Easter Colossians 3:1-4
April 12, 2020 152-162-157-752*-341
*CW-S – "In Christ Alone"

"To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father – to Him (our Lord Jesus Christ) be glory and power forever and ever! Amen."

Easter Gives Us a "New Normal"
I. We've been raised with Christ.
II. We have new priorities in life.
III. We have a new goal in life.

Dear Christian friends,

**Some people** are already wondering, "What will life be like WHEN this **pandemic** is over?" Will we go back to the WAY THINGS WERE or will there be a "NEW NORMAL"? When things finally settle down and we can be OUT AND ABOUT will we still practice SOCIAL DISTANCING just to be **careful**? Will we hesitate to shake hands or **give someone** a hug? Will we keep wearing **masks** because WHO KNOWS when the **next new, deadly virus** will come around? Will we continue to wash and **sanitize** our hands COUNTLESS TIMES a day? We've seen how 9/11 **gave us** a NEW NORMAL when it comes to **flying**. WHAT NEW NORMAL will the Covid-19 virus bring us?

RIGHT NOW nobody knows the **answers** to those questions but I can tell you something this morning that is far more EARTH-SHATTERING and LIFE-CHANGING than any **pandemic**. "Christ is risen – He is **risen indeed**!" That we have a risen, living, **triumphant** Lord Jesus – that changes everything for us. SEEING **Jesus risen** from the dead we just can't go back to LIFE AS BEFORE. It's the exact opposite! EASTER GIVES US A "NEW NORMAL" - a **"new normal"** because 1)we've been raised **with Christ**, 2)we have new priorities in life and 3)we have a new goal in life.

**I. We've been raised with Christ.**

Paul here doesn't shout, "CHRIST is risen!" but he does exclaim, "YOU are **risen** – **risen** WITH CHRIST!" Our rising with Jesus STARTS with Jesus Himself rising from the dead.

Easter is the HEART of our **Christian faith**. Paul once wrote, ***"If Christ has not been raised your faith is futile, you are still in your sins."*** A Jesus who is STILL DEAD and buried is worthless as a Savior. A STILL DEAD Jesus can't hear our prayers – can't help us with our problems – can't save us from our sins – He certainly can't bring us to heaven. A STILL DEAD Jesus can't do ANYTHING!

That's what makes today SO GLORIOUS and COMFORTING. Jesus ISN'T DEAD **anymore**! As those women HEADED OUT to Jesus' grave they were sure Jesus was STILL dead. They weren't going out to WELCOME Jesus **back to life** but to give His **dead body** a PROPER BURIAL. But when they finally arrived at Jesus' grave they found it **wide open**. An angel ASSURES them that they are at the **right grave** and then he announces that GLORIOUS FACT of Easter that changes everything – ***"He is not here. He has risen, just as He said."*** Jesus' soul returned to His **body** – Jesus' **dead body** came back to life – Jesus came out of His grave ALIVE and TRIUMPHANT nevermore to die.

That fact of **Easter** gives us a NEW NORMAL – ***"because*** (we) ***were raised with Christ."*** THAT HAPPENED when we were baptized. IN chapter 2 Paul had written that we had ***"been buried with (Christ) in baptism."***

There at the **baptismal font** – in that precious ***"washing of water and the Word"*** – we DIED – we were buried – AND we ***"were raised WITH CHRIST."*** In Holy Baptism the Holy Spirit brought us to faith in Jesus – made us children of God – gave us ALL THE BLESSINGS of Jesus' life, death and

resurrection. Our sins were ALL **washed away** in that blood of God's Son shed on the cross. We were clothed with the holy and perfect life Jesus lived in our place. There Jesus shared with us His EASTER VICTORY over death and the devil – promised us eternal life in heaven the very moment we die.

***"Raised with Christ"*** in Baptism EVERYTHING is changed. We don't rise ***"with Christ"*** and GO BACK to our old way of life as **slaves to sin** and Satan. We have a "NEW NORMAL" with…

**II. New priorities in life.**

***"Because you were raised with Christ… set your mind on things above, not on earthly things."***

We've been raised ***"with Christ"*** to a WHOLE NEW LIFE but we are still living in this **sin-cursed** world. That presents a REAL THREAT to us **as Christians**. Living IN this world it's so tempting to live JUST LIKE the **world** – like **unbelievers**. Living IN this world we can easily ***"set our minds …on earthly things."*** The job – money – sports – toys, etc. – they are ALL PART of **life now** but they are not to be what our **lives now** are ALL ABOUT.

***"Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things."*** Living in this world shouldn't we SOCIALLY DISTANCE ourselves **from the world** so we don't catch the **world's warped attitudes**? Shouldn't we be wearing SPIRITUAL MASKS so we don't breathe in the world's POLLUTED, INFECTIOUS **morals** and **values**? Shouldn't we be constantly washing and SPIRITUALLY **sanitizing** ourselves **with God's Word** so we don't GET INFECTED with the world's messed-up priorities? Shouldn't we QUARANTINE ourselves from places and people **we know** are DANGEROUS and DEADLY to our Christian faith – like pornography on the internet – "friends" who are **pulling us away** from Jesus, etc.?

