

## Easter

**Text: Mark 16:6**

<sup>6</sup>“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.”



“He has risen,  
See he is not here.  
the place where they laid him.”  
Mark 16:6

**Theme: The Wound of Death Is Defeated**

The greatest wound in life is death. On Good Friday it looked as though death had won.

The Son of God was hanging dead on a cross. His lifeless body was put in a grave.

CFW Walther wrote in his Easter hymn, “**In satan’s domain did the hosts shout and jeer for Jesus was slain whom the evil ones fear.**” The devil never found such satisfaction as when he got the people to reject their Savior and kill Him.

The greatest wound that we have in life continues to be death. There are many things that we fear: job loss, financial struggles, health problems, troubles within our families, and many other things. But no fear is as great as the fear of death. It brings dread as we see our own last hour approaching and grief when we mourn the loss of loved ones. But on Easter Sunday we celebrate that in Christ the wound of death is defeated.

I. Death is a horrible wound.

There are all kinds of comforts that we find in this world when we grieve. Some of them are good. The women, who went to Jesus’ tomb, wanted to do one final good work for Jesus. They wanted to give His body the proper embalming. They got up early in the morning to go to His tomb. We do many similar things. We have lavish funerals with visits from many family and friends. It brings a sense of closure when we see our loved one, one last time. Like those women we often visit the graves of our loved ones, and we decorate them with flowers. Many of you might have done that for Easter. We often find comfort in the fact that their suffering is gone, especially when a loved one had a long drawn-out illness. Sometimes we do things that will help us to remember the person. It has become a new custom to have picture boards at the funeral. When my father-in-law passed away a few years ago, I put together a DVD with pictures and videos from the last 25 years.

None of those things is bad. They can all be comforting. However, there are also unchristian ways that people sometimes try to find comfort. Some people go to a medium and try to communicate with the dead. Sometimes people will simply say that death is a natural part of life. People will often think of their loved one as being in a better place, but with no reason for that hope.

No matter how much we try to comfort ourselves in this world, nothing will ever completely heal that wound of death. I have seen the last moments of many people on this earth. It has never been a happy occasion. There is a void in our lives when one of our loved ones is taken. It is a wound that will be there until the day that we die.

II. Only Christ can heal the wound of death.

He conquered death by His glorious resurrection. He was nailed to a cross. To make sure that He was dead, the soldiers thrust a spear into His side. He was as dead as any person could be. But just before He died, He said three words, “*It is finished.*” There was a reason why death can into this world. It was because of our sin. Paul writes in Romans 5, “*Just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this*

*way death came to all men, because all sinned...so that just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Christ our Lord.” (Rm 5:12,21)* Christ gave His life for our sins on the cross. He paid for every one of them. He died our death, so that as He rose on Easter, we could rise to new life. The grave could not hold Him because He didn't deserve death. He conquered death in our place by conquering sin in our place. Satan hoped that he won on Good Friday, but Christ's resurrection on Easter proved that Christ had won when He offered His innocent life on the cross.

The angel told the women, *“He has risen; He is not here.”* The body that was laid in that tomb is the same one that was raised from the dead. That body came to life on the third day. It still has the marks in His hands, feet, and side because it is those wounds that have defeated death for us.

Those wounds are what heals our wounds of death. There are many Bible verses that show that Christ's victory over death is our victory. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul writes, *“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?... Thanks be to God. He gives us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* In Revelation 1 Jesus told John *“I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”* (Rev 1:18) Today we will sing about how His resurrection gives us peace and hope in the hymn *“I Know that My Redeemer Lives.”*

**He lives triumphant from the grave. He lives eternally to save.**

**He lives to silence all my fears; He lives to wipe away my tears.**

**He lives and grants me daily breath; He lives, and I shall conquer death.**

In those wounds of Christ, we find victory over death. In baptism in His name, we died to sin, and were raised to a new life in Him. Through faith in Him God is now our dear Father, the friend who loves us most. Nothing can separate us from His loving arms, not even death itself. In Christ we can go through life confident of God's forgiveness and love. When death comes, we find peace in Christ. What a comfort it is to know that those who die in the Lord have now gone to be with Him in spirit. The book of Revelation also says, *“Blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on.”* But there is an even greater hope. We know that because Christ rose from the dead, the body that we bury will also be raised to eternal life. In Christ alone can we find healing in our grief now, and in Him alone will we find joy in the resurrection of the dead. We also find hope when our time comes. Death is a fearful thing, but it is the last enemy to be conquered. Jesus promises that not even death can rip us from His loving arms. He will take us to be with Him in spirit. We look forward to the day when He will raise us and bring us to Him where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain.

About a week ago, we lost the oldest member of our congregation. She was 101 years old. You might wonder how people could have cried after such a long and blessed life, but they did. It was also difficult to watch her grow weaker and weaker in the final weeks of her life and then to see her lifeless body. But in those last weeks, she had hope, a sure hope in Christ that she would soon see her Savior, and not only Him but those brothers and sisters in Christ who had gone before her. That is the greatest gift that Christ's resurrection brings. Whenever the Lord calls us from this life, we know that because Christ lives, we will live also. Look to those wounds of Christ that redeemed you from your sin, and they will heal the wound of death. Christ's wounds give peace when we mourn and hope when our last hour will come. Thanks be to God for that victory that He gives to us in Christ Jesus our Lord!

Amen

***Pastor Don Hougard - Benediction Lutheran Church - Milwaukee, WI - April 12, 2009***