



“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” St. Mark 10:45. The death of Jesus on the cross and His resurrection pays the entire penalty of sin and guilt by the grace of God. Through His death on the cross, Jesus propitiated God's wrath toward all people, that is, Jesus satisfied God's anger toward sinners and reconciled us to God. The death of Jesus on the cross also destroys the power of sin to hold us, therefore, we are rescued from Satan through the obedience, death and resurrection of Jesus our Savior. Through the one time sacrifice of Jesus, His death frees us from the oppression and enslavement sin causes as Jesus says in **St. John 8:36 “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”**

The Resurrection of Our Lord is the High Festival of the church year as the Scripture teaches the great comfort we receive by the triumphant victory over the grave won by Jesus. The great comfort we receive by the resurrection of Jesus shows us that He is God's Son. **“He was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead...” as the sacred writer states in Romans 1:4.** No one but God's own Son could defeat our enemies, sin, death and the devil and give to us forgiveness of sins.

The resurrection also shows us that the sacrifice of Christ was accepted by God the Father for the reconciliation of the world. **“For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life” Romans 5:10.** From this work and mercy of Christ all who believe in Christ will also one day be raised to eternal life as Jesus told Martha in **John 11:25-26: “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die.”** Jesus makes the resurrection of believers clear in **John 14:19** as well when He says, **“Because I live, you also will live.”**

The Resurrection of Our Lord is the very heart of the church year, the High Festival sometimes called the “Festival of Festivals and the Feast of Feasts!” When Christ steps triumphantly out of His tomb, the victory is complete our eternal salvation is secure through this life saving, life giving work of our Savior who gave everything that we would be reconciled to God the Father. Jesus is the foundation, the cornerstone of the church, the author of our faith who keeps us secure through Word and Sacrament while we work in His church on earth until He comes again and takes us to be with Him forever in the joy of our Lord.

The Day of the Resurrection of Our Lord is not just one day in the church year but a season including seven Sundays of Easter, including Ascension Day. The ancient church viewed the Easter season as 50 days consisting of Easter Sunday to the Day of Pentecost. Those 50 days were considered days of overwhelming joy for **Christ had risen! He had risen indeed!**

On Easter Sunday, we hear the Gospel of our Lord, the resurrection, the witness of Scripture to His victory over death and the grave forever. The Second Sunday of Easter focuses on Thomas who the Lord brought from doubt and fear to faith and trust in and through Christ. Our faith is strengthened in the words of Jesus **“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” St. John 20:29b.**

The Fourth Sunday of Easter celebrates Christ as our Good Shepherd, while Ascension comes on the Thursday after the Sixth Sunday of Easter. The Seventh Sunday of Easter reveals Christ who is at God's right hand in all His glory, intercedes for us, His church and prepares a place for all who believe. And while the Easter season ends with Pentecost, yet every Sunday as we gather for the Divine Service to hear God's Word and receive His gifts is a great celebration of Our Lord's Resurrection.

The Resurrection of Christ makes clear that Christianity is the world's only true religion since all “world religions” rely on salvation by good works. Therefore, Christ's Resurrection teaches and assures us of the doctrine of justification by faith which is the heart of the Christian faith, giving enduring comfort to all who believe. The hymn writer points to our trust in Christ forever as we follow Him throughout life.

**Now I will cling forever
To Christ, my Savior true;
My Lord will leave me never,
Whate'er He passes through.
He rends death's iron chain;
He breaks through sin and pain;
He shatters hell's grim thrall;
I follow Him through all.**

LSB 467 “Awake My Heart, With Gladness” verse 6.

In Christ, Pastor Ahrendt