

Dear saints, it's a wonder God the Holy Spirit has gathered us into this house today, in the conviction that something happened 1,993 years ago, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 33 AD, in a small little corner of the world, in a garden, in an upper room, on a mount, a tomb, actually matters for us today.

The women, disciples struggled that day. No alleluias. Sounds unbelievable, empty tomb, He's not there, told He's risen. Jesus told them of His passion, resurrection. They should know. Yet in spite of what they've been taught and heard, they still struggle, they still doubt, they despair. Not unlike you.

Why do you dwell on hardship instead of every trouble a blessing to draw you closer to Him and see more of His love? Why do you live as though the Lord won't work evil for your good? Why do you dwell on death instead of life? Why do you act as though our loved ones who died in Christ are lost? Why do you look at disease, even death as though it were the worst thing that could happen to you? Why do you live as though your life will end? Why do you put the value of your life: by what you do; measure your life whether its good, bad, successful or complete by worldly, man's standards?

How can we despair, be fearful, lose sight of His promises, what we've been taught and heard? How pitiful when we live in fear of tomorrow or illness or death -our Lord lives. **Remember how He told you!**

Rejoice. **And they remembered His words!** Lose your sins, doubts, your struggles in the glorious wounds of the resurrected Christ. Even your sin only you know about, ashamed of. Be ashamed no more, for your guilt, the power of sin and death, God's wrath for all your sin spent on Him. **Remember how He told you!**

You've stood by the grave and wept, you will throw your arms around grandma again. Your parent you attended at their bedside in brokenness of body, will embrace you again. Though you held the hand of your beloved as you felt the life depart, you will hold them in the kingdom of God. Though your heart was crushed beyond despair by the loss of your child, Christ will place them in your arms again, raised; mothers will not lose their children, along with all His children and usher us all into everlasting life. **And they remembered His words.**

Jesus' resurrection, eternal life sealed, in His Word. Sacraments. Do you grasp your reality? Changes everything. You're joined to His death and resurrection in your Baptism. And more, He feeds you His very resurrected body and blood, medicine of immortality. Jesus says, **Whoever feeds on my flesh, drinks my blood has eternal life, I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, my blood is true drink.** For there, the power of Jesus' resurrection is yours like no other place on earth, heaven and earth come together. This is the feast of victory, the Lamb slain has begun His reign.

True Lutherans desire to be the historical, catholic, Christian Church, what that means. 500 years ago the 1<sup>st</sup> Lutherans sang Luther's 'new' hymn we just sang. 500 years ago, today, Lutherans throughout Germany, celebrate their 1<sup>st</sup> Easter, with the entire liturgy in their own language, 1st time in over 1000 years. Latin was the language of the Early Church, and Latin remain the language of the church. The Reformation changed that. As we do today, the liturgy, as it was 500 years ago

Luther's Deutsche Missae, German Mass, cleaned up the Medieval errors that had crept in the Western Rite. Even more, this was the 1<sup>st</sup> Easter for any Christians in over 300 years to celebrate the Lord's Supper in both kinds, people received the chalice too, wine/blood given, as the Pope had order the wine withheld since 1215 Council.

Easter 480 years ago. Luther had recently died. Sharp disputes, deep factions arose, to compromise, join forces with the newly emerging Reformed Church, as both them and Lutherans under attack from the Romans. Real Lutherans, men like Chemnitz, Bugenhagen, Flacius, Amsdorf, Andreas (you'll meet them in heaven) had fierce disagreements with Melanchthon and others willing to compromise doctrine, practice to join forces with the Reformed against Rome. See, you true Lutherans have never been able to get along with others, and to make it worse, some of you are German decent. We don't compromise. We can't compromise God's unchanging truth to gain friends or for the world to love us or more followers on social media.

Gets worse, then 4 days after Easter, the Battle of Mühlberg, not far from Wittenberg; early morning, while your people, the German peasant army was celebrating the Divine Service, the Holy Roman army with knights, slaughter 8,000 men; another 1000 taken pows, the Romans lost 50 men. So with defeat of the main Lutheran defenders, HRE Charles V, will soon have over 400 Lutheran pastors imprisoned, many executed for giving the laity the chalice and not recanting even what the Early Church believed, before there were popes. We will be arrested, die before the world would stop us preaching and giving Christ's blood. But then again, which of us can die.

The Lutherans should've been wiped out many times over; the Lord alone preserves His Church. Our fathers and mothers struggled, endured, sacrificed, suffered, died so you could sit there and call yourself Lutheran.

Here we are 500 years later, even 1993 years later, has the world really changed? The Church still attacked by false, misleading words. Surrounded by evil. Satan, His minions work tirelessly to destroy you, your family, every relationship you have. And even more there is still doubts, struggles, still despair. Your Lord lives. The devil can't win. Lies can't win. Death can't win. We stand firm in the unchanging truth of Scripture; we confess, we fight, will not be moved. You have resurrection. **And they remembered His words.**

Every man dies but not ever man lives. Live dear saint. You are not made to fit into this world, you're made to stand out, stand firm. Baptism is your entire identity, join to His death and resurrection; the Eucharist, Lord's Supper is resurrected life of the Church, how we live. Live as saints. What can man do to you? Nothing can truly harm you. Do not be afraid or fear. **And they remembered His words.** Your Lord lives; cancer, disease will not have the last word. Your Lord lives, to carry your burdens, to lead, guide you; forgive your sins; answer your prayers and cries; wipe away your tears; give you what you need; comfort you when you mourn.

Christ lives. And you cannot stop Him, He will not stop caring for you every moment, every step, every breath of your life. Bask in the beautiful reality of this day, His glory His life given you. **Christus ist erstandet! The Lord is risen!**