

He Lives to Give me Proof and Peace

Second Sunday of Easter

BETHEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | York, Nebraska

April 16, 2023

SERIES THEME: HE LIVES!

Life is full of either/or moments where you face an unavoidable choice between two alternatives. Some of those moments are relatively insignificant. Either I have the chicken, or I have the fish. Other times, they shape the course of your life. Either I accept this new job offer, or I keep my current job for the remainder of my career. Either I accept his marriage proposal, or.... Some either/or moments are bigger than others. Here is the biggest either/or of them all. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. One might ask, "How does that either/or affect me?" Because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and Savior from sin. He said the proof is that he would rise from the dead. "The Son of Man must suffer many things ... be killed and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). Thus, if Jesus remains dead, he is both failure and fraud. However, if Jesus rose from the dead, he proves he is who he claimed to be— the Messiah. And he did what he came to do—save us. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. That means, either Jesus is a complete waste of your time, or he is your only hope for salvation. If Jesus is still dead, it is completely logical that you should want nothing to do with him. If Jesus rose, it is only logical that he becomes the center and greatest priority of your life. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. This season of Easter is a 50-day-long celebration of the fact that the Holy Spirit has answered that either/or for us. We believe this life-changing truth. Christ is risen! He lives! Throughout this season, we explore what that means.

THEME OF THE DAY: HE LIVES TO GIVE ME PROOF AND PEACE

Thomas had been taught and trained by Christ himself. He heard Jesus predict his death and resurrection. Yet, even after hearing the eyewitness testimony of friends, who all saw the resurrected Jesus, Thomas had doubts: "Rising from the dead. That can't be possible!" Today is a day of great comfort for any follower of Jesus who wrestles with doubt concerning Christ's promises or doubts about God's Word. Jesus does not come to rebuke Thomas' weak faith. Jesus comes to strengthen Thomas' faith, giving him proof of the mind-bending reality of the resurrection—to let him feel it, touch it, explore it. Jesus didn't reject Thomas. Jesus engaged Thomas and gave him peace. Still today, Jesus comes to his disciples in Word and sacrament. The living Lord speaks to us. He lets us partake of his true body and blood. When we show weakness of faith, he does not reject us. Just as he did with Thomas, Jesus engages us, giving us proof and peace.

Worship Leader

Pastor Justin Wilkens

Organist/Pianist

Kathy Bremer

Acknowledgments

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The Service, Setting One (page 154 in Christian Worship 21)

Hymn: 448 Now Let the Heavens Be Joyful

Stand

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession

CW 154

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just
and will forgive us our sins
and purify us from all unrighteousness.**

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father,

I am sinful by nature

and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions.

I have not loved you with my whole heart;

I have not loved others as I should.

I deserve your punishment both now and forever.

But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins

with his innocent suffering and death.

Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord, Have Mercy

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen.

Glory Be to God on High

CW 157



Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.



We praise you, we bless you, we wor - ship you, we glorify you,



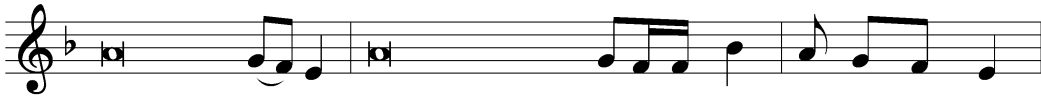
we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,



God the Fa-ther Al - mighty. O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;



O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sin of the world;



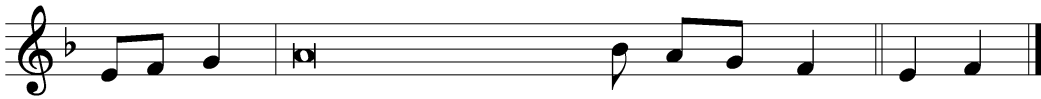
have mercy on us. You take away the sin of the world; re-ceive our prayer.



You sit at the right hand of God the Father; have mercy on us.



For you on-ly are holy; you on-ly are the Lord. You only, O Christ, with the



Ho - ly Spirit, are most high in the glory of God the Father. A - men.

THE WORD

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

O risen Lord, you came to your disciples and took away their fears with your word of peace. Come to us also by Word and sacrament, and banish our fears with the comforting assurance of your abiding presence; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

First Reading

Acts 2:14a,22–32

The living Lord appeared to many eyewitnesses so that they might testify to the truth of Jesus' resurrection. Through their testimony, God gives his Church proof and peace.

Peter Addresses the Crowd

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice, and spoke loudly and clearly to them:

²² "Men of Israel, hear these words! Jesus the Nazarene was a man recommended to you by God with miracles, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man, who was handed over by God's set plan and foreknowledge, you killed by having lawless men nail him to a cross. ²⁴ He is the one God raised up by freeing him from the agony of death, because death was not able to hold him in its grip.

²⁵ "Indeed, David says concerning him:

I saw the Lord always before me.

Because he is at my right hand,

I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart was glad,

and my tongue rejoiced.

My flesh also will rest in hope,

²⁷ because you will not abandon my life to the grave,

nor will you let your Holy One see decay.

²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life.

You will fill me with joy in your presence.

