

Easter Sunday
Three Words of Truth
Remember Jesus Christ: He Has Risen!
Sermon Text: 2 Timothy 2:8

Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel – 2 Timothy 2:8

Easter usually holds with it some special memories for us. We think about time with family. We look around and take in the signs of spring and new life that are so apparent this time of year. We recall the smell of the flowers, the look of the church on Easter morning, Easter breakfast, or Easter brunch.

As a kid I remember getting up real early and helping out with the Easter breakfast at Zion Lutheran Church in South Milwaukee. I can remember the look of the kitchen and how I would peel the potatoes for the hash browns at some wee hour of the morning. I remember going upstairs to see the church and I remember how different, how colorful and bright, the church looked on Sunday morning after being so dark and bare on Friday. I remember the how the hymns sounded so different and lively and loud after the somber tones of Lent.

I am sure that you have your own special memories that correspond with this special day of Easter.

What are you going to remember about this journey to the tomb? The theme running throughout the season of Lent serves to help us remember some specific things and take them with us. Let's try to remember three word of truth themes. Let's see there was: *Is it I? Love One Another. Watch and Pray! I am He! What is Truth? Take Him Away.* Then we got to Holy Week: Palm Sunday: *Save us Now.* Maundy Thursday: *Take and Eat. Take and Drink.* Good Friday: *It is finished.* And now on the day of resurrection, the angels who greeted the women did so with three incredible words of truth: **He has risen!** Remember those three words of truth: **He has risen!**

It seems like an overly simple request. How could we ever forget! But these are the words of profound encouragement that the apostle Paul gave to a young pastor Timothy. ***Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead,*** these were some of the last words that Paul would ever write.

Consider Paul's circumstance for a moment. Paul knew that his time on earth was nearing completion, he knew that he would soon suffer a martyr's death at the hands of the Romans. What does a person in that kind of situation think about? A person might reflect on his life, the joys, the challenges, the people that were important to him, the truths that were held dear. With these words Paul reveals that this was the chief

thing that was on his mind, this was the treasure of first importance that Paul wanted to direct the heart and mind of Timothy towards: ***Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.***

Like most great advice it's terrifically simple and solid. *Remember Jesus Christ raised from the dead.* In fact, this is more than great advice, this is really the heart of the Christian faith: Remembering the good news of what God has done for us. The main message that God has for us is not "Go and do!" but rather "Hear and believe!" What joy God graciously pours out on us as this morning we gather together in this familiar place, with these familiar sights, and sounds, and smells, and we remember the great things that our God has done for us. We gaze upon that old rugged cross once more, we peer into that tomb that is ever empty. And as we hear God's Word we recall and remember that he did this for us, he died and rose again. God has accomplished our salvations, Jesus has done this saving work for us, and that gives us peace and a living hope that transcends even our understanding.

But understand this, the resurrection of Jesus is a historical fact that has forever changed the world we live in. God's plan of salvation has been fulfilled in Jesus. God's promise of a Savior, who would come to crush the serpent's head, has been fulfilled. He suffered, he died, but his was the victory, and we can be sure of it because he rose again. His victory is passed down to us. New birth is born and given to those who believe. Death has been defeated, and therefore those who die in faith, die well because the hope of heaven has been made sure.

The words, "***It is finished,***" are confirmed with a glorious exclamation point as the stone is rolled away. The angel sits on top of this symbol of death in a triumphant pose and announces to those wrapped in fear, He is not here! **He has risen.**

Remember this and remember that Jesus did this for us and for our salvation. Jesus poured out his blood for the forgiveness of our sins, he gave his body over to death so that we might live. He has paid the price of your debt of sin. He turned away God's wrath from you, taking it upon himself. He died the death that you deserved. He was laid in the tomb and rose again so that you also may live. It's true and will forever be true. Christ has risen. He has risen, indeed!

How could we possibly forget those great things? It's not every day that God's Son dies and rises again from the dead. This is a historical fact that brings forth joyous praise from millions upon millions of Christians each year. How could we possibly forget these great things?

Well, like the disciples before us, we let the troubles of life, our fears, our anxieties, and doubting hearts, push this work of Christ into the deep recesses of our hearts and minds where we have difficulty retrieving this all-important truth and grasping its daily significance for our lives. Jesus had told his disciples time and again, that he would suffer, die, and rise again. Yes, he told them that he would rise! He even told them that he would meet them and where he would meet them, but they had trouble remembering any of this. Their heads were filled with worries, with fear, with doubt. Shaken by the

events of the week, they forgot his words of promise. Troubled by their own difficulties they were slow to believe what Christ had done was real and they had a hard time seeing that it had real meaning for them.

