



DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

Easter (C) – 1 Corinthians 15:19-26

Focus: *Defeating Death Itself*

word of life

“For [Christ] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.” (1 Corinthians 15:25-26 NRSV)

Read 1 Corinthians 15:19-26

CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!

The breathtaking smells and images of Easter Sunday can overwhelm our senses as the resurrection of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! We need not just hope for life after death, but we can believe it.

The Apostle Paul writes, “If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.” (1 Corinthians 15:19 NRSV) The empty tomb of Jesus turned the world upside for his followers. They could not grasp the meaning and implications of the empty tomb. Even after the risen Jesus physically appeared to them, walked and ate with them, it was still staggering.

1. *What would it have been like to be at the empty tomb on that first Easter morning?*
2. *How might you have reacted to the news of Jesus being alive?*

It is well worth spending time telling and re-telling the story of the resurrection of Jesus. For the story of Easter is not just about one man—Jesus Christ born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, baptized in the Jordan—defeating death and all of its power. God did not raise Jesus from the dead just to illustrate God’s mighty powers on one individual. Easter impacts *our lives*. Easter is *our story*!

It is the Apostle Paul who attempts to explain the theological ramifications of resurrection. Apostle Paul starts at the beginning with Adam, one who represents all of humanity, both men and women. The word *adam* means *earthling*. “From dust we came, from dust we shall return.” Adam includes all of us who are contained in a human body and who die. As humans, we are intricately connected to Adam, and we are a product of God’s creative work. Death is a byproduct of being in Adam’s lineage and gene pool. To name death does not bring it closer or faster to us. It is simply to state our reality.

3. *How are you connected to Adam?*
4. *How easy or difficult is it to talk about death? Why do you think that is so?*

Easter boldly and loudly proclaims a new ending to the story of Adam. “For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:21 NRSV) Although we realize death is part of our connection with Adam, we also recognize the resurrection of Jesus Christ changes the outcome. In Christ we are made alive.

First Christ had to defeat death—his own death. Paul explains Christ returned to God after his resurrection to continue to fight against his enemies. The final enemy to be defeated is death. God is at work through Christ. Because Christ died and rose again, we are promised resurrection as well.

5. *If someone would ask you to explain Easter, what would you say?*
6. *How does Easter impact your view of death?*

Word among us

When Josh was eleven, he had the chance to spend a summer with his grandmother. He always loved listening to her stories while she cooked their meals with vegetables from the garden. She was quite a storyteller, weaving together stories of his ancestors in ways which made the time fly.

Early on that summer, it was decided Josh needed a family tree. Using Josh's computer skills, they spent hours on the computer tracking down distant relatives. They also visited cemeteries, taking pictures of tombstones.

As a budding artist, Josh became fascinated with the artwork and quotes on the tombstones. He discovered lilies, open doors and tombs, sunrises, and empty crosses. He could not help but notice the flowers and evergreen bushes on top of the graves. His grandmother gently used their time together to teach her beloved grandson about Easter and the promise of resurrection. She was a life-long Sunday School teacher and recognized a teachable moment when she saw it.

During that summer, Josh was given the gift of his past with the family tree, but the greater gift was the gift of his future in Christ and the promise of life after death.

1. *What art work is often placed on tombstones in your area of the country?*
2. *How does this art work remind you (or not) of Easter?*

Jesus Christ defeated death. As yet, we do not escape death. We bury loved ones and grieve their passing. But Easter reminds us of our connection to Christ and the promise of the permanent defeat of death itself. And so we often sing Easter hymns at funerals. We place symbols of life on graves and plant greenery. **CHRIST IS RISEN! CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!**

3. *What helps you remember that Christ is risen?*
4. *When someone grieves and wonders why people need to die, what do you say?*

faith practice in daily life

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed

The message of Easter takes on deep meaning as we name the power and sting of death in our lives. To be part of Adam and humanity is to recognize the finite nature of our time on this earth. Nevertheless, we are made alive in Christ Jesus. We need not wait until our death to experience this newness of life. Easter is today. Jesus frees us today from the powers of this world, including the fear of death itself.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! We proclaim Easter through word and deed.

5. *How might you proclaim Easter through your words?*
6. *How might you proclaim Easter through your deeds?*

Prayer

Risen Christ, defeat the power of death in our life. Free us to live in you. Amen.

last word

Breathe in...and say, "Christ is risen."
Breathe out... and say, "Christ is risen indeed."
Repeat often.

Daily Faith Practices

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