

The Savior Risen Again

Preached in New Hope Reformed Fellowship Church, Middleville, MI,
on Sunday morning, April 17, 2022 by C. VanSteenselen.

Text: Mark 16:6-7
Psalter 320:3-4
Psalter 77:4-5
Psalter 181:1,4
Psalter 196

Congregation,

Most likely, we all know someone who died. Maybe it was a mother, a grandpa, or a husband. What happens at such times? It is a time of weeping and mourning. This is followed by a funeral. The body is laid in grave. You bring the last honor. But what does often happen after this day? You still go to grave. Why is that? To remember this person. His last remains are there. Yes, you know, the person will not come back. But it is the last straw. Yes, you know that the person is dead. Only at resurrection he will be alive again. Those that know about such loss have felt the power of departing from one another.

Also, this morning few women go to the tomb. They just lost a loved one. It is only three days ago. Yesterday, they rested on the Sabbath. Now they are on their way to the grave. Why? To show the last honor. To take care of His body. But what will they hear? This ‘dead’ Person is alive again. He is risen. This message shocks them. How can this be? But yes, it is true.

Theme: The Savior Risen Again

- I. Seeking for a Dead Savior
- II. Hearing about a Risen Savior
- III. Seeing a Living Savior

I. Seeking for a Dead Savior

By a Terrified People

Who are looking for the Savior? It is a terrified people. We read in verse 6, “And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted.” Who is speaking here? The previous verse says, “a young man.” Who is this young man? Is it one of the disciples of Jesus? No. Is it maybe the young man that fled away in Gethsemane? No. Who then? We find his description in the previous verse. He has a “long white garment.” Luke speaks of, “Shining garments” and Matthew, “[His] countenance like lightning and his raiment white as snow.” What does that refer to? Purity. Holiness. God. So, who is it? It is an angel. Matthew makes that clear, “The angel answered and said unto the women, “Fear not ye” (Matt. 28:5). But to whom does the angel speak? The text says “them.” Who are that? For this, we have to go back to verse 1, “Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome” (16:1). These are the women that followed Christ. They have love in their heart for their Savior. But what does the angel then say unto them? “Be not affrighted.” That means, do not be alarmed, terrified, and astounded. One commentator says that this is stronger than the phrase “Fear not” which was said to Mary. Yes, the same word is used when Christ feels the heavy wrath, “[He] began to *be sore amazed*, and to be very heavy” (Mark 14:33). But why were these women affrighted? Because they saw an angel. See our previous verse. Can you imagine if you would see one? Right after dawn you see a shining being. Note that the word shows that their fear was ongoing. It needed to stop continuing.

Application

Are there those among us that are frightened? You came to know the truth that God exist! That gave you much fear. Why? Because you saw His holiness and purity. You saw as were His ‘shining clothes’ and ‘radiating face.’ In that light, you see your own sinfulness and dirtiness. And how then can you stand? If you think about eternity, it means to meet God. And you cannot meet Him! That brings much fear! Then the messenger of God brings no longer a word of a man but of

God. Then God has to say, “Fear not!” Why? Because there is hope in Christ. In Him, you can be saved.

Are there also those that have never been frightened? Then you do not know God. You do not know the truth about yourself and your sin! Think about the moment that you will die. Then you will meet God. Do you think that this will not frighten you? It will. Then you wish to run away. You will ask the mountains to fall upon you. But that will not happen! Yes, the Bible says, God is holy. He is a consuming fire. Ask Him, “LORD show me who thou art! Show me who I am.” Yes, then you will have fearful moments when you realize who you are. You fear your own heart. And you will fear who God is. In that way, the LORD cuts off all that is of us. But then He will also reveal Christ as covering for sin. But what was the problem of the women? They sought a dead Savior. No, not living one.

