

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**April 28, 2019**

Hymns	155, 141, 165 & 167, 149
First Lesson	Acts 5:12, 17-32
Psalm	16 (page 68)
Second Lesson	Revelation 1:4-18
Gospel Lesson	John 20:19-31

Revelation 1:4-18

I Know That My Redeemer Lives

- I. As the living Lord
- II. As the guiding Word
- III. As the ruling King

Memorial Ev. Lutheran Church - Williamston, Michigan

In the name of Jesus, who conquered Satan by His dying and defeated death with His rising, fellow redeemed, rejoicing in His resurrection,

*I know that my Redeemer lives!* is a sentence that stirs our emotions. The joy of singing the hymn with that title, descant voices added to ours, seems like a foretaste of heaven. *I know that my Redeemer lives!* produces tears in many as we remember singing good-bye to loved ones with those words at their bedside and Christian funeral services. *I know that my Redeemer lives!* fills us with confidence for life right now.

Do things here seem less joyous than last Sunday? If so, it's not the fault of the risen Savior, but of the sinful nature trying to erode that truth within us and to separate that truth from us. *I know that my Redeemer lives!* is just as true today as it was Resurrection Sunday. That's what God tells us in Revelation.

Many regard Revelation as deeply mysterious. But the theme of Revelation is given us in this lesson: *The victory of Christ and His Church over Satan and all evil.* Jesus rose not just to be a trophy for Himself, but also to give His victory to us!

In this first chapter of the last book of the Bible we see strange sights, we hear strange phrases. But this is a set of word pictures from the holy lips of our living Lord Himself, showing us that He lives! The emphasis here isn't on our knowing, but on His living. I know that my Redeemer *lives* as the living Lord, as the guiding Word, and as the ruling King.

**I**

We know our Redeemer really rose. People saw Him alive for forty days after He rose. Then those people told other people, who told other people, who told others, and so on, until someone told us. One of those who saw Jesus alive after His death and who told others, "Jesus is risen from the dead!" is John.

Not John the Baptist; he was beheaded well before Christ was crucified. This is the John who was one of the twelve disciples, who followed Jesus to Caiaphas' court, saw Jesus on the cross, was given charge of Mary, ran with Peter to the empty grave, was behind the locked doors on successive Sundays when the risen Jesus appeared. This is the John who, by the Holy Spirit, wrote the words of today's Gospel Lesson and this lesson.

Get the point? We know our Redeemer lives because we see Him risen through the eyes of those who saw Him risen. The truth that Jesus rose is greater than it would be to see our deceased loved ones risen from death. Oh, that would be wonderful! But the truth that *Jesus* lives means He **“loves us and has freed us from our sins by His own blood”** (v. 5), the great Good Friday news. He sees what we need and acts in love to help us every day! Our greatest need, His greatest help, is freedom from guilt. The truth that Jesus lives guarantees that. We said that often last Sunday, but we can never get enough of that.

We know Jesus is our *living* Lord. He bought us; we belong to Him. He **“has made us His kingdom”** (v. 6). He hasn't forgiven our sins so we could be boxed up and taped shut, then set on a shelf until He comes to take us to heaven. He redeemed us to be vital in His kingdom work now on earth, active and vibrant in serving Him! Jesus is our *living* Lord who has **“made us also His priests”** (v. 6). We go to God in prayer as the Jewish priests did, praying to Him for ourselves and others.

Belonging to Christ, being His **“kingdom”** and His **“priests”**, may bring problems. John wrote Revelation, the Gospel of John, and his three letters from an isolated Mediterranean island. He wasn't on vacation; he'd been exiled by the emperor **“because of the Word of God and the testimony about Jesus”** (v. 9) – because John continued to speak the truth that our Redeemer lives. We won't be exiled if we tell others who Jesus is and what He has done, but we may be ridiculed. Will we let the threat of ridicule keep us quiet? No! Jesus is our *living* Lord! We are forgiven sinners – winners joined to Him to live and work in joy and confidence for Him and for His people!

## II

The reason so many don't bother to live the way God wants is God doesn't seem real to them. They can't see Him, hug Him, have Him over for dinner. Doesn't the Lord seem that way to us at times? Risen from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now far away? That's not the way it is! We know that our Redeemer lives – lives in us and speaks to us as the guiding Word.

