DEATH HAS BEEN SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY
I. It’s from Death to Life for Us
II. Because of Righteousness
1 Corinthians 15:51–57

SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 2021 | EASTER
THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

EASTER DAY

Old Testament Job 19:23–27
Psalm Psalm 118, CW p. 108
Epistle 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 or 1 Corinthians 15:51–57
Gospel Mark 16:1–8
Chief Hymn ELH 343

Hymns – ELH
352 Jesus Christ Is Risen Today, Alleluia
351 I Know That My Redeemer Lives
170 O God of God, O Light of Light
(Tune #459) Easter Hymn
355 Now Christ Is Risen
356 The Day of Resurrection

Faith & Our Savior Lutheran Churches
Medford & Grants Pass, Oregon
Edward L. Bryant, Pastor
EXORDIUM

Dear fellow redeemed, for whom our Lord entered into death, and for whose justification He was raised again from the dead:

The Lord Is Risen!

He Is Risen Indeed!

Do you realize that when you say, “The Lord is Risen!” you are saying so much more than if you just say, “Jesus is alive”? The victory of Jesus over death was not accomplished just by His going to heaven. He died and went to heaven on Good Friday; what happened on Easter was different. I am right in saying that my mother, my father, and all the saints still live; they live in heaven. But that isn’t what we celebrate today. We celebrate not just of the immortality of the soul that goes to God while the body returns to the dust. We celebrate the mystery of what happened to Jesus – His resurrection.

The significance of Christ’s resurrection is that He has defeated death for us and won resurrection for us. “But as it is, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead also comes through a man. For just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:20–22, CSB)

This is what is ours at the last day when the trumpet call of the angels echoes across the whole earth “all who are in their graves will hear His voice and come out-…” (John 5:28) and “The dead in Christ will rise first.” (1 Thess. 4:16)

It will be the same for all believers, whether living in their bodies or “asleep” in the grave, our souls in heaven. So it is written, 1 Corinthians 15:51–57 (CSB)

51 Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. 53 For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality. 54 When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place:

Death has been swallowed up in victory.

55 Where, death, is your victory?

Where, death, is your sting?

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

And so let us thank and praise Him together as we rise and sing the Easter Hymn. “Alleluia, Christ Is Risen.”

(🎵)

The Festival Hymn (All Rise) Easter Hymn

Tune: Hyfrydol – ELH #459

1. Alleluia, Christ is risen; His the scepter, His the throne;
   Alleluia, His the triumph, His the victory alone.
   Hark! The songs of joyful Zion Thunder like a mighty flood:
   "Jesus out of every nation Has redeemed us by His blood."
2. Alleluia, Christ is risen; He has conquered over death.  
Alleluia, He has given perfect life to us by faith.  
Grateful hearts and voices raising, we shall praise the King of kings;  
Ceaseless thanks and cheerful praises down the ages joyful ring.

3. Alleluia, Christ is risen, life to give where needed most;  
Alleluia, He the firstfruits of the resurrected host.  
He has led me through the valley of death's dreadful gloom and shade,  
With his gentle staff and comfort, leads me to a world remade.

4. Alleluia, Christ is risen, Worthy is the Lamb once slain;  
Alleluia, He redeemed us by His rich and bloody stain.  
Wealth and glory, strength and blessing, wisdom, honor, songs we raise,  
To the Lamb upon the throne: Unto Him be endless praise!

“Unto Him be endless praise!” indeed!  
This year we have been preaching from the epistles, and so today, as is usually the case,  
the inspired epistles interpret, giving us the “why” and “what it means” of the historical realities  
recorded in the gospels.  
So in our Gospel lesson today Mark records the straightforward declaration ““Don’t be alarmed,” he told them. “You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they put him.”” (Mark 16:6, CSB)

The whole fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians is a dissertation on what this means for us, and particularly in these (nearly) last words of the chapter Paul addresses what will for us one day be a reality, for

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Change is coming for all people, and Paul is here telling us of the change that will come to all the faithful.  
Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.  
Scripture speaks of the change in many ways, but always in terms of joyful rescue from death and sin as in the words of Isaiah, “When he has swallowed up death once and for all, the Lord God will wipe away the tears from every face and remove his people’s disgrace from the whole earth, for the Lord has spoken.” (Isaiah 25:8, CSB) Sorrow and tears be gone! Hello righteousness!

But Paul focuses in on what will happen to our bodies, whether we are living, or newly raised, things will be absolutely different. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed. For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality.  
Just as our bodies are suited to this present life, they will be suited to eternal life. Right now this body is corruptible, something I am aware of more and more each year. It is wearing
out and it is approaching death, which is to say that it is mortal, doomed to die. Unless the Lord returns first, the day will come when each one of us will take our last breath, our hearts will stop, and our souls will have no earthly place to live. Sorrow, grief, separation, pain all are connected with such death.

But in a twinkling, that will all change. This corruptible body will be changed, and the new body will last eons – it will last forever – without growing weary or faint or breaking down or being afflicted with disease. And therefore we who have immortal souls will have also immortal bodies. As God created Adam and Eve perfect as beings with both body and soul, so we will be restored to that perfection: Immortal body and immortal soul.

Just as our bodies are now suited to enjoy all the blessings of this mortal life on earth, our resurrected bodies will be suited to enjoy all the blessings of whatever the New Heaven and New Earth may be, as the apostle John prophesies. “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:4, CSB)

II. Because of Righteousness

How can this be? The first answer to that is “Because God is the omnipotent creator.” But that has always been true. The important thing is the victory over sin. Sin has been our mortality problem. “… sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all people, because all sinned.” (Romans 5:12, CSB)

What will make the difference in the defeat of death and the gift of immortality is the righteousness that is ours through Jesus Christ.

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56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Death is the punishment for sin, and sin has power over us because of the law that says, “The soul who sins shall die. …. ” (Ezekiel 18:20, ESV) But the law has been fulfilled FOR US by our Lord Jesus Christ. The righteousness of His perfect life is ours, and He made satisfaction for all of our sins. (Once again!) For “He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21, CSB)

As Paul wrote to the Romans, the instant of our resurrection is coming and inevitable. “Besides this, since you know the time, it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, because now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.” (Romans 13:11, CSB)

May you spend part of each day reflecting on the perfect promises of God, and the perfect immortality that await us because …

The Lord Is Risen!
He Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

AMEN! This is most certainly true.