4-1-18

 Easter Sunrise Service

John 20:1,15

This day we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He overcame death, and because of this, we who are in Christ Jesus, look forward to eternal life. Jesus went through terrible suffering just three days before His resurrection in glory; and it for our benefit and the defeat of satan. But we must never forget that this was all part of God’s plan from before time. What Jesus went through was not a “plan B”; it is all ordained by God and brings Him glory.

If we keep our eyes and hearts open to the Holy Spirit as we read our Bibles, sometimes we can catch connections that show God was planning these things all along. Our reading today starts off by letting us know that this occurred on the first day of the week. Why is that? Well, we know that Jesus was crucified on Friday, on the day of preparation. This is important because the Passover was the foreshadowing of the sacrifice that Jesus made. Those who sacrificed the Passover lamb were protected from suffering at the hand of the angel of death. Likewise, those who accept the Lamb of God and His sacrifice, are protected from death; Death simply becomes a doorway into eternal life with Jesus.

Jesus was placed in a tomb that same day. He remained there all the next day which was the Sabbath, the day of rest. So, it just happened that the next day was the first day of the week when Jesus completed His three days in the earth, as Jonah completed his three days in the belly of the fish. Well, not quite.

If we go back to Genesis 1, we learn that on the first day, God created the heavens and the earth. This is the beginning of creation, a new creation. When Jesus arose from the tomb, He was a new creation. Jesus now had a glorified body, like none that had ever existed before. God again created something new on the first day of the week. And because He is the first fruits, and we are in Christ, we also have a new, glorified body to look forward to.

Also, consider the first quotation we have from God, “Let there be light.” At God’s command, light invaded the darkness and over powered it. And who is Jesus, but the light of the world?

John 8:12

Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.

New creation and light invading the darkness, both on the first day of the week. All according to God’s plan.

Now, poor Mary, your heart must go out to her. Her beloved teacher had been cruelly murdered and now someone had removed His body from the grave. She is not at all comforted by the two angels who now occupy the tomb of her Master. And when she sees Jesus, she thinks He is the gardener. Why would she think that, why would that come to her mind? Surely, He was not standing there with a shovel or rake; Certainly, He was not dressed as a laborer.

Consider another designation for Jesus. This comes from 1 Corinthians 15:45.

So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living soul.” The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit.

Jesus is the last, or sometimes called, the second, Adam. In Genesis 2:15, we learn that Adam had a job to do. He was to cultivate the garden that the LORD had planted; He was a gardener. So, the first Adam was a gardener and the second was mistaken for one. It’s almost like God started a little joke at creation, and we had to wait 5000 years for the punch-line.

Lastly, we must not miss that Adam was created in God’s own image and Paul tells us in Colossians 1:15, “(Jesus) is the image of the invisible God”.

The Bible is the word of God and there are no mistakes or coincidences or something God hadn’t planned on. These things help to give us confidence, that one day we will join our Lord Jesus Christ, in resurrection and in eternity.

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, Your people gather this morning with rejoicing. After the solemn remembrance of Your crucifixion and death, we now remember that death could not hold You. You demonstrated complete mastery over death; the victory is Yours.

In Your glorious resurrection, You have shown Yourself worthy of praise and worship. In Your unsurpassed grace, You have imparted the victory to us. In You alone, we have been shielded from God’s wrath, have been forgiven sin, and the head of that ancient serpent, satan, has been crushed. What can we do but praise You? You are God, and You look upon us in great mercy.

Our Lord and Saviour is alive, and He is once again seated in heaven, enjoying the glory He shared with the Father, before He took on human flesh to save us from eternal separation from God. We celebrate Your return to Your rightful throne; and we look forward now to Your return in power, to set up Your Kingdom on earth.

Lord Jesus, it is in Your most holy name we pray

Amen