This would not only be the case for the disciples, but it continues to be the case for believers throughout the ages - for us today. Distracted by our joys and successes, troubles and anxieties, we lose sight of what the death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ means for us. Shaken by the events of the week, troubled by our own difficulties, we forget what this event means for us. We fail to grasp the significance of this good news in the grand scheme of our daily lives. As soon as the festival ends, many move on until next year. Should we do the same? We cannot, we shall not let the joy, or the memory of this special morning be forgotten, lest we lose the unforgettable blessings that he has won for us.

Paul, therefore, did a good and necessary thing by pointing young Pastor Timothy to the good news of the resurrection. ***Remember Jesus Christ, crucified and risen.*** Timothy would face the same kind of highs and lows that we all face in life. He would face the difficulties of life as any sinful human being, He would face the same kind of frustrations and rejection that Paul had experienced in his ministry. He would see friends, including his beloved mentor Paul, suffer and die. He would face death himself. The path of life wouldn't always be bright and brilliantly lined with good food and fresh smelling flowers. But nothing could change the fact that Jesus Christ had come as the promised Savior and had accomplished salvation, and had defeated Satan, sin, and death to give believers daily peace in the forgiveness of sins, new birth into a living hope, and the unfailing joy of eternal life. Whatever Timothy would face, this was to be his confidence, his firm foundation, his endless source of hope and peace and joy: Jesus Christ has risen!

Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead... this is my gospel. Notice how Paul personalizes this message. This had truly been the solid foundation for Paul. It is the truth upon which all believers live and die and peace. It is true for you. In all circumstances of life, we can be content for my Jesus lives again, and he will never forget us. He has risen! He lives! This is the truth of utmost importance that our faith clings to, and this is the truth of utmost importance that brings us joy and peace in any and every circumstance of life.

There is a rather well-known story about Martin Luther and his wife Kathryn that illustrates how this kind of forgetting can happen and what it might look like in our lives. During a very difficult period in his life, Luther was carrying many burdens and fighting many battles. Martin, who was known to be a rather jovial man, was instead very worried and troubled. His friends recommended him to go away for a change of air, to see if he could get relief. He went away; but he came home as miserable as ever. One day when he went into the sitting-room of his home, his wise wife Kate, Catherine von Bora, was sitting there, dressed in black, and her children round about her, all in black. "Oh!" said Luther, "who is dead?" "Why, doctor" said she, "have not you heard that God is

dead? For my husband, Martin Luther, would never be in such a state of mind if he had a living God to trust in.” At that Martin was said to have burst into a hearty laugh, and said, “Kate, thou art a wise woman. I have been acting as if God were dead, and I will do so no more. Go and take off thy black.”

Dear friends, always remember: **He has risen!** Remember what that means to us and to our daily life. The encouragement that Paul gave to Timothy is simple and spot on, and it is easy to take with us all our days. ***Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead... this is my Gospel. - 2 Timothy 2:8.*** Jesus Christ, is true God and true man. Jesus lived and died and rose again for you and for me. He has risen! This is both an incredible historical fact, and also our source of personal comfort and joy. This is our gospel. This is the good news that God has given to you and to me. This gospel of Jesus Christ crucified and risen gives daily peace and eternal joy to everyone who believes. Notice how Paul refers to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is my gospel.

Mary would never forget the day that her risen Lord Jesus called out her name. Peter would have never forgotten how he ran to the tomb and found it empty. God had given them this good news in this unforgettable way.

Now to be sure, Paul wasn't there at the tomb with Mary. He didn't run with Peter to the tomb. But this good news of the resurrected Christ had become his by faith, and it personalized for each one of us as the Spirit grants faith to each one of us. This good news given to Mary and Peter was also given to Paul and Timothy, and it is given to us as well. Through virtue of the pages of Scripture we too get to gaze at the cross and peer into the empty tomb once again. Hear and believe. In faith remember forevermore, that Jesus Christ did this for you. Dear friends, in both bright and festive days, and in dark and difficult moments, as well as every moment and circumstance in between, may this simple and solid sentiment be with you. ***Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead... this is my Gospel.*** Take those three words of truth with you wherever you are and wherever you go, **“He has risen!”** Alleluia! Amen!

The copyright to *Three Words of Truth* (Lenten Resources for 2019) is held by Northwestern Publishing House. © 2018 Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. All rights reserved.