

# An Order of Worship for the Home

The Seventh Sunday of Easter – May 24, 2020

Guest Pastor, Rev. Aaron Putnam

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*This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.*

*There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we shelter in place, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org) to give online.*

## Invocation

Reader 1: He is risen!  
Reader 2: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Reader 1: All thanks and praise to God...  
Reader 2: Father, Son and Spirit...  
Together: Amen.

Reader 2: He is risen!  
Reader 1: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

## Psalm 68:1-3

God shall arise, his enemies shall be scattered;  
and those who hate him shall flee before him!  
<sup>2</sup> As smoke is driven away, so you shall drive them away;  
as wax melts before fire,  
so the wicked shall perish before God!  
<sup>3</sup> But the righteous shall be glad;  
they shall exult before God;  
they shall be jubilant with joy!

## Confession & Absolution

*Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered. (From the order of Compline, Lutheran Service Book p.254)*

Christian Confessing: I confess to God Almighty, before the whole company of heaven and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed by my fault, by my own fault, by my own most grievous fault; wherefore I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me, forgive me all my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

Christian Responding: The almighty and merciful Lord grant you pardon, forgiveness, and remission of all your sins.

Together: Amen

### [Luke 24:36-49](#)

*Please read the gospel text from your own Bible. These verses are the basis for the message which follows.*

### [Apostles' Creed](#)

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### [Message from Pastor Aaron Putnam](#)

#### **[A Real Resurrection Has Real Meaning](#)**

At times, in the western (so-called “enlightened”) world, it becomes easy to view the resurrection of Jesus as nothing more than a symbol. Easter becomes a fun and inspirational tradition. It’s an opportunity to reflect inwardly and be reborn in our ideals. It’s a call to live out the best version of ourselves.

But as we experience the stark reality of the corona pandemic – overwhelmed hospitals and morgues; a collapsing global economy; the terrifying fragility of our lives – a symbolic resurrection only disappoints. To borrow the words of author Flannery O’Connor, “Well, if it’s a symbol, to hell with it.”

The historical truth of the resurrection is immensely important because it is the hinge on which the story of the world pivots. This raises the question: What if you believe the resurrection is true?

- What if you believe that Jesus lived the perfect life you could never live?
- What if he died the death that you deserve?
- What if he rose from the dead to redeem and restore you?
- What if you are saved by grace through faith in Jesus? What then?

How does the historical truth of the resurrection impact your life? What does it mean for your life today, next month, or next year?

As we look at Luke 24:36-49 we see the impact the very real resurrection of Jesus has. The reality of the resurrection responds to fears, hurts and hesitations. Through the lens of these three, we can see what the resurrection meant for the disciples gathered in that room, and what it means for us today.

## FEARS

On Sunday evening of Jesus' resurrection the disciples are "sheltered-in-place" in the upper room. The doors are locked for fear that the Jews might try to kill them, too. Jesus comes and stands among them. "Peace be with you."

This freaks them out! they think they are seeing a ghost. But Jesus calms their fears. It's really him - in flesh and blood! He was dead, but now is alive. Death has been overcome. In the face of fear Jesus brings peace.

There's a lot of fear in our world right now. COVID-19 has us fearful for our health, our jobs, our family members, our economy. Who would've guessed 3 months ago that we'd be afraid to go buy a gallon of milk? And all those fears we see and experience have their source in our ultimate fear – the fear of death.

James Cai was the first person in New Jersey to be diagnosed with COVID-19. A physician's assistant by profession, Mr. Cai was well aware of the dangers of COVID-19. An article I read gives a blow-by-blow description of Cai; first, feeling like he had the flu; then, going to his mother's home to avoid getting his daughter sick; checking himself into a New Jersey hospital; and his health spiraling downward from there.

"Sunday, March 8, James Cai woke up. He knew he was alive. There was the clock. There was his phone with the photos of his friends and family, the beeping machinery above his head. And yet, he was still afraid. He prayed to God; he prayed to Buddha. He bargained: He would save so many lives if only his own could be spared. He would stop working so hard so he could be a better father to his daughter. He read over and over the cards that friends sent him,

tangible objects from the outside world that let him know that he had not been forgotten.”<sup>1</sup>

James Cai feared death. He lacked peace...real peace. He lacked peace with himself, with his family, with his idea of a higher power.

Contrast that with Don. Don was a developmentally disabled adult with whom my mom worked several years ago. Don was getting ready to have heart surgery. Doctors explained to him the seriousness of the situation. There was a chance that he could die in surgery.

Without fear, Don responded that if he died it would be okay, because he'd be with Jesus and his mom. As a baptized Christian, Don believed his sins were forgiven by God – not because he deserved it, but by God's grace through faith in Jesus! Don was at peace, and took comfort in the fact that because God raised Jesus' body from the grave, he would do the same for him on the last day.

Either he was going to be healed in surgery or healed on the last day.

Either he was going to live...or he was going to live.

Either he was going to be with family...or he was going to be with family.

Either he was going to be okay...or he was going to be okay.

United with Jesus, he had a peace that passes all understanding.

What do you fear today? Listen to Jesus' words as they speak to you. "Peace be with you."

