

Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

April 2022

Dear Friends,

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. ²¹ For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” I Corinthians 15:20-22

Benjamin Franklin once wrote ***“Our new Constitution is now established, everything seems to promise it will be durable; but, in this world, nothing is certain except death and taxes.”***

Franklin expresses his hope that the Constitution for the founding of our nation would be sound enough to stand the test of time.

While Benjamin Franklin’s quote is profound in its own way, God’s Word teaches us that there are many other things that are as certain or even more certain than death and taxes. As we begin the season of Easter, we celebrate God’s sure promise of Resurrection. As the Apostle Paul says ***“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”***

Jesus says, ***“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. ²⁵ Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.” John 5:24-25*** In the Gospel of John, the Gospel writer quotes the words “verily, verily” twenty-five times. The phrase can be translated “truly, truly” or “certainly, certainly”, and comes from the Greek word from which we get the English word “Amen.” The promises and declarations of God are true and certain.

Luther says it well, *“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? This is so true that even Satan cannot deny it. Christ’s victory over sin, death and hell is greater than all heaven and earth. You can never imagine His Resurrection and victory so great but that in actuality it is far, far greater. For as His person is mighty, eternal, without limit, incomprehensible, so also is His Resurrection, victory and triumph mighty, eternal, without limit, incomprehensible. Were hell a thousand times more, and death ten thousand times more, it would all be but a spark, a mere drop compared with Christ’s Resurrection, victory and triumph. But His Resurrection, victory and triumph Christ gives to all who believe in Him. Since we have been baptized in His name, and believe in Him, it follows that even if you and I underwent sin, death and hell a hundred thousandfold, it would amount to nothing; for Christ’s Resurrection victory and triumph, which have been given me in baptism and in the Word by faith, and therefore are my own are infinitely greater. If this is true, and I most certainly believe it to be true, then let sin death and hell dog my steps and growl at me. What will they do to us? What can they do?...”*

No matter how great our difficulties seem, the certainty of the Resurrection is far greater. Instead of sin, we have righteousness, instead of defeat we have victory, instead of death we have life. Christ has overcome everything for us. May God grant us grace to look beyond our sufferings and by faith, lay hold of the finished work of the Risen Lord, Jesus Christ. ***“Amen”***

“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Chuck Bylkas