

Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

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November 20, 2005
Last Sunday of End Time
1 Corinthians 15:20-28
Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Ezekiel 34:11-16,23,24
Psalm of the Day: Psalm 47
Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 15:20-28
Gospel: Matthew 27:27-31

The King's Victory Is Ours!

Did you ever experience things in life that aren't exactly what you expected? Something that you would have never guessed you would have seen or heard? I remember early in his career, the first couple of times I had seen Mike Tyson fight, he was an amazing fighter and an amazing boxer and just the pure violence with which he boxed. It kind of took me aback the first time I heard him open his mouth and speak though. That is not exactly the sound I expected. I expected something more than Mighty Mouse to come out of his vocal chords.

A number of things are like that in life though, aren't they? You would expect something different and instead something completely opposite seems to show up. Christ the King Sunday, when you heard the gospel, was it what you would expect on the Sunday that we celebrate the fact that Christ rules as King over everything—that everything is under his feet. Instead we have a reading of how he was beaten, mocked and spit upon. It doesn't sound very kingly, but our God is not what you would expect. Our God is a God of grace and a God of love, but also a God of justice. He demands that all sins be paid for. So in order to have his love and mercy both be fulfilled, he has love and mercy meet at the cross where God walks willingly to take all of our sins upon himself and he allows himself to be killed so that by his death, he might conquer death. It is not the way you or I would have sat down and planned out the way of salvation, but our God does the unexpected.

The reason he had to die—because Adam and Eve sinned and everyone since then is born sinful—you and I are the reason he had to die, because we are born in sin and after we are born, we sin in our thoughts and our words and in our actions and then God does the unexpected. We killed him very clearly through our sin, and yet our God takes the victory that he won through his perfection and through his atoning death that takes away our sin, and he says, "It's yours. It's yours freely. You don't have to earn it. You don't have to deserve it. I did it because I am a loving, just God." And now he says to us, "Your King's victory is yours." Would you ever have guessed that? That is why we speak of him as a king like no other king. A king who rules with the power that is beyond all powers, but he exerts his power in love so that the victory that he won is now ours. We triumph over the devil and Christ is exalted as King over all things. That is what our God reveals to us this morning.

As we consider these words to the Corinthians, maybe we have to see where we don't always live that way. Maybe we have to look at it and ask ourselves, "Where are the places that we live as though the victory hasn't been won? What are the things we

consider as more important than the victory God has won for us? How do we act like we are king instead of God is King?”

Paul wrote to the Corinthians this incredible Chapter 15 which you have heard often throughout your life. It is the confidence that we have in the fact that Christ rose from the dead which means also that we will rise bodily from the dead as we have been speaking about through End Times. The Corinthians believed that Jesus rose from the dead. They didn't necessarily doubt that, but there were those among them questioning whether those who died first would also rise from the dead. So Paul started with what they agreed. When he said, "*But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead*" they would say, "Yes. We agree with that." But there were those who weren't so certain that it made any difference for them rising from the dead.

So he leads them down the path to see how the only reason Christ rose from the dead was to assure us that we also will rise, bodily. He came to earth to defeat our enemy, which is sin. He said to think about it, *as in Adam all die*, all became sinful. Every person born after Adam was born in Adam's image, not in God's image—born separated from God, born deserving eternal death and damnation because we are born spiritually dead—dead in our trespasses and sins. We are born without any spiritual life whatsoever and yet our God has made us alive in Christ Jesus through his life and through his death. How? Because as in one man all died, so in one man all will be made alive. The life comes through one man. It comes through Christ Jesus. He is the firstfruits from the dead. Because he is the firstfruits, we know that others will also rise from the dead. It is a certainty. It is what God has promised us. We can know it for a certainty because Christ put everything under his feet. He conquered death.