For a Dead Savior

We find this in verse 6, “Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth.” Luke adds, “Why seek ye the living among the dead?” (Luke 24:5). It is true. They sought Jesus. They looked for their loved One. They tried to find their Savior. But what is the issue? They do not remember that He will raise again after 3 days. Jesus had said, “The Son of man must suffer many things...and be killed, and after three days rise again” (Mark 8:31). Ah, now they experience the first part. But they had forgotten the latter. Do you see how blind they are? Do you notice how little they understand? What does the angel say? In Luke 24, we read, “[Ye] seek the living among the dead” (Luke 24:5). Yes. They sought. They sought to find Him. It is the same word that you can find in Matthew about conversion, “For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that *seeketh* findeth” (Matt. 7:8). But here, they sought one that was dead. One without life and diseased. One buried. Notice that the word for dead is in the plural. That means they sought Him among dead people. But what had happened? Christ became alive again. Our text says, “the living [one].” He is alive again. He is recovered to life. He is no longer dead. The word “living” often refers to God. Peter confesses, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the *living* God” (Matt. 16:16). Yes. Jesus is alive. Even more, He has life in Himself! He is the Living One. Later Peter says, “Whom God hath raised up...because it was not possible that he should be holden of it” (Acts 2:24). Do you see how strong this is? He must arise.

Application

Congregation, what or who do we seek? Do we seek the things in this world? Do you go after a career, family, and riches? That will end in death! You say, “Is that really true? How do you know? May we not enjoy the world?” Well, what does the Bible teach us? “The world passeth away, and the lust thereof” (1 John 2:17). Those that only have their treasure in world will perish with world (Matt. 6:19-21). How then do you get eternal life? By seeking it in Christ. By true faith in Him. Jesus said about Himself, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). It can only be found in Him. We urge you, seek it in Him. Why? Because you are dead in sins and trespasses. Only He can make you alive!

Those among us that are convicted, where do you seek your salvation? Is it in keeping the law? Do you try to pay what you owe God? Ah, that will never work! That is the way of death. Do you think that God can accept it? No! Do not seek a dead Savior! The letter of the law kills, but the Holy Spirit gives life (2 Cor. 3:6). Forsake all ‘good’ works. Deny yourself and flee with your burden to Jesus Christ.

Child of the LORD, is it not true? How often do we not seek a dead savior? Oh, yes, in our tears and experiences. Yes, it is true, there will be tears! We will experience weeping. But we can never end in it. No, that is death. Seek the living Savior. Seek time and again the resurrected One. He can give life and maintain it. Seek it in Him. These women sought a dead Savior. But what do they hear? That it is a risen Savior. Our second thought.

II. Hearing about a Risen Savior

A Crucified One Rising

We will first hear that the risen Savior was crucified. Verse 6 continues, “Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified.” The question is, who arose? Yes, One that was dead. But more. It is One that is true human. We read, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Why is that mentioned? This is His Savior’s name. The One that will save His people from their sins. He came from Nazareth. That was a little place on earth. There, He grew up in his youth. It was even the fulfillment of a prophecy, “He shall be called a Nazarene” (Matt. 2:23). The phrase “Jesus of Nazareth” is only found few times in the Bible. When do we read about it? First, when the Devil cried. He saw Jesus’ holiness and was afraid to be destroyed (Mark 1:24).

Second, when a sick person asked for mercy (Mark 10:47). Third, some said that Peter had been with “Jesus of Nazareth” (Mark 14:67). Lastly, it is mentioned with the men walking to Emmaus. They call Him “Jesus of Nazareth, a mighty prophet” (Luke 24:19). And this Jesus, a true human, “was crucified.” No, this is not just a dead person arising. But One that was crucified. The way how Mark describes it is that the action is completed. He wants to emphasize that it truly happened. At the same time, the word shows that it has still result for now. Oh, yes, for a normal human it is impossible to raise. But this is even more true when someone is crucified. Yes, crucifixion is a horrible death. We have heard that before. No one can survive this. But this One that is raised has power! He is raised! Yes, with all the wounds on His back and on His hands. Ah, for some, this name is a reproach (Clarke), but here it is the name with the hope for salvation. Yes, all this was to emphasize that He had been truly dead but that it was no longer the case.

True church of God, what does the Bible say? Are you not crucified with Christ? Yes. Ah, what is that painful! And that lifelong. Yes, being crucified. But there will come a moment that you may lay that crucified body in the grave. Yes, that includes life with all its difficulty. It includes all your sins, all your wrongdoings. That will all remain there. And was it not true? You were taught about Jesus of Nazareth. Ah, what was He precious! Yes, a human. Needed to be able to suffer and die! But! He *has been* crucified. It is no longer the case. Why? He had power to arise. And in that way, He has the power to resurrect sinners too.

