

April 7, 2013
Easter 2

"Your Risen Savior Makes Every Day Special"

REVELATION 1:4-8

John, To the seven churches in the province of Asia: Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, ⁵ and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father-- to him be glory and power forever and ever! Amen. ⁷ Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen. ⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

We sure had a special Easter service here in this church last Sunday. There was the sight and smell of beautiful flowers. There was the sound of people singing loudly and shouting out in joy "He is risen indeed!" There was the taste of good food. There was the warmth of fellowship together with people we love. Everything we did radiated the joy of knowing that Jesus won a miraculous victory over sin and death.

This joyful celebration doesn't end with Easter morning. Susan's dad was fond of saying, "Every day is Christmas when you are a Christian." That is also true of Easter. Every day is Easter when you are a Christian. Your risen Lord Jesus Christ makes every day of your life special. Every day is special because of who Jesus is and also who we are.

Every day is special because of who Jesus is

Examine every day of your life, even your worst days. They are all very special because of who Jesus is. John writes in the Revelation, "Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits before his throne, and from Jesus who is the faithful witness, the first born from the dead and the ruler of the kings of the earth."

He wishes us grace and peace from the God who is and was and is to come. He wishes us grace and peace from the seven spirits before his throne. He wishes us grace and peace from Jesus. Who is Jesus Christ? He is the Lord our God, along with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Every day of your life on this earth is special because you have been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus is God. The Father is God. The Holy Spirit is God, three persons and yet one God. In his famous *Lorica* Patrick of Ireland begins with these words, "I arise today Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity, Through a belief in the Threeness, Through confession of the Oneness Of the Creator of creation."

Every day is special because Jesus is the faithful witness. Jesus proved to us that all his words are true and reliable because he kept his Word to rise again on the third day. On

Easter morning we heard the angel tell the woman at the tomb, "Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee; The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again." Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies that were spoken about him regarding his death and resurrection. That means we can listen to the words of Jesus and apply them to our lives with absolute certainty that these words will not fail us.

In John 10 Jesus gives us a promise we can count on because he backed up his promises by rising from the dead. "My sheep listen to my voice, I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, no one can snatch them out of my hand." With these words Jesus promises to carry us and hold us in his loving arms through the best of times and the worst of times. That makes every day special.

Jesus is the first born from the dead. He is the first born which means he is the pre-eminent one, or the most important one. Jesus is the first born because he was able to raise himself from the dead. He has the power to raise us to life again after we die. Every day is special because we live with this hope of being raised to life again by Jesus on the last day.

Every day is special because Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth. How joyfully the revelation proclaims our Lord Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords. How joyfully it reminds us that Jesus will reign forever and ever. In Ephesians 1 Paul prays that his beloved people in Ephesus might come to know "the incomparably great power for us who believe." Then he describes this power in this way. "That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given." Jesus is control of nations. He can build his everlasting kingdom in the hearts of people through the power of his Word.

This past week we heard how the rogue nation of North Korea is issuing threats against our country. This past week we also received our latest issue of *Forward in Christ* that described how a missionary went to Korea and was killed for his faith. One of the people took his Korean version of the Bible and used its pages to paper the inside of his house. People started coming to read what was on the pages. Today over 30% of the people in South Korea are Christians and they are sending missionaries around the world to spread the gospel. Psalm 46 says, "Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice and the earth melts." The risen Lord and Savior sits on his throne and directs his church to take his Word to all nations. Nations are changed.

Every day is special because Jesus is always the same. He says, "I am Alpha and Omega, who is, and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Jesus is the eternal God. It says of Jesus in John 1, "The Word was with God in the beginning." One of your favorite verses of the Bible tells you, "Jesus, Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." You may know that verse, but do you know what comes before it in Hebrews 13? It says, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their faith." Then it says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." Think of someone you know who is strong in their faith. What sustained them and helped them? It was the risen Lord Jesus Christ who said, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Every day is special because Jesus who rose from the dead has promised to come back in clouds of glory. "Look he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him." Some people will mourn when Jesus returns. They will cry out in fear for the mountains to fall on them and for the hills to cover them. Dear Christian this will be the best day of your life if Jesus returned on clouds of glory. You long for that day to come. You yearn for it. You pray for it. Because you know who Jesus is and you also know who you are through him.

Every day is special because of who you are

Listen to how the Revelation describes who you are. "To him who loved us and has freed us from our sins and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father, to him be glory forever and ever." You are someone whom Jesus loves. He loves you, not because of anything he sees in you, but because he has freed you from your sin and made you someone special to him.

The night of his resurrection Jesus appeared to his disciples and showed them his hands and side. It says they were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Jesus kept the nail prints in his hands because they are the supreme evidence that everything has been done to free us from our sin. Colossians 1 says, "He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Without Jesus, we would be nothing because of the problem of sin that confronts us daily in our lives. Sin is like a terrorist bomb that has a way of doing lots of damage in our lives. Listen to what James 1 says, "But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin when it is finished gives birth to death." Sinful thoughts can lead to other sinful thoughts and then to sinful actions. Romans 3 makes this sweeping assessment of humanity that shows us how desperate our situation is without Jesus. "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless." There is nothing I can do to free myself from the consequences of sin.

This morning as we think of Jesus showing his disciples his nail scarred hands, we know that these hands of Jesus were also nailed to the cross for our sin. Romans 8:1 speaks of the ultimate freedom that makes every day of life on this earth special. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Every day is special because we can say there is no condemnation for me in Christ. My sins are forgiven. I have peace with God.

Because we are free from sin, we are now free to serve our God. "He has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father." Old Testament priests had the privilege of bringing animal sacrifices to the altar that pointed people to the future sacrifice Jesus would offer at the cross. Because Jesus rose from the dead and freed us from sin, we are free to serve as a kingdom and priests. You are privileged to offer your life as a sacrifice to your God to tell the world how much Jesus loves you and all people. That makes every day special. 1 Peter 2 says, "You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation,

a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." Some of your worst days in life can be your best days because those are the days the Lord will still use you to serve him in his kingdom and declare his praises.

May the joy of Jesus' resurrection fill every day of your life as you patiently wait for him to come and take you home. Amen.