

The Resurrection of Our Lord (2018)

Mark 16:1–8 When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. *And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.*

In the Name of Jesus.

“and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.”

So often it takes someone who has NOT heard Luther

and Paul's Gospel all his life to remind us deplorable Lutherans of the treasures we take as a matter of course. Our dear brother Joe commented that what he loves so about Luther and Paul's Gospel is the freedom to leave the words JUST AS WRITTEN, with no improvements on it at all. So, I'm gonna give Joe a gift this morning and repeat the Isaiah promise. Listen...to...the...words!

“and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.”

‘The reproach of His people!’

We live in the State OF Louisianan: the State that IS Louisiana.

The REPROACH of His people that He removes FROM...THE...WHOLE...EARTH—now that's the words! And y'all and I did not write this: God wrote it! So no taking away; no adding; no improving! The REPROACH—the cause of head wagging and finger wagging and tsk!, tsk!, and rolled eyes, superior brains, superior feelings—the cause of vultures gathering over the corpse!—the cause of the ENDLESS line, one after another, of those who wanna tell you and me JUST...THE..RIGHT...WAY... to go about WHATEVER

in life:

Is that, as with our King, the best of the world to the worst of the world found Him—finds His disciples!—
SUCH...EASY...TARGETS for complaining!

And what is our Resurrection Day reply to the whole earth's disappointment regarding us? Hallelujah!
Praise...the...Lord! We won't be here much longer! Hang on, world! Hang on, prince of this world! Your BIG burden was lifted on the first day of the week millennia ago. The rest of your burden will be removed—we guarantee!—soon!

Don't hide!

Don't pretend!

Don't PLAY the world's deadly, ungodly game!

That you ARE what you ARE—the young man at the tomb says, is no longer any cause for fear! (Despite the fact that, at THAT happy message, the women fear and tremble and—the Holy Spirit says!—told no one! How *disappointing* of them! *Yes!* So the first women disciples

could give the first male disciples a run for their money!
Go tell the disciples—and Peter too!)

I often repeat to y'all the story about my little brother, who was complaining one day about folk who don't come to church regularly enough. He and I were infected early with church-itis; so we're pretty sick; and cannot go very long without the radical medicine of Christ's Body and Blood!

And I repeat the story often that I once confronted him with the FACT that most people who stay away from his congregation certainly do because they know they will find HIM there E...V...E...R...Y Sunday—and I'm surprised people make it even two or three times a year.

And I've told you how much he rejoiced at my REPROACH of him! So, fair is fair!

Breathing my last last night, my little brother texts for a chat. And I call. And the first words out of his mouth are: you pastors always preach the Gospel; but who tells you? So, I'm calling to tell you that tomorrow morning you will celebrate the rising of Jesus. And THAT means that even YOU, my brother PAUL, are not going to get what you deserve from God! And you need to tell everyone at church tomorrow that if YOU can have

confidence about your standing with God, then EVERYONE must! If my brother PAUL is saved, then NO ONE should despair of God!

And I told my little brother that I loved him; and that I TRY to be the Christian my father was, is; but that he just seems to DO it. He said ‘Christ is risen indeed!’ And hung up!

So I wrapped myself in the funeral shroud of my Savior—His Baptism of me, the pledge and guarantee that the Living God accepts ME...DESPITE...ME..... And smiled as I slept!

I beg you to hear me!

The rising of Jesus that that young man proclaimed in words to take away all fear—the LAST thing these words are FOR is to CEMENT our position more firmly STUCK in this world! So that we can play the game they do in seats of power, at religious nexuses, at the crossroads of chatting and chewing men to death in this world.

My sin: I was recently obsessed the way that our society is so upside down—Ten Commandments-wise. I read a slew of stories about people who butcher others, who

spend a few days in a resort somewhere, then come out and write books, become motivational speakers, go on talk shows—get their OWN talk shows! And I was wondering about Barabbas, the one Pilate released at popular acclaim, when he condemned our King.

What sort of book deal did Barabbas get? I'm HOLDING IT! Famous dude! Did Barabbas get his own talk show? 'Tea time with Barabbas and friends!'

