweep sins under a rug? God calls Himself both **“just”** (Romans 4:26), fair – and the **“God who justifies the wicked”** (Romans 4:5). How is that resolved? At the Savior's cross *and empty tomb* we see the full view of God!

“He was delivered over to death *for our sins*” (v. 25). Is that too much Good Friday for this Resurrection Sunday? Never! If we don’t see why that happened that Friday, we won’t know the power for us from His empty tomb that Sunday. What if Mary Magdalene and the other Mary had come to the tomb and been able mournfully to finish the work of properly burying the body of their Lord? What if there were no angels, no neatly set-aside cloths? What if the tomb weren’t empty? There would be rotten results beyond the body of Jesus rotting inside. *Is He the Savior? Are my sins gone? Will heaven be my home?*

Jesus **“was raised to life for our justification”** (v.25), that is, because God had declared us sinners, “Not guilty!” for the sake of Christ’s sacrifice for us. It’s correct to say Jesus raised Himself to life. He predicted, **“Destroy this temple** (referring to His body), **and I will raise it again in three days”** (John 2:19). He did raise His body from death that third day since Friday, when His soul had left His body at death. His soul returned from heaven before Sunday dawn to rejoin His body in the grave. Then, soul and body together, the risen Savior went to hell to tell Satan, “You thought you won when I was crucified, dead, and buried, didn’t you? Here I am in the flesh and on your turf – and you can’t do a thing about it! I am here as the victorious, risen Savior! You are defeated.” That’s *when* – early Sunday morning – and *why* – not to suffer, but to proclaim His victory – Jesus *descended into hell*. He showed Himself alive later that Sunday to people on earth; that’s what our creeds mean with *The third day He rose again from the dead*.

Here, the Holy Spirit had Paul write the Father raised the Son because here the Spirit stresses another triumphant truth. The Son had been **“forsaken”** by the Father at the cross as Jesus suffered our hell. Had the Father left the Son in the grave, we’d wonder who Jesus is, what God is all about, where we stand with God. But the Father didn’t **“abandon”** the Son **“to the grave”** (Psalm 16:10). He raised Jesus to life. The Savior’s empty tomb gives us the full view of God, who announces, “The price has been paid in full! The work to redeem the world has been perfectly completed! My eternal anger is removed from you sinners!” The empty tomb gives us the full view of God who gets our praise as we now sing *Hymn 157*.

II

“Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast – as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)

The vast majority of people today, like the Pharisees who considered themselves the religious elite of Jesus’ day, get upset when God’s messengers call out sin, warn against unGodliness, say, “It isn’t *our* life to live as *we* please. It’s the life God has given us and won for us to live as *He* pleases!” Who’s right? The empty tomb shows us the full view of life.

What do paczkis and Mardi Gras have in common? They come right before Lent and are efforts to get rid of things. Paczkis have been made for centuries to get all the sugar and fat out of the house of the family that feels they must go without them for Lent. Mardi Gras has been observed for centuries as a last sinful blast before giving up sinful pleasures for Lent. Really? That’s the Christian life? Living for God for only a season? No! The Savior’s empty tomb gives us the full view of life.

“Yeast” (v. 6) as an ingredient isn’t wrong. The picture here is how a little **“yeast”** works through a big

batch of dough. What a picture of our sinful nature, the Old Adam we've had from our parents since we were conceived and born! That selfish wretch whispers to us, "Nobody's perfect! God can't possibly expect you to be! Just try your best, and if you slip up sometimes, so what?" The holy God tells His children through faith in the risen Jesus, **"Get rid of the old yeast"** (v. 7)! It's not simply saying, "I'll do better!" It's the difficult daily drowning of the sinful nature with terror over offending God, and with trust in the crucified and risen Savior for forgiveness. The empty tomb gives us that full view, not a seasonal view, of life.

Jews who heard, **"Get rid of the old yeast"** recalled God's command concerning the Old Testament Passover. As the lamb was being roasted for the Passover meal, all yeast and anything made with yeast was to be removed from the house. Why? It was God's way to impress on them the seriousness of getting rid of evil and living in the joy of deliverance by the promised Messiah. His empty tomb gives us the full view of life *in Him!*

Not only do we get rid of sin. We also use our new life in the risen Savior, the life **"that you may be a new batch without yeast – as you really are"** (v. 7). How can we who are so full of sin that we were condemned by God, who began life belonging to Satan, now be a new batch for the Lord? **"Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed"** (v. 7) for our sins!

