

It Has Changed EVERYTHING

Acts 10:34a, 37-43

Psalm 118

Colossians 3:1-4

Luke 24:1-12

It has changed EVERYTHING!!! The Resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed EVERYTHING! Alleluia! Today we celebrate the event that has changed humanity more than any other event in history. There is NOTHING that is not affected by the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. All creation has been renewed! I want to share with you today some of the ways that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed our lives.

There are people here today who are grieving the loss of a loved one. In the midst of your mourning, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed everything! Because of His Resurrection we can say, in the *midst* of our grief, “Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?” (1 Corinthians 15:54b-55). The Resurrection of Jesus Christ has broken the chains of death and given us a new hope—a hope that we will see again soon the people we have loved and lost.

There are people here today who are suffering physical illness. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed everything, even our health problems. It has given us the hope that the day is coming soon when, “He will change our lowly body to conform with his glorified body” (Philippians 3:21)!

There are people in this church right now who suffer from mental illness, which can leave people feeling hopeless and despairing. Yet today, we have been given a new hope in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. A hope that one day soon, we will be recreated in perfection and every struggle will be taken from us. There will be no more struggles and pain, as we hear in the Book of Revelation, “Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them (as their God). He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, (for) the old order has passed away... Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:3-5a).

There are people here at church today who are experiencing injustice. Some of you are facing unjust lawsuits; others have had your name and character dragged through the mud, while others have been bullied, ridiculed, and hurt. Others have experienced racism, prejudice or sexism. Still others have been the victims of domestic abuse. Regardless of the form of injustice that we are dealing with right now, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed it. We are given today a new hope. The Resurrection of Christ has assured us that there will be judgment and justice, that the Truth will eventually be revealed, and that our dignity is eternally protected. This is the hope that allowed Paul to write to Timothy—

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead... proclaim the word; be persistent whether it is convenient or inconvenient; convince, reprimand, encourage through all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, following their own desires and insatiable curiosity, will accumulate teachers and will stop listening to the truth and will be diverted to myths. But you, be self-possessed in all circumstances; put up with hardship; perform the work of an evangelist; fulfill your ministry.

-2 Timothy 4:1-5

There are people here who do not regularly attend church. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ changes that; it no longer allows us to place God in a box that we're comfortable having Him in. Jesus broke out of that box when He broke out of the tomb. He has rescued us and we can no longer be the same! Saint Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians, "[God] rescued us from such great danger of death, and he will continue to rescue us; in him we have put our hope" (2 Corinthians 1:10)! When we understand and comprehend the reality of what we have been rescued from through the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, then we will follow Him anywhere and everywhere, including to church where we give thanks for having been rescued when we could not save ourselves. The word Eucharist means "thanksgiving," and there is no better way for us to show our gratitude to Christ for rescuing us than celebrating the Eucharist!

Financial hardships have fallen upon many people these days. We have families in our parish and in our community who have lost their jobs, or who have taken noticeable cuts in their income. More than ever before, people are being challenged to trust that God will take for them, providing their needs while purifying their wants. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ changes our fears and anxiety into trust and hope in the midst of our financial struggles. Jesus reminds us—

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven... Do not worry about your life, what you will eat (or drink), or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they?

-Matthew 6:19-20a, 25-26

There are a lot of people in the world today who are worried that maybe the end is near. With fear in their voices they talk about the earthquakes, hurricanes, tsunamis, wars, terrorism, out-of-control government officials, poor government policies, and injustice as the signs that the end of the world is near. Some of them have resigned themselves to a continued downward spiral in quality of life while others have started rallying people to take up arms and fight for our rights. For those of us who desire to be authentic disciples of Jesus Christ, His Resurrection has changed everything, including our fear and hopelessness, which has been changed into excitement and peace.

You will hear of wars and reports of wars; see that you are not alarmed, for these things must happen, but it will not yet be the end. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be famines and earthquakes from place to place. But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

-Matthew 24:6-7, 36

Our celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is an opportunity for us to be changed! To let go of our fears, anxiety, anger, pain, sins, and despair and be changed into a new creation, full of peace, trust, hope, and healing. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ has changed EVERYTHING! Alleluia!

SUGGESTED PRAYER EXERCISES:

- ✚ Take some time in prayer and think about what aspects of your own life have been noticeably changed because of your faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. What do you do differently because of your faith? How does it affect what you say? How does it affect how you pray? How does it affect how you respond to the various things that are going on in your life? Has it changed EVERYTHING?