



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

April 9, 2023
Easter Festival

Pastor Randy Ott

First Lesson: [Jonah 2:2-9](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 118

Second Lesson/Sermon Text: [Colossians 3:1-4](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Matthew 28:1-10](#)

Don't Lose Your Since

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.

In Christ, our risen and ruling Savior, dear fellow redeemed:

Coming to church this morning, things look a little different. There are quite a few things up front here that have changed. I don't know if you noticed them all. There are lilies everywhere. You probably noticed that. I'm going to give you that much credit. But maybe some of the other things you don't notice right away.

The "Dust to Dust" banner—we only had the one Ash Wednesday service this year. The evening one got canceled because of that evil white stuff, but we had the ashes put on the banner. Now the ashes are gone. It just says "Dust to Dust" and it's clean, it's clear.

You might notice the Paschal candle, a symbol of Christ's suffering and death in our place. It's the candle that we followed in and processed behind last night at our Easter Vigil Service. It isn't right next to the font where it usually is. Now for Easter season it is moved up next to the altar as this visual reminder that His suffering and death is over and He is raised again.

Another one you might not have noticed, on the altar, right above the middle "Holy" there is a cross. "There is always a cross there, pastor." I know there's always a cross there. The cross is different. It's a bare cross. Why? It's because Christ rose. Since Advent, the Crucifix was there with the body of Christ on the altar, but now it's a bare cross because Christ rose.

The other thing, if you were here on Good Friday we came up and put nails with the red ribbon on them (on the wooden cross) because our sins pierced Jesus and He bled for

our sins, not just someone else's sins out there but for each of us individually. It's no longer red. ***"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow..."*** ([Isaiah 1:18](#))

A lot of these things are changed. Why? It's the "since." Since Christ has risen from the dead, everything has changed. He was put to death for our sins. Good Friday=red ribbons=Christ on the cross=ashes on the "Dust to Dust" banner. He was raised to life for our justification so that we are declared "not guilty" of our sin, even though we still keep sinning. Everything has changed since Christ has risen from the dead.

That makes a difference for you and me. That's what Paul was telling the Christians in Colossi in [Chapter 3](#) in what I read to you earlier. It also means everything has changed for us. ***Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*** These visuals changed since Christ rose from the dead. Since Christ has risen from the dead, this makes a difference for us also in daily lives as Christians. ***Since, then, you have been raised with Christ...*** We focused on this last night in the Vigil.

We had one part of the service focused on baptism. Since, in our baptism we were buried with Christ so that we were baptized into His resurrection so that just as He rose from the dead, we too may daily rise to live a new life before God in righteousness and purity forever. Since, we were buried with Christ, don't set your mind on earthly things. That's pretty straight forward and easy to understand, but it's hard to do.

Any of you here already worried about the ham you threw in the oven this morning? Did you have it at the right temperature? Are you thinking about all that stuff as I'm up here talking and as you're going through all this stuff? If you traveled a long way to get here to see family, are you worried about getting home and thinking about some of those things? Or, many, many, many of God's people face challenges and difficulties every day of their lives. We struggle. We have difficulty. We have health issues. We have work issues. We have relationship issues. We have issues. This is who and what we are. But since, you have been raised with Christ, set your mind not on earthly things, but on things above.

That doesn't mean we don't think about those things. Of course we will think about those things. We use the resources God has given us to do the best we can in those things. But when He says "Set your mind on things above," He's telling you, all these things you do on this side of heaven, view them through the prism of Jesus' resurrection.

Here's what it means. Since, you have been raised with Christ, these things are all temporary. I don't care how painful they are, and I'll never tell you they aren't painful, but I will tell you they are temporary. I will tell you that we go through much pain and much suffering, just not to the extent of the suffering and the pain Christ went through. God forsook God on the cross! We talked about that on Friday. He did that for YOU because He wants you/He is desperate to have you in heaven with Him. So set your mind on those things. Don't let everything else distract you and separate you from those things so that those things become every once in a while.

Set your mind on/keep your mind on/live your life, your daily life, everything you do in your daily life through those corrective lenses of **you were baptized into Christ and raised with Christ and He was raised from the dead and you, too, will be raised from the dead.** Don't forget your since. Your since is Christ.

There are a lot of things I worry about. There are a lot of things that stress me. One of the other things maybe you noticed that is different today, I'm wearing a white gown. I usually wear black. It's really slimming, isn't it? But I worry about when I wear a white gown and I turn around to pray at the altar that someone is going to try to project a movie on my back or something like that. That's why I normally always wear black.

Okay, I don't really worry that much about that. But I do worry about all of you, all of our members that aren't here, all of the people that I know. I worry, are you connected to Christ? I've said it over and over. I have one desire in my life, one mission in my personal mission to serve my Savior. I know I'm going to be in heaven because of Jesus, not because I'm a pastor, not because I've done this or that. I'm going to be in heaven because Jesus died for every last one of my sins and the Spirit gave me this faith to believe that which seems unbelievable. But I'm worried that some of the people I know and some people I love won't be in heaven with me.

So I'm just begging you today, don't forget your since. Your since is you have a Savior that loved you so much He died for you. Your since is that you were baptized into Christ. And now, since that has happened, stay close to Him. Don't let other things crowd Him out of your life. Stay close to Jesus so that you'll be in heaven with me.

Brenda stood up so I must have to say "Amen" now *(lots of laughter)*. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.