

+ In Nomine Jesu +

Mark 16:1-8 (Isaiah 55:1-11)

Date: April 4, 2026

Liturgical Date: Easter Vigil

Title: Come

*In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit*

*Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia! Alleluia!*

Hey, you, yes you! Come! Are you thirsting? Come to the waters. Are you out of money? Come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Come, for the night of death has ended and the sunrise visits us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Come for the exile is over, and the Lord will open your graves, and raise you from your graves. Come, for everything is now ready. Come to the feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, for death is swallowed up forever.

Isaiah sees the Lord with a bountiful feast. The Lord's generosity is on full display. The Lord withholds nothing from all those in need. To the thirsty he offers water. This is for you. And there is no cost to what the Lord gives. He gives freely. This really is for you. No money? No problem. What the Lord gives, you couldn't buy even if you had money, even if you tried.

The Lord did not withhold his servant, for his servant is high and lifted up and exalted. His servant is the one for the many. He has borne our griefs. He has carried our sorrows. With his wounds we are healed. This servant is the one host who prepares the feast for the many.

The feast that the servant prepares is so generous and bountiful that all people are invited. The call goes out. Come, everyone who thirsts. The feast is so generous that even those without money are invited. From the greatest to the least. The last as well as the first. What the Lord gives, you cannot buy, even if you wanted to, even if you tried, even with all of the money in the world. How many rich people or tech giants want to cheat death, with technology or AI or frankenstein type experiments? And they all fail. But here, a feast for life, without money and without price.

The Lord's feast will satisfy. The Lord calls out - Come! And the Lord offers the feast which his servant prepares on the cross. Forgiveness. Healing. Life. Eternal life. Why spend your money for that which is not bread? Why focus so much effort and time and money pursuing that which does not last for eternal life? The feast which the Lord gives even grants the resurrection of the body. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

Salvation is offered freely to all people. The gift is free. Usually when you hear that something is free, you wonder... is it worth anything? What's wrong with it? Maybe this is too good to be true. Maybe eternal life and God raising the dead is too good to be true. Some people think it is. Why would God give away something so valuable at no cost? So they pass on

the feast that God offers.

Salvation is offered freely to all people. The rich, the poor. The Jews, the Gentiles. The high and mighty, the low and oppressed. To every nation, to every language. Even to miserable sinners. This salvation is for you. Incline your ear. Do not turn away from what the Lord offers. Here in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ and the feast that he prepares is the word and the promise - your soul will live.

Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call upon him while he is near. The Lord will not be found in the tomb. Don't seek him there. The Lord is found alive and triumphant over death. Even the young man at the tomb knows where to find Jesus - "He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you."

On this most holy night, Christ is found alive. Christ is found near to those who walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Christ has trod that path himself. His death on the cross destroys death. Have no fear of the grave. Seek him while he is near to you in this veil of tears. Seek the Lord to deliver you from death to life. Even the simple children's prayer seeks life from the Lord - Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. And this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Yes, now is the day of salvation. The Lord can be found now. Do not delay to seek the Lord, nor be weighed down with the cares and riches of this world. For the Lord says, "In a favorable time I listened to you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The days are dark and full of death. The Lord of life calls you to the feast.

The Lord is found where he promises to be. Before you to Galilee - He is risen, he is not here in the tomb. And his disciples find him in Galilee, just as he said. The Good Shepherd calls out with his voice. The sheep hear that voice. And in that voice, that Word of God, is life. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. The Lord promises to be there when your last hour comes, as a shepherd gathers his sheep.

The Good Shepherd calls out to those who seek him. The call is to repent, for the wicked to turn from their ways and for the unrighteous to turn from their thoughts. Worldly, fleshly, deceitful deeds and thoughts are death. Do away with those things. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Return to the Lord. His compassion is abundant. The Good Shepherd leaves the 99 to find the one lost, that lost sinner who repents. However great or shameful the sin, the Lord's compassion is greater. However great or damning the guilt, the Lord's pardon is unconditional and plenary.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. The Lord's ways are incomprehensible to a human, worldly way of thinking. Yet every single one of our Old Testament readings tonight (and even the whole Old Testament) shows the

Lord doing things contrary to how we would think or plan.

God creates all things out of nothing. God creates everything perfectly, without sin, and God creates man in the image of God - male and female he created them. God saves one righteous man in the flood as the whole earth is full of evil. God saves Noah to keep the promise alive that the offspring of Eve would crush the serpent's head. So God gathered Noah into the ark even as God gathers us into the church and saves us through baptism. His ways, not our ways.

God takes his own people - captive and in exile and completely powerless - and saves them. Despite his people following other idols and appearing to be rebels against God, God still saves them by tearing out their heart of stone and gives them a new heart of flesh and gives them his Holy Spirit. There's no laws or commands to make the people new. The people don't do anything. God does everything. His ways, not our ways.

Our eyes see a lifeless body. Our eyes see a body laid in the ground - dust to dust. Our eyes see skin destroyed and bones left over. But we walk by faith not by sight. Job's eyes will see God, even as our eyes will see him. For I know that my Redeemer lives. What value are the outcast or the lame? From human perspective, their lives aren't worth much. But God gathers them in and turns their shame into praise. And Nebuchadnezzar had all the power, or so he thought. But Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would not bow down, for the God whom they did not see would save them. Then they all saw him, the fourth man in the fiery furnace. And not a hair was singed. His ways, not our ways.

God's ways save, and God's word stands true. The Jewish leaders, the chief priests, the soldiers all saw a man on a cross. Bloodied. Horrifying. Crucified. Calling out that he was forsaken by God. Humiliated. Hanging dead. That's all human eyes could see. But God saw every sin of the world hanging there. God saw every sin covered with the blood of his Son. God saw a perfect lamb dying the death that all deserved, so that all would live. His ways, not our ways.

Christ is risen (He is risen indeed, Alleluia, Alleluia) Christ lives, and the word goes out. Repentance. Forgiveness of sins. The word goes out to all nations. And this word of repentance and forgiveness of sins does not return empty. The word looks like nothing. Christ is risen from the dead, for you. He gives you life. And this body that dies he will raise again on the last day. These words give hope to the dying.

Isaiah sees a picture. The word works like creation works. Rain and snow come down. They water the earth. The earth sprouts and becomes seed and bread. The creation comes alive with rain and snow. How much more will creation come alive when the word of the resurrected Christ goes forth. Behold he makes all things new. Dead men hear the word and spring to life, leaping like calves from the stall, enlivened by the new life in Christ.

And because this word will never return empty, we are diligent to teach and learn this word here at our church and at our schools. The word may look like it's not working. What sort of results should we expect from the word? It doesn't matter what we expect, but it only matters

what God would accomplish for his purpose. And so we preach and teach here and at Lutheran South Unity School, and the word will succeed in the thing for which God sent it. We preach and teach of Christ who died for sins, of Christ who rose from the dead and lives, of Christ who invites all people to the feast.

Hey, you, yes you! Come to this feast. Young or old. Mature, knowledgeable Christian or someone just hearing this for the first time. The feast has both wine and milk. And they are both without price for you. Death is swallowed up in victory. Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory. Our Lord Jesus Christ lives, and he invites you to feast on his life, his word, his flesh.

*Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia! Alleluia!*

+ Soli Deo Gloria +

Rev. Michael J. Bahr