



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

April 4, 2010

Easter Sunrise Worship

[1 Corinthians 15:51-57](#)

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Isaiah 12:1-6](#)

Second Lesson: [1 Corinthians 15:51-57](#)

Gospel Lesson: [John 20:1-18](#)

Death Has Been Swallowed Up In Victory

Have you ever watched some kind of sporting event, basketball, football, baseball, whatever the case may be, and the team seems to have the victory won and then something happens. They give it away and its as though that old saying has been switched around and instead of grabbing victory from the jaws of defeat, they grab defeat from the jaws of victory. You have to wonder if that's how Satan felt early Easter morning. He grabbed defeat. It had been thrown upon him when it seemed like he had the victory when Christ had died. You wonder if he understood all this that was going to happen ahead of time. Or you wonder if he just sat there in stunned silence, maybe in the middle of the gym floor pounding on the floor with his head buried in his hands like you see from some basketball players at this time of the year. Isn't that the picture that is ours because of Easter morning?

The victory is ours. God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul tells us what that means for us in those words I just read to you. Because the victory has been won entirely and completely by Christ, not by our doing, not by any of the things that we do or think about or say or anything like that, there are some certainties that we now have that we can live with. That certainty that he points us to is that death has been swallowed up in victory.

The ultimate fear that most people have of living in this world is that their life is going to come to an end. Death no longer holds its way over us because we know that just as Christ has risen from the dead, we too will rise from the dead. We don't know the exact route of the victory parade, do we? We don't know exactly what our bodies will look like. He tells us we are going to have glorified bodies. He tells us the perishable must be clothed with something that's imperishable, the mortal with something that's immortal. I don't know what that means. I don't care what that means because I've got the victory. Christ defeated Satan. I am not going to hell. Through faith in Jesus Christ, I don't care what kind of glorified body God gives me. I don't have to face the terrors of hell for a whole eternity. So whatever the Lord decides to do, I don't think he has screwed anything up yet. I don't really have to worry about what kind of body I'm going to have when I'm raised from the dead. This is the glorious truth that we have as Christians. The victory has been won and eternal life is ours.

It's an amazing comeback so to say that we have this victory. We are sinners through and through. We are born in sin. We commit sin daily and at times we even doubt that this victory is complete and absolutely think we have to do something or that all we

have to do is repent. Or all we have to do is believe and then the victory is ours. Repentance is the work of God. Faith is the work of God. We simply receive all the benefits of the victory. He gives them to us through the work of the Spirit, the Spirit working in our baptism where we were baptized into Christ's resurrection from the dead. He gives it to us through his Sacrament at the altar, his very body and blood that were given and poured out but that now lives and rules. He gives us this to assure us that we are forgiven and the victory is ours.

We can't understand this. That's why God calls it a mystery. It's something he has to reveal to us. He has to reveal this truth to us, that death, which to human eyes, appears to be the end. It appears that life comes to an end and from everything that a human can see, there is no more. We are to walk by faith and not by sight. Faith that the victory has been won. Faith that it means that death for us is not the end. Death for us is the entrance into the glory that is heaven. Death for our bodies isn't even the end. Even though our bodies are put into the ground, because Christ has risen, we too will rise and our earthly bodies, as decayed and dust as they might be, will now be clothed as something imperishable and immortal. That's the victory that Christ has won for us.

So as we go through life and we face the challenges of day to day living in a sinful world, we face them often by committing "turnovers," by sinning against our God. Satan is still fighting even though he has lost the complete war. He still fights many smaller battles against us trying to lead us individually away from our God, trying to lead us into apathy towards this full and free forgiveness, trying to lead us into being caught up in the sins of the world. He leads us to focus on the things that separate us instead of the things that unite us. He leads us to focus on the immensity of our sin. And if that doesn't work, he'll lead us to focus on the thought that sin is no big thing. Satan doesn't care how he trips us up. He just wants to trip us up.

To some certain degree, we need to have a daily reminder that the victory is already won. We need to know that the victory is complete. Jesus' life and death paid for every sin. In order to have that, we need to be continually reminded of this truth. We need to continually grow in our knowledge of God and grow in knowledge of this truth because Satan is not going to stop working. When you think about it, what better thing is there to do in the world than to get closer to the God who not only created us but who loved us even when we had sinned, who not only lived and died in our place but sent the Spirit into our hearts. The God that is complete and absolute love, to get to know him more fully, to walk closer to him, to walk hand in hand with him through all the challenges that life in this sinful world will bring...what more glorious thing is there for us to do?

Every day is a trumpet call to walk with God and know that the victory is ours. Some days seem more mundane than others. Not every day in our minds has the glory of Easter. But every day is the glory of Easter even though its not in our minds. Every day, Christ has won the victory, and we live in the knowledge and the comfort of that victory. That knowledge is what keeps us safe until God calls us to our heavenly home.