Verses: Psalm 16:8-11 and John 20:1-9 Occasion: Worship Location: First Presbyterian Church of Lake Mary Date: April 4, 2021 Pastor: Joe Raymond

**Song:**

**Today’s sermon title is, “Resurrection Sunday 2021” Sunrise**

**The scripture readings are from Psalm 16:8-11 and John 20:1-9**

**Psalm 16:8-11**

**I keep the Lord always before me;**

 **because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.**

**9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;**

 **my body also rests secure.**

**10 For you do not give me up to Sheol,**

 **or let your faithful one see the Pit.**

**11 You show me the path of life.**

 **In your presence there is fullness of joy;**

 **in your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

**John 20:1-9**

**Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. 2 So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” 3 Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. 4 The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, 7 and the cloth that had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. 8 Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; 9 for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.**

**This is the word of the Lord! Thanks be to God.**

**Let us pray**

Heavenly Father, please quiet our minds

and open our hearts to your truth.

And please

 **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart**

 **be acceptable to you,**

 **O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. Psalm 19:14**

Amen

**Sermon**

**Friends, we gather in His name today to celebrate!**

**He is risen!**

**He is risen indeed!**

Each year we reread these Resurrection Day accounts, and each year I just cannot get enough of them!

In these narratives, first we feel the intensity of the disciples’ sorrow and then, just as vividly, we experience their profound joy!

* The events of their last 3 days had been a shock.
* Just one week prior, Jesus had entered Jerusalem with great fanfare
* Five days later, He was dead!
* Life as they knew it abruptly stopped.
* They did not understand, as yet, that all was being fulfilled just as God had preordained!
* But this was resurrection day! All would become joy!

Today, our story opens with Mary Magdalene bringing spices to the tomb, expecting to anoint Jesus’s body. On her way in the dark, she wondered how she would roll the entrance stone away. But she discovered this was already done, and that Jesus was not there!

Then all the running began.

Mary ran to tell the disciples!

Then, Peter and John ran to the tomb at full speed!

Each discovered Mary was right!

What could this mean?

I want to draw your attention to the final verse we read in John 20:**9 ...for as yet they** (the disciples) **did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.**

I wonder, do we understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead?

What exactly is meant by the jubilant words, “He is Risen?”

What depth of meaning is embedded in those three seemingly simple words?

Would it surprise you to know that as we explore these three words, we can come to understand the whole of God’s plan to reconcile sinful man back to Himself?

They are very powerful words.

Our inquiry begins briefly in Genesis 3, for that is where sin first entered into the human story. When Adam and Eve first chose rebellion, their relationship with God was broken. But God, out of His great compassion, promised that in time He would provide a Savior to reconcile mankind to Himself.

And so, as John1:14 states**...the Word became flesh and lived among us**.

* He was born of Mary and
* lived a perfectly sinless life.
* 33 years later, He willingly gave His life to pay sin’s penalty for all who would come to Him as their redeemer.
* He did this out of His great love for us.

Paul explained it in Ephesians 2:4-5:

**But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.**

Friends, as we consider how Jesus voluntarily gave His life for sinners, it is important to realize something we might overlook.

That is:

As cruel of a method of punishment that crucifixion was,

that was not the worst part for Jesus!

Others have suffered crucifixion, but no one else paid for the sins of mankind.

In order to pay for sins, Jesus, though He was perfect, had to endure the wrath of God that day.

He had to suffer separation from His Father as He took the sins of the world on Himself as our representative.

This was unimaginably worse!

If we had been in the crowd that week, we could have seen the physical side of what Jesus endured, but we could not have seen the hidden battle raging for our souls in the spiritual realm.

It is important to emphasize here the truth that, though Jesus offered Himself as a substitute, He was not sinful! Once God’s wrath for sin was satisfied, death had no hold on Him.

Jesus is the faithful one about whom Psalm 16:10 was written. **10 For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.**

The meaning of this: Jesus would not remain dead!

No, the disciples did not understand this on the day Jesus arose, but they certainly did later.

Consider Acts 2:24.

On Pentecost, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, loudly proclaimed to the crowds in Jerusalem, “**God raised [Jesus] up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power.”**

It is interesting to note that Jesus had taught His disciples multiple times that He would rise from the grave.

For example, in Matthew 16:2, we read **...Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.**

Jesus had even informed the religious leaders, though He used more figurative language.

In John 2:19, Jesus said, **“Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”**

He spoke of His own body, not the building.

Jesus’s message apparently was clear to some scribes and Pharisees because they asked Pilate to place guards at Jesus’s tomb until the third day, explaining, “...**otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead,’** (Matthew 27:64)

We are not told why the disciples were not anticipating Jesus’s resurrection.

We only know they understood later.

Brothers and sisters,

* Be assured, God’s plans do not depend on our understanding to proceed.
* Take comfort, knowing that what God ordains, He will bring to pass according to His plan.

Two examples of this will aid our investigation of the meaning of “He is Risen.”

1. As I mentioned last week, God planned that Jesus would enter Jerusalem on the exact day He did. It was the Israelites’ designated day to choose their sacrificial lamb for the Passover.

Jesus fulfilled this foreshadow because He was the final sacrificial lamb.

1. Similarly, God ordained that Jesus would rise from the grave on this particular day to fulfil another foreshadowing: This day was their annual Feast of the First Fruits. People were to bring their first ripened sheaves of grain to the temple to thank God for them and the rest that would come.

Jesus fulfilled this foreshadow because He was the “first fruit” of those to be resurrected to eternal life and others would be resurrected also.

In 1 Corinthians 15:**22,** Paul explained **...for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. 23 ... each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.**

Church, these three little words, “He is risen,” carry profound meaning.

They embody the whole truth of Jesus’s finished work of John 3:16, 17. **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.**

**17 “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.**

Friends, this is good news that needs to be shared. Please remember, it came to you on its way out to someone else, using you as a messenger.

To those of you who do not yet know the risen Savior, Who offers you salvation, please call or come see me right away, so we can have that life and death conversation.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father, we praise You for Your everlasting grace toward us.

We join our voices in praise with our brothers and sisters world-wide this morning as we celebrate that Jesus is Risen indeed!

Amen

And now:

**To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever.**

Amen