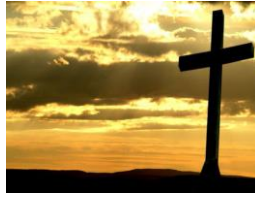


Matthew 6:13
Delivered From Evil
Easter Sunday April 17th, 2022



The cross is bare and empty!



The stone is rolled away!



The tomb is cold and empty!

So, let's share that Good News with each other and the world!

Repeat after me: "He is risen!"

"He is risen indeed!"

"He is alive!"

"He is here!"

Indeed, Jesus rose from the dead on that first Easter almost 2000 years ago to never die again. His resurrection from the dead is the validation of all he taught, and all he claimed to be. He is the Son of God, and through his sacrifice on the cross all our sins are forgiven.

We have been delivered from evil and the evil one, and now await Jesus' final victory.

We today believe that, proclaim that, and as the Body of Christ spread that message to the world by what we say and do. We make our lives living prayers unto God as we love one another.



On that first Easter morning, that first day of the week, the Marys and Joanna came to the tomb to do their grim duty, which was to anoint the body of Jesus with burial spices. When they got to the tomb the stone had been rolled away and the tomb was empty. And then God showed up. In the midst of doing their duty based on love... God showed up as God often does.

God sent two angels that declared Jesus' resurrection just as the angels did at his birth. They asked a question, **“Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here but has risen.”**

The stone was rolled back. This was not to let Jesus out, but to let the Marys in to see that Jesus' body was no longer there. Jesus body was different after his resurrection. He could pass through closed doors like he did in the Upper Room that evening.

He could go in and out of people's perception, like he did with the two men that afternoon on their walk to Emmaus, those two who only recognized him in the breaking of the bread.

Now the angels' called the women to remember Jesus' prophecies. They reminded them that Jesus said, **“While he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.”**

They remembered his words and ran and told the 11 disciples and the rest what they had seen and heard. It is thru remembering that faith often develops. Remembering is such an important part of faith, because it is in remembering God's promises, faithfulness and care in the past that we in the present are strengthened and encouraged in our faith.

And today we WILL remember in the breaking of the bread.

The women remembered and ran and told the 11 disciples and their testimony was ignored. The phrase in the scripture **"because their words seemed to them like nonsense."** in Greek has the connotation of the babbling of a person in a fevered state. The disciples were probably thinking, **"These women are out of their minds in grief. We all saw Jesus crucified, dead, and buried."**



But Peter, he ran to the tomb and saw the empty tomb, but didn't leave in faith... just wonderment... or amazement. For some, just the empty tomb itself is, and was proof of the resurrection of Jesus. But for others like Peter and the 11 they had to meet the risen Lord before they believed. It is the same for many today. And it is in relationships of love with other Christians that we meet Jesus.

It was in Jesus' appearances after his resurrection that his followers believed. That afternoon he appeared to the two men on their Walk to Emmaus. That evening he appeared to 10 of the disciples in the Upper Room. Thomas was absent, so he did not see and believe. And later Jesus appeared to Peter alone, and then to 7 by the Sea of Galilee, and then to more than 500 in Galilee.

It's in these appearances that deep faith developed and the church, His Body grew. He appeared after his ascension to Stephen the first

martyr, and then to Paul, and finally to the Apostle John in his Revelation that closes out the Bible.

It's in these appearances and more that the faith of the early church was strengthened and grew through the power and presence of Jesus. It was when two, or three, or more were gathered together that Christ appeared. And sometimes the two were just Christ and a believer.

Today we conclude our Lord's Prayer series with the 6th phrase, "deliver us from the evil one." What better day to speak to this, than on the day of resurrection, because Jesus' resurrection delivered all of us from the evil one. The resurrection validated the forgiveness of sin that Jesus won on the cross. It validated the claim that Jesus defeated sin, death, and the devil, the evil one.

In the last 6 weeks we have explored 3 types of prayer that are present in the Lord's Prayer: meditation/contemplative prayer, intercessory prayer, prayers of petition. The Fourth type is spiritual warfare prayer, or imprecatory prayer. The 5th and 6th phrases of the Lord's Prayer fall into this category, which are: "Lead us not into hard testing, but deliver us from the evil one."

We pray these phrases fervently when we have also prayed "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." We pray the last phrase fervently as we live out the Kingdom of God here on earth, when we confront the forces of evil in words or through righteous lifestyle.

When we do this, we open a battle with the evil one who desperately wants us to fail; so that God's Kingdom will not come and God's will, won't be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Now belief, faith and prayer all come together when we act to bring the Kingdom of God here on earth. When our beliefs inspire us to faith,

it inevitable moves us into action. And in reverse when we act on our beliefs, and see God moving in and through us, our faith grows.

John 3:16 says, **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believes in him will not perish but have everlasting life.”** In that verse the word “believe” is used. Now in the English use of that word you can have lots of beliefs that do not spur you into action. These beliefs remain just that beliefs, they don’t become faith. Faith is belief that spurs us to action.