He took all of our sins, every last sin we ever have committed and ever will commit, and put is on his shoulders and carried it to the cross. That sin killed him. God died because you and I have sinned. Yet Jesus the God-man didn't stay dead. The third day he rose again to assure us that this sacrifice—his perfect life in our place and his death in our place—was acceptable to the Father. Then the Father raised him. Jesus was raised from the dead and now he lives and he rules eternally and God puts everything under his feet. And on the last day, the final enemy—death—will be destroyed because we will no longer die. We will have eternal life with our God in heaven. This victory is ours. It has been given to us completely. Death is not something that has control over us any longer because we know for a certainty for me to die is Christ and to live in this world is still gain. But to die is Christ—I will be with him. We have the victory over death. That is why all those things that we have been saying through End Times we know for a certainty to be true. We don't have to grieve as those who have no hope. We know that we are Saints Triumphant and that the Last Judgment won't cause us to be afraid because our faith is built on those solid truths we focused on at the Reformation—salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone and Scripture alone and is the authority in our spiritual life so that we know that all of these things are true. The victory is ours. We have triumphed over death.

Yet sometimes we live as though we haven't. Sometimes we live as though there is no victory over death and everything is only in this world and in what we can see. Sometimes then we get angry at God because he hasn't given us the victory over the

things that we want victory over. We want victory over anything that is a hardship, any bumps in the road that come into our life. That is what we want victory over at times more than we want victory over death. I want God to take away the hardships I face. I want God to take away those difficult decisions we have to make at times—whether we are going to do what is right and stand up and serve God and say this is what God has said is sin or whether we are just going to kind of meekly walk away and hope the subject changes. At times I want God to give me victory over that so I don't face those things.

Maybe we want God to give us victory over health issues. We want God to give us victory over financial issues. We want God to give us victory over time so that we have more time to use all those toys that we have that maybe put us into some of our financial difficulties. We want God to give us all the other victories instead of the one that he has given us, so we chase after them on our own because evidently God, we think, maybe doesn't love us enough to give them to us or he doesn't care about those things or God is just off some place and he isn't an active part of our every day, moment to moment life that we live. It is amazing what the devil can lead us to believe at times, isn't it?

A God who loves us enough to die for us—we think that's nice, but it doesn't mean anything for us day to day or moment to moment. We are looking for victories over things that aren't even a pin prick in the timeline of eternity and our God has said, "From the moment you believe, you have eternal life. It is all yours—all my blessings, all my love." Yet we still want God to give us something different. What kind of fools are we? If we would see that kind of behavior in our children, we would sit them down and say this isn't right. Yet we do it. We doubt God's giving us a victory or we are looking for a victory over something else. If our friends treated us the way we treat God, we wouldn't consider them friends.

But look at our God. We do all of these silly foolish things and yet our God still comes to us and is eager to come to us day after day, morning, noon and night, and say to us, "I love you in Jesus Christ. I have taken away your sins. Come back from those things that Satan is trying to lead you away from me with. Come back to me and focus on the love I have given to you and put your trust in me when I say to you all things will work together for the good of those who love God. Trust me when I say to you I will give you everything you need, not everything you want, but everything you need. Trust me. Believe me. My blood, my body was given so that you could know this for a certainty." When the spirit wakes us up from our spiritual slumber and we see our sin, he also leads us to see at that same moment that God has taken away even those sins. Our God gives us a victory that is like no other. Not only do we triumph over death, but we can triumph in life because he is with us, helping us day by day to grow stronger in the faith so that we see what truly is important. We put aside some of our petty worries and some of our petty anxieties and some of our petty things that we chase after of this world and we say, "God, you are my all in all. You are the one who gives me the victory. You are the one who is my King. You are the one that I love."

We know that is a fact because the King over all is king in our hearts through his life and through his death. He enables us to serve him. He enables us to know that he is our all and all. He even forgives us for the times that we don't let him be our all in all.

The King's victory is ours. That thrills us to the tip of our toes when we really acknowledge who we are by nature, when we really see how we chase after silly things and then we hear our God say, "I still love you". It is an incredible victory. It is an unexpected victory. It is a victory we rejoice in day after day after day, from one church year to the next, from one Sunday to the next, from one season to the next—whether it is End Time or whether it is Advent, our God reigns, and his reign is extended through us.