

**St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church  
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E.  
Schultz**

**Easter Sunday, April 16, 2016**

**Luke 24:1-8**

24 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. <sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, <sup>3</sup> but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. <sup>5</sup> 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? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' " <sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words.

People of God-rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

What do Pastors do all day? We visit the sick and the dying. Back in the day they didn't call it hospice care – when I went to visit a little grandpa named Merlyn on the far side of Long Lake – what the locals called "china town". I never saw Merlyn stand up. He was in a hospital bed in his living room when I met him. Merlyn was dying from cancer. He had tried even experimental treatments – something made from apricot pits – that seemed to work for a while any way. But now it was getting near the end – and so he wanted to be reminded again and again



that Jesus loved him and washed away all his sins so that when he died he would come home to Heaven for sure. And so I went to visit Merlyn. I would knock on the door – and his German shepherd named Heidi would come to the door – to keep the master safe. Mrs. Schuester would crack the storm door – and pass a very large Milk Bone to me. I would crack the door and hand Heidi the Milk Bone and Heidi would let me in. Very carefully – very slowly I would reach over the bed to shake Merlyn’s hand. We would visit. I would read the Scriptures – like **Psalm 121 A song of ascents. <sup>1</sup> I lift up my eyes to the mountains – where does my help come from? <sup>2</sup> My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. <sup>3</sup> He will not let your foot slip – he who watches over you will not slumber; <sup>4</sup> indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. <sup>5</sup> The LORD watches over you – the LORD is your shade at your right hand; <sup>6</sup> the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. <sup>7</sup> The LORD will keep you from all harm – he will watch over your life; <sup>8</sup> the LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.** We would pray. I would very slowly take the master’s hand and say, “See you later!” -because I most surely will – here or in Heaven. Heidi would walk me out. Then return to lie down at the master’s side to keep watch! Jesus keeps watch over us all the time. His angels camp all around us. He will never leave us. He will never forsake us. Nothing will ever separate us from His forgiving love. No one can pry us from His nail marked hands.

**“Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’** A man who used to visit “my church”

every Sunday in the summer was named Bill. Bill drove a semi – an 18 wheeler filled with groceries to grocery stores. He would slid a lift under a palate piled high with cases of groceries – pump it up off the trailer bed – roll it to the platform that went down to the grocery store floor – and roll it to the ware house room of the grocery store. One day – one of the rivets on the platform gave way. The load crushed Bill’s leg – literally split it open – all the way down to the femoral artery! Bill ran the lift with one hand – and pulled his leg free with the other. They EMS guys came in their little pudgy truck to take Bill to the Emergency Room and to the OR! I went to see Bill after the operation and he said, “What a blessing!” “Getting your leg smashed?” “No-having this opportunity to tell each doctor, each nurse, each surgeon, each therapist, each visitor that Jesus loves me. That Jesus spared my life. The other possibility – for Jesus to take me home to heaven – to be with him forever! Have you witnessed faith like that?

**“Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> ‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’** Jesus is risen from the dead! This is the reason for joy deep inside of our ♥ of ♥s – because Jesus took our sins away. This is not some shallow feel good emotionalism. This is joy born of rightly discerned law and gospel. Again why are we so blessed – that out of the 104 billion people – give or take – who have lived on this planet since God made Adam from soil and Eve from Adam’s Rib – why are we so blessed that this Easter morning – we are gathered in Jesus’ Father’s House of Prayer to celebrate Easter. Of all the 7 billion people alive on this planet today – why are we so blessed to know Jesus is my Redeemer – risen from the dead – to rescue me for eternity? Do

we count ourselves tax collectors and sinners? Because that is what we are! When the Apostle Paul said, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst” ...would we be so bold as to say to the writer of so much Scripture and the missionary to so many souls – I am much worse?!

**“Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup>He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup>‘The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.’ ”** When I was a student at Northwestern College – by the grace of God – I was in the touring chorus! In the next 5 years we traveled to literally most of the 48 States. We would pile off the bus-eat supper – and then sing for Jesus. Often in the time between supper and the service – we would walk through the sometimes very old Church cemetery. More often than not – there were huge grave stones that had broken and toppled over – their very heavy pieces like the heaviest 3-D puzzles. We were very strong young men. We would pick up the pieces and put them back together. We didn’t ask permission. We just did it! I heard about a Cemetery not too far from here – where the people who are supposed to take care of it – aren’t! They say there are weeds taller than almost all the grave stones. Somebody said these are naturally occurring wild plants. They are for the most part weeds – dishonoring the graves of veterans of the Civil War – and early immigrants – probably Lutherans who came to America to be free of religious persecution! I thought to myself – somebody should do something! This isn’t right! But the fact is – really no matter what people might do today – including – sometimes especially by doing nothing – they cannot really harm people Jesus has taken home to Heaven. Whatever might happen to our bodies in this

world in Cemeteries – or reduced to ashes and gone as far as people might control them – in 9.11 disasters – Jesus will bring our soul to Heaven the moment we die – and body and soul – glorified – safe and strong and flawless on Judgment day!

