

Sermon Text: Luke 24: 1 – 6

Sermon Theme: **“Why Do You Look for the Living among the Dead?”**

At this time I would like to re-read a portion of the Gospel Lesson we heard read just a few minutes ago. We read the first six verses of Luke chapter 24:

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. ⁵ In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here; he has risen!

This is the Good News from God’s Word that we consider together this Easter Morning.

I want you to imagine for a moment that you are walking along with the women that first Easter morning. You are talking about all the events of the last couple of days, and suddenly you remember that there is a large stone in front of the entrance to the tomb. Now you are worried about how you will get inside the tomb to finish the preparations of the body that couldn’t be done on Good Friday. But when you get to the tomb, the stone is moved! You look inside the tomb, but don’t see a body! While you are wondering about all this, two men (whom the other Gospel writers tell us were really angels) in the brightest clothes you have ever seen, appear before you. Then they ask you the question that is before us this morning, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?” There is a rebuke in this question of the angels. They are rebuking the women for their lack of faith. They failed to trust the Savior’s promise that he would rise again. In other words, the angels were asking, “Why are you acting like the Savior is still dead?”

We too deserve this rebuke from the Lord’s messengers. Like those who came to the tomb that first Easter, we show a lack of faith and trust in the Lord’s promises. When we worry about things, doubting the Lord’s promise that he is always in control, we live as though Jesus were still dead. When we allow sin to rule and dominate our lives, we act as if Jesus were still dead. When we ignore the regular use of God’s Word and his Sacraments, thinking that we will make God happy if we show up in Church once or twice a year, we act as if Jesus were dead. So in love for us the Lord sends his messenger to ask you and me, “Why do you look for the living among the dead?”

My dear Christian friends, you and I have a risen Lord and Savior! The Bible tells us that Jesus “was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised again for our justification.” We have a risen Lord, who paid in full, the price for all of our sins and guilt. We have a risen Lord, who promises you and me that he is with us each and every day. We have a risen Lord, who gives you and me the power to say “no” to sin. We have a risen Lord, who invites you and me to come into his house on a regular basis and hear his Word and worship him, our living and loving Savior.

“Why are you looking for the living among the dead?” This question was also a reminder to the women that they had good news to tell others. The good news about Jesus is that “He is not here; he has risen!” The women needed the reminder that their Savior is a living Savior. So the angel instructs them, “Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’” The women at the tomb that

morning needed to stop acting as if Jesus were still dead, and, instead, go and tell this good news to others. And a little later in Luke's Gospel we read that, "When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others." The group of women at the tomb that first Easter morning couldn't keep this Good News to themselves. They now became proclaimers of the same question and answer they had received from the angels, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen!"

Why do you look for the living among the dead? The question is still asked of you and me anytime we are tempted to think that we have no purpose here on this earth or no reason for living. Jesus Christ has risen! Because of our living Savior, you and I have THE reason for living: to glorify him in all that we say, do and think. And one way that you and I glorify the Lord is by going and telling others about Jesus, our risen and victorious Savior. Why do you look for the living among the dead? Jesus Christ lives! This is the Good News we have to tell others. We share the message of God's Word with those who don't know their Savior or who are neglecting their relationship with their Savior. After applying God's Law and Gospel to ourselves, we don't hesitate to teach and proclaim the Law of God that clearly shows someone their sins and their need for a Savior. You and I make use of the opportunities we have to tell others of the complete forgiveness of all sins won by our victorious Lord Jesus. We gladly and willingly join in the effort to share the Good News of the Savior's resurrection with all the world by supporting our Synod's missions with our offerings and with our prayers. Finally, we rejoice that the victory of Jesus is our victory as well. Just as the Savior crushed the head of the devil on Easter Morning, so Jesus comes to you and me in his Word and Sacraments and gives us the power to resist the temptations the devil brings to us. The Savior's victory over the grave is your victory and it is my victory. As Jesus lives, the Good News is that we too shall live forever with him in the perfect joys of heaven.

Why do you look for the living among the dead? On this Easter Morning, this question has led you and me to confess that far too often we are guilty of living our lives as if Jesus were still in the grave. It is with great sadness that we confess our sins and plead for our Savior's forgiveness. Why do you look for the living among the dead? On this Easter Morning, this question has also filled your heart and mine with great joy. The grave of our Savior Jesus is empty. Our sins are paid for. We are forgiven. The Good News answer to the question "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" is that "He is not here; he has risen!" Jesus Christ is risen; he has risen indeed! Amen.