It's EASTER, dear people! We have a **risen**, LIVING Lord Jesus. We've ***"been raised with Christ"*** – ***"THEREFORE keep seeking the things that are above, where Christ is seated at God's right hand."***

Today don't just see Jesus RISEN from the dead – see Him also ***"seated at God's right hand."*** God's ***"right hand"*** is a picture of God's ALMIGHTY POWER – of God – Jesus! – IN CHARGE and IN CONTROL of all things **at all times** – working everything according to **His plans** and for our **eternal good**. Watch the news, etc. – AND THEN SEE Jesus ***"seated at God's right hand."*** Jesus risen – REIGNING – what a sight for SORE EYES!

***"Seek the things that are above, …set your mind on things above."*** The ***"things above"*** are all those blessings **that we have** ONLY IN our **risen, reigning** Lord Jesus. ***"Things above"*** – the PEACE and JOY that God has forgiven **all** our sins – that God love us and is with us EVEN WHEN it **doesn't look** like it. The comfort of God's **promises** – the guidance of God's **Word** – the privilege of **prayer**. The blessed assurance that ***"nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"*** – that ***"we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us"*** – that ***"no one can snatch us out of the hands"*** of our Good Shepherd. DAILY having those ***"things above"*** is our new normal in our RISEN, **reigning** Lord Jesus. ***"Set your mind on (those) things above."*** Don't toss them **away** for the CHEAP JUNK of this world!

TOP all those ***"things above"*** with God's promise of **eternal life above** when we die. Easter gives us a NEW NORMAL with…

**III. A new goal in life.**

***"For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."***

Right now Jesus is PHYSICALLY HIDDEN from our sight. Jesus is with us – He's PROMISED us that! – but we can't see Him with our eyes. JUST AS Jesus is ***"hidden"*** from our sight SO TOO our new life in Jesus is ***"hidden"*** from sight. Just by looking at a **Christian** people CAN'T SEE that we've

***"been raised with Christ"*** – they can't see all those WONDERFUL ***"things above"*** blessings that we have in Jesus. **Sometimes** we Christians EVEN LOSE SIGHT of that! Christians also GET SICK – **Christians have** all kinds of **problems** and **hardships** and **troubles**. Christians LOSE their jobs – their health – Christians die. A **dead** Christian being buried LOOKS JUST LIKE a **dead unbeliever** being buried.

But God has revealed what's ***"hidden"*** from our sight and it is SO GLORIOUS and COMFORTING! When the Christian dies his soul GOES IMMEDIATELY to be with Jesus in heaven. Oh, we're not going to heaven because we're BETTER than others or we've cleaned up our lives. **As Christians** WE KNOW we really should be condemned to hell's eternal punishment when we die. Our sins ARE THAT BAD! Our sins are not just MISTAKES or POOR CHOICES but open defiance of God's will and rejecting God's control of our lives. "God CAN SAY what He wants but I'll do WHATEVER I want." That's the attitude behind every sin and the thinking of our sinful natures.

Being honest about our **sin** and the **hell we deserve** makes today SO GLORIOUS and COMFORTING. We have Jesus – CRUCIFIED and NOW RISEN from the dead! God's own Son was born our brother and He has taken care of **everything** to MAKE THINGS RIGHT between God and us. Jesus lived for us that life of **perfect love** and **obedience** that we OWED God. **On the cross** Jesus was punished for the sins of the world. Jesus shed His precious blood and sacrificed His **innocent** life to ***"take away the sin of the world."*** AND NOW – now Jesus is risen triumphant and He shares His victory with us. Washed clean in Jesus' blood – clothed by faith with Jesus' perfect life – we are FIT TO LIVE forever with God in heaven – our souls are going straight to God in heaven when we die.

That's ***"hidden"*** from our sight but WHAT COMFORT it is! We bury the dead bodies of our **Christian** loved ones but our loved ones ARE NOT IN those graves. Their bodies are there but THEY ARE with Jesus in heaven and He's ***"wiped every tear from their eyes."*** And the moment we die we WILL BE RE-UNITED with them ***"before the throne of God"*** in heaven never to be parted again.

And there's EVEN MORE! ***"When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."*** Jesus is coming again in all His glory. He will raise all the dead back to life. Then with a glorified body and soul we will live forever with God in that ***"new heaven and new earth, where there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain – where God will have made everything new."*** Personally speaking, THE SOONER that happens the better!

Because of today – Jesus ALIVE and **triumphant** – everything is CHANGED. We have a "NEW NORMAL." ***"Don't be afraid!"*** the angel told those women and God tells us today. ***"Don't be afraid!"*** because JESUS LIVES! Whatever might ALL BE WRONG in the **world** or our own **personal lives** – JESUS LIVES! **Jesus lives** and that means WE CAN LIVE **every day** CONFIDENT of God's love and forgiveness – **confident** of God's power and promises – **confident** of eternal life in heaven. "**Christ is risen** – He is risen indeed!" Amen.

Luther's Explanation to the 2nd Article

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