

Sermon 2008 Resurrection of Our Lord

Text: Colossians 3:1-4

Theme: "Resurrection Takes a While"

If I were to plant an apple seed in a pot in front of you this morning, would you expect to have fresh grown apples by the end of service? Now we all know that Easter services can go long, but probably not long enough for an apple tree to grow from seed to a mature tree that is bearing fruit.

The seeds of faith take a while as well. That apple seed is hidden in the soil for months before the seed sprouts. Not only that, but it has to be kept wet and cold in that soil before it will sprout. It's interesting that we sometimes expect faith to pop up and blossom in a moment when nothing God has created does that.

St. Paul says that our lives are hidden with Christ in God and he does not seem to expect anything particularly amazing until the day of the resurrection. In fact, we could say that most of our lives on this earth are like the time that apple seed is in the cold, wet ground waiting for spring to come so that it can sprout and grow.

Most of us are in a hurry to do almost everything. We stand at the microwave yelling at it and drumming our fingers... "Come on, come on, hurry it up. How long does popcorn take?" We blow our horns at people who hesitate even a moment at the green light as though that ½ second will make up for the fact that we left the house 10 minutes too late. God's way is not hurried.

With God, time is required. Remember when Christ was born, we are told that Mary treasured up all these things in her heart and pondered them. Mary had a lot of pondering to do and a lot of time to ponder. Sometimes because we celebrate Easter three or four months after Christmas, we forget that there were really about 34 years between the two events and still the women at the tomb didn't really get it.

We celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ because his resurrection points us toward our resurrection. Because he rose from the dead, we shall rise from the dead. You see, resurrection is not an historic event and then we're done. Our celebration today is not like our celebration of Abraham Lincoln's birthday or even Reformation Day when Dr. Martin Luther nailed his 95

theses to the church door. Our celebration today is more like a rest stop along the way on a long trip. We are still moving toward our goal but we take a moment to celebrate that we know where we are headed.

Resurrection is like that apple seed that slowly grows in your heart as you ponder what Christ has done. As, we are impatient with everything else in life, we are impatient with ourselves and particularly with our faith. We think that because we don't see the whole picture right now, we might as well give up. And to be honest with you, the church has not always helped matters by heaping rules and demands on everyone. Sometimes we think that we can make people grow by guilting them into it. If I go out to that apple seed that is slowly germinating in the cool, wet ground and start demanding apples immediately, will that help matters? If I pour fertilizer on it, will that speed it up? What if I tell that seed how disappointed I am in its progress and that after all I had done for it, I thought that I should at least have a tree by now? No; that apple seed will take whatever time it takes to do what it needs to do before it sprouts.

If you have been Baptized, your faith is at work. Now the difference between us and apple seeds is that every apple seed works pretty much the same way, but not so with us. Each and every one of us is a unique creation so that means that while our faith may grow along certain familiar guidelines, it nevertheless grows uniquely. Drumming our fingers or blowing our horn will not make anyone's faith grow faster or stronger.

Have confidence that your faith is at work. When you were Baptized, faith was planted within you. Now your life is hidden with Christ in God. ALL OF OUR LIVES are hidden with Christ in God. Whether you struggle every day to maintain Christian values or whether you are the very model of Christian virtue, this IS NOT YOUR REAL LIFE. If what I do here on earth was my real life, I would not be standing up here this morning folks. If this were my real life, I would be out making real money to afford all the pleasures that this world can offer and eventually I would get to some beach somewhere where it is not snowing on EASTER! But this life is not my real life.

My real life is hidden with Christ in God. Our real lives will not be revealed until the day of the resurrection, the day when Jesus returns to earth, raises all the dead, removes sin from us and from the world and THEN...THEN we come into full bloom. Then our real lives begin.

So if you struggle to live a Christian life, if you feel torn between the pleasures of this world and the promises of Christ, if you are a late bloomer so to speak, don't be too hard on yourself. We're all late bloomers. All of us are still seeds in the cool, wet ground. None of us have even begun to attain the glory that we will have one day. The best any of us can do is to keep the seed of faith that has been planted in us well watered.

That by the way is the biggest thing that will kill apple seeds. Apparently, if they get too dry, they will never sprout. It makes sense. In nature they would fall off the tree in the fall and have the apple to keep them cool and moist until they make their way into the ground where they will sit all winter until the warmth of spring makes them sprout. Likewise, the only thing that will kill our faith is getting too dry. Jesus says that he gives the

water of life and whoever drinks his water will never thirst. He offers that water here every week as we call upon the power of the Baptismal waters that flow over us and as we receive his body and blood in the Holy sacrament. By doing this we keep our faith watered as we wait.

We don't come here week after week because we are so holy and righteous. We come here week after week because our dream is to one day be glorious when Christ returns.

We don't come here because we have it all figured out. We come here because we need help and support as we struggle to ride the waves of life.

We don't come here because we are all so full of the waters of life. We come here because this wilderness of life, filled with disease, and sadness and brokenness makes us dry and thirsty.

We come here as we await the resurrection – keeping the seed watered and looking forward to who we will one day be.

AMEN.