

Emmanuel Ev. Lutheran Church – Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Easter Sunday  
March 31, 2024  
Sermon by Pastor Christopher Pflughoeft  
**A real resurrection means a real solution**

<sup>12</sup> Now if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how is it that some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? <sup>13</sup> If there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised. <sup>14</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is pointless, and your faith is pointless too. <sup>15</sup> Then we are even guilty of giving false testimony about God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise, if it were true that the dead are not raised. <sup>16</sup> For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. <sup>17</sup> And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. <sup>18</sup> Then it also follows that those who fell asleep in Christ perished. <sup>19</sup> If our hope in Christ applies only to this life, we are the most pitiful people of all. <sup>20</sup> But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

–1 Corinthians 15:12-20 EHV

He is risen! He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

Many people currently try to address life's biggest problems with fake solutions – solutions that do not solve. Recently my dad went to an AI, artificial intelligence, convention in San Jose. There he said he witnessed people who thought they could nearly solve the problem of death through their technology. They saw solutions to global warming, medical problems, poverty, and more. People see much potential in generative AI to give a solution to the world's problems. Some look to autonomous technology to take away dangers in life. Give the tech the hard jobs to do. This will spare much potential harm to people. Roads will be safer with less human error. Still some others believe a move to a meta-sphere or an online lifestyle can separate them from the threats and problems of life.

Now, I know what you are thinking... Pastor, the positives, negatives, and potential of new technology is a weird topic for an Easter sermon. I'll give you that one. What I notice though is that many of these things are looked to as solutions to our biggest problems. Perhaps, in a sense, they are. Yet, they have a clear deficiency. AI and the internet will be destroyed on the last day too. Advancing technology cannot solve our greatest problem. We need a solution that truly solves – a real solution.

There is a problem that is universal to humankind. This is the problem of death. We all know that one day, we are going to die. The first human body was made from dust. Now, because of the consequence of sin, which is death, each human body will return to the dust from which it was taken.

You and I have this problem. The whole world has the same problem. Although the problem is death, God had a solution. Jesus is the solution. Jesus' bodily, physical, and real resurrection from the grave is proof that the solution solved our problem. A real resurrection means a real solution.

In our text for today, the Apostle Paul is confronting those who had lost hope for eternity because they denied the resurrection of the dead from the grave. The Corinthian Christians lived in a culture that believed the idea of a person rising bodily from the grave to be utterly preposterous. They believed it could not be true. Sadly, there were then Christians who had begun to be convinced by their culture that this must be the case. They even began to deny the resurrection of the dead from the grave. (By the way, doesn't this sound somewhat like our day? There's a reason our series is Resurrection Reality.)

To do away with this false teaching about the resurrection of the dead, Paul follows up with a very logical argument. Paul's argument, which was inspired by the Holy Spirit, goes as follows: First if you

deny the resurrection of the dead, you are saying no one could ever be raised. Yet, there is a problem with this teaching because of Jesus' resurrection. So, if you deny the resurrection of the dead, you are denying Jesus' resurrection. Now, what are the logical consequences of denying Jesus' resurrection? These are that you will die and be gone forever. Your faith is useless. You are actually a pitiable person for even believing these things. Also, Paul and the other apostles would simply be liars. Then, Paul brings up what changes this whole line of thinking. This is Jesus' bodily resurrection from the grave. Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. Because Jesus rose, there is then sure hope that your faith is real, these words are true, and you will rise to eternal life.

Paul's argument is straightforward. In his argument, Paul pushes how important Jesus' real resurrection is. Because Jesus lives this means that those who look to him shall live. This means that his followers have hope. Ultimately, Jesus' real resurrection means there is a real solution to the real problem of death. As Paul writes, Jesus is the firstfruits of those who have died. Jesus rose from the dead first. Then, all the others who have died shall rise from the grave as well. Those who died in Jesus will rise to eternal life in the new heavens and the new earth. Those who died apart from Jesus will also rise from the grave. Yet, they will then go to eternal death in hell.

By his death, Jesus defeated death and paid the debt of sin in full. By his resurrection, Jesus proved that it all worked. He proved that he is the Son of God and that our hope is real. Indeed, a real resurrection means a real solution.

Jesus' death is the only solution to this problem. God's death is the only solution to this problem. Jesus' real resurrection is proof that he is the Son of God. Jesus' real resurrection is proof that the solution to the problem of death worked. A real resurrection means a real solution.

You are aware of the problem of death. Perhaps it is through your own physical suffering. Perhaps it is through the loss of a family member. Perhaps it is because of the sin that you have committed and your awareness through the law of God that you have broken and the guilt of your sins. As you are confronted with the problem of death, don't go to the world's solutions. They don't work

Instead, look to Jesus. He is the solution to your problem. On Friday, we saw him strung upon the cross to die for the sins of the world. Today, we look with his disciples to see his tomb empty. Why is Jesus' tomb empty? Because he provided the solution to the problem of sin. Jesus has indeed been risen from the grave. Jesus lives. When humans fell into sin, a problem came as a consequence. This is the problem of death. Therefore, the Lord promised to send a solution. The Father sent His Son to live and die for you. Jesus Christ did, in fact, rise from the dead. Jesus is alive. God's solution worked. Now, God sends the message of this solution out into the world. The Holy Spirit works through this Word to bring the solution to your heart. Now you have confidence in the resurrection of the dead. Jesus' real resurrection means a real solution to your problem of death. One day, you shall live with your God and all believers forever in paradise.

Many people see technology, such as generative AI, as solutions to our biggest problems. They think that they can create greater and safer lives. Ultimately, we know the truth. These are not true solutions. They cannot overcome the greatest problem. Our hope comes from something real. This is Jesus' bodily resurrection from the grave. Therefore, let me sum up this message with Paul's words near the end of 1 Corinthians 15, "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (1 Corinthians 15:56-57 EHV). A real resurrection means a real solution. Amen.