

Met by the Risen Jesus

“And behold, Jesus met them ...” Matthew 28:9.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Memorable meetings. It’s hard not to be a fan of memorable meetings. Now, I’m not talking about work meetings (but, if those are memorable for you in a positive way, good for you!) However, I’m really talking about those moments when two parties are reconnected after a time of separation. The ones, when you see them, they can quickly pull at your emotions. Sometimes they make the news. No matter which social media platforms you’re using these days you’ll likely have no trouble finding their versions of these moments. We’ve seen memorable meetings between animals and their owners, between families and their loved ones returning from deployment, between friends who had lost contact over the years and so on.

Well, how about for you personally? Do you have any memorable meetings that come to mind? Maybe even this Easter weekend has created a few more for you. One memorable meeting for me happened after my son learned to walk. (And I use the word “walk” in a loose sense of the term because he’s been more interested in running than walking even though he’s still somewhat new to moving on just two legs.) I remember coming home from work, opening the garage door and pulling in the car. After I shut the car off and got out, I remember realizing that my son knew I was home.

You see, the hallway from his bedroom to the door I would use to enter the house is right above where I park my car. Once he heard that garage door, I imagine that he had gotten up from playing on the floor in his room and came to the door I would be coming through. Down in the garage though, all I heard was thump-thump-thump-thump of his little run-walk to meet me. It was the first time since he had started walking that I got to experience that. Then, when I opened the door, he greeted me with a sweet, excited smile and with his wordless version of, “Hi Dada!” I’m sure that’ll be one memorable meeting that will stick with me forever.

Memorable meetings. They can really make an impact. And today as we celebrate Easter, we are pointed back to one, very memorable meeting that makes a huge difference. Earlier from Matthew’s Gospel, we hear about this memorable meeting with these words, **“And behold, Jesus met them ...”** (28:9). Jesus appeared to the Marys who had come to the tomb early on that first Easter day. He met them as they were leaving the tomb to carry out the angel’s words about sharing the news of Jesus’ resurrection with the chosen, eleven disciples. Jesus met these women, Matthew tells us, while they were filled with mixed feelings of both fear and great joy.

Could you imagine how Jesus’ greeting sounded to these women? One moment they are processing the angel’s news, the next moment they actually hear the voice of their friend, their Lord! The last time they had heard Jesus voice, He was crying out in agony! Yet now, He greeted them. Into their fear and joy, Jesus’ greeting must have carried such familiar care and compassion. In fact, His resurrection had made Him better known to them as they worshipfully embraced Him in that moment. Then He reassured them of His everlasting love, removed any fear and sent them off with a promise.

Even without being there at that first Easter meeting, there is no doubt that this memorable meeting between Jesus and these women made an impact. How could it not leave its mark? It wasn’t just time that came between them. Three days, many hours, weren’t the worst of this separation! They had been separated by death! They had been separated by the preparation

of the Sabbath! They had been separated by the tomb! Now, in one memorable meeting none of that separated them any longer!

These women were able to hold onto their Crucified and Risen Savior! They could worship their God in the flesh without any preparation on their part! His death and resurrection were their preparation! They were forgiven and restored as His beloved children. And now their memorable meeting would lead to another. These women carried the promise of reconciliation to Jesus' disciples. The men who had deserted Jesus, were in Jesus' eyes brothers with whom He also wanted to meet. And soon, they too would be met by Jesus to know that their failures, their fears and even their future deaths no longer separated them from their Lord and Savior as well. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Dear friends in Christ, today, we too, have one more memorable meeting to include in our personal collection. The Risen Jesus comes to meet with us today. Because of His impactful meetings with those women and those eleven disciples, many others have heard that promise that they too will get to see Jesus and they have. Now so many Easters later, it is our turn to personally see, hear and receive the impact of a memorable meeting with Jesus. And here in this very moment, we do.

This Easter day, we are met by the Risen Jesus in the name of the Triune God. For in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Jesus has given His Church His authority to baptize and teach all people. In this baptismal gift, we are connected to His death and resurrection, washed clean from our sin and claimed as members of His family. And day after day, in our baptism, the Risen Jesus leads us by His Holy Spirit from the death of sin to the newness of life.

This Easter day, we are met by the Risen Jesus in the forgiving words of the pastor. While a mere man tells us that our sins are forgiven behind that man's words stands the authority and power of the Risen Jesus. The gift of forgiveness that our Risen Lord and Savior gave His Church has been proclaimed to us this very day and so our failures, our sins have been forgiven for Jesus' sake alone. We are reconciled and restored because our Crucified Savior lives.

This Easter day, we are met by the Risen Jesus in bread and wine. In just a few moments, our Lord and Savior by His mighty Word will prepare for us His Body and Blood in, with and under the bread and wine. By our Risen Savior's hand, we are fed food for our forgiveness, life and salvation. Our hungry mouths receive from Him the bread of immortality and on our sin-parched lips the chalice pours His quenching blood that restores life (*LSB 624, vv. 5-6*).

And from this memorable Easter meeting with Jesus, we are pointed to another. We are directed to Jesus' Second Coming when He will meet us in all His glory for all eternity. Our Redeemer lives and He lives our mansions to prepare. He lives to bring us safely there (*LSB 461, v. 7*). Our Risen Savior lives and He loves us with an everlasting love and we've only seen a foretaste of all that His love has to give.

Yes, Jesus meets us today and it makes an impact. Our sin is forgiven! Death is defeated! We are His children! Life eternal is ours! May our Easter meeting with Jesus fill us with hope and joy of that future, memorable meeting with Jesus and lead us to share with others, His desire to meet with them too! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor Dan