

# Lutheran Spokesman



Matthew 28:1-10

<sup>1</sup>Now after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. <sup>4</sup>And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

<sup>5</sup>But the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. <sup>7</sup>And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.”

<sup>8</sup>So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

<sup>9</sup>And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, “**Rejoice!**” So they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him.

<sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, “**Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.**”

# The Meaning of Easter

*"What does this mean?"*

Those words may sound very familiar to you. Martin Luther used them as he wrote his catechism. As he set forth the basic truths of the Bible, over and over again he asked the question, *"What does this mean?"*

In asking that question, Luther was following the example that was set several places in the Bible. For example, when the Israelites first observed the Passover, God told them: "It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, ... that you shall keep this service. And it shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' that you shall say, 'It is the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households'" (Ex. 12:25-27).

We get the distinct impression that God didn't simply want the people to

do the act of celebrating the Passover. He wanted them to KNOW WHAT IT MEANS. So it is when we have our young people learn and memorize the truths of the Bible—this isn't done just for the sake of exercising their memory; we want them to learn what those truths mean.

So it is with Easter. What exactly does it mean when we read or hear that those who went to the tomb found the place empty where Jesus' body had once lain?

It is unfortunate that all the Easter account means for many is that it is a time to have an Easter egg hunt. For others Easter has nothing to do with Jesus' rising from the dead (they say He never did); to them it is simply a time to celebrate new beginnings.

Is that all Easter means?

The apostle Paul says it this way: "If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!" (1 Cor. 15:17) If Jesus had not come back from

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the dead, it means that the death He died on the cross was not the payment the Father wanted to cover over the sins of the world. If that were the case, all the hopes we have of life after death wouldn't be worth the paper they are printed on. "Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:18-20).

Jesus is alive! He has come back from the dead! And we know this is true because God has recorded it for us in His Word, and that Word cannot be broken. God cannot lie. When He tells us Jesus is alive, we know and accept it as truth!

*"What does this mean?"* Listen and rejoice over what the Bible tells you!

Since Christ is risen from the dead, what He said is true: "Because I live, you will live also" (Jn. 14:19). In His resurrection we have the assurance that we who believe in Him will also not perish, but have everlasting life (see Jn. 3:16).

God help us make our celebration of Easter more than just another holiday. Instead may our celebration be a day of true joy, because we know what Easter means. We can join with Job in the words he wrote, "For I know that my Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last on the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job 19:25-27).

This IS most certainly true!

—Pastor Paul Krause



## The Victory is Ours through Jesus Who Won the War

*Talk about war has been a leading topic of discussion in our country as well as elsewhere in the world.*

This dreadful subject matter is taking place in the civilized world not because of any sadistic pleasure. No peace-loving person has delight in war—what with all the pain, suffering, sorrow, and destruction that it brings. This kind of talk takes place because of the presence of hostile enemy forces that threaten the physical welfare of their neighbors.

Sad to say, talk about war has occurred in every generation of time. And as long as this sin-cursed world endures, this distressing topic will con-



tinue to be discussed; as the Bible reveals, there will be wars and rumors of wars until the end of time (Mt. 24:6,7).

While this is our temporal lot as citizens of this world, yet as citizens of the eternal kingdom of God we can rejoice with unending praise and

thanksgiving over the greatest war that was ever fought and won—by our Savior Jesus Christ.

On the battlefield of Calvary, shortly before Jesus delivered the final and decisive blow to the enemy of our soul by laying down His life on the cross, our Lord sounded the victory cry, "It is finished!" And then on the third day following Jesus' triumphant death, God the Father certified that His Son had won the war—by raising Him from the dead!

Jesus' resurrection leaves no room for doubt that He was successful in gaining the victory for us as our Savior. At this Eastertide, please take the time to reread and reflect on those beautiful Bible passages that reveal what Jesus' victorious resurrection means to us, namely—

\* that He is the true Son of God who was able to bear all our sins and fully suffer the deserved penalty for them, and thus was powerful to win for us God's complete forgiveness (Rom. 1:4; 4:25);

\* that His resurrection shows Him as the promised Head-crusher who destroyed the power which the devil had over us to drag us down to hell (Gen. 3:15; Heb. 2:14,15);

\* that His death and resurrection have made it possible for us to daily put to death our sinful nature through contrition and repentance,

and to lead a godly life (Rom. 6:4,5; 2 Cor. 5:15);

\* and that His resurrection has secured for us a life of immortality in the future heavenly world where there will be no such thing as wars or any kind of conflict (Jn. 11:25,26; 2 Tim. 1:10; Rev. 21:1-6).

Contrary to the many nay-sayers in this world who question the truthfulness of Jesus' teachings in the Bible and tell us that we are foolish to believe that Jesus is man's only Savior, Jesus' resurrection proves that His Word and teachings are true (Jn. 2:19), and that our Christian faith is not vain and empty (1 Cor. 15:12-20).

When we look back upon the military wars that were fought and won for us by our soldiers, the graves of the fallen serve to remind us of the great sacrifices that our valiant soldiers made in our behalf. They laid down their lives so that we could enjoy temporal peace, safety, and freedom.

In this season of the church year, as we look back upon the ultimate battle of all time, the empty tomb of Jesus not only reminds us of the supreme price that He paid as our victorious Savior, but also of the glorious fact that our lifeless bodies will be raised in glory on the Last Day to life everlasting (Jn. 14:19; Php. 3:20,21).

—Pastor Mark Gullerud



## EASTER EYES

The Communion Proper Preface for Lent speaks of Him "Who on the tree of the cross didst give salvation unto mankind that, whence death

arose, thence Life also might rise again, and that *he who by a tree* once overcame might likewise by a tree be overcome."

The "he who by a tree" is the devil, now overcome by the Cross. The devil used a tree in a garden to make us spiritually blind. He had promised sight. "Your eyes will be opened," he said. But a terrible blindness came instead. "Then their eyes were opened and they knew that they were naked ... " It was a nakedness more than physical. They no longer saw their God as the benevolent Creator and Provider of all things advantageous to them. *They* had to see to that *themselves* from now on, according to this new sight.

Those words "then their eyes were opened and they knew ... " occur in one other place in the Bible, involving two other people (on the Emmaus road). Their eyes had been at first "restrained, so that they did not know" their God and Savior, as He walked with them. But not restrained for long.

Satan had been quite active earlier on in the Gospels—unsuccessfully at Jesus' temptation, and again later when he spoke through the mouth of Peter. But then, alas, successfully in the last week of Jesus' life. He entered Judas and removed whatever saving grace Judas saw in Jesus.

Before long there is another garden (Gethsemane), another tree (the Cross), another death. But this death will restore sight and Life! For this final week of Jesus' life is a complete reversal of the damage begun after that very first week of history. Everything had become unraveled—but Jesus knits it all together again.

### **Jesus Restores Sight**

Satan had used deceptive words to bring about blindness. Now Jesus uses the words of the Holy Spirit to restore sight. "Beginning at Moses and the

prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Through these words and His familiar action of breaking bread, these two Emmaus disciples obtained their Easter eyes. "Then their eyes were opened," we read, "and they knew *Him!*"

Their hearts burned within them over the joy of a Savior and over the repentance and remission of sins soon to be spread through the world. This blessed warmth replaces the searing guilt and shame that has plagued us ever since Adam and Eve remorsefully realized what their sin had done, after God promised them a suffering and conquering Savior.

"The Lord is risen indeed!" the fellow-disciples said. The two gladly concurred. And no fig leaves now! For the Spirit who came to breathe new life into them also offers new clothes: "Tarry in the city of Jerusalem," Jesus said, "until you are endued (clothed) with power from on high."

God rested when Creation was done. And Jesus "rested" on the Sabbath when His work of Re-creation was finished, then rose triumphant from the grave. He holds out a new heaven and earth to us. We shall "not perish, but have everlasting life." Thank God we too are given Easter eyes to see it.

"Easter is a clear day; from it you can see forever!"

—Pastor Em. Warren Fanning



*Alleluia!*

## *I Believe in the Resurrection of the Body and the Life Everlasting*

CREDO (Latin for "I believe")! One of the earliest confessions of faith was a baptismal formula reflecting Matthew 28:18-20. "I believe in God the Father; I believe in God the Son; and I believe in God the Holy Spirit." This confession grew into the Apostles' Creed. Another striking confession of faith is contained in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

As time went on, phrases were added to these creeds in order to reflect the confession of the truths of Scripture in the face of specific errors and attacks on Christian teaching.