For the Jews, after the Passover lamb – the animal – was slaughtered, no more yeast would be brought into the house for seven days. Now that *the* Passover Lamb – the Savior – has been slaughtered and is risen, let there be no more **"malice and wickedness"** (v. 8) brought into our lives the rest of our days. Instead, let there be **"sincerity and truth"** (v. 8). We are what God has made us through the cross and empty tomb of Jesus. He gives us this full view of life to be lived every day!

Celebrating Easter isn't wearing new clothes, but dressing up in a new life, the full view of life we see from the Savior's empty tomb. Will we stomp through life with a sour, pessimistic outlook? How can we when we know and trust that the biggest obstacle in life has been removed by Christ's life and death and resurrection?! Will we shove through life with grudges held against others and evils of all sorts spilling out in our mouths and minds, hearts and lives? How can we when we know and trust that Jesus has died and is risen for us?!

This holy day isn't about the newness of nature after a long winter. It's about the empty tomb – and the full view of the new life we have in the One who left His tomb. We live full of **"sincerity"** (v. 8) toward others. We live full of the desire to get more and more of God's **"truth"** (v. 8) in devotions at home and every Sunday here, and to be **"truth"**ful in our living. The Savior's empty tomb gives us the full view of life, as we use what God gives us in life to support His kingdom's work, to live in harmony, to put on daily our new life in the risen Jesus. That's what we sing about now in *Hymn 145, 3-4*.

III

"Because I live, you also will live." (John 14:19)

The Savior's empty tomb gives us the full view of death. *Death? Only a Lutheran preacher would say that on Easter! Isn't this holy day about life?* It is! But the life we have in the risen Jesus also gives us the real view of death.

The Savior's tomb is empty. The One who once laid there spent forty days among His followers after Resurrection Sunday to prove He is alive. He went to great lengths to assure His disciples He had risen

so they would preach to others, “We trust Christ crucified *and risen from the dead!*” After rising, Jesus let His followers see Him, let one of them touch Him. He ate with them and spoke with them. His enemies bribed Roman soldiers to keep the resurrection report under wraps, but that didn’t work. The reports are in and the news is out: Jesus lives, and that changes the way we see death!

It’s awfully ironic. Even folks who want nothing to do with Jesus like to look for evidence that there’s life beyond the grave. Some say Easter reminds us that as fall’s dying leaves are replaced by spring’s tender shoots, so humans die and go to another place after death. Some of you have been at the deathbed of a loved one since last Easter. Did you comfort your parent or spouse with the observation, “Isn’t it nice that October’s brown leaves give way to May lilac blossoms?” No!

When death is about to take our spouse, our parent, our child, our friend – or has already done so, they will hear from us, or we will hear ourselves, what the Savior says, **“Because I live, you also will live”** (v. 19). When you get close to death, don’t you want your spouse, your child, your parent or pastor to tell you, “Jesus didn’t stay dead, and you won’t, either!”?

Since the last time we gathered on a Sunday to sing *I Know That My Redeemer Lives*, death has invaded the lives of a number of our families. People you used to admire and counted on to be around aren’t around anymore. The Savior’s empty tomb doesn’t remove the tears. But it does shout the truth that your believing loved one lives in Jesus. That’s the full view of death!

Do our lives show that we no longer fear death because the Savior defeated death? Or will the way we resume living this afternoon make those who know us wonder why we bothered with the Resurrection Sunday service? The Savior’s empty tomb doesn’t make all our problems dry up and blow away. Before this week is over, some of us may face heartache or difficulty, trouble at work or tragedy at home. But the Savior’s empty tomb keeps us from despair because we have the full view of death: it isn’t the end!

Don’t let temptations in life or distractions in the world obstruct and block your view of the resurrection. The Savior’s empty tomb changes our view of everything that matters! If this is the first time in a long time you’ve heard what Christ’s death and rising from death mean, we invite you to keep coming back each week to hear it with us, to talk to the pastor about studying together in more detail the full view of God, of life, even of death – the full view on display in all God’s Word.

Without the resurrection, we would see God as sinister – slaying His own Son. Through the Savior’s empty tomb, we see the full view of God – saving the world through His crucified and risen Son! Without the resurrection, we’d see life as a dreary existence – living only to try to stay alive another day. Through the Savior’s empty tomb we see the full view of life – living every moment to praise our risen Savior. Without the resurrection, we’d see death as a horrible monster – waiting to devour us forever. Through the Savior’s empty tomb we see the full view even of death – becoming for us who trust in Christ the last, blessed step between earth and heaven. The Savior’s empty tomb gives us the full view of what matters forever, the truths that God uses His Word to keep in us forever. Amen.

Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen.

As we remain standing, we sing Hymn 146.