

WEEKLY DEVOTION – Tuesday, April 6, 2021
Pastor Bruce Kischnick, Grace Lutheran Church, New Albany, IN

“MY THREE FAVORITE WORDS”

READING: Matthew 28:1-7 – After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. There was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he is risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples: “He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him. Now I have told you.”

He is risen! He is risen indeed! A blessed Eastertide to you! There are a lot of words in the dictionary that I like a lot. “Dandelion” is a nice word. “Interstellar” is an interesting word. “Lunch” is a good word when I’m hungry! “Michigan” makes me smile. “Sycamore” brings pictures to mind. But of all the words in the English language (and in German, French, and Koine Greek – in all of which I know at least some words), my favorite three words in combination are: “He is risen!” (Always said with the exclamation mark!)

“He” is Jesus Christ, my Lord and Ever-living Savior. He went to the judgement hall for crimes uncommitted. He felt the lash of Roman “justice” for a rebellion he never fomented. He wore the crown of thorns, the garish robe, the splinters from the cross, and the nails that pierced him through. He felt the abyss of the Father’s wrath at sin, my sin, our sin. And at the last he gave up the ghost in order “...that I may be his own and live under him in his Kingdom and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.”

“Is” – Martin Luther famously said (and Bill Clinton forgot), “Is is is!” “Is” is a statement of fact. It isn’t “might be”; it isn’t “could be”; it isn’t “will be” – “is” means what it says. It’s a done deal. It’s for sure, for certain, without a doubt, and absolutely true. Jesus “is”, even as the Lord said to Moses, “I am that I am.” Believe it! Rejoice in it! Trust it! Live according to it!

“Risen!” – He’s not missing; he’s not absent; he’s not stolen away; he’s not buried elsewhere where Mary cannot find him. He is RISEN! He is alive and whole and holy and absolutely beautiful. He has overcome death and the grave, Satan and sin, the Sanhedrin and the Elders and the Chief Priests and Pontius Pilate and Caiaphas and Annas and all his enemies. He has foiled the executioner, overwhelmed the guards, surprised even his closest disciples, and he lives. He is RISEN! Never to die again. No longer in his humiliation, but now in his exaltation. Once again, the King of kings and Lord of lords! Once again, the all-powerful, almighty, hallowed and awesome Son of God who lives and reigns to all eternity.

HE IS RISEN! Those are, in my estimation, the most beautiful, most powerful, most meaningful words in any language because they tell us the price paid on Friday's Cross has been accepted by the Father in full exchange for our salvation. That by his rising, Jesus has extended to us God's grace and mercy. We are **SAVED!** And all of it comes with a number of promises, not the least of which is this, "Because I live, you shall live also!" We will know the joy of the Resurrection in full because we ourselves will experience it through Christ. Alive and well and living in heaven with him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

HE IS RISEN! Those words bring an end to every Lutheran funeral – both at the church or funeral home and at the Committal. Each single time they are a reminder to all in attendance that the hope we have in Christ Jesus is founded on something real and powerful – namely, his Resurrection. Because he overcame death, every Christian heart can rest easy in his love because he has already secured our future and assured our everlasting life. They are my favorite three words when put in that order – **HE IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUJAH! And AMEN!**

HAPPY EASTER TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU!

PRAYER:

ANNOUNCEMENT(S):