## HURTS

*Look at my hands and feet. It is I myself. Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have. (Luke 24:39)*

Why do you think Jesus had the disciples look at his hands and feet? What would they see there? They saw his scars from the nails.

The last time they saw Jesus, they thought those wounds would ruin everything. They believed those wounds would destroy their lives. Now Jesus, even with his resurrected body, still carries those marks.

Seeing Jesus' wounds, the disciples were reminded of what Jesus did. He was wounded for their transgressions. By those scars they were healed. Remembering those wounds would strengthen the apostles in their struggles as they faced ridicule, arrest, torture and even death.

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<sup>1</sup> New York Times – "How New Jersey's First Coronavirus Patient Survived" by Susan Dominus, April 5, 2020

But the resurrection is not just consolation; it is *restoration*! On the great final morning when Jesus returns in bodily form everything mournful and evil in this world and in our lives will come untrue. The worst hurts that you have experienced in this life will, in the end, only magnify your joy!

What hurts are you dealing with today? Because of Jesus' resurrection, when you are raised in glory your joy will be that much greater for every scar you bear.

The reality of Jesus' resurrection addresses our hurts and our fears. It also speaks to our hesitancies.

## HESITANCY

Can you imagine the hesitancy the disciples' must have been feeling? They had left everything to follow Jesus... and now what? What do you do when the person you staked your life on is crucified, dead and buried? Do you go back to fishing? Tax collecting? Something else?

Now, Jesus shows up, and the question has changed. What do you do when the person you staked your life on is risen from the dead? And he's Lord over the entire universe?

Jesus opened their minds so they could understand:

*"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:46-48)*

Whoa! Repentance & forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed to ALL nations?! Beginning in Jerusalem! Jesus gave *purpose* and *direction* to the disciples' lives. He empowered them with his Holy Spirit. He commissioned them to join Him in restoring lives!

Do you know what happened? Their hesitancy disappeared! They were off to the races taking risks we can't even imagine... but maybe should imagine...

Bruce Deel took a risk 23 years ago when he moved his wife and four young daughters into one of worst neighborhoods in the country. Bruce was sent to close down a dying church, but the Lord had a different idea. God had an idea that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed to ALL people in that neighborhood beginning with crack addicts, alcoholics, drug dealers and prostitutes. Many of these people would live in his home, and eat at his dinner table, and babysit his girls.

Through Bruce and his City of Refuge ministry, Jesus has restored thousands of scared & scarred people. When asked about risking his and his family's lives in this calling, Bruce responded,

“When you know that you are in the middle of your purpose, risk becomes a secondary thought that you rarely even address. Risk is the enemy of the fulfilment of purpose. If I'm unwilling to engage in the risk, I will never experience the joy of purpose being fulfilled in my life.”<sup>2</sup>

As individuals – and as churches – risk can be scary. For the disciples, and for Bruce Deel, risk became secondary. Risk took a backseat because of the purpose and direction Jesus gave them. That purpose directed their hearts and lives.

We may look at their stories and think, “I could never do that!” After all, these people are hard core!

Let me challenge that response. Jesus has given you purpose and direction, too. You may wonder what yours is, but be careful not to overcomplicate it. The disciples and Bruce Deel didn't have grand plans; they just jumped into what Jesus put in front of them

What has Jesus put in front of you? Maybe your purpose is a family member who is struggling... or a neighbor next door who needs a friend... or a school down the street that needs help... or a co-worker who is going through a crisis...

Because of Jesus' resurrection, you're not held back by hesitation. You can live an “ordinary life” that is bigger than you ever imagined! You can boldly share repentance and forgiveness of sins with those Jesus has put right in front of you!

Let me end with these words from author Tish Harrison Warren.

“The truest fact of the universe this Eastertide is not death tolls, emptied sanctuaries, or overcrowded hospitals. The truest fact of the universe is an empty tomb. The Resurrection is the only evidence that love triumphs over death, weakness prevails over strength, and beauty outlives ashes. If Jesus is risen in actual history, with all the palpability of flesh, fingers, bone, and blood, there is hope that our

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<sup>2</sup> From the podcast *Building a Storybrand*, episode 191: “Bruce Deel – Find Your Purpose by Taking More Risks”

mourning will be comforted and that death will not have the final word.”<sup>3</sup>

So, what about your fears today? What about your hurts and your hesitations? If the resurrection is really true... then to hell with them! Jesus lives, and the victory's already won! Alleluia!

### Offering Prayer

*If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.*

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.  
Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.  
Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.  
Reader 2: Receive our offerings.  
Together: Receive us as your own.

### Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

*Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

### Blessing (2 Corinthians 12:14)

Reader 1: He is risen!  
Reader 2: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!  
Reader 1: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
Reader 2: ...and the love of God  
Reader 1: ...and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you  
Reader 2: ...and with you  
Together: Amen  
Reader 2: He is risen!  
Reader 1: He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

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<sup>3</sup> From "If Easter Is Only a Symbol, Then to Hell with It" published online by Christianity Today at <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/april-web-only/coronavirus-easter-only-symbol-then-hell-with-it.html>

*As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org). We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.*

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