

Sermon for 4/23/2000 (Easter)—*Sermon Series: “Come, Meet the Lord of Life.”*—Lord of Life Lutheran Church

**Title:** “The Lord of Life and Death

**Text:** John 20: 1-10

**Introduction:** **Illus.: Transformed by death and raised to a new life**

**Theme:** If the Easter story is true, then Jesus must be the Lord of life and of death.

### *What do you come expecting to see. . .*

- **The reasonable certainty of death or the miraculous reality of the resurrection?**
  1. The women expected to find a dead body not an open tomb
  2. ILL.: MOVE FROM MOURNING TO LIFE
  3. Too many people (including many Christian) are stuck in the cycle of grief after the death of loved one.
  4. “*And now, brothers and sisters, I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have not hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus comes, God will bring back with Jesus all the Christians who have died.*” 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14
- **Expecting to see Jesus but not expecting to experience Him?**
  1. John stooped to look in but Peter, emotive as he was, burst into the grave to find out for himself
  2. Sad to say, for many long-time church goers “church” becomes a head thing rather than a heart thing
  3. We don’t expect Jesus to do a resurrection miracle in our life because we analyze it to death
  4. If Jesus is my Lord of life and death, He must be Lord of my “*heart, soul, mind, and strength*”

### *Moving from seeing to witnessing the Easter Lord*

- **Accept the proof of the resurrection as good enough for you**
  1. **Ill.: Some things are not too good to be true**
  2. Look at the evidence that the resurrection of Jesus was not just a hoax or legend
    - multiple witnesses (women, Peter, John, over 500 at last count 1 Cor 15:6)
    - the burial wrappings left in such a way to show no grave robbery but intentional leaving (vss. 5-7)
  3. Is your faith a philosophy of life, or is it a conviction about a Savior who is Lord over life and death
    - **Ill.: Young adult answer to ? “What would you say to someone who says that Christianity is not different or better than any other religion in the world?”**
- **Believe in the necessity of Jesus’ resurrection and yours. . .**
  1. The Bible says that “*it was necessary for Jesus to rise from the dead*”(9)
    - *He was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised from the dead to make us right with God.”Rom.4:25*
  2. . . Because then you will be done conceding the fight to Satan and sin
    - **Read Romans 6: 1-4**
  3. . . Because then you will stop living to die and you will start dying to live
    - **ILL.: A CEMETERY USED TO BE REFERRED TO AS “RESURRECTION CITY”**
    - The disciples went to the tomb expecting to find a dead person and found the resurrection
    - The recent tragic death of so many young people brings home the reality of death; but if we expect and hope in the resurrection, that isn’t the final word.
    - “*For not one of lives to himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.*” Romans 14: 7-8
- **Live as if the resurrection has already happened**
  1. Letting resurrection laughter be put back in your life (vs. 4)
    - **ILL.: FUTILITY**
    - Lighten up a little—there is always tomorrow!—especially in light of the resurrection
  2. Raised to a new way of resurrection living
    - After the resurrection experience, do you and I just “*go away again to their own homes*” (10) or do we itch to get out and let someone else know the good news?
    - Having a little of the *Christmas shepherds* and the *Easter morning women* in our hearts and faith
    - **Ill.: Too Scared To Say Something**

### **TRANSFORMED BY DEATH AND RAISED TO A NEW LIFE**

One morning in 1888 Alfred Nobel, inventor of dynamite, awoke to read his own obituary. The obituary was printed as a result of a simple journalistic error. You see, it was Alfred's brother that had died and the reporter carelessly reported the death of the wrong brother. Any man would be disturbed under the circumstances, but to Alfred the shock was overwhelming because he saw himself as the world saw him. The "Dynamite King," the great industrialist who had made an immense fortune from explosives. This, as far as the general public was concerned, was the entire purpose of Alfred's life. None of his true intentions to break down the barriers that separated men and ideas for peace were recognized or given serious consideration. He was simply a merchant of death. And for that alone he would be remembered. As he read the obituary with horror, he resolved to make clear to the world the true meaning and purpose of his life. This could be done through the final disposition of his fortune. His last will and testament--an endowment of five annual prizes for outstanding contributions in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature, and peace (the sixth category of economics was added later)--would be the expression of his life's ideals and ultimately would be why we would remember him. The result was the most valuable of prizes given to those who had done the most for the cause of world peace. It is called today, the "Nobel Peace Prize."

### **MOVE FROM MOURNING TO LIFE**

The home of Paul Laurence Dunbar, noted poet, is open to the public in Dayton, Ohio. When Dunbar died, his mother left his room exactly as it was on the day of his death. At the desk of this brilliant man was his final poem, handwritten on a pad.

After his mother died, her friends discovered that Paul Laurence Dunbar's last poem had been lost forever. Because his mother had made his room into a shrine and not moved anything, the sun had bleached the ink in which the poem was written until it was invisible. The poem was gone. If we stay in mourning, we lose so much of life. -Henry Simon Belleville, Illinois

### **SOME THINGS ARE NOT TOO GOOD TO TRUE**

Several years ago, The Saturday Evening Post ran a cartoon showing a man about to be rescued after he had spent a long time ship-wrecked on a tiny deserted island. The sailor in charge of the rescue team stepped onto the beach and handed the man a stack of newspapers. "Compliments of the Captain," the sailor said. "He would like you to glance at the headlines to see if you'd still like to be rescued!" Sometimes the headlines do scare us. Sometimes we feel that evil is winning, but then along comes Easter, to remind us that there is no grave deep enough, no seal imposing enough, no stone heavy enough, no evil strong enough to keep Christ in the grave. [James W. Moore, \*Some Things Are Too Good Not To Be True\*, Dimensions, 1994, p. 80.](#)

### **FUTILITY**

One night a thief broke into the single-room apartment of French novelist Honore de Balzac. Trying to avoid waking Balzac, the intruder quietly picked the lock on the writer's desk. Suddenly the silence was broken by a sardonic laugh from the bed, where Balzac lay watching the thief. "Why do you laugh?" asked the thief. "I am laughing to think what risks you take to try to find money in a desk by night where the legal owner can never find any by day."

### **TOO SCARED TO SAY SOMETHING**

"\$10 for 3 minutes," replied the pilot. "That's too much," said the farmer. The pilot thought for a second and then said, "I'll make you a deal. If you and your wife ride for 3 minutes without uttering a sound, the ride will be free. But if you make a sound, you'll have to pay \$10." The farmer and his wife agreed and went for a wild ride. After they landed, the pilot said to the farmer, "I want to congratulate you for not making a sound. You are a brave man." "Maybe so," said the farmer, "But I gotta tell ya, I almost screamed when my wife fell out."

## **John 20: 1-10**

1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" 3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went back to their homes.