The ancient creeds affirmed a belief in the "resurrection of the flesh." It was necessary to add this specific confession in view of the Gnostics, who taught that the physical body was inherently evil. This reflected the errors of the Greek philosophers who saw the goal of afterlife as becoming a pure, spiritual being. The preaching of the cross was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks. The preaching of Jesus' physical resurrection from the grave was a stumbling block to the liberal Sadducees and was also foolishness to the Greek culture and world. In fact, when Paul preached in Athens about the "unknown god," the intellectuals listened until Paul

spoke of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. "And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, 'We will hear you again on this matter'" (Acts 17:32).

It is no wonder then that Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15, emphasized the reality of the physical resurrection of the body. "But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen" (1 Cor. 15:13). If there is no physical resurrection of the body—then our faith is vain. If there is no physical resurrection of the body—then we are false witnesses. If there is no physical resurrection of the body—then we are still in our sins. If there is no physical resurrection of the body—then those who died believing in Jesus have perished (1 Cor. 15:12-19).

The good news of Easter is "But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits (pattern) of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). Jesus will destroy that last enemy, DEATH, when He returns on the Last Day and the dead are physically raised from their graves. Who can even imagine what kind of a body this might be? (1 Cor. 15:35-49) We shall bear the image of the heavenly Man.

Death will be swallowed up in victory! "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; 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 shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory'" (1 Cor.15:50-54).

Christianity in the 21st century has become a "here and now" religion. Some mainline churches even question the necessity of believing in the fact of the physical resurrection of Jesus. Preaching about everlasting life has taken on a nebulous fairy tale about some vague non-physical existence. Some children are not very excited about going to heaven because they think that they will be sitting around on a cloud all day playing a harp. What is even more chilling is the growing New-Age return to the ancient heresy of reincarnation—the idea of coming back in different forms of life until a person achieves nirvana (spiritual nothingness).

This reflects the bankruptcy of modern Christianity. Modern man looks for something in terms of this

physical present creation, which itself groans and travails in anticipation of the glory to come in connection with the resurrection of the body.

The Bible promises the restoration of the paradise created for Adam and Eve. We look forward to a new heaven and a new earth. We look forward to a new physical life with God. We confess with the church through the ages, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting." The gospel is the proclamation that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

The CLC needs to get back to the basics. We need to focus on the preaching of the blessed hope of everlasting life in Paradise. We need to celebrate Jesus' physical resurrection from the dead every Sunday, as did the early church. We need to emphasize the fact of the resurrection of the body and the hope of life everlasting. Jesus has abolished death by His resurrection and brought life and immortality to light. "Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

—*Pastor John Schierenbeck*



**Some VBS Children at Redemption Lutheran Church, Seattle (Lynnwood), Wash., display their "coats of many colors" after studying the life of Joseph. John Hein is pastor.**

# Understanding Our Faith

—Pastor Daniel Fleischer  
(From a series of bulletin articles)

*Christ's resurrection, itself an attested historical event, is conclusive evidence that God has reconciled the world unto Himself. It is the foundation of the Church, the life and breath of each believing heart . . .*

## EASTER SUNDAY

Easter! It is the oldest of Christian festivals. It is the most joyous for those who are well grounded in the knowledge of Christ.

The early Christians were often in sadness because they were persecuted and in danger for their lives; but on Easter day they lifted up their heads. Their hearts were filled with joy. They embraced each other, crying out to one another: "The Lord is risen!" — "He is risen indeed!" This is the most glorious news contained in the entire gospel. Jesus—who died and paid the debt demanded by the Law—restored life by His resurrection. He lives to die no more and has become "the Author of salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Heb. 5:9).

Martin Luther wrote on the wall of his room "He lives! He lives!" to remind himself daily that Jesus, the promised Messiah, had come and fulfilled the will of His Father. He suffered and died, but lives as our Savior, King, and Advocate with the Father. When the morning sun was rising and chasing away the shadows of night, Jesus rose from the dead and chased away the shadows of death. He promis-

es in His Word, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (Jn. 14:19).

Christ's resurrection, itself an attested historical event, is conclusive evidence that God has reconciled the world unto Himself. It is the foundation of the Church, the life and breath of each believing heart that pilgrims through this life but yearns for something better. "Here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" (Heb. 13:14).

That is the Christian faith. The event of Easter makes it real and guarantees that the believer in Jesus shall come to the better life.

Human existence is in reality one long procession to the cemetery. That is reality. But for those who are alive in Christ, the procession is but a rite of passage, for Jesus says, "He that lives and believes in Me shall never die" (Jn. 11:26).





