

MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

April 7, 2024

Pastor James Enderle

1st Sunday of Easter

First Lesson: [Acts 18:1-11](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 16 CW

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

Gospel Lesson: [John 20:19-31](#)

Resurrection Reality: The Living Lord Gives Proof and Peace Proof that Gives Peace

1. _____ of the Word of _____
- We _____, we _____, we _____
2. The _____ of Jesus bringing true _____
3. _____ brings true _____

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.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

Think back to an experience, something you've gone to, something you've seen, something you've eaten, that you want to share with someone but it's just so hard to explain either the feeling or how amazing it was, or maybe even how bad or different it was. I have a couple here to show.

This might look pretty harmless. I was reminded of this recently this week. Another family was reading a children's book of Chinese culture and they asked my wife, "Is this a real thing?" This is called "stinky tofu." It's actually very famous from a city that you could travel the train about 20-30 minutes away from where I spent about eight years, in a city called Chaojing. Maybe many of you don't like tofu anyway. It's kind of like that soybean bean curd thing. Stinky tofu is tofu, but it smells like a pig farm, literally. It's a thing that I can't explain to you. I can show you a picture of it, but you wish the picture or video had that sense of smell because you just cannot understand what it smells like. When you go to Chaojing, it's along this canal and there is vendor and vendor and vendor and you can smell it. Where I lived, sometimes you'd have a stinky tofu street vendor come by on the street and you could just smell it. The wind comes this way and you know what is down the street. Sometimes it's hard to explain things that you just have to experience.





One more here—I like going to concerts. It’s one of the things I did a lot when I was younger. This is the last concert I went to. I remember going there about a year ago and someone asked, “What is their music like?” The band is called “Sigur Rós.” There is debate on how you exactly say it. They are an Icelandic band and they don’t sing in English. They sing in their native language. The music is not like alternative. It’s

not rock. The best way for me to describe it is “magical.” He sings with a very high voice sometimes and low sometimes. Their music has been used in movies and commercials. But right in this picture, he is playing the guitar with a violin bow. If you can imagine what that sounds like, again, to describe it, you just can’t do it. It’s hard to explain. It’s hard to put in words. You have to experience it for yourself.

When we look at what John is doing for us in our text and what we saw in our Gospel, it’s kind of hard to describe what is all going on. Our message for today, the real theme is that because of the proof of Jesus rising from the dead, we have peace. There is true proof that gives us peace, but as we look at what John talks about, we see that when he is writing to us, it’s a little hard. He is talking about this thing that is very difficult. If you hear what he says, you might notice some similarities to what he writes in the [Gospel of John](#). I’m going to read a little bit of the [Gospel of John](#). Then as we look at the text, or you follow along in [1 John](#), see how there are some similarities.

The [Gospel of John](#) starts this way, similar to the [Book of Genesis](#). He says, ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was with God in the beginning.”*** ***“⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.”*** You hear that and then you see our text today, and you see many similarities between what John writes about in this letter and what he writes about in the Gospel, but there is a difference. He talks about Him coming to us, but notice what he emphasizes in our text. He says this. ***“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard...”*** We see over and over again what he emphasizes. What is he emphasizing? He is emphasizing how they are *witnesses of the Word of Life*. Notice those two things, the Word of Life, and what he emphasized in his Gospel, the Word was there in the beginning and He was Life. He gives life. So he kind of combines that here in our text today; that Jesus is this Word of Life in how many ways he describes it. We have seen it with our eyes. We have heard it. He repeats that again a few verses later.

Then he describes what he does as a witness. What does it mean to be a witness? We talked about God on trial throughout the Lenten season. Why do you have witnesses

come up? He says exactly what it means that they are witnesses. He says this. "We have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim it to you." As a witness, *we see, we testify and we proclaim*. This is something that they really saw, they really experienced, as the Word of Life; this thing that has been around from the beginning, He is God, but He brings life. He came to give you forgiveness, peace and life. Notice what he said. He saw it. We heard about that in the Gospel lesson, how they saw Jesus after the resurrection and how they were afraid and fearful, but He brought them peace. They were able to touch Him, to eat dinner with Him, and now they testify to who He is, what He did, and what it means to us, and they proclaim that truth.

I saw this video. It's a satire video. I think I showed it to the public school catechism class. It's a satire of the disciples who, after Jesus died, they were all meeting together and they said, "You know what? Let's go steal Jesus' body and pretend that He rose from the dead." One of the disciples was saying this and the rest of them go "Yeah!! Let's do that!!" Then he said, "And after we do that, we'll say that He rose from the dead and then people will hate us! Then they'll persecute us! Then they'll kill us!" And they go "Yeeeeaaaaahhhh!!!" Then one of the disciples was going "Wait! When do we get glory and fame? When do good things come to us?" He says, "We don't! Yay!!!" The point is that this is not made up. This is actually one of the great testimonies to the fact of the resurrection—that the disciples shared this truth. They saw it. They testified to it and they proclaimed it to earn nothing! In fact, they were martyred for it. All but John were killed for their faith. They weren't afraid to share this amazing thing that was so hard to talk about and so hard to describe because it's so amazing that Jesus came to live for you, to die for you, to take your sins upon Him, and then to rise! They saw this!

