

King of Glory Lutheran Church
Easter Saturday/Sunday – March 31, April 1
Mark 16:1-8 Dead End...April Fools!

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Easter is not a dead end, it is only a new beginning. Death got fooled by the open tomb! We'd be foolish not to believe it! Alleluia!

Video – 2:58 Luther Seminary Easter is Coming
(www.youtube.com/watch?v=0c2inXKD6PI)

Friends! Easter isn't coming! Easter is here! Christ is Risen! (He is risen indeed!)

When Mary, Mary and Salome came to the tomb early that morning to anoint Jesus body, they never expected to see the rock rolled away from the entrance. It was the last thing in their minds that an angel would be waiting for them - let alone an angel who spoke.

“Don't be afraid. I know you're looking for Jesus the Nazarene, the one they nailed on the cross. He's been raised up. You can see for yourselves the place is empty. ... He is going on ahead of you to Galilee. You'll see him there, exactly as he said.” (Eugene Peterson. The Message. Nav Press Publishing Group. Colorado Springs, CO. Pg 134)

Can you imagine their surprise?! Being told, “The Lord you stood by and watched die just hours ago, isn't here. Don't worry. Don't be afraid. Just go! He'll meet you in Galilee!”

Now let me ask you. Honestly. What would *you do* if an angel had just spoken to you and told you a dead man was alive? They ran like their lives depended on it.

They ran until their chests were heaving and the breath had fled their lungs. And they said nothing – to anyone. No tweets. No posts. No hashtags. No instagram. They said nothing. For they were afraid!

This sounds like a dead end to me. Sound like a dead end to you?

Ever been at a dead end?

In the Emergency Room and the doctor says, "I don't think he'll make it."
Your lawyer hands you the divorce papers to sign.
You and your family sit facing the casket at the cemetery.
She goes to the sorority party thinking it will be a good time and everything goes bad.

These are dead ends: times in life when even Siri can't say "recalculating" or find you another way home. Nope it's the end of the road, the relationship, the marriage, the job, the illness, the hope for any future. As that popular saying goes, "It is what it is."

Not today, my friends. Not today. Because Christ is Risen! (He is risen indeed!) Alleluia!

You know what today is? It's Easter, but it is also April Fool's day. On April Fool's Day we get tricked into seeing something we don't see, or the joke is on us. Know the truth! This is no trick. This is no joke!

The church has proclaimed Christ's resurrection message from centuries ago and we believe what happened on that first Easter morning was true, is true and will always be true. The joke was on death! The joke was on the Jewish religious leaders who thought they had found a way to be rid of this new rabble rousing rabbi. Ha ha! You cannot kill God. You fools! Christ is Risen! (He is risen indeed!)

I'm telling you, there are no dead ends with Jesus Christ. Just this week, we had two beloved members of this church die. Both had been in hospice care with their loving families around them. They were friends: Boyd Johnson and Joe Hoberman.

Boyd wasn't afraid to die. He told me the truth. "Everybody has do it." So on Tuesday morning, Boyd slipped peacefully away in his sleep. When I went to see Joe on Tuesday afternoon, I shared with him that Boyd had died. Joe replied in his typical good humor, "Darn, he beat me! He's probably waiting for me. I just hope he has a name tag on so I can find him!"

Both of these amazing men trusted in God. They trusted God already had a place ready for them in the next life. They loved God. They weren't afraid because they knew death is not a dead end. They weren't afraid because they knew God held their very lives in this life and the next.

Sound foolish? Well...it doesn't change the fact that Christ is Risen! (He is risen indeed!)

Just like the video said, the one who dies with the most toys doesn't win. Money isn't God. Hope is stronger than despair and compassion is superior to power. God is God and on this April Fool's day, there are no dead ends.

Today is the day we can bring all our dead ends, all our crushed dreams, all our lost relationships, all our failures to the empty tomb. I tell you the truth,

Easter changes everything because now when we come to what looks like a dead end, we know God makes a way out.

Easter changes everything because now we when mess up, when we hurt those we love, , and we feel bad, there is forgiveness. The slate is wiped clean!

Easter changes everything because now my life has purpose and I can give and receive love freely while not living in fear.

Easter changes everything because the infighting at the office, the gossip, the boss who doesn't like my work, is not of ultimate importance! Life right here and now with Jesus – that's what has purpose!

Easter changes everything! Because now we can trust that when we die, we will be in the God's loving arms – we live in hope!

Easter changes everything, because it tells us that we really can trust God. This crazy foolish God went to the cross, died for us and now wants to be with us forever!

The tomb wasn't a dead end – now life with God has no end! There is no end to the love and mercy and kindness God shows to us! There is no end to forgiveness. While there may be an end to life here on earth, there is no end to life in God's presence. Here or in the next life! Easter changes everything!

Sounds foolish, I know! But we'd be foolish not to trust resurrection and life with God. It is the only life that matters with no dead ends. Easter changes us and Easter changes everything. Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Amen