This sermon was first preached at St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Denver, Colorado, June 10, 1967 by Pastor Victor Tiefel; its compelling thoughts will be printed here in two parts—

## A Sermon Study of Psalm 23

### Part One

#### Psalm 23

*The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want.*

*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.*

*He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

*Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.*

*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*

Of all domesticated animals, sheep are well-known for their helplessness in the face of predatory animals, birds of prey, and the elements of nature such as storms and wintry blizzards. They are panicky, prone to wander away, and, unlike other animals, seldom return to the fold without the coaxing and guidance of shepherd and sheepdog. In our psalm, which is the devout confession of a believer's abiding faith in the Lord Jesus, a king likens himself to this helpless animal and fervently expresses his faith that "The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want."

Yes, the greatest and most powerful king ever to rule Israel was not

ashamed to admit that he was unable to take care of himself, that he was indeed a human being quite helpless and panicky, prone to wander from the right paths, and much like a sheep in every respect. He realized that he needed God to shepherd him. We are all aware of David's terrible adultery and murder in thought, word, and deed—and his confession to Nathan, the priest God sent to him.

The haughty unbeliever would never admit to such a need but prides himself on being rather like a fox, clever and resourceful, well able to take care of himself. But children of God have learned that they need shepherding—that they are utterly dependent on a gracious, providential God.

Therefore I invite you to make this confession of a king your very own confession of faith by saying, "The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want." You have two wonderful reasons, for 1) tenderly He feeds me with succulent food in pastures green; 2) tenderly He leads me ever onward toward the heavenly fold.

### Part 1

Consider first of all, "tenderly he feeds me with succulent food in pastures green." With God as your shepherd, you cannot be in want, because green pastures and still waters are yours. In our own country the areas where sheep are grazing are many and

varied. Some areas are parched and dry, alkali and arid. Sheep have a difficult time, and the shepherd must herd them hither and yon; they roam far and wide to find sustenance. But also in our very own Rocky Mountains quiet pools of refreshing water await, where sheep can quench their thirst.

So it is in man's wandering life here upon this Earth. People everywhere are wandering about shepherdless, without direction, aimlessly living out their pitiful lives without the advantages of real food for their souls, real waters to satisfy their thirst. The solutions which they find prove to be mirages; their philosophies are inadequate and vain; their latest notions and schemes are unworkable; yea, man's noblest aspirations and attainments never satisfy, and their finest morals are immoral to the eyes and mind of their Creator.

Men and women become weary in their search. And when Jesus descend-

ed upon this Earth to become their Shepherd, we are told that—in His travels of teaching and preaching and healing—when He beheld the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd (cf. Mt. 9:36).

How wonderful then for all of you who have heard the voice of the Good Shepherd and learned to follow that voice and only that voice . . . for has He not led you into green pastures and beside the still waters of His Word and Sacraments? How soul-satisfying are not the eternal truths found in His holy Word, compared with the parched, barren, and fruitless thinking and notions of the would-be-wise of this Earth? Here you may lie down to rest; here you can drink to your heart's content from the Rivers of Salvation.

*(To be concluded)*



**A study of the Christian's relationship with his Savior and what He expects of the Christian in connection with being in the world but not of it—**

# **IN THE WORLD BUT NOT OF THE WORLD**

## **Part III. WHAT IT MEANS**

There is the stern warning that our hope not be defiled by associations with this world that would conflict with our confession of that hope: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with

Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not

touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

We sometimes speak of 'open' and 'secret' idolatry. When one worships a Christless god, his idolatry is obvious. What is less obvious and more insidious is the idolatry of covetousness: "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: . . . covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). A covetous heart, never content, is defined as idolatrous. It is a denial of the goodness, grace, and protection of God: "Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" (Heb. 13:5).

To that end, we need to guard against materialism—a bondage to the 'mammon' of this world: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mt. 6:24). Oh, how burdened and confusing life becomes when our devotion to the Lord wanes, and bondage to mammon waxes. While we are in this world and often need to do business with this world and procure our needs (and may receive and use with thanksgiving its various attractions, 1 Tim. 4:4), we need to remind ourselves that our real treasures are out of this world.

Just as the Lord has blessed us with many material gifts and provisions with which to serve and glorify Him in this world, He has also given us a body which, although corrupted by sin, is sanctified by the Holy Spirit, who

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dwells in us. The human body has been endowed with a design and desire for sexual relations. This is God's gift to husband and wife, and affects in a complex way the identity of each and their relationship together. Nothing complicates and distorts that fruitful and pleasurable relationship more than unlawful sexual passions and activities.