Sinners in our midst, what do you think of Christ? Is the problem not that He has no value? Maybe you find Him a good Person. Maybe you think that He did much good. But, it is not for me! Do not see? He is powerful! He overcame death. One day you will meet this risen Savior. And what then? Then you will see His power. Will that be for your advantage? Oh, no! Then it will frighten you. Why? Because He has the power to hand you over death. But this Savior still seeks dead sinners. He has the power to arise. Plead then with Him. Ah, yes, the women in our passage sought. What was it? One that was crucified. Jesus of Nazareth. But all has changed. He is risen. That is what we will see now.

A Hearing about Rising

They will hear that He is risen. Verse 6 continues, “He is risen.” No, He is no longer dead! He is no longer in the grave. But He is risen. What a glory and what a joy! A risen Savior. Now those frightened women may hear it. The angel tells them, “He is risen.” What does that mean? That He is risen from the dead. He is alive! This is also what Christ exclaims about Himself in Revelation, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore” (Rev. 1:18). How is that possible? Because He *is* the resurrection and the life (John 11:25). Note that it does not say that He has it, but that He is it. It is part of His being. But how is Christ risen? In our text it is passive. Someone else did it. But who? It is the Father. Paul says that His resurrection was “by the glory of the Father” (Rom. 6:4). But it is also by the Holy Spirit. Again, Paul writes in Romans, “The Spirit of [God] that raised up Jesus from the dead” (Rom. 8:11). Do you see? A triune God is involved in Christ’s resurrection. What does it show? That the Father agreed with the payment of the Son. But if we compare this with other Bible texts, we see at other times that it is active. That means, Christ himself has the power to do it. We read in Luke, “The Son of man must...the third day *rise* again” (Luke 24:7). Here it is active, by His own power. Yes, it also means that hereby He is declared to be the Son of God, “Declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Rom. 1:4). He is the powerful One. He is the One with dominion. He is the King.

Application

Church of God, what does it mean to you? You in all your misery. We have heard that Christ is alive! He is risen! He has all power. He overcame sin and death! What a majesty! Ah, what did it take a long time before you saw that moment. Ah, what was there much strife. What did you have much doubt and fear. And then to realize, He is risen. What did it show? That the Father agrees. When you were taught more, what did you see? I was crucified with Christ, but also that I was risen with Him again. Why was that? To walk in newness of life. To follow Christ wherever you go. Have you experienced that Christ resurrected you by His own power? Do you know of that He was declared to be the Son of God? Ah, He is so powerful. He is able to do that. What a hope the church of God has. He had power to make me alive. And now? He gives power to continue in that life. Yes, you constantly need His grace and blessing. Without that, you would go astray.

Young friends, where do you seek your life? Ah, it seems that the world has life. But it does not. May LORD open your eyes. May He show you that there is only One way of life. That is in Christ Jesus. We encourage you, seek your life not in world but seek it in Him. Ah, yes, God knows man’s frailty. How do we know? Well, the women do not only heard about the resurrection. They are also given proof for it.

A Proof of Rising

This proof is found in verse 6, “He is not here. Behold the place where they laid him.” Is this not strange? The proof of Christ’s risen is that He is no longer in the tomb. The angel says, “He is not here.” It is true, Jesus Christ “*is not* the God of the dead, but the God of the living” (Mark 12:27). He is no longer at this place. His body is no longer here. But was this not exactly what the pharisees will argue for? “His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept” (Matt. 28:13). And now, this is the proof for the women that He is risen. How can this be? What is then important for a true Christian? To walk by faith, not by sight. Paul wrote, “We walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). This is also true for the women. This would be a test of faith. Do they believe the word of the angel? Yes, they will receive some proof. But still, true faith is needed. But angel says more, “Behold the place where they laid him.” Who had done that? Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (John 19:38-42). But why does the angel refer to it? Well, what had happened before? These women had seen where Jesus was laid, “Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid” (Mark 15:47). They had seen with their own eyes that His body was laid there. And now they see with their own eyes that His body away. But remember, the linen clothes are placed orderly in one spot. The cloth around Jesus’ head was in another place (John 20:7). It means that everything was orderly. There was enough proof for them to believe that He was raised.