²⁹ "Gentlemen, brothers, I can speak confidently to you about the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath that he would seat one of his descendants on his throne, ³¹ he saw what was coming and spoke about the resurrection of Christ, saying that he was neither abandoned to the grave nor did his flesh see decay. ³² "This Jesus is the one God has raised up. We are all witnesses of that.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm of the Day: 16- In Front of Hymnal: My Heart, Therefore, Is Glad

Second Reading

1 Peter 1:3–9

St. Peter points to the resurrection as proof of the hope we have regardless of the outward circumstances of our life.

Praise to God for a Living Hope

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ into an inheritance that is undying, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. ⁵ Through faith you are being protected by God's power for the salvation that is ready to be revealed at the end of time.

⁶ Because of this you rejoice very much, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various kinds of trials ⁷ so that the proven character of your faith—which is more valuable than gold, which passes away even though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not see him now, yet by believing in him, you are filled with a joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Stand

Gospel Acclamation

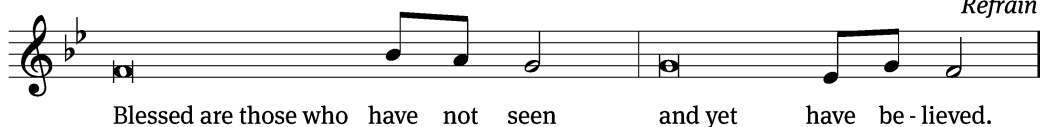
John 20:29



Refrain



Tone



Tune: © 2021 Northwestern Publishing House. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 713578

Jesus gave the proof that led to peace for Thomas, peace that could only be found in his Lord and God.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, the disciples were together behind locked doors because of their fear of the Jews. Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. So the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you! Just as the Father has sent me, I am also sending you." ²² After saying this, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ Whenever you forgive people's sins, they are forgiven. Whenever you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

²⁴ But Thomas, one of the Twelve, the one called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples kept telling him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands, and put my finger into the mark of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will never believe."

²⁶ After eight days, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them. "Peace be with you," he said. ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and look at my hands. Take your hand and put it into my side. Do not continue to doubt, but believe."

²⁸ Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹ Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

The Purpose of John's Gospel

³⁰ Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, did many other miraculous signs that are not written in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

Hymn of the Day: 456 O Sons and Daughters of the King

Sermon

Stand

Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Be seated

Prayer of the Church

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Lord of life, fill our hearts with joy during this season, for you have risen and conquered the grave. Imprint the message of victory on our hearts and implant it in our minds. Through the good news of your resurrection renew our hope and revive our faith. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

By baptizing us into your name, you have connected us to your death and rising. You have put our sin to death and have given us a new life. Enable us each day to think of ourselves as dead to sin and alive to you, so that we may walk in newness of life in all we do. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

In this fallen world, death and sorrow surround us. Touch the hearts of those who grieve the loss of a Christian they love. Direct their eyes to your empty tomb and ease their pain by reminding them that their loved ones will one day rise again. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Lord, many people grieve without hope. Let the message of resurrection reach them and awaken faith in their hearts. Use us as your instruments to bring the word of life to their souls and the message of hope to their hearts. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Stay by the side of all who are suffering. In your wise mercy, heal those who are sick, receiving treatment for illness, recovering from illness or surgery, or hurting in body or mind. [We pray especially for...*here name the person and the cause of the petition.*] Remind them that your victory over death is a fact, and comfort them with your promise to raise them and give them and all believers new, glorified bodies like yours. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

Risen Savior, feed our faith with the message of your resurrection. Come to us in your Word and in the feast of your Sacrament to sustain and strengthen us until we feast with you in eternal glory.

Amen.

Offering

Offering Hymn: 511 Crown Him with Many Crowns

sts. 1, 4

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.
Amen.

Hymn: 800 How Firm a Foundation

sts. 1, 4–5

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship

Sunday: 9:30 AM Bible Study and Sunday School, 10:30 AM Worship

Pastor Out of Town April 16-19

Pastor will be out of town from April 16-19 for the Missionaries Conference in Denver. If you need to contact Pastor, you can reach him at his cell: 703-474-9273 or his email:

jwilkens34@gmail.com

Bethel Voters Meeting April 23rd

The next voters meeting will take place on April 23rd following our worship service.

Trinity Funds Request

The \$10,000 supplementary fund has been depleted for the year and Trinity is asking for congregations and members in the association to support the school if they are able. They are thankful for all of the support that has been given to Trinity already.

We also keep Mr. Owen, principal at Trinity, in our prayers as he has received a call to serve as 5th-8th Grade Teacher and Principal at Zion Lutheran Grade School in Chesaning, Michigan.

New Church Directory

Please find a time following a worship service or schedule a day to have Beverly Bornschlegl take your picture to go into the upcoming church directory. We would like to have all pictures taken by May 14th.

CONNECTION CARDS: Visitors or members with changes in contact information, please fill out a connection card online at www.bethelyork.com on the member connect tab or scan this code.



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Personal assisted listening devices are available.

Given to the Lord: Attendance: Worship 74, Offerings: Operating: Needed 2,854.90, Given \$1,650.25. **To God be the glory!**

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