And since our country is doing its best to emulate Pontius Pilate, I started to wonder about who would be good modern parallels for the other two crucified with Jesus that day. If the murderers are no problem—their day and ours—then who MUST the government attack?

And I thought of cases that the Supreme Court of our land must judge in the coming months; and it hit me! Local, state, and federal power has come crashing down on a guy who did not want to bake a cake for another guy; and on a florist who did not want to bundle flowers for another guy. And the greatest juridical minds we can come up with are now pondering their fate in their august selves.

For a few minutes I was toying with the thought of a bulletin cover with Jesus on a middle cross, and on the left and right a guy in a baker's hat and a guy wrapped in

flowers.

Now—and let's be serious here a minute—why did I want to do that?

Because—I...was...not...listening...to...Joe!

I left the Word lying unused, and fell into the rut of this earth's fussin' and feudin'! Culture wars! Vexations! Double standards! Hypocrisy! Annoyances! My feelings-doctor tells me that a bulletin cover like that would be an example of me being 'passive-aggressive.' The little bit I know about that means that I'm trying to pass off as a joke a true ball of anger or sadness or some other feeling he wants me to make up inside me. I don't know about that.

What I do know is: The Word calls it sin; the Word calls it the earth; the Word calls it the 'reproach that IS God's people!'

Isaiah sang of a feast for people starving because of their unbelief. He sang of rich wine for people who were struggling to get a drink of clean water—because, as the ONLY people in the world who KNEW the Lord, the God of Abraham, the Living God, they had decided to live as lost and deluded as my ancestors in Norway, or your

ancestors, bowing down and scraping before bits of wood and stone and metal.

‘If such signs were done in Sodom and Gomorrah, THEY would have repented! But not MY people!’

‘The ox knows its master and the donkey its master’s feeding trough. But MY people do not KNOW Me. And I am mortified by MY people!’

The OLD day’s done, dear disciples of Christ! Solid standing with heaven will never again—after the young man’s word about our risen Jesus!—OUR standing with heaven will NEVER again hinge on you and me out-doing the out-doers of this earth. In fact, the cross is our route—our only route to be with Him! Meaning: the confession that when WE are removed from this earth, the world will be a better place!

So, here’s your fellow-deplorable’s guarantee for you!

Despite your daily and many sins, your violence against God, you will rise! From this earth, or a hole in this earth!

But since HE rose—THAT King of shame!—the nasty and terrible PAUL will NOT be re-animated, to cause EVERLASTING vexation, as I've caused sorrow for some decades now. No! THAT Paul will never rise! That Old Adam! Yours either!

In fact, that phony was killed in you long ago—me too, my rotten little brother tells me!—the day we were baptized into Christ! STRIPPED of what WE wrap ourselves with, playing dress-up, to out-WHATEVER WHOEVER—HERE!

And we KNOW better, don't we? We know Moses! And we know Christ! And you and I, my dear ones, have even been blessed to sit at the feet of Doctor Martin Luther and learn the Small Catechism.

And...STILL....

Pastor wants to strike back—with sarcasm, humor, jabs—at an earth that is only striking at ME because I deserve it!

And whom do YOU want pinned down? Exposed! Stripped! Displayed! Cru...ci...fied? Ummmmmm....

You see why the young man did NOT send the women to tell of the God in our Flesh now risen from the dead—NOT sent to Pontius Pilate, to the Roman Emperor, or to my Viking forebears swathed in violence.

Nope! They were sent to the most serious cases on earth! The BURDEN of this world: those who should know better, but who will not! The disciples—even PETER! Even Paul! Even you, me!

Hide nothing!

Run from nothing!

Pretend nothing!

Unless you are ACTING like those who have died to sin, been freed from it, because you have been baptized into the Christ of God Who was crucified, but Who left the tomb and its scraps behind—scraps to cover us!

One of the funniest things Luther ever wrote was when he was bothered by his deplorableness—why cannot Luther ever be a better Christian?! But Luther knew it was

his poor punching bag, Satan, who was bothering him.

I don't recommend this. But revel in what Luther then wrote. He said:

My prayer is then, 'Holy Satan, PRAY for me! You won't have long to put up with me!'

He will remove the reproach of His people from the earth.

The Lord will unburden this world that cannot bear you and me much longer. For He has risen indeed! Amen!