

Devotions – April 21-27, 2019

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Introduction

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” Then they remembered his words, and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened. (Luke 24:1-12)

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

What does this mean? Do we really feel the weight of those words in our lives? This week let's look at seven things we as children of God and followers of Jesus say it means to proclaim these words. It means we are:

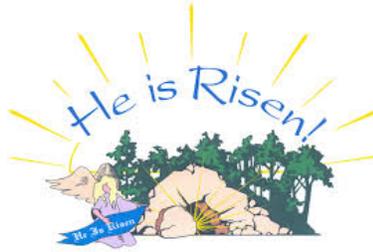
- Loved
- Free
- Different
- Same
- Forever Hope-Full
- Confident
- At Peace

Sunday, April 21, 2019

Loved. We are loved by a God who takes care of every corner of the universe God created. God clothes the lilies of the field and feeds the sparrow. Unlike most shepherds, God seeks out even one of creation that becomes lost. That's how much God loves us. It is a love God pulls off perfectly. And since us big brained humans too often worry there will not be enough and that we cannot do enough, God stretched that perfect love even farther for us and came among us as Jesus. We are loved!

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Let us pray: *God you created this world in your perfect and all-sustaining love. Help us to remember that. And raise us up with our Risen Messiah to be fonts of that love in the world. Amen.*



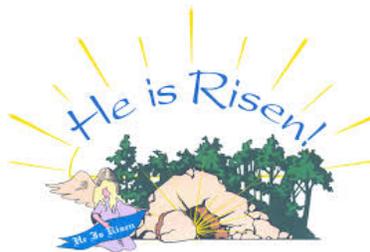
Monday, April 22, 2019

Read the Luke 24:1-12 intro above.

Free. In *The Freedom of a Christian*, Martin Luther wrote that although the Christian is free from all works through Jesus' death and resurrection, we are not to hoard that freedom for ourselves. We are to use it to empty ourselves for our neighbor. We are free from all the ways the world measures us and so we use that freedom to love others.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Let us pray: *God, in Jesus you have made the Way for us clear and bold. We are free from our sin, from stigma, from worldly pressure and power. Help us always to follow Jesus' lead and respond to that freedom with our lives for the sake of neighbor and only your divine approval. Amen.*



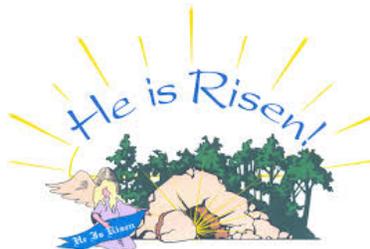
Tuesday, April 23, 2019

Read the Luke 24:1-12 intro above.

Different. Being followers of Jesus does make us different in this world. We march to the beat of a different drum. Our Gospel-centered responses to this world can and should make us seem a little different. Where the world says pledge your allegiance here, our identities say our allegiance is to Jesus. Where the world encourages us to focus only on building our wealth, our identities say our wealth is for God. Where the world offers saviors of all kinds and in all price ranges, our identities say our Savior is Jesus. It is different. It's supposed to be.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Let us pray: *God, you set us apart in sending your Son to us, asking for our allegiance, teaching us to be good stewards of our wealth, calling us to see only one Savior. Give us the courage we need to be different in a world that wants to measure us as though we are all the same. Amen.*



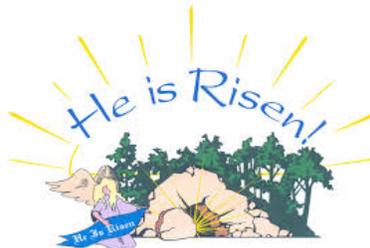
Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Read the Luke 24:1-12 intro above.

