

# Eastern Mission

Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

*“Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. <sup>2</sup> And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. <sup>3</sup> And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: <sup>5</sup> And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, <sup>7</sup> Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. <sup>8</sup> And they remembered his words, <sup>9</sup> And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. <sup>11</sup> And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. <sup>12</sup> Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.”*  
**Luke 24:1-12**

At first glance, Luke’s account of the Resurrection is somewhat surprising. The women who approach the grave that morning, come not with the expectation of meeting a living Lord Jesus, but rather to anoint His dead body for burial. We might expect that the news that Jesus has risen from the dead would be greeted with great excitement on the part of the apostles. Instead, they considered the message of the women to be *“...idle tales, and they believed them not.”* Even when Peter sees with his own eyes that the tomb is empty, he left the grave *“wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.”*

Of course, the reaction of the women and the apostles should not surprise us at all. Their Lord was dead, and in their experience, the dead do not rise. When the angels asked *“Why seek ye the living among the dead?”*, the women might well have thought *“Where should we seek for the body of Jesus?”* There was no earthly reason to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead, *except for the fact that Christ Himself had told them that He would do so.* *“Remember how He spake unto you...”*

The problem that the women and the apostles had is the same problem with which we still struggle. *Sin.* Sin deceives us into believing our physical senses, our unreliable feelings or our limited reason above the Word of God. Sin corrupts us by curving our hearts inward (*incurvatus in se*, in Latin), causing us to seek the kingdom of God last instead of first. We, like the women on that Easter morning, seek the living among the dead.

The good news is that God knows about our sin nature, and has overcome it in the finished work of His Son. The death and Resurrection of Jesus, grants unto us the forgiveness of sins, newness of life in this world, and the certain promise of eternal life in the world to come. God continues to reveal Himself to us in Word and Sacrament, bringing us to repentance and kindling faith in our hearts. Because we are now part of God’s new creation, we are no longer slaves to the sin that curves us inward, but empowered by the Holy Spirit to seek *“...first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* We seek the Living One among the living, because death could not hold Him. Death cannot hold us either; just as He said.

May we continue to hearken to the Word of God, that continues to deliver the glorious news: “Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Hallelujah!”

*“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: <sup>23</sup> Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: <sup>24</sup> Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that He should be holden of it.”*  
**Acts 2:22-24**

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Chuck Bylkas