

Christ's Resurrection show itself in our daily life - Acts 2:42-47

Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Our meditation for this Fourth Sunday in Easter is from the First reading of today: Acts 2:42-47, which was read before. Let us pray: ***O Father in heaven, our Creator, Redeemer and Comforter, as we come together to hear Your Word, we humbly pray that You may open our hearts to the preaching of Your Word, so that we may repent of our sins and believe in Jesus Christ, our Savior who You raise Him from the dead. Hear us for His sake. Amen.***

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Dear friends in Christ,

The church talks about redemption, but it sometimes seems we have trouble with what it means to be redeemed. Jesus died on the cross, not because of anything He had done, but to redeem us, to buy us back from the curse of death and hell which we deserve as sinful people. And when Jesus says from the cross, "*It is finished*", a word which in Greek means paid in full, he declares that the price has been paid for our redemption. Then in the glorious resurrection of Jesus to life again, we have God's own receipt, His guarantee that our redemption price has been paid, that we truly have been bought back as God's people.

So we are now in good relationship with God for what Christ did for us, and there are people who want to see some proof in the lives of us, Christians that we truly are redeemed people. But how do we show that we are redeemed? How do we show that we are different people because Jesus has died and has risen again for us? We show it through what we today are going to call Christian living or Resurrection living, which is the life we have through our baptism, the life St. Paul talks about when he says "*Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.*"

Resurrection living is the natural result of a life of faith. Resurrection living is what we see in the people of Jerusalem in our text today. We see people whose life and life-style was changed by

the fact that they had been redeemed by Christ, and had life with Him through His resurrection.

Can the same be said of us? Does the life-changing power of Christ's resurrection show itself in our daily behaviour, our family life, and at our worship and gatherings as a church? In Luther's explanation of the second article of the Apostle's Creed *we confess our faith in Jesus Christ, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature; who has purchased and won me from all sin, death and the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death so that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness.*

So friends in Christ as the redeemed people of God, we want to show the power of Christ's resurrection in our life of resurrection living.

I read a while ago a quote which says: Live your life in such a way that you don't have to hide your diary. I definitely agree with this idea, but I think it does not say enough to the people of our world today. Things that were once simply considered wrong and which we thought of as shameful or embarrassing are now glorified, encouraged, or praised. We think of such things as normal behaviour. We once praised chastity and sexual restraint.

Today our world encourages sexual promiscuity, adultery, and even homosexuality. The only caution is to practice safe sex. If it feels good, do it we are told. Party till you drop, declares one song today, as if all that matters was self-gratification.

Look at the lifestyle that soap operas set before people: adultery, drunkenness, drug use, greed and selfishness are treated as normal parts of life. And while soap operas may only be describing what is going on in the real world, it does not make it right. There was a time when things were more or less black and white, when people knew, and cared about, the differences between right and wrong.

Now no one seems to care - and everything is just a muddled grey. And what is the most disappointing is the fact that all too often

Christians do not seem to be any different than anybody else. It just seems so hard for us to live a sanctified or holy life, the kind of life we would expect from the faithful people of God. If you were to make a daily record of everything you did in a diary, it might pass as acceptable reading to many people. After all, nobody's perfect. But what if God were to sit down and read it? Would it embarrass us to have Him know what we have been doing?

But remember - He does know what we do each and every day! Is it any wonder, then, that there are people who question the resurrection of Jesus Christ? How can we expect anyone to believe in Jesus as the Redeemer of the world if the people who should have been most affected by it - the people who claim to believe it and who know that they have been bought back by God through the death and resurrection of Christ are just as bad as everyone else?

If Jesus had not died for us and rose again from the dead, then our lifestyle would not matter. But then again, the only thing we would have to look forward to was eternal death in hell. But the good news is that we have been redeemed; we have been bought back from sin, death and the devil through the life, the death and the resurrection of Christ. And the fact that Christ rose does change us. St. Paul once said *“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.”*

Friends, the new life we have through the resurrection of Christ is resurrection living. It is the type of life we see in the early members of the church. It was the fact that they were redeemed that led these Christians to live the life described in our text today said *“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the*

people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

If we want to practice resurrection living or Christian living, and I believe that it is the only lifestyle possible for believing people, then we need to be like these Christians of Jesus' day. That does not mean that we have to go out and start some sort of Christian commune or that we have to sell all we have to give to the church. But we do learn some important lessons from this text.

First, resurrection living involves a good worship life. As these people devoted themselves to the teaching and preaching brought to them by the apostles, so we need to hear and learn God's word in church and bible class. We need to get together - at the very least on Sundays - to enhance the fellowship we share with one another, to encourage one another, to support one another as we seek to live the new life in Christ. We need time to praise God and to rejoice in the life we have as His people. That is basic to resurrection living. And a strong prayer life is also a necessary part of resurrection living. Those early Christians devoted themselves to prayer.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, keep a healthy praying life! Pray for your friends who do not yet know the joy that Jesus' resurrection brings to our lives. Pray for our church, that it may grow and that it may faithfully proclaim God's truth. Pray for Pastor Scholz and for me that we may serve as a good and faithful shepherds. Pray for our members, that God would bless us all and that He would help in time of need. But then, like the early Christians, let's put our prayers into action. Let's care enough about others that their needs and concerns are important to us.

Let's seek to be a caring friend to the person sitting in the pew beside us. Have them over for coffee or dinner. Show that you do care about them. Take advantage of the fellowship opportunities we have at church. It helps us to enjoy life together, even while we avoid some of the pitfalls and traps of worldly living. Let us forgive one another, love one another, and encourage one another to be the type of people

that God wants us to be. We do not want to be like the world. We are alive in Christ, and in the power of His resurrection we will live as the redeemed people we are - not under the influence and guidance of sin, but under the influence and guidance of God's word, even if it conflicts with our feelings and desires.

It is interesting to note that passages like our text today, which talk about the lifestyle of God's people, often note the effect that resurrection living had on others. It was the fact that Christians were different from others, that they lived what they believed, which impressed people. And as a result of their resurrection living, we read in our text *“And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved”*

Dear redeemed people of God, I believe that we will see the same thing happen among us when we live as the redeemed people we are. And it is only natural that we who believe that Jesus died to take away our sin and rose again to give us life as His redeemed people live a new life - a life of resurrection living, of Christina living showing by our worship, our fellowship and our whole lifestyle what it means for us to be people bought back by God at so great a price. Lord, through the resurrection of your son, help us in our resurrection living. Amen.

May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord, and Savior. Amen.