Same. Jesus on the cross and Christ risen from the tomb makes us the same too. God's activity through Jesus has leveled the playing field. We see it take shape around our tables and fonts every week. We are all the same when we die to ourselves and rise in Christ through the baptismal waters. We are all on equal footing when we come to the feast at the Lord's Table. Leaders who serve, servants who lead, all of us.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Let us pray: *Jesus, you walked in this place with such eloquence and grace as you taught your people how to be servant leaders like you. We try so hard to model you and we often fail. Forgive us when we do and embolden us to keep trying. Help us to see always that we are all the same in the abundant love and delight of our creator. Amen.*



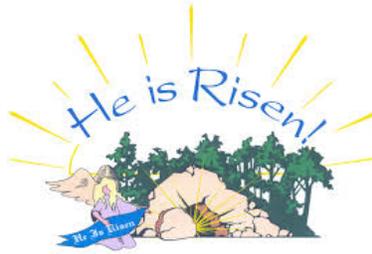
Thursday, April 25, 2019

Read the Luke 24:1-12 intro above.

Forever Hope-full. Sometimes the trials of this life, which are so real, try to snuff out our hope. I was talking with a man recently about a difficult situation involving someone who has undertreated mental illness. It has been very hard on the family. The man said he'd seen this kind of situation play out among people many times and it was hopeless. This person would never get better. The family would never be able to handle it. But one of the family members wanted to cling to the hope of God's promise to heal and help us. And I realized, that is a noteworthy difference between the ways many people experience the brokenness of this world. The man I was talking to could only see hopelessness. As people of the risen Christ we can accept both of these things at once: yes, some brokenness is very, very challenging. AND we can hold on to hope that God is at work to repair that brokenness. Even in our darkest moments we can also remain full of hope.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Let us pray: *God, we love this life you have given to us. And sometimes we are confounded and confused and angry over the brokenness that comes to each of us in some fashion in these lives. God, on those days when it feels like our candle of hope is all but snuffed out, remind us of who we are and that we may be so bold as to remain full of your Divine hope in all we do and say and feel and experience. Amen.*



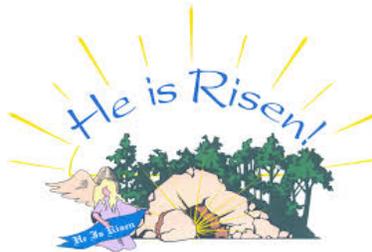
Friday, April 26, 2019

Read the Luke 24:1-12 intro above.

Confident. Can this part of proclaiming Christ risen be overstated? Think about all the other things that seek our confidence, other things that insist they can be like God's steadfast lovingkindness to us. Think about all the things that try to undermine your confidence that you are created in the image of a magnificent God and that you are one of God's gifts to the world. We are bombarded with these messages throughout our days and even in our dreams sometimes. And yet, as Jesus-following people, we proclaim all our confidence rests in our salvation already won in Christ Jesus. It's a big deal.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Let us pray: *Good and gracious God, you have secured our salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ simply and only because that is what you desire for us. When voices around us begin to ask for us to place our confidence elsewhere, when the confidence you have given us is being eroded and we begin to lose sight of who we really are, pull us back, God. Be the true foundation of our confidence always. Amen*



Saturday, April 27, 2019

Read the Luke 24:1-12 intro above.

At Peace. I don't know about, you Dear Reader, but I get too busy sometimes. I get all caught up in my task lists and thoughts of "supposed tos" and "should haves." I forget that God is in charge, not me. It sneaks up in me like a sore knee or stress headache and the first symptom is that I realize I am not at peace. It's time to go back to the beginning, to stand at the foot of the cross where God died for me, to stand with the women at the mouth of the empty tomb where God defeated death and sin for me. We go back to the beginning to remember that all things are in God's hands and God's time. All we have to do is love one another; live in and give of our freedom; be a different kind of voice and presence in a world where we are all made in the same likeness of our Creator; remain full of hope even in our darkest moments; hold onto that confidence we have in our salvation through Jesus Christ; and rest in God's peace and share it with others.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Let us pray: *God of peace, you have shown us the life-giving Way in our Redeemer Jesus. And you have made us to be industrious and ambitious creatures. Help us keep the balance, God. Be with us as we use our energy and creativity and gifts in our work, homes and communities. And pull us back to you, dear Lord, when we get too busy, too caught up in our own agendas, and too far from your peace. Amen.*

