



## Morrison Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church

[www.mzluth.org](http://www.mzluth.org)

March 23, 2008

Easter Sunrise

1 Corinthians 15:51-57

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: Isaiah 12:1-6

Second Lesson: 1 Corinthians 15:51-57

Gospel: John 20:1-18

### **Victory!**

Paul writes to us this morning about a battle and about victory that has been given to us. He's speaking about the battle that has raged since the devil fell; the battle between Satan and God, the battle that Satan wages to lead people away from God and to himself. If this battle were left to you and me, this battle would be impossible for us to win. There would be no victory. That's why today is such a glorious day because as we come together and we look with John and Peter into that empty tomb, we see that it is empty. Christ has risen and that makes all the difference in the world to us. We see that this victory is ours. We see that this is a victory that is unlike a lot of the other victories that people get all excited about. This is a victory over death itself, and this is a victory that comes only through Jesus Christ our Lord.

There are a lot of battles that are fought. There are battles that are fought between nations. There are battles that are fought between sports teams. You see that image all the time during the basketball tournament, don't you? But some people fight an ongoing battle that they are just simply going to lose. Think of the millions and millions and millions of dollars that are spent every year in the battle so that it doesn't look like you are getting older, so that your hair isn't getting grayer, so that your face isn't sagging a little bit more. Think of all the creams that are rubbed onto eyes so that they don't look like they are as dark as they really are. Think of all the people you see on TV that look like they are standing in an incredibly strong wind as their face is pushed back and up and there is no wind. It's just all the surgeries they've had.

People don't want to see that they are aging because it's a reminder of what Paul talks about in our text, isn't it? Aging, in a sense, is a reminder that we are perishable. Things don't stay the same. We get older and as we get older, it's a reminder that eventually we are going to leave this world. For many people that is a terribly frightening thought.

Look at what Paul says to us. Paul really talks to us about the ultimate anti-aging device, doesn't he? He says, "I'll tell you a mystery. Listen. Here is what is going to happen. In a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, not over weeks and weeks of treatment, we will all be changed. The perishable, what you and I are, will be clothed with the imperishable. For those who are not dead when Christ returns, just like that, everyone will be changed. For those bodies that have died and are in the graves, the dead will be raised, and in a flash, the twinkling of an eye, they will be changed. It won't be plastic surgeons. It will be Christ and the victory that he won." This aging is a reminder of the fall into sin. The fall into sin has lost its effect over us because in Christ we are a new

creation. We still age and we still die in this world, but this is what God assures us of through the resurrection. The ultimate victory over death has been won. We will be clothed with the imperishable.

Think of all the effects that we have in this world because we are perishable. Did you get up a little earlier this morning so you could take a shower so the people around you wouldn't be upset with you this morning as you sit and celebrate the resurrection? We need to take showers because we are perishable. We are kind of rotten. In heaven, I'm guessing we aren't going to be taking showers. We are imperishable. There is nothing that is going to cause any of these effects. We won't age. We won't have pain. We won't have suffering. We won't have sorrow. We won't have all of the things that make this life bad. All we'll have is the blessing. We'll have the presence of God. I suppose you could say the light at the center of the throne, the Lamb and the Father, is the ultimate tanning booth. That's what we will be enjoying. We'll have a light that is unlike any other. We'll bask in the light of his love and his glory day after day after day.

This is what Paul is telling us. "When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true. Death has been swallowed up in victory." Easter morning means that we don't have to fear death. It doesn't mean that there isn't a loss when a loved one dies, but it means that we who are in Christ don't have to fear death because we will be clothed with what is imperishable because Jesus has won the victory.

The reason we are perishable is laid out for us pretty clearly by Paul. The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. All the sins that we commit are what contribute to the sting of death. Because Adam and Eve sinned, that leads us to sin. Because there is sin in the world, there is death in the world. If there never would have been sin, there never would have been death. But because Jesus was perfect in our place and God credits that perfection to us, we don't have to worry that when we die that's the end. We know that we will be changed. The "we" here refers to those that believe that Jesus is their Savior throughout this reading from 1 Corinthians 15. We who have been led by the Spirit to believe that Jesus lived and died in our place will be clothed with his perfection. We have this victory that we could never win. We have won the battle that could never have been won except that the victory was given to us through Jesus Christ.

All the times that you and I worry about the things of this world, where we live with a laser-like focus only on what we can see, forgetting at times that we are living as aliens and strangers in this world and that heaven is our eternal home, all the times that we have let our worries and concerns about this life overshadow our love for God, all those times have been forgiven in Christ. All those things have been washed away through Jesus. In Christ we have the victory.

That's what we celebrate today and that's the victory that we live in every day of our lives. We know that God's anger has been turned away because it was poured out on Christ. We know that eternal life is ours because Jesus rose. We know that heaven is ours because the Spirit lives in our heart through the Word and through the Sacrament. We have this victory and we can live in the confidence of this victory day after day. The

more that we grow to know our God, the more we live in this confidence. And the things that worry us, the things that trouble us become smaller. We are still sinners. They will still be there, but they become smaller in our sight as God becomes larger in our sight.

So celebrate the victory! Storm the court. Rejoice in your salvation today, tomorrow and forever!