

Easter 2023 Message

Text: Matthew 28:1-10, “Go to Galilee, there you will see Him”

Alleluia Christ is Risen! Christ is risen indeed Alleluia!

How about a little Holy Humor this morning?

Jesus, Moses, and Noah are all walking down a road one day. Moses asked, ‘have you performed any good miracles lately?’ They hadn’t. So he proposed a challenge. To cross a flowing river.

Noah said he would go first, and in no time flat, had a large boat constructed from the local timber and had floated peacefully across to the other side.

Moses, deferring to let Jesus go last, raised his arms and commanded the water to part for him, allowing him to walk calmly across the now dry riverbed.

Jesus stood by patiently and watched as his two companions crossed the expanse.

When it was his turn, he casually strolled out across the top of the water, but shortly into his stroll he started to gradually sink into the surface of the water. By the time he reached the other bank, he barely had his head above the surface of the water.

Moses and Noah both took a step back to evaluate the situation. After several minutes, Moses snapped his fingers and said...

“Ah-ha! I think I’ve figured it out! I bet the last time you tried that trick out, you didn’t have those holes in your feet!”

On that first Easter morning, Matthew tells us there was a great earthquake and that an angel descended from heaven and rolled back the stone. The two Marys came to see the tomb, but much to their surprise they were greeted by the angel saying, “Do not be afraid; I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, he has been raised, as he said.”

Our Bishop from East Central Wisconsin Synod of the ELCA, Anne Edison Albright in her Easter message, reminded us this week to pay attention to the words, “Do not be afraid” in the Bible. Any time there is a “Do not be afraid, the good news is soon to follow... and sure enough... “He has been raised.”

The two Marys are then called by the angel to be the first messengers of the good news to the disciples. So they left quickly with fear and great joy, only to be encountered by the Risen Christ himself. Jesus also said, “Do not be afraid.” What is going to follow? The good news. “Tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”

What’s the good news? Go to Galilee. There you will see Jesus. What does that mean for us today? To go to Galilee? What does Galilee represent today?

Remember, Galilee is where Jesus started his public ministry. We as readers are to go back to the beginning of the Gospel. We are to read for ourselves. Galilee is where Jesus was baptized... identifying with us sinners in every way. Galilee is where Jesus called the first disciples out of their daily jobs, to leave their old lives behind. Galilee is where Jesus taught the Sermon on the Mount, you know the one that says, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. In everything do to others as you would have them do to you.” Galilee is where Jesus touched lepers and was willing to become unclean himself in order to heal them. On the Sea of Galilee, Jesus calmed storms with a powerful word. This is where he cast out demons and fed people who were hungry. This is where he welcomed little children into his arms and taught us to become more childlike.

I am starting to get it. Galilee is everywhere. Galilee is where we meet people who are hurting or are in need... Galilee is when we feed hungry people. Galilee is visiting the sick. Galilee is in our own communities... our own families. Galilee is in Ukraine and Russia. Galilee is in our schools. Galilee is in Guatemala where we go on mission trips. Galilee is at the Bletzinger House down the street. Galilee is in church every weekend where 2 or 3 gather in Jesus’ name

and share in the word and sacrament where Jesus promises us grace and forgiveness.

In Galilee, we will meet a God in Jesus Christ, who loves like no other. He forgives like no other. Welcomes like no other. And He heals like no other.

The resurrection of Jesus opened for us a way to life that really is life. It is a way through the cross moments in our lives. The times when we are at the end of our ropes. It is a way of hope. And when we die or our loved one's die, it is the way to eternal life.

Alleluia, Chris is Risen! Christ is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!