Application

Dear believer, is it not often true like the women? We have the Word of God. But at times there can be so many doubts and fears. Then you say, is it for me? God can certainly save another but me? That is hard to believe, even impossible. Have you experienced that? Some forefathers said, “It is easier to pluck a star from heaven than to believe!” Do you know of that? You ask, is that Biblical? Absolutely. What do we read? “Faith [is] not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). Ah, but what does then often happen? Yes, God knows their frailty! He knows that they cannot believe. Then He gives some proof. Then He says, “Ask a sign. I will give it. Try me, and I will answer.” Then they may have moments that faith in exercise. Then they can believe, it is also for me. Yes, that is a foretaste of heaven. Why? Because then faith will turn into beholding. What shall that be!

Those unknown with this, does the text say something about you? Yes. It shows that some things are true that we do not see. Yes, there is even proof for it. Heaven and hell do exist. But you might think that it is not true. Ah, we can assure you, how many have returned from death? If you die, will you then return? But what would come later? The women and disciples would see the Savior alive. That is what we see in our third thought.

III. Seeing a Living Savior

The Command

The angel gives the women a command how they will see the Savior. Look at verse 7, “But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter.” Will the women see the risen Savior directly? No. First, their faith is proven. What must they do? Two things. First, to go away, and second, to tell about Christ’s resurrection. The angel says, “But go your way.” It begins with but. That shows a transition and contrast. As if the angel wants to say, the proof is an “empty tomb,” but go and tell this to the disciples. Yes, the women have to “go their way.” That means they have to depart and to go away. The angel commands. Interestingly, it is a continual command. You could translate it, “Keep going away.” At the same time it is a gentle command, no not harsh. It is the same as Jesus said to the Syrophenician woman, “For this saying *go thy way*; the devil is gone out of thy daughter” (Mark 7:29). What a love was involved in that command. But had these women only to go? No. This was a means to try their faith. Would they believe it or not? What did they have to do? The angel said, “Tell his disciples and Peter.” This is a one time action. But still, it is a test. Who do they have to tell? The disciples. Those unbelieving ones. Those weeping and mourning ones. Mark describes them, “They mourned and wept” (Mark 16:10). What a tragic. Their Savior is dead. And now the women have to tell them about the resurrection. Yes, even more, also to Peter. Ah, that denier. He did it even three times! Can imagine how that would have been for him? He had denied his

Master. Afterwards, he had wept bitterly. But then His master was crucified. And at this moment He was dead. How could it ever be right again? Do we see the special care for Peter? They have to say, “Peter, He lives.”

Application

Congregation, how often does God not try one’s faith? Then things happen in life. Then God’s child faces difficulties and moments of impossibility to continue. What does a child of God then do? Then he cries out to God. What does God want to teach then? Follow me in all things. Ah, what do they often fail. Then they think that they know better than God. But the LORD has to teach them again and again to obey His command. Yes, if it would be about the child of God himself, it would be a great failure. But when grace is involved such tests become times of purification.

Those that do not know Christ, has the passage to say something to you? Yes, certainly. God commands, “Repent from your sins. Believe in Christ.” Maybe you think, how can that save me? Is that a means of grace? I do not understand. It is true. It is impossible to understand. If you think about it, it is foolishness. But we have many things in life that we do not understand. Think about our conception. But it works. Will you then not test if God’s Word is true? If you do, then you will see the results. No, then you will not only hear of but also see a risen Savior. Because what do the women have to tell the disciples? That Christ is risen? Indirectly yes, but it is phrased in a different way.

The Place

Where will they see Jesus? We see this in verse 7, “That he goeth before you into Galilee.” Interestingly, it does not say, “Tell them that He is risen again,” or “Tell the disciples that Jesus is alive.” Yes, this is mentioned in Matthew, “Tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead” (Matt. 28:7). But in Mark, we read only, tell them that “He goeth before you.” Of course, this can only happen when someone is alive. Why does Mark say this? Do we remember what Jesus had said? “But after that I am risen, *I will go before you* into Galilee” (Mark 14:28). The angel simply refers to Jesus’ own words. He does not add anything extra. No, but he goes back to the trustworthy Word of Christ. One commentator says, “To be going before [them] implies leadership.” It shows them that Jesus is still their Master. He determines what and how. But where do they need to go? Is it Jerusalem? Is it the place of crucifixion? No! Is it maybe a place in Judea? The locations where Christ had done so many miracles? No. But it says, “Galilee.” Yes, this was the country of the gentiles (Matt. 4:15). This was a region, according to the pharisees, where no prophet arose (John 7:52). But why there? Well, here Jesus began His preaching. This is the place where the roots of the disciples were. Yes, they were called here. Matthew Henry says, it was for their recovery. It was to get again a clear mind. In Jerusalem, they would only be among strangers, but they did know Galilee. We also believe that it was for another reason. What? From now on, the gospel had to go to the gentiles. What gospel? That of the risen Christ.

