

Easter Sunday 4/20/2025  
1 Corinthians 15:19-26

“For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.”

McGregor, North Dakota, is 60 miles from my hometown of Williston. Most Sundays after church, especially in the summer, my parents, brothers and sisters and I would drive those 60 miles to my grandparents' house in McGregor. Never did circus peanuts and mints taste so good as at Grandpa's. My brothers and sisters, my cousins, and I walked on the railroad tracks, played on the toys at the McGregor school, fished at the McGregor Dam; in general, enjoyed life in God's creation. I have fond memories of those Sundays in McGregor.

I do not, however, have many memories of the drive home. I vaguely recall getting in the car, but after all the energy spent enjoying God's creation, I would soon be sound asleep. The next conscience memory I would have is waking up in my bed, the next morning, in my pajamas.

You see, my kind and gracious father would carry me in his strong arms into our house, he would dress me in my pajamas and then tuck me, safely and lovingly, in my bed.

My Dear Friends in Christ, we rejoice and celebrate that the Easter resurrection of Jesus Christ means that death is merely sleep for the saints of God. One moment we are alive on this earth, walking by faith; then, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, we awaken in the kingdom and power and glory of heaven for eternity.

This Easter dawn we rejoice that Christ has burst open the portal of the tomb for us. Jesus lives, death's reign is done. Rejoice! Be glad!

The Easter resurrection of Jesus Christ has destroyed the last enemy, death.

When the time has come for the mortal to put on immortality; when the hour beckons you to put off this earthly tent to enter the eternal tabernacle of heaven; when the time comes for you to depart this vale of tears to enter Jerusalem the Golden; the Easter resurrection of Jesus Christ means that death is simply a **sleep** through which God our heavenly Father carries you to from this land of death to the Promised Land.

Look at Paul's words to us, *For as by a man came death ... For as in Adam all die* (vv. 21, 22). Death was brought into God's perfect creation by the first man, Adam. In the fall of Adam and Eve, we fell into slavery under the power of a fearful, body and soul destroying, tyrant. This tyrant is sin. Sin has changed the paradise of Eden into a vale of tears.

Sin always promises us pleasure and treasure. But, the consequences of sin are truly misery and heartache, temporal and eternal ruin. Sin instills a sweet poison into us. After it is enjoyed but for a brief moment, it tortures and torments the soul. Sin gives a friendly Judas kiss in order to betray us to the most bitter remorse. Like a Delilah, sin whispers fondly to us in the hour of temptation, in order to betray us into the hands of the enemy of our souls. Sin promises us, if we only will yield to it, fulfillment of our most burning desires, help in our need, joy, bliss, riches, and fame will be ours. But, once we have yielded to its temptation, sin rewards us only with misfortune, grief and sorrow, shame and disgrace, a sickly body and an empty soul.

Sin grants us only one reward -- **death**. According to God's Law, the wages of sin is death, not merely the death of our mortal bodies, but spiritual death in the depth and fires of hell.

But thanks be to God! God is love and He did not want us to die and perish in hell, so He took it upon Him to save us. The Bible teaches us God's plan was this: *For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son (Jn 3:16)*. God sent His only begotten Son into this sin-enslaved world and laid on Him the sins of all sinners, to battle sin and to overcome it. That sin condemned God's Son, nailed Him to the cross, killed Him, and buried His body in the grave. On that Good Friday, as the darkness of our worship this past Friday reminded us, it appeared as though the all-destroying tyrant, sin, had swallowed up and conquered even our Savior from sin. But, no -- no indeed -- for Christ is risen!

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead. Christ was not conquered by sin, but sin by Christ. Sin and its wages of death have lost the battle. And that also means for you Dear Child of God, sin has also lost its power to accuse, torment, and condemn you.

His work completed, Christ did not remain in the grave. Christ rose in glory from the dead and showed Himself alive so that all the world would know He had triumphed over death.

As the substitute for all people, Christ's Easter resurrection is the triumphant procession of the whole redeemed and reconciled world of sinners. Paul says it this way, *by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead ... so also in Christ shall all be made alive (vv. 21, 22)*. Christ's Easter resurrection is God's own proclamation to all mankind we are forgiven all our sin, death has lost its sting and we are victorious over the very gates of hell.

Our *Little Catechism* teaches it this way:  
 Why is Christ's resurrection so important and comforting? Christ's resurrection proves that A. Christ is the Son of God; B. His doctrine is the

truth; C. God the Father accepted Christ's sacrifice for the reconciliation of the world; D. ALL BELIEVERS IN CHRIST WILL RISE TO ETERNAL LIFE.

In the world of sports, when the team wins, the fans win. So it is, My Friends, that we sing a loud cheer "We win!" before the empty tomb and the living Lord Christ, because we **win** over sin, death, and hell in Christ.

We win because it is in our Baptism that we die with Christ and we rise with Christ. The Bible says it this way, *If we have been united with Him in a death like His, we certainly shall be united with Him in a resurrection like His (Ro 6:5).*

That means, My Dear Friends in Christ, on Good Friday, as we see the stone rolled before Joseph's tomb, we see the stone seal our own tomb. On Easter, as we see the grave of Christ empty, we know that our grave is empty. As we see Christ alive, we know we live, today and for all eternity, in Him.

Therefore, My Dear Christian Friends, do not weep. Do not be sad. Fear not. On this most blessed Easter Day, do only this one thing -- CLAIM WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN YOU IN YOUR BAPTISM.

You are more than a conqueror in Christ! Sin does not rule over you. Death and the grave have no terror you. Your whole life is a journey of victory. Death will be no more than sleep for you. You will enter into the joy of heaven through the gate of death. You will awaken to life everlasting and be crowned with the crown of life.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.