

“Repent: Turn to Jesus for Resurrection and Life!”

Text: Luke 24:1-8

To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and might forever and ever. {Rev 5:13}

In the name of our Risen Lord Jesus, dear People of God,

There are things that one just expects in life, things that just always happen the same way. The phrase says: **“IT’S A GIVEN!”****It’s a given** that highways/streets are jammed during rush hour. {Drive to the corner by the fire station on Eau Claire & Schofield Avenue at 5PM and you usually have to wait to turn or cross the road; coming is just as bad}**It’s a given** that we get thunderstorms rolling through in spring, such as we’ve had last week.**It’s a given** that you get junk mail in your box, on your computer, or even cell phone.**It’s a given** that you came to church today expecting to see & smell Easter flowers and you do.**It’s a given** that you expect to hear special, upbeat organ music & choir anthems and you have.**It’s a given** that you expect to hear a preacher preach this morning and so I’ll try. You expect all these things. No surprises here.But then there are those times when things aren’t what you would expect. You crack open an Easter egg and it’s raw, not hard-boiled. Your tests from the Doctor come back much more serious than at first expected. You order a coffee at McDonald’s and the clerk says: **“It’s on me!”** You drift for walleyes and 15 lb. 40” northern is on your line. You sat down in the pew still rubbing your eyes from getting up so early...and then there’s a hymn verse, a lyric, or a line from the sermon that just hits you emotionally and tears begin to fill your eyes.

Some of you are here with a lot of things on your mind today, many of which are stressful and detour your attention, e.g. your Easter dinner & company coming or a situation you’re trying to cope with. Some of you maybe here because it’s Easter and going to church is what people do on Easter.

Easter may be one of those things that’s a given. But let’s remember Easter is exactly what we need. So pull up an Easter chair for a few moments (or I guess I should say an Easter pew). Don’t worry, your Easter hams are going to be OKAY. Your company will wait. For a just a few moments, let’s turn away from the worries/stresses/busyness of our lives and:

“Turn to Jesus for Resurrection and Life!”

1. We sadly know what to expect
2. We gladly rejoice at the unexpected

1Luke’s account of Easter morning begins with exactly what you would expect: **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.** It all sounds so normal: *dear friends, a loved one’s grave, and some dignity for the dead!*These women were **dear friends** of Jesus and his ministry. They supplied food and clothes for Jesus with their own money. They stood by Jesus at the foot of the cross when others, like most of the disciples, ran off scared. Their loyalty and their love for Jesus displayed itself when he was alive. Now it displays itself when he is dead!Where were these women going? They were going to a **loved one’s grave**. No one likes cemeteries. We do anything we can to make them look “nice”. We comment how pretty the flowers are, how nice the grass is mown, and how beautiful the marble monuments are.But deep down inside, we know that we can’t spruce up death with pretty flowers, marble monuments, and manicured lawns. A grave is a grave. Jesus’ grave was brand-new compliments of a rich man named **Joseph of Arimathea**. But even Joseph’s 1st-class tomb could not compensate for the fact that Jesus’ battered, lifeless body lay inside on a cold stone slab. What a dreadful place to see Jesus. What a dreadful crucifixion He endured. There was nothing to spruce up. ***The fact of the matter was GOD WAS DEAD & NOTHING COULD CHANGE THAT!***These faithful women would make the best of it. They went to their loved one’s grave to show some basic **human dignity for their dead Jesus**. Things were a bit rushed on Good Friday. They had to bury Jesus in that tomb and close it before the Sabbath Day. The women went shopping for burial spices, and then planned to return after the Sabbath to clean Jesus’ body, apply the spices, and wrap his body with clean linen. Then they prepare to move on with their lives and just let Jesus **rest in peace**.We sadly know what to expect in Joseph’s cemetery. **It’s a given!** Nothing out of the ordinary here: a loved one in a grave, and a bunch of friends gathering to say a final farewell. If Luke’s account ends here and all that’s left is the expected, then I guess I have to say: **Amen**

Oh but wait a second ~ Luke's account doesn't end here. Something happened that the women didn't expect: **They found the stone rolled away from the tomb.** Who could have possibly arrived this early and opened the grave? Where about the Roman guards? They were supposed to make sure that none of Jesus' disciples came in the middle of the night, carted off the body, and then claimed that Jesus was alive. What in the world was going on here? This doesn't make sense. This is all **UNEXPECTED!**

When the women stepped into the tomb, the 1st Easter was born: **When they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 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? HE IS NOT HERE; HE HAS RISEN!"** (vv. 3-6a)

Instead of grave clothes, they saw angels in lightning white clothes. Instead of a body on a slab of rock, they saw 2 angelic preachers turning that slab into their pulpit. Instead of the silence of death, they heard the 1st Easter sermon...short, sweet, & unexpected: **"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! "A dead man literally rose from the dead?"** That's unexpected; that doesn't happen! Jesus once said in Galilee: **"The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again."** Easter truly happened because **JESUS IS THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE** so today **we turn to him rejoicing over the unexpected!**

God proclaims his Easter truth to us so that we can have a rock-solid foundation to build our faith upon..... that our sins are forgiven.....that sting of death has died.....that the devil has been defeated.....that life, in Christ, lasts forever! **Easter's miracle is not what we would've expected,** but it is exactly what we need!

What do you need today? You desperately need **God's forgiveness.** Easter is the proof that Jesus' redemption really works! The Bible says: **He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.** (Ro 4:25). Easter is our Lord's declaration to us that our sin has been forgiven. **Turn to Jesus for your forgiveness!**

What do you need today? You need **help with death!** Death and the grave is not our grand farewell. Because Jesus lives again, we see death as but a sleep from which our living Lord will wake us up one day, just as he himself did. One day, our nicely manicured green lawns will rip open, our marble monuments crack in two, and our bodies will rise from their slabs in the earth. **Turn to Jesus for your resurrection!**

What do you need today? You need **hope in life.** You've got some things on heavy on your mind? Your hope in life isn't placed in a dead guy. No! Christ is alive, which means that we have all kinds of hope to bring us through this life. The living Lord is with you every single second of this life until he takes you into eternal life. **Turn to Jesus for your life!**

What did you expect when you came for Easter today? I suppose that depends on what you believe. If the forgiveness of sins and victory over death isn't really that big of a deal to you, then the most you can expect today is a chocolate bunny, hot ham, and an hour nap.

But if Jesus walking out of his tomb is something you never expected, then you have every reason to **gladly rejoice at the unexpected love of Christ** in forgiveness of your sins, complete removal of your guilt, and the hope of eternal life in heaven when the last trumpet sounds. Until that last trumpet sounds, may our Lord Jesus keep you in a living Easter faith—that continually **turns to Jesus for resurrection and life. For He is risen! He has risen, indeed! IT'S A GIVEN! HALLELUJAH! Amen.**