In the New Testament when the word “believe” is used there is always some active component to it. A belief in the New Testament spurs to action. A belief in the New Testament is more like what we call faith. It is active and living.

The difference between belief and faith is like this, and this is an illustration I always used with confirmation classes.



If you were standing on Oracle with your back to traffic and I told you a truck was coming and you believed me, but didn’t move, you would only have belief and lose your life. But if I said a truck was coming and you got out of the way you would have life, and “faith”, because you acted on your belief.

In the same way we can make our lives living prayers to God by acting on the beliefs and the prayers that are within us. Some say most communication is 80% nonverbal. Just think about that. So, than can we pray to God in a nonverbal manner? Yes!

In fact, we can make our lives living prayers before God. Do we want the Kingdom of God to come here on earth? Do we want ourselves to be instruments of God’s Kingdom coming here to earth?

By our actions we can live the answer to those questions. We can do the things that are done in the Kingdom right now here on earth with each other. We can live out the fruits of the Spirit: **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.**

Now I got a solicitation call about right here when I was writing this sermon. I did not want to be pleasant to the person on the other end of the line, because when I am interrupted while writing I find it very hard to pick up and continue on. But I was pleasant and even kind in saying no to the person on the line, because that is what I knew God wanted me to do. The measure of our Christianity is often how we deal with the minor irritations of the people in our life.

We are called by the Lord's Prayer to make our lives a living prayer, and as we do that, not only are we delivered from the evil one, but those whose lives intersect ours, they are delivered too, like the solicitor that day.

That's what it means in the Great Thanksgiving prayer of Holy Communion, **"we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us,"**

As we live out our beliefs in faith; we see lives saved, people in despair turned to hope, healings of body, soul, and mind. We see the Kingdom come and we see ourselves and others overcoming the trials and testing of life, and defeating the evil one. Our lives will become living examples of the Lord's Prayer.

1 John 4:4 says, **"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."**

As the Kingdom of God advances, as the Light of Christ comes into the world through you, the kingdom of darkness shrinks. Darkness cannot overcome light.

The only way the evil one can defeat us is if we invite him into our hearts. The evil one can't possess us, because of the power of the Holy Spirit we have within us. The evil one can come in only if we invite him. James 4:7 reminds us **“Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”** Pray to God “Deliver us from the evil one.” and then live a life of holy resistance to evil by living a righteous life. That is spiritual warfare prayer in action.

Now those of little faith and great hope; act on what little faith you do have, and it will grow as you see God's Kingdom come here on earth. Place yourself on the pathways to God where you will most likely run into Jesus.

The 11 disciples only came to faith after Jesus appeared to them. There were only 10 of the disciples in the Upper Room when Jesus first appeared, and so that 10 believed. Thomas was absent from the church body; so, he didn't get to meet Jesus and believe until the next week when he decided to show up with the others.



The 2 met Jesus on the road to Emmaus, and others met Jesus, as many as 500 at one time, before he ascended into heaven. It was in the gathered body, the 2 or 3 or 500 that Christ met them.

A story is told about a little boy who was sick one Palm Sunday morning and stayed home from church. His brothers and sister came home from church and told him about Jesus coming in with all the palm branches and singing that morning and the little boy said, “Can you believe it!! The one morning I didn't show up and Jesus does!”

Much truth to that, Rev. Rick Warren is fond of saying and me of repeating **“Christianity is as much about belonging as believing.”** It is

our beliefs that pull us into a community of believers, and it is within the body that Jesus shows up for again he said, **“Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name there I am in the midst of them.”**

The only rule or clause in the New Covenant in Jesus’ blood is that we love one another. At the last supper Jesus only gave one new commandment that **“we love one another as he has loved us.”** That is hard to do in the abstract. We can’t truly do that absent one from another. It is time to return to in-person worship if you can and to commit to being here in-person whenever you can.

A recent study says 54% of Americans describe themselves as lonely coming out of the Pandemic. We as the Church have the cure to that loneliness if only, we would show up, and invite others to be with us.

Now there is a present and future aspect to **“Lead us not into hard testing, but deliver us from the evil one.”** In the present we ask not to go through hard testing and be delivered from the evil one. There is the future aspect too, when Christ returns in glory.

It is the same with our relationships of love. In the present we meet Jesus in them, and when we leave this earth to enter the Kingdom of God in Heaven, the only things that go with us are our relationships of love.

So, love one another deeply and hold the hope that since Jesus is raised from the dead that you will gather together again one day in heaven.



So go from this place in faith looking for and seeking a risen living Savior in your relationships of love and in your searching, you will be found.

Everybody that 1st Easter was searching for Jesus, but it is Jesus who found them. Keep searching.

In living your life as a sacrificial prayer to God you will not be kept from hard testing anymore than Jesus was kept from the cross, but you will be delivered from the evil one now and forevermore: (Repeat after me.)

He is risen!

He is alive!

He is here!

He will return!!!

Let us pray. Lord, today there are those among us who are seeking you and still have yet to be found. Help them make a commitment to your body the church and within that be found and claimed forevermore. Amen.