**<sup>7</sup>“The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.”**

**<sup>8</sup>Then they remembered his words.** As I am 64 and 7/8s years old – on Christmas and birthdays and Father’s Day – when it is customary to give gifts – our children more and more give us gift cards for experiences – like very nice dinners or shows – or the *Fireside* – dinner/theatre. Musicals – like Beauty and the Beast just the other day. We say Nunsense and Man of LaMancha and West Side Story and Peter Pan and Cinderella and Mary Poppins and more. I have said it is disappointing that life is not like a musical – where every little bit people burst into song and dance! I like to think I get out a lot! I have witnessed people spontaneously dancing at my Piggly Wiggly – going from the snack aisle – into the liquor department – note the order – from snacks to liquor – not the other way around! I saw three black women dance their way into UW Madison Hospital – and the Hertigs dance in the St. Luke parking lot – because I complained nobody dances! I was in Nancy’s car the first day of Spring – Sirius Radio – 60’s Rock n’ roll – Neil Diamond – Sweet Caroline – bamp, bamp, bamp, Sweet Caroline – bamp, bamp, bamp – and that part where everybody goes – *so good, so good, so good*. Know what I mean? The Village People – Y M C A. The Righteous Brothers – and the little people in their dress pants and long sleeve shirts and vests and stocking feet – when they play Gimme That Old Time Rock’n’roll and there’s that percussion – cow bell part – bonk, bonk, bonk, bonk and the little people literally bounce. You remember that feeling? Multiply that about

10 billion times and you are only approaching the joy we will know in heaven. You literally can't imagine how wonderful it will be – when all the grief and frustration and trouble of this world is past. No more death or mourning or crying or pain. No more cancer. No more heart attacks. No more strokes. Have you ever watched someone die because they cannot take a breath? Watched as invisible hands...? No more! No more! When we are in Heaven we will see what God's Word promises, **Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where O death is your victory? Where O death is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the Law. But thanks be to God He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"**

**"Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.' "** We live in difficult times. A man comes into a school where special needs children are taught – and takes the life of his wife and a student – and then despairs! That was a couple of days ago. As bad or worse has happened since. We live in difficult times – where chemical weapons – the likes of which have not been used since the Great War – the Terrible War – the War to end all wars was being fought all across Europe. We live in difficult times – where people steal beer trucks and run over people on purpose – apparently looking for little people! Again – that was a few days ago – only worse has happened since! God's Word says, "Husbands, love your wives like Christ loved the Church!" God's Word says, "Honor your Father and Mother" and people in law enforcement and first responders are being ambushed! There needs to be an intensity and a focus among God's people. We need to read our Bible and Meditations

and Forward in Christ and much, much more! We need to be more and more faithful hearing God's Word and coming to Lord's Supper and coming to Bible Study to search and Scriptures and discuss them and apply them. We need to be concerned about our family and our friends and co-workers that they come to faith and grow in faith before it is too late! I was at the grocery store around the corner from our home the other day and I looked at their Easter cards! They had a lot of them! There were the little divider/labels behind the Easter cards. Some said "Religious". Very many of them did not! How do you have an Easter card that is not religious? You have cards with chocolate bunnies – all lined up – going off into the distance – open the card – a receding hare line – get it? You have chocolate bunnies with ears missing – what? You have cards with flowers and decorated eggs and sunrise that say, "It's Spring!" Celebrate the rebirth of your lawn? How shallow is that? Today is not about peeps and ham with those little criss cross cuts and little spices pushed in to make a pattern. Today is not about hot cross buns – frosting and raisins – but what that frosting cross represent – my Savior and yours – crucified dead and buried and now alive – my Redeemer – the Lord of my Life – by Savior and my King! Easter changes everything. It means forgiveness, hope and a home in Heaven where we will join angels to sing, *"Thank you, Jesus!"* Amen!

**To God alone all glory!**

*Rev. Anthony E. Schatz*

