

Easter Sunday  
Sermon Text: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26  
Related Text: Luke 24:1:12  
Date Preached: April 4, 2010

Alleluia. Christ is risen!  
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Billions of people have been claimed by its power. This one has cast a shroud over every family. This one has caused the weeping and sorrow of countless individuals.

No one has been immune to the power of this enemy. It has claimed the common everyday worker. The cruelest hardened criminals have not withstood its force. The rich, well-to-do, and most famous of individuals have not escaped its grasp.

Death has claimed every person who has ever lived. Yet today, the obituary of death itself has been written. The enemy of death is living on borrowed time. Death, the last enemy of God's creation is nearing its final breathe.

Death's fate was sealed when it laid claim to the only Son of God. Jesus Christ, the one who healed the sick and restored sight to the blind, was himself laid in the darkness of a tomb. Like all the others before him, Jesus seemed no different.

That was until sometime in the early morning hours of the first day of the week. The stone was rolled away. The wind of God that breathed life into Adam and Eve in the beginning of creation breathes life into Christ, delivering him from hell and breaking death's hold.

Christ's victory over death is a victory he shares with us. His resurrection from the dead paves the way for our resurrection on the last day. In sharing this victory with us, we experience a transformation. This transformation is one from fearing the finality of death to living in the joy of life, with the promise of new life to come.

While television shows like *Clean House* and the *Biggest Loser* highlight the transformation of those lucky to be televised, Christ is transforming our own lives in much simpler ways.

Take the women who journey to the tomb as an example of the transforming power of God at work. They are going to do a very simple act. They are going to anoint Jesus' body with the burial spices. This would have already been done had it not been that Jesus died so near the beginning of the Sabbath that they could not do so without breaking the Sabbath law.

So they go on this day. They arrive and the tomb is empty. An angel announces that Jesus has risen. Death's grip has lost its vice-like hold.

What is changed is how we view the simple acts that we do on a daily basis. No longer do we need to do good things so we can hopefully get to heaven. Our eternal life is a gift that is freely given and cannot be earned. Our Lord's resurrection frees us from the futility of trying. Death will not separate God from his children. Our future is in the secure hands of God.

The things we do now reflect the life Christ has won for us. To put it another way, how will I live my life in a way that is acceptable to God, not for the purpose of getting heaven, but for the purpose honoring the life God has given us in the present?

Instead of adding to rumors and speculation that tear away at the reputation of others, the kind words we say about our neighbors are life affirming. We go from tearing people down to building people up.

Simple things like reaching for an item on the top shelf of a grocery store for the stranger or stooping down to pick up an item that the lady with a cane at Barnes and Noble dropped on the floor can mean

more to the recipient than we realize. Such simple things affirm the value of life and are uplifting.

As we each strive to live our lives as God's children, our future is firm. Death, the last enemy is being abolished.

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