

The Resurrection of Our Lord—March 31, 2024
Text: Mark 16:1-8
Theme: Resurrection Window



If you were here for the Good Friday service, I concluded the sermon with the question, “How do we know?” How do we know that our salvation is complete and our eternal home in paradise is secure? There is no doubt that Jesus was a good rabbi. He was a great teacher. He obviously firmly believed that

He was the Son of God sent into the world to pay for all the sin of humanity if He was willing to die on the cross for that very premise. He believed, and He encouraged His followers to believe, that His death on the cross and damnation to Hell would pay for all the sins of mankind. Great. That is a fantastic thing of which to be certain, but how do *WE* know?

We have doubts! We have insecurities! We know our sins and they are always before us. How do we know that we are forgiven? We know because of today. Today we celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. Had He died on Good Friday and never returned, we would have no assurance that He did what He said He would do. But He rose from the dead! There were over 500 witnesses and at least 7 of the witnesses, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, and Paul, recorded it in writing. There is no more doubt that Jesus rose from the dead

than anyone would doubt that the twin towers were destroyed on 9/11. Most of us sitting here saw the towers fall in 2001. Likewise, hundreds of people saw Jesus risen from the dead in 30 A.D.

The artist of our stained-glass window shows us Jesus standing radiantly alive. You can see the scars on His hands even though he has been resurrected. He is still present in His body, the body that had been whipped and beaten and nailed to a cross. That very body was raised from the dead. Look at the window and you can see the angel holding the stone in his hands. The women in the Gospel were concerned about moving the stone from the entrance of the tomb as they went to finish anointing Jesus' dead body. This process had been shortened on Friday because the sabbath started on Friday at sundown, and dead bodies could not be touched on the sabbath. Sunrise Sunday morning was the first opportunity they had to finish anointing the dead body but who would roll away the stone that securely sealed the tomb?

Finally, the artist depicts the soldier who was guarding the tomb. He looks on in terror. Can you blame him? Matthew tells us that the guards fell over like dead men at the sight of the resurrection. I bet they did. No one had ever seen this before and nobody has seen it since, but we can be certain that it happened. There is no way a hoax of this magnitude could have been

maintained for 2,000 years. Literally hundreds of people witnessed this event and the soldier in the window represents all of them, and he represents us as well.

Look at the soldier's face and you will see the fear of God. If we are left by ourselves, that's all we have: fear. How can we feel anything else toward a being so powerful that He can raise himself from the dead? Only those of us who know why He rose from the dead, and believe that He is our Savior, only we can also feel love beyond fear. Only those of us who walked with Him during His ministry understand that the resurrection was the proof we needed that all our sins had been forgiven. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we know that we are completely forgiven of every sin we ever committed in thought, word, or deed. We are free and His resurrection proved that we are free. This is what He promised us. This is what the prophet Isaiah was talking about when he wrote our Old Testament text some 700 years before this event.

"Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

Behold our God. Out of His lavish love for us, He did everything necessary to be certain that we would spend eternity with Him in

paradise. Easter is the highest holy day of the Church because it is this day that proved that Jesus had accomplished everything He promised to accomplish. He rose from the dead to prove that you and I also will rise from the dead and we will spend eternity together in paradise. Never let anyone tell you that you are not worthy of salvation. Never let anyone call your eternal life into question. Either Jesus rose from the dead or He didn't. If He didn't, then everything we believe is trash. If He did, then it is finished, even as He said from the cross. Every sin is forgiven. No one can accuse you of anything. You are now God's holy saint forever.