The risen Jesus spoke to John, and John **“turned to see the voice that was speaking to me. When I turned I saw seven gold lampstands and among the lampstands was one like a son of man”** (vv. 12-13). At the end of this chapter, we read **“the seven lampstands are the seven churches”** (Revelation 1:20). Since **“seven”** is often a Bible number for completeness, these **“seven churches”** include you and me and all believers in the risen Jesus – *the whole Church of Christ*.

Our living Lord here tells us, “I'm right here among you! Yes, I've ascended into heaven. And, yes, I'm ruling there, too! But as true God, I can be in all places all at the same time!”

The risen Jesus isn't with us as a cheerleader shouting, “Come on! You can do it!” He is with us to guide us with His Word. That's what Christ taught by showing Himself to John **“like a son of man...clothed with a robe that reached to His feet, and around His chest He wore a gold sash”** (v. 13). Our Redeemer is still true man – has been since He was conceived in Mary's womb. But He's no ordinary man. He dresses in royal splendor. He is with us, among us, gives us constant direction. *Really? Where?*

In His Word! In His sacraments! His good news about His price paid for us guides us daily where to go to be cleansed from our damning guilt – to His cross! His holy Word guides us daily how to live as His forgiven, grateful children. His absolute truth guides us to see Satan’s schemes to deceive God’s children and divide God’s people, then guides us by His truth to resist all that! We know that our Redeemer lives to guide us as the Word Himself!

### III

What do the holy angels do in the presence of the mighty God? They bow before Him and worship Him! Dare we sinful humans take God lightly, think of Him as a good friend, then sit in His house and in His presence daydreaming or reading something else while He speaks? We gather here in reverent awe, not relaxed leisure. We speak and sing to Him with hearts full of wonder at the wonders He has done to save us sinners. Each Sunday here, each day out there, we live what we know and believe – that our Redeemer lives as the ruling King!

**“His head and His hair were white, like white wool or like snow”** (v. 14). Hardly ordinary! That pictures our King’s perfect purity. He is so far above us we can’t imagine His holiness!

**“His eyes were like blazing flames”** (v. 15). That’s not meant to terrify us. That shows us our living Redeemer sees and keeps in heart all people and animals, plants and materials He created. It also shows our living Redeemer uses His x-ray vision to see our sins, to see unbelief in the hearts of those who reject Him.

**“His feet were like polished bronze being refined in a furnace”** (v. 15) – in other words, durable, sturdy, and powerful. They show His strength to subdue Satan and all His enemies. We know our Redeemer lives with power – and uses it for us!

**“His voice was like the roar of many waters”** (v. 15). If you’ve stood near Taquamenon or Niagra Falls, you know the sound. Our ruling King uses His Word to speak to us in might, authority, and victory. Man is powerless to change His truth!

**“A sharp two-edged sword was coming out of His mouth”** (v. 16). His Word isn’t a set of suggestions. His Word is a sharp sword – the message of power to slice open and expose the putrid filth of our sins, then to cut us loose from guilt and Satan.

**“His face was shining as the sun shines in all its brightness”** (v. 16). No longer are our Redeemer’s forehead and cheeks streaked with blood and blotched with bruises. Rather, the Redeemer’s radiant face shows the exalted glory He has as the ruling King who raised Himself from hell-enduring death!

What happens when we realize we are in the presence of our living Redeemer, our ruling King? **“When I saw Him in all that majesty, I fell at His feet like a dead man”** (v. 17). When we sinners consider His glory, we realize we slap Him in the face with our sins and we deserve His punishment forever. *Oh no! We confess our sins against – and guilt before – that King?!*

We do! But our ruling King says to us what He said to John. **“Do not be afraid. I am the Alpha and the Omega** (the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet), **the First and the Last – the Living One. I was dead and, see, I am alive forever and ever!”** (vv. 8,17-18). Our Redeemer has no beginning, no end. His death looked like the end, but Jesus rose from death to give us life forever. What do we fear? **“I also hold the keys of death and hell”** (v. 18). He’s paid the price in full to free us from sin! He has the

keys to release us from death and Satan. He is our confidence! We know Jesus lives as our ruling King!

We have pictures of the Savior in our homes. But I doubt He looks on your walls as He does in these verses. There's nothing wrong with a picture of Jesus as our dear friend or Good Shepherd. But we don't forget our Redeemer also lives as our ruling King. Know that – and worship Him more reverently and joyfully than ever. Trust that – and serve Him more humbly and faithfully than ever. We know and live and rejoice in the truth that our Redeemer lives to save us! Amen.