Those that know God, how often is it not true? Yes, you have had many experiences in the past. There were moments of tears and joys. You had times of fear for God and sights on sin. You had some light on the Savior’s death. Ah, in that period, it was like one day you can believe to belong to God’s people, but another day you can not. It is up and down. Ah, then there are times of true longings for God, but also times of dryness of heart. But what does God want to teach? Experiences are important. It cannot be without. But! It is not the foundation! With such trials, God refers back to His own Word. Then He says, “What have I said in My Word? Those eat the body of Christ and drink His blood have eternal life. Not those that feel or experience.” No, it is those that eat and drink. Then God brings you back to the first moments. Then you may look back. And you see, yes, LORD spoke. Yes, it was from Him. Ah, what was I blind.

Are there those that live in that spiritual Galilee? Those Gentiles? What do we see in our text? God seeks such. Gentiles. How? By bringing them the gospel. Also now, the gospel comes to you! You! No, not your neighbor. What do you do with it? Will you deny it? Then no sacrifice is left. Ah, be reconciled to God! Or do you think that God does not want save you? Ah, forget that thought. He seeks lost people. You are lost. Lost! What is the problem? You will not! You have no desire for salvation. Please, do not perish! It will be terrible that will be true for you. Then you will weep forever. Weep without end. Pray this Savior. Then He will save you from sin. But in our text, what will happen in Galilee? There Jesus Christ will appear. That is what we will look at now.

The Appearance

What do we read in verse 7? That Christ will appear unto the disciples. It says, “There shall ye see him, as he said unto

you.” Before the women return, the angel points forward. Yes, that is a great contrast. First he had said, “He is not *here*.” Now the same angel says, “*There* shall see.” Yes. This location is miles away. About 70 miles. What will happen there? We read, “Shall ye see.” Yes, they will see with their own eyes. They will perceive and behold Him. A similar scene will take place on the last day, “Hereafter *shall ye see* the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Matt. 16:64). What a powerful appearance is that. Yes, even a Kingly one! No, our text does not say, “Maybe ye shall see Him” or “If all well ye shall see Him.” No. They will see Him. What a blessing. But who will they see? Our text says, “Him.” That means Jesus of Nazareth. The Christ. The King of Kings. Even more, that will be their Savior and their Beloved. They could cry out, “He is all together lovely.” Yes, even more than now. What blessed communion will they have with Him.

Application

Church of God, have you learned that? He is not here! At the beginning of that tender life, they seek their Savior among the dead. They seek it with the law, God’s people, self-righteousness, or even in the covenant. But then they are told, He is not here. Seek Him not there. Maybe you are under such distress. Then your question is, where do I find Him? It is where He told you! That is in His Word. How? By faith. If that happens, what then? Then you will see Him! Yes, at His time. No, not yours. He reveals Himself when He wants. When you may see that, what a wonder is that. Then you see Him in all His beauty. Then you cry out, “He is altogether lovely. Such One is my beloved.” One day you will see Him fully. Without any darkness. What a blessed day will that be.

Unconverted listener, seek this Savior. No, you will never find it in the world. You will never find it in yourself. But if you seek Him, you will find salvation too. Yes, that will give much strive. It will give many challenges. But the end is sure. What a wonder if such sinners will be saved! No, that is not a fruit of their own field. But if that happens, it is only by Gods grace and mercy. Then it is true, a triune God raised Jesus Christ. A triune God raised me. And then it will be true also, a triune God will be praised by me.

Conclusion

Congregation, what truth we have heard from this history. By nature, we all seek dead saviors. But this morning, we also heard about a living Savior. He is risen. He is alive. He can give life. He has done this for the true church. Yes, they are risen with Him. And they will rise again the last day. Then it will be for them for an everlasting joy. For an everlasting praise.

But those who do not know this, He can still give it. Oh, yes, He has the power to do it. Beg him for that. Why? Also, you will be raised on the last day. But the question is, How? How? Will that be for everlasting joy or for everlasting contempt? Amen.