

"Jesus Wins"

John 20:1-18

A group of kids were playing basketball in the high school gym. An elderly janitor was reading the Bible while waiting patiently for the game to end. After the game, one of the kids said, "What are you reading?"

The janitor said, "I'm reading the book of Revelation."

The kid said "I hear that Revelation is hard to understand. Do you know what it means?"

The janitor said, "Yes I do."

The kid said, "What does it mean?"

The Janitor answered, "It means that Jesus wins!"

Jesus' win is what we celebrate today, a win that from the very beginning was not for himself but for all of us. Jesus' victory over death is what we call the greatest news ever. This news is the very essence of Jesus' Gospel.

The announcement of that news was made more than two thousand years ago, but it feels so fresh and new that every time we hear it, it is as if the event of the "Resurrection" is happening now.

I say it this way because the news of Jesus' victory over death is what renews our faith in the gift of eternal life. The News of Jesus resurrection is what renews our faith in the God of life, in the God that one day became flesh so that we would no longer live in fear of death and in hopelessness but in the presence of his light and promises, and all because He Lives! And like the Apostle Paul once said "Because he lives, we shall live also."

Big win, isn't it? In the history of humanity there have been a few phrases that have captured our imagination and left a mark on every generation. Phrases like "If you judge people, you have no time to love them." by Mother Teresa.

"All I know is that I know nothing." by the great Greek Philosopher Socrates.

"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." by Neil Armstrong

These are just a few famous phrases by great people, phrases we all have heard and learned. But what about the phrase from the Angel at the empty tomb in the Gospel of Matthew, who said to the women who came to the tomb, "He is not here, He is Risen." and what about the quote from Mary who told the disciples on Easter morning, "I have seen the Lord."

These two phrases along with the announcement from the angel to the shepherds on Christmas night, "Today in the City of David a Saviour has been born to you, He is Christ the Lord."

These are phrases of great news, news that has changed the course of history, that has inspired all of us and here we are repeating and shouting, "He is Risen, He is Risen indeed!"

Christ has won; death has no dominion over us. Death has lost its power, its sting.

The events of Easter reveal more than the Victory of God over death, they reveal what God is against: God is against "Sin" in all its form. Let's not forget that the word "Sin" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word "Hamartia", a word that means Missing the Mark, an idea that is taken from the practice of hitting the Bull's Eye with an arrow.

Think about this, if you have shot an arrow with a bow, or even played the game of darts you know what I am talking about. What are the chances you will hit the bull's eye or the red centre in a game of darts all the time? Chances are very small. That is what we do in life, we constantly miss the mark, and I can see that every time we miss the mark, it is like shooting an arrow into the heart of God. And as the Apostle Paul said in his letter to the Romans Chapter 6, "The Wages of Sin is Death."

Death is the ultimate outcome of "Sin" and God is against both, Sin and Death.

God is against the side of us that makes us miss the mark in all its forms.

God is against everything that diminishes and destroys life. In many pages of the Bible, we read about God's call to take care of the poor, to welcome the stranger, to remember the widows and orphans, to guard ourselves from the temptations of greed, racism, anger, hate, lies and all kinds of vices. God doesn't want us to miss the mark of justice, of loving one another, and treating each other and ourselves with respect and dignity.

Sadly, in our brokenness, we have been shooting arrows into the heart of God forever. Look at the world today, there is no need for me to name some of the things that are wrong in this world because I am sure you know them better than I do. It looks like we are shooting arrows into the heart of God from all directions, and yet this is the world that God loves, the world He came to die for, to give us life, eternal life.

This is the God who took on the world's sin so that we can be reconciled with Him, He is hoping and longing that we would reconcile with one another as well.

“He is not here, He is Risen!” “I have seen the Lord.” these are two phrases that come to us as a gift from God. The tomb was empty, the Lord won the battle that we cannot win. The reason for God to do that is very simple, only the one who doesn’t miss the mark could wash away our sins, so great is His love for us that he did it with his own blood.

And the most incredible thing about it, is that we haven’t done anything to merit, to earn the Lord’s Sacrifice, the Lord’s death on the cross and commitment to be with us, to be present in our lives.

We all, in one way or another, have experienced the providential hand of the Living Christ, of His Holy Spirit.

“He is Risen! He is Risen indeed!” is a very personal phrase we shout with faith, with joy, we feel it in our hearts, minds and spirits. Jesus has triumphed and because He wins, we all win! His victory is our victory.

Alleluia, He is Risen, He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Amen.