

In the Name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Jesus, betrayed, bloody, hated, tortured, and dead, lives. Jesus lives. He has suffered all death could give. He has endured all the taunts and missiles Hell had to throw. He has given His neck to the devil. Yet, He lives. He laid down His life, but He has taken it up again. He has fulfilled His Father's Will. The prophecies have all fallen. The Law is full. He was dead and buried, but now, in the Body born of Mary, He lives.

And here is the greatest surprise, not that He lives, that He has conquered death, that He is stronger than the strong Man, but that He is not angry. Adam failed Him in the garden. David failed Him in Jerusalem. Peter failed Him in the courts of Caiaphas. We have failed him in our homes, in our country, in our work. He was tortured and killed for our sins.

Once it did seem as though we would be destroyed, and that at our own hands. It looked as though our sins would overcome us, that we would endure the justice of our shame, that we would be exposed as the wicked, selfish things we are, that we would die the common death of men and go to a Hell worse than that of Dante's imagination. For everything the devil did to us, we really did to ourselves. Adam was a willing accomplice in the garden. He succumbed to temptation, true. He was seduced. But don't forget that he was in paradise. He was not hungry. He was surrounded by lavish, interesting, delicious food. David had wives aplenty. He had everything a man could want. All his desires and wants were met. But he was filled with greed for that which belonged to another. No one made them sin. No one made you sin either. No one made you throw a temper tantrum, send an angry e-mail, call your opponent a name, or say mean things. No one made you steal or lie or cheat. No one made you think those nasty thoughts. No one made you proud or arrogant or afraid of what people might think. Repent.

But do not be afraid. Jesus is back, alive out of the grave, but He is not angry. He bears no grudge. He seeks no vengeance. He comes instead to bestow peace, with mercy and forgiveness, with salvation. Jesus gives Himself alive to His friends made now into His Bride. Adam is restored to his dominion over creation. David returns to his throne and wins the war. Peter retains the keys to heaven. And, you, O Christian, are renewed, reconciled to the Father. For Jesus lives and Jesus forgives.

He comes out of the earth, back to life, to the upper room. Jesus lives! The angelic song to shepherds in their fields is now fulfilled. There is peace

on earth, between God and men. The Prince of Peace, the Lord of Life, the Lion of Judah, lives. All other things fail. All things of creation decay and grow old and die, but not Him. He has died, but He has not decayed. He has paid sin's wage in full. He has given Himself as a Sacrifice. He has been nailed to the cross and pierced by the centurion's spear. But now He lives.

Now, the war in heaven has come to an end. Satan has been cast down, secured in Hell with chains. And, so, too, the sins that held us in have been destroyed. We are free. There is nothing to keep us in Hell. There is nothing to keep us out of heaven. Our ancient enemy, that seductive accuser from the garden, has no more to say. The cherubs with flaming swords are removed. They sing God's praise and tell the women, **“He is risen! He is not here.”**

Jesus lives. And He is not angry. Imagine that! He is not angry. He seeks no vengeance, bears no grudge. He does not blame those who killed Him. He does not blame you. His petition to the Father on the cross, **“Forgive them”** is granted in His resurrection. He comes alive out of death to forgive, to give His life to you.

The fast is finished. Feasting begins. And that which we refrained from saying, or singing, for a time, what our hearts whispered all Lent-long, now bursts forth with the rising sun, **“Alleluia!”**

Praise ye the Lord. Jesus lives. Alleluia! Jesus died, but is not dead. Hallelujah! Jesus lives. Death has done its worst, but death is undone, is no more, has nothing left. *O death, you pitiful thing, where is your sting? O grave, you wicked liar, where is your victory?* Jesus lives. Alleluia! Jesus lives.

Do not be afraid. Jesus lives, and He is not angry. The sacrifice has been made. The debt is canceled and forgotten. Righteousness is declared. Jesus lives. He lives, and He is not angry. Adam, David, and Peter are restored. You are reconciled to the Father in the Son. Your future is assured: Jesus lives. It is not just death and Hell, the devil and his demons, that are undone. Your sins are also undone. They are gone, forgotten, destroyed. Jesus lives. Hallelujah! Jesus lives. And because He lives, you are just. You are right with God, pleasing and delightful to Him. You are forgiven, clean, pure, holy, and filled with His good works and with His Name. He is not angry. He is glad to have you. He wants you. He loves you.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Jesus lives.