What does that mean then that Jesus lived and died and rose again? He explains it to us. ***"We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ."*** So this Word of Life, this Jesus, or we could even say the whole message, the Word, the Bible, the Gospel of Jesus, what does it do? *The Gospel of Jesus brings us true fellowship*. It brings us fellowship not only with the disciples. He says it brings us fellowship with us, but he says our fellowship is with God and with Jesus, the Son of God.

What does that really mean to have fellowship with God? When we think about what we like to join together with—you can join together with all sorts of things. The truth is, we often join ourselves and yoke ourselves with the wrong thing. You can maybe think of yourself when you're a parent and your kids were growing up and you said "Don't hang out with those kids. Make sure you have the right friends. You don't want to yoke yourself or have fellowship with the wrong type of people. They might lead you astray." What we often do in life is we actually yoke ourselves. We fellowship with sinful things; things that we know we shouldn't do; things that hurt us. We fellowship with pride and the things that we think are good and right. We struggle with that. But God says that

through the Word of Life, we aren't just now fellowshiped with the sin that clings to us. We now have fellowship with Jesus, with the Father.

What does that mean that we have fellowship with God? It means that we have peace and forgiveness. That sin that we like to fellowship with, the sin that we are born with, it says that makes us contrary to God. Our sinful nature, our flesh is in conflict with God. We cannot please God. But then it says because of Christ, we are now no longer condemned. We have no condemnation. Instead, we are reconciled to have fellowship. To have reconciliation means that we have peace. That's what this whole service talks about. The proof of Christ gives you peace.

If I cannot be united with God, there is no peace. My sins separate me from God but because of Christ's work on the cross, He forgives your sins. So the holiness of God which says sinful man, you and me, cannot be in fellowship with Him, that is now erased and our Mediator gives us that holiness, gives us that perfection so that we can have fellowship with God; a true forgiveness, a true peace. We are at one with God—that awesome Bible word "atonement"—to be made "at one with God." We are given this peace and forgiveness that so much of the world is looking for.

So many people are looking for truth, for proof, for peace, and we have it. That's what he says here. He says, "***We write this to make our joy complete.***" The fellowship we have with God and this fellowship we have with one another because of faith, what does it do? *Fellowship brings true joy.* How do you know that? What is that familiar to? Think about Easter or Christmas, when you get the whole family together to celebrate. When you have everyone around, does that bring you joy having that family and friends around, that fellowship, that unity. Imagine that then with God and with all believers, knowing that we stand forgiven, this joy and this peace and forgiveness through Christ. You think of such a joyful thing.

At the beginning of the sermon, we talked about things that are hard to explain, things that you want to share but you just can't really describe it. Think about joyful events that you just can't wait to share. I was at a coffee shop this week and I knew someone working there. I got my coffee and later, they came up and said "I just have to share this exciting thing with you." You can maybe think about a time in your life where you just had this joyful news you had to share. Maybe it's the birth of a child or a job promotion or something else amazing. This is the truth of what we have. We have a joy that we can't contain, that we want to share, and other people to have.

As John talks about how he is a witness of what happened—that they experienced this true thing that Jesus really appeared. They were able to put their hands on Him and saw how He rose for them. The truth is we can share that truth as well. As we sang about today, by faith we know this is true, we'll sing about it in our last hymn, too, but the faith that we have is not a wishy washy thing. It's a certainty because we know that God's

Word, the Word of Life, does not lie to us. It is true. The facts of the resurrection are so amazing. The facts of the resurrection that He died and rose again so that we, too, will rise again—what joy this gives us! We can face anything in this life knowing we have true peace and forgiveness and (notice what it says) eternal life. “...***we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life...***”—that Jesus died and rose again. He is the eternal life. And He gives us eternal life. What joy!

What joy you and I have in fellowship with our Lord and Savior, not by what we do but by faith alone. By faith in the Savior who came for you and for me, to die for you and for me, and to take away our sins. So my prayer is that we go out and share that joy, share that proof and proclaim it, just like the disciples wanted to do. Even when we are faced with opposition and fear, we can have a confidence that our Lord is with us and will give us the words because it matters. And because you believe and you have that joy and peace that comes from knowing our Savior, we want others to know of that as well. Amen.

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