

The Resurrection of Our Lord, Easter Day  
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Rev. David A. Kind  
University Lutheran Chapel  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

✠ Jesu juva ✠

## OUR COMING TRANSFORMATION

Mark 16:1-8; I Corinthians 15:51-57; Job 19:23-27

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God the Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

**C**hrist is risen! And as Christ is risen from His tomb, so also shall we rise one day from our tombs. St. Paul speaks to us of this today: "For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Yes, one day we will all hear the heavenly fanfare and all the dead will rise from their graves. And we who have trusted in Christ will be transformed.

St. Paul describes this coming transformation as a change from the corruptible to the incorruptible and from the mortal to the immortal. Now what, you might be asking, does that entail? I'm quite sure that no pastor or theologian knows the answer to that completely; for St. Paul says that he is telling us about one of the mysteries of the faith. Such things cannot be completely researched or discovered, they are simply to be believed. However there is one thing that we can say with certainty about what this transformation will entail. For that which is corruptible to become incorruptible, all that corrupts it from within and from without must be removed. Sin must be done away; and here I am speaking not just about the penalty for sin, not just the effects of sin, like shame and guilt, but the thing itself. And for that which is mortal to put on immortality, that which causes death must be removed; and once again that thing is sin. It must be completely removed not just from the soul of the who is raised up to life; but also from the flesh, so that the raised body is no longer under its influence and no longer under its curse.

These things, Christ has done. He has already broken the power of sin and its curse, through the forgiveness He won when He gave up His life on the cross. And He has broken these things for you when you were spiritually crucified and raised up with Him in Holy Baptism. And what He began in that great and miraculous Sacrament, He will complete in your flesh when it too is buried and then raised, or if He comes again before the time of your death, when it is transformed at His coming.

And this resurrection will be a real, in the flesh, resurrection. This is not just some kind of spiritual thing, but the body being reconstituted and brought to life again! It is something virtually unheard of, apart from a few miracles recorded in the Scriptures: human beings overcoming death itself, not simply by cheating it or prolonging life, but by rising from the dead into a new and everlasting life!

And the skeptic will say, yes that all sounds fine and good; but how can this possibly happen? How can those who are dead accomplish this, or anything at all for that matter? It is impossible for the dead to rise. The dead are dead. That's it. And this would be true if we were left to our own powers and devices in this; for death robs a person of all power and of all doing. It is as the Psalmist says in Psalm 89 (:48): "What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave?"

But Christ Jesus makes the impossible possible. This day the women went to His tomb looking for a corpse to anoint with spices; but what they found was an empty tomb and an angel. And that angel declares to them that which they too had thought impossible: "You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here." And then the angel points them to the place where His body had lain. And it was not there. Jesus resurrection is a real physical resurrection.

But His body is raised a transformed body; transformed how? I'm not entirely sure how, as I said before, for it is a mystery. But we can say one thing for certain. His body is no longer subject to death. As St. Paul says in Romans 6(:9): "Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him." He who knew no corruption, but was still mortal for our sakes, has now put on immortality. And by these actions He has utterly broken the power of death and conquered it as was prophesied in the book of Hosea where Christ says: "O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction!"

And so Christ says in the same place of us: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death." When Christ burst open the doors of His tomb, our tombs also were made to stand open. They will hold our bodies for a time; but only for a time, not forever. Death no longer has that power over us because it has no power over Christ into whom we have been Baptized and in whom we believe.

A long, long time ago Job confessed his faith in Christ and in his own resurrection by Christ's power: "I know that My Redeemer lives, and He shall stand at last upon the earth; and after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes behold, and not another." And we can have this same confidence about our redemption and our resurrection from the dead. We can have this confidence because our Lord, Jesus Christ, has promised us this will be so. His Word has power to accomplish what He says. And not only is this the Word of God Himself, but it is the Word of one who has done it!

And now we can say with St. Paul: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory



through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Now there is hope. Now there is a certain future for us. Now there is resurrection. For He is who was crucified is no longer dead. His body no longer lies in the tomb, but lives and breathes. He is risen! Amen.

✧ Soli Deo gloria ✧