Furthermore, such a corruption of the desires of the body makes it a temple inhospitable to the Spirit: "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:18-20).

The world has always perverted this desire, but now with the overwhelming influence of various media—assisted by technological advances unthought of a few decades ago—Satan has ingenious ways of bringing temptation and sexual perversion right into our homes. James reminds us to "keep one's self unspotted from the world" (Jms. 1:27).

This applies not only to the acts of extra-, pre-, (and post-?) marital sex and not only to homosexual perversions, but also to the application of modesty and purity in speech and attire. We should take care not to tempt others to fall into the same pollutions we have escaped.

Finally, we would mention what one commentator mentioned as a chief flaw of the world: pride. The Tower of Babel was the ultimate symbol of rebellious man: a glorious tower built to the heavens as a mark of man's rebellion against God's will—his great declaration of independence from God's claim on him. Debased pride has always led to violence, misery, and grief.

In contrast, those who are Christ's need not boast in themselves but rather delight to honor God and give preference to others, for at the core of our Christian self-view is this, that God will in due time exalt us, without our seeking it of Him. "Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in

due time" (1 Pet. 5:5-6).

We are in the world, but not of it. As we greet every new day, we do so renewed and regenerated through the Holy Spirit, putting off the flesh through repentance and putting on the new man through faith in our risen Lord Jesus. Ultimately, as was said earlier, we live in this world as an extension of Jesus. We are in the world for the sake of the world! At His ascension He gave His apostles the great commission: "Go therefore into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk. 16:15-16).

We are in this world, not to join it nor to withdraw from it, but to shine a divine light upon it—that light that has shined in our hearts in the face of Jesus Christ: "You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine that men may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 5:14,16).

—Pastor Peter Reim

*Editor's note: This is the third and concluding portion of a shortened version of an essay delivered to the June 2002 West Central Delegate Conference, Denver (Lakewood), Colo.*



**Ladies of Redeemer,  
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Church, Sister  
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December 2002**

# "CLOSE COMMUNION"

Or: "Who is to be admitted to the Lord's Supper?"

## Second In A Series

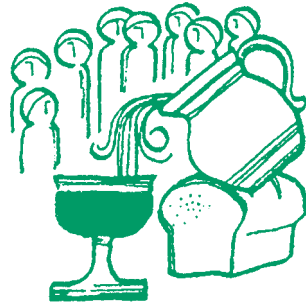
Christian congregations and their called ministers are only the administrators of the Lord's Supper, not "lords" over it. It is not our institution but Christ's, as the words of institution clearly show. We are not permitted by Scripture to practice "open Communion"—or close it off to those Christians for whom Christ has appointed it.

This points up a possible tension between what some might see as "church rules and regulations," and "the needs of the people." If such tension arises, it can only be resolved with great compassion for souls, evangelically (under the Cross) and with a high regard for the written Word of God.

"Open Communion" is commended by many denominations today—Lutheran, Reformed, Catholic. This happens where both "the preaching of the gospel" and "the administration of the Lord's Supper" are no longer—or very feebly—understood, or in some cases never understood at all.

For confessional Lutherans the distinction is this: The preaching of the gospel is for all, believer and unbeliever alike; but the Lord's Table is appointed only for those who have already come to faith in the Christ of the Scriptures, have openly professed it, and are faithful to Him.

Pastor Martin Luther observed this distinction well: "Thus Christ did. He delivered His sermons to the multitude for everybody, as the apostles later did,



so that every person heard them, believers and unbelievers; whoever caught it, caught it. We must do the same. But the Sacrament we are not to cast among a crowd. When I preach the gospel, I do not know upon whom it takes effect; but here I must be convinced that it has taken effect upon those who come to the Sacrament. Here I must not act in doubt, but be reasonably sure that the one to whom I give the Sacrament has laid hold of the gospel and has true faith."

Thus a true shepherding is involved, and it causes one to think that—of the words used in the previous article as synonyms for "close"—perhaps the best and warmest one is the word "enclosed (Communion)," which bespeaks a certain tenderness.

The Word of God is taught in order to do two things—to bring people to the knowledge of their sin and awakening them from it, and to bring them to faith in Christ their Savior. Without words this would be impossible; therefore people must not be barred from preaching, as this would lock the door

of grace for them.

With the Lord's Supper the case is different. By it a person is not to be given the first beginning of repentance and faith, nor for the first time obtain grace and become a Christian. First comes the Word, then this Sacrament. And by this Sacrament the grace previously obtained through the gospel becomes confirmed, preserved, sustained, and furthered—and the existing repentance and faith is intensified.

We notice how Jesus (as in Matthew 9:35) went from place to place to preach the gospel; and how (in Luke 10) He sent seventy disciples out to do the same. But note how He first celebrated His Supper in the small circle of disciples, enclosing them in His pastoral (shepherd's) care.

Early Christianity carried on in this fashion.

—*Pastor Em. Warren Fanning*



# The Discourses of Christ

*the Samaritan Woman at Jacob's  
Well—John 4:1-14  
Part One*

## Jesus—the Source of Living Water

It was time for Jesus to return from Judea to Galilee. Most Jews would have detoured around Samaria to avoid contact with the Samaritans. The Jews saw the Samaritans as an inferior, mixed race which had corrupted the Old Testament worship by freely mixing in the ideas and pagan practices of the world's religions.

The racist attitudes (that ran both ways) between the Jews and the Samaritans made the likelihood of an unpleasant and even hostile incident a distinct possibility, if not almost a certainty. So it was that few Jews found it necessary to go through Samaria.

However, on this trip Jesus found it necessary to go through Samaria—not because He was in such a hurry to arrive back home in Galilee, but rather

because of the gift of living water which He alone could bring to these lost sinners. Jesus deliberately crossed the ethnic barrier that had been deeply entrenched over several centuries, so that He could bring words of life to a despised people, a people He loved.

After a long day in the hot sun, Jesus was ready to rest when they reached the town of Sychar. Jesus stopped at the very location where the patriarch Jacob had dug a well so many centuries earlier.

While the disciples went into town seeking provisions, Jesus rested at Jacob's well. He rested and waited—not waiting impatiently for the disciples, but waiting for the arrival of this Samaritan woman. Upon her arrival Jesus made what would seem to be

quite a natural request. He asked for a drink from this woman, who had just drawn water from the well. For the woman it was a most surprising request, for she easily recognized Jesus as a Jew.

Jesus reached across a great divide that day, a divide that was far greater than the ethnic divide the Samaritan woman had recognized. Jesus reached out to this woman in the midst of her daily life as she filled one of her daily needs. Jesus led her to the fulfillment of a greater need. With His request for a drink, Jesus made the transition from the temporal to the spiritual.

### Jesus Reaches Out

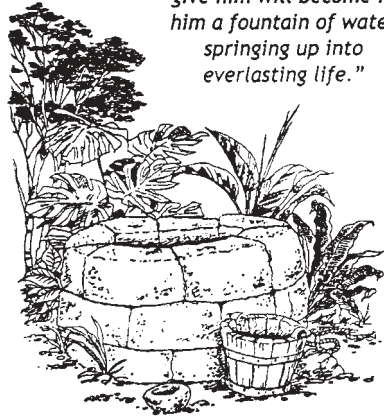
As much as water has always been one of our greatest daily needs, Jesus provides a greater necessity from a most enduring and wondrous Source. Jesus presented Himself to this woman as the Source of "living water"—a water which He alone can give and which permanently alleviates the inner thirst of sin-parched souls.

Jesus understands every aspect of our lives. Even as we are busily seeing to the demands of daily life, Jesus reaches out to us. He can and often does use the circumstances of life to lead us back to His Word.

Jesus understands our needs better than we do ourselves. He understands our need for Him to bridge that deeply entrenched barrier that blocks our relationship with God. The Savior comes to us that we might learn of Him as the Source of the water of life, for He would receive to Himself the people of every land and nation.

We are refreshed with the spiritual water of the gospel of Christ when, through the Word, He reveals to us the

*"But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."*



true nature of His mission, that He came to Earth to be the atoning sacrifice for our sin. Only Jesus could serve as this payment for sin, since only the divine Son of Man could be both precious and holy before God, a sacrifice sufficient to cover man's massive debt of sin, thus satisfying divine justice.

The precious message of sins forgiven—completely forgiven by the merits and mediation of Christ Jesus—is the water of life.

What the Holy Spirit does with this wondrous message demonstrates the power this living water possesses. In each heart where this water of life refreshes, the Spirit causes a fountain to spring up unto everlasting life.

