

Sermon Series: “Easter’s Glow in our Lives”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield—4/19/2009
Title: “An Easter Purpose for Living”
Text: 1 Corinthians 15: 58
Intro.: *Ills.: Anti-God rally disarmed by the resurrection*
Theme: The fact that Jesus came out of the grave not only guarantees that we will some day but now frees us up to live out our lives to the fullest purpose which God intended for them.

Our resurrected Jesus has put the life back into our lives . . .

- Little things matter, again
- 1. ***Therefore***, (if Jesus is risen from the dead . . .) — don’t ignore the little words (*syn*) in this Scripture
 - a. **Illus. Little Things Matter**
 - b. This tiny word “*therefore*” hinges on the great truth of Jesus’ resurrection and ours to come described earlier
- 2. If you knew you were going to live forever, how would that change the way you lived? (For good or bad)
- We can be strong and steady!
- 1. It starts with the right foundation (*be grounded*)
 - a. **1 Corinthians 3: 11-14**
 - b. What is it that is the “bottom line” for you?
- 2. No matter the outward circumstances, Christ’s resurrected purpose for your life is secure
 - a. We allow ourselves to be distracted and distraught over eternally inconsequential things (***in terms of eternity***)
 - b. Not ill-health, peer or employer threats, nor economic/social crisis deters us from being about the Lord’s work
 - c. Steady as she goes and unmoved by the little “flies” of life — reflecting God’s nature alive within you in Christ
 - d. **Illus.: Ignoring Distractions**
- 3. Define your life by what you will become not by what your are
 - a. *You have died, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. Christ is your life. When he appears, then you, too, will appear with him in glory. Colossians 3:3-4*
 - b. You “are” a powerfully raise new creation, who has an eternity of hope secured and waiting for you
 - c. *In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:13-14*
- We will be enthusiastically abounding in the Lord’s work!
- 1. *God has made us what we are. He has created us in Christ Jesus to live lives filled with good works that he has prepared for us to do. Ephesians 2:10*
- 2. God-given life time service opportunities as object lessons we are living for a redeemed and resurrected purpose
- We are redeemed and raised up to recognize the value in the Lord’s work
- 1. Kingdom building versus Fiefdom building
 - a. When our service/involvement about ourselves and being *King of the Hill*, always someone ready to knock off
 - b. Leaving behind the powerful scent of the living Christ in our legacy of work and impact on others (*But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. 2 Corinthians 2:14-15*)
 - c. Putting God’s kingdom’s goals first in life, career, plans, allows God opportunity to do his miracles in/thru us
- 2. Raised to a resurrection work ethic because the work (*kopos*) may not seem all that glorious
- 3. Words of advise from Solomon on a meaningful legacy in life’s work
 - a. **Ecclesiastes 2: 18-26**
 - b. Know that because Jesus lives nothing that you do in home, job, marriage, school, church, in life is in vain

Anti-God Rally Disarmed

Dr. George Sweeting tells of an incident in the early 1920s when Communist leader Nikolai Bukharin was sent from Moscow to Kiev to address an anti-God rally. For an hour he abused and ridiculed the Christian faith until it seemed as if the whole structure of belief was in ruins. Then questions were invited. An Orthodox church priest rose and asked to speak. He turned, faced the people, and gave the Easter greeting, "He is risen!" Instantly the assembly rose to its feet and the reply came back loud and clear, "He is risen indeed!" **Today in the Word, September, 1989, p. 8.**

Little Things Matter

The *U.S. News and World Report*, commenting on a delay in the space shuttle Columbia's second flight, pointed out that little things have often been the cause of big difficulties in the space program. The reason for the postponement was a clogged hydraulic-system filter. Officials reported that the 5 quarts of oil needed for a change was worth only about \$25. Yet the setback cost American taxpayers approximately \$3 million a day. On another occasion, a costly satellite was lost because a punctuation mark was omitted from its computer program. And the cause for aborting an Apollo 13 moon landing in 1970 was a short circuit caused by a piece of wire worth about 50 cents. **U.S. News and World Report.**

Ignoring Distractions

There is a story involving Yogi Berra, the well-known catcher for the New York Yankees, and Hank Aaron, who at that time was the chief power hitter for the Milwaukee Braves. The teams were playing in the World Series, and as usual Yogi was keeping up his ceaseless chatter, intended to pep up his teammates on the one hand, and distract the Milwaukee batters on the other. As Aaron came to the plate, Yogi tried to distract him by saying, "Henry, you're holding the bat wrong. You're supposed to hold it so you can read the trademark." Aaron didn't say anything, but when the next pitch came he hit it into the left-field bleachers. After rounding the bases and tagging up at home plate, Aaron looked at Yogi Berra and said, "I didn't come up here to read." **Nehemiah, Learning to Lead, J.M. Boice, Revell, 1990, p. 38.**

1 Corinthians 15:58

⁵⁸Therefore, then, family of God, be strong and steady. Always excel in the work you do for the Lord. You know that the hard work you do for the Lord is not pointless.

1 Corinthians 3:11-14

¹¹For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, ¹³each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. ¹⁴If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.

Ecclesiastes 2:18-26

I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the work into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. For a man may do his work with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then he must leave all he owns to someone who has not worked for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. What does a man get for all the toil and anxious striving with which he labors under the sun? All his days his work is pain and grief; even at night his mind does not rest. This too is meaningless. A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness.