

Easter Sunday Sermon April 4, 2021

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Happy Easter to all! This is the great Paschal celebration where we travel back in time and follow Jesus from Gethsemane, into the judgement hall, witness the trial, the crucifixion and today the resurrection.

In the worship life of the church, we highlight and accent two parts of Jesus' life. The first is Jesus' birth, or incarnation. With his incarnation, God took our nature upon himself and became fully human just like us. God became a man. These days, people are turning themselves into all sorts of different things. Men turn themselves into women. Women turn themselves into men. Both turn themselves into something in between or try to become persons with no gender at all, if that were really possible. In this climate of people changing, we engage in the celebration of the greatest change ever, when Jesus, the son of God was incarnated into human flesh.

The second part of Jesus' life we focus on is his resurrection. Why would Jesus want to become human like us in the first place? Jesus became one of us so that he could save us. Born in the stable, he became one with us in nature. On the cross, he became all of us as our representative under the just judgement of God and died in our place. Jesus' mission was successful – it worked. We know it worked and that Jesus served his purpose because he is back from the dead. Now risen, Jesus has life after death for us all, and we reign over death as his eternal brothers, sisters, and friends.

The Bible has been showing us God's plan to bring new life for a very, very long time. After their fall into sin in Eden, God demonstrated for Adam how to take the life of an animal and then use the skin for clothing that would not only give them a more durable covering than fig leaves for their nakedness but would also later protect them from the elements as people spread into less hospitable regions of the earth. In the great flood, most living flesh died. However, God brought forth countless generations of the living from those he kept safe in the ark. Abraham's wife Sara was beyond her child-bearing years and barren to boot. Nonetheless, God caused them to have a son Isaac, and promised that the number of their

descendants would be as the stars in the night sky. In the death of Pharaoh's first-born son Israel was released from their bondage and slavery in Egypt and started a new life in the promised land of Canaan. A similar miracle to Abraham and Sara happened with Zechariah and Elizabeth, both also well past the childbearing age and she barren. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the temple and foretold they would have a son. They did, and we know him as John the Baptizer. And finally, of course, the pièce de résistance, when Mary gave birth to the Son of God even though a virgin!

We are told the Creator brought forth everything that exists out of nothing that existed before. God can do what for us is the impossible. Let there be no doubt then about what he has been trying to say to us in the Bible. Let there be no doubt about the life after death we have in the power of Jesus' resurrection!

We are fortunate that Easter falls in the spring here in the northern hemisphere, the top half of the earth. We celebrate the resurrection just as the Daffodils are blooming and plants are coming back to life after the long, dark, cold winter. The earth helps us in our celebration of Jesus' return from death and hell. And we also take heart that, we, too, by means of God's Word of promise, our baptism, and the body and blood of the Lord, live in the same power of life that Jesus has. We are no longer just born from below. We, like Jesus in Mary's womb, are born from above and we are born of the Spirit of life.

God bless us as we celebrate and participate in Jesus' resurrection. God inspire us as we remember Jesus' return from the tomb on the third day. God help us to firmly hold on to the eternal gift we have in Jesus, the Son of God, who leads us through this life and into the next. Amen.

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