One would never expect a fountain to spring up in the midst of a desert by simply pouring water upon the parched, cracked soil. To have a sudden spring of water come forth from the desert—a fountain that produces wondrous evidence of life, a fountain that continues without end—would be miraculous indeed!

This is what happens within the sin-parched desert of a human soul when

Jesus pours His loving gospel into that heart. The heart springs forth with life, an immediate life that has an eternal duration. This is more than bringing hope for the Lord's presence in this life; it is a sure promise of everlasting glory before the Lord!

How blessed we are to have been given to drink of the waters of life which forever relieve our souls of the parching thirst of sin and death. How refreshed we are by the water of life which is in Christ Jesus!

—*Pastor Theodore Barthels*



*From the Chapel Talks file of Prof. Em. Paul R. Koch—*

## The “Word” From TIME?!?

On occasion, your favorite news-magazine gives its readers a break from political maneuverings, stories of starvation in Africa, of the genocide called abortion, . . . and gets religious. Such an article may appear at Christmas-time, or New Year's, or Easter. You will notice the cover right away—Abraham is featured, or perhaps a photo of inter-galactic space with one beautiful blue star amid the heavenly host. Yet any heart-warming that you might begin to feel gets quickly chilled by a title like this: "What does science tell us about God?"

Do you anticipate a scientific approach to Christmas? Or a report on scientific research into Creationism? The average (even the non-Christian) reader will be sparked to a few preliminary thoughts, just from the cover. "Maybe I should be more interested in science, and perhaps I should be interested in God, too; and maybe there's a connection discoverable . . . maybe a clue to God out there in the cosmos . . . maybe at Easter."

But the discerning Christian also knows that the question is off course in a bad orbit. The article itself will be

well-written, but as you read you discover that it does NOT answer what science tells us about God; rather, it gives what scientists have to say about there being a God—which leaves entirely unanswered the lead question: "What does the cosmos tell us about God?"

I have read such a TIME-ly article—twice; and if you read it, you will feel your umbilical cord being twisted when without explanation a Bible verse or two is printed in soft green ink—quotes that are familiar to the Christian. Of course, the magazine does not give the location of the citations they deserve, and interspersing God's Word into such an article seems like dropping pearls into hog-swill.

Dear reader, the world is going to hell in a handcart, and some of the pushing is being done by your favorite news-magazine. If yours should present such an article, be on guard; let the Spirit of God Himself temper how you respond to such impressive agnosticism and such deep-sounding shallowness on a subject already explained to us by the One who has written the definitive article on it (consult Genesis



1 and 2).

Indeed, if a searcher for God wants to know some generalities about God, he will leave his magazine behind, go outdoors on a clear night and take a telescopic look at the cosmos to learn what even the deist knows: The heavens DO declare the glory of God; and the firmament DOES show His handiwork (Psalm 19). For those invisible attributes of God are clearly seen in the created cosmos, being understood by observing the things that are created—that is, the attributes of God's eternal power and divinity (Romans 1).

But the person who wants to progress beyond ascertaining merely the existence of God—and get to know Him personally—will do what one does for any other personal relationship: he is not content to merely observe what the person has accomplished in his job resume—he will set up an appointment for a personal interview. Face-to-face you get that person to explain himself, to present his deepest thoughts on matters affecting you and the world. That's how you get a feeling for his integrity, his intelligence, his morals.

Do that with God, and you will become eye-witness to what the evolutionary theorist is still struggling to discover: Who IS God, and what are His intentions with this race of semi-intelligent mammals on this special glob of planetary matter?

When that pilgrim is honored by searching the Scripture, the searcher for truth can know that God has already and adequately revealed Himself in the divine Person born in Bethlehem, that God has communicated Himself adequately in this record (the Bible) of His deeds and doings for

humankind.

And then the light can go on in the human brain also—Aha! Here I get answers from God about science—not answers from science about God. Now I am getting answers from God about humanity—not answers from humanity about God. The Bible gives me answers from God about me and my place in His plans—not answers from me about God's place in my plans!

Follow the green print, dear people—the evergreen record of God's love for all mortals, shared with us again this past Christmas season in His own TIME-less way.

Indeed, science or scientists or secular magazines are not sufficient of themselves to tell us with any perceptivity that they have any true knowledge of God as Redeemer; our sufficiency comes from the Creator-Redeemer source of everything; we have been blessed with God's sufficiency in and with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior (2 Cor. 3:5).

Blessed be His Word and Person among us! Amen!!



*“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor. 15:20).*

## Preparing For War

Hardly anyone is ignorant of the fact that our country is preparing to go to war as part of the war against terrorism, though the if-and-when is still being debated. Residents of Corpus Christi have a stark reminder of it whenever they cross the harbor bridge. Below are cargo ships loaded with trucks, tanks, humvees, jeeps, and helicopters. In the distance equipment is being staged for loading aboard ship. We are reminded that this world is a very dangerous place. People have different opinions about particular wars and now about going to war against Iraq. But of one thing we are sure and it is not debatable. According to Romans 13 it is the divinely appointed role of civil authority to be God's minister, an avenger to execute (carry out) wrath on him who practices evil. We need to pray for our government leaders that they will have the wisdom to discern when, how, and if to exercise the full use of their authority to go to war at a given time and place. Theirs is not an easy task. They too must answer to the Lord for their actions. They surely risk divine retribution if they should fight a war for personal reason or to promote their own political agenda. Whether or not the country goes to war, preparation is essential for the possibility.

In war people always suffer; many die, not only of the military, but also of the populus. In this country the people on the street have not endured the ravages of war, because until 9/11 wars for the most part have been fought on

foreign soil. But the war against terrorism knows no boundaries, and potential to suffer casualties here cannot be dismissed.

Let us Christians lay aside the bravado that suggest that we have no fear. The fact is that we do have fear; we too have concern. We too could suffer pain and loss if war should come to our country or city. So the question—Are we prepared for war? We speak in the spiritual sense. Paul exhorted in a different context, but with words that apply here: "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

In whom is your faith? Pity those whose faith is in the might of arms. Is it in smart weapons? Is it in fallible men? A sorry object of faith.

Blessed are they (we) whose faith is in Jesus Christ who guides and controls the destinies of men and nations, but who above all else has made our peace with God the Father through His death upon the cross. In Jesus we have access to the throne of the Father who for Jesus' sake hears our prayers, even as we pray for our leaders, our nation, and for the hope that war can yet be averted. As an exercise of our faith we will pray that the will of the Lord prevail, knowing full well that His will for our eternal salvation has already prevailed. Jesus has overcome the enemy of our soul, the devil. It is our faith that if here we should suffer pain or loss, anguish and affliction, it is Jesus who will carry us through, and who will turn away evil from our house, or in

*continued on p. 20*

## LIFTING HIGH THE CROSS



For a number of years the members of Ascension Lutheran Church, Tacoma, Washington have been worshipping in temporary quarters, looking forward to construction of a permanent worship home. After various “city hall” delays, ground was finally broken last September. In February when the church was about 3/4 done, Pastor Em. Bert Naumann scanned us some e-mail photos, including a rather dramatic illustration of the popular hymn.

Jack Mayhew (l.) of Valentine, Nebr. with the rest of his main crew, Doran and Warren.



The crew’s go-fer Bert Naumann (front), who is now a member of Ascension. See also next page.

greater mercy bear us home to heaven.

Unfortunately Christians so often take the Lord's blessings for granted. If the present situation serves as a wake-up call to give ourselves to hearing the Word, receiving the Sacrament, and immersing ourselves in the love of Christ, then whatever occurs we will have profited. There is no greater folly that to be spiritually unprepared. Whether war occurs, whether or not it comes to our country, home, or family, or whether we are permitted to live out our life in peace, the question remains, Are we prepared?—an important question because we are surrounded by death and march inexorably toward our own death however and whenever it comes!

Faith says, "The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Psalm 46:12). There is no greater Refuge than our Lord! No greater promise than that heaven is our home! No greater faith than that one day we shall be with the Lord! No greater wisdom than to be prepared!

*—From a Sunday Bulletin of Resurrection Lutheran Church, Corpus Christi, Texas; Daniel Fleischer is pastor.*

## Announcements

### BB Camp/CLC Youth Camp

This summer there are two opportunities for your children to get to know others in the CLC and enjoy their fellowship on the campus of Immanuel Lutheran College. From June 20-22, girls in grades 5-12 can participate in a basketball camp. Beginning in the afternoon of June 22 and running through June 28, boys and girls in grades 4-8 can attend the CLC Youth Camp. Information on both of these opportunities can be found at [www.ilc.edu](http://www.ilc.edu). Once there, click on NEW and choose Girls' Basketball Camp or CLC Youth Camp. Your Pastor should also have information on these events.



Ascension, Tacoma Pastor Paul Naumann and the new cross