

Risen Indeed: Easter Eucharist at Eleven

Bible Verses Mentioned: Isaiah 65:17–25, Acts 10:34–43, Luke 24:1–12

It's a bit of a maze, but as soon as you get up the stairs, you can hear it. I might believe this job. How does that happen? Yeah, you know almost every Easter in Christmas.

It's a lot of business stuff though, so impacting the education. I was looking to get a place where somebody will know the specific stuff. And you know I definitely try to go take a look at the next month or two or at least try to kind of work on something. Something like a tournament.

Something kind of, you know, nothing crazy, no time. Yeah, sure, I could, but yeah, I was working that up actually working on the main school that I was in high school. So I was working with it.

I don't think I ever got to a point where I was just like, all right, I'm ready to perform. I'm just going to go for it. I don't like it. We got this sneak guy under chefs here. I think she comes here to me as a surfacing until this guy played in Australia.

It's like a big old one like this, huh? But it sounded great. Wow. And then he played this video about trying to make it. Beautiful hygiene. How is this possible? Yeah, I had had some people who just kind of lightness attached to it in the higher position.

Yeah. Yeah. Because it feels good.

And what kind of paper?

The other one was the starting of the sanctuary. Are we gone a little too slow? I don't know. We're just getting better for a couple minutes. Okay. I went slower than me. Okay. I'm not going to have an incident on that, so I wasn't really sure. Like I thought we were going too fast, and then I started seeing if I wanted to go faster.

Could you show me a review for that? Didn't doesn't have an answer. And then found it, but I may have a good way to go. Sorry. I'm going to be honest.

Hallelujah, Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed.

Hallelujah. Almighty God, to you, all hearts are open. All desires known, and from you, no secrets are hid. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You and worthily magnify Your holy name through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, Holy Son of the Father,

Lord God You take away

The Lord be with you. Let us pray. O God, who for our redemption gave Your only begotten Son to the death of the cross, and by His glorious resurrection, delivered us from the power of our enemy.

Grant us so to die daily to sin, that we may ever more live with Him in the joy of His resurrection through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. A reading from Isaiah. "I am about to create new heavens and a new earth.

The former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating. For I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy and its people as a delight. I will rejoice in Jerusalem and delight in my people. No more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it or the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days or an old person who does not live out a lifetime.

For one who dies at 100 years will be considered a youth and one who falls short of 100 will be considered a cursed. They shall build houses and inhabit them. They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall not build in another inhabit. They shall not plant in another eat. For like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be offspring breast by the Lord and their descendants as well. Before they call, I will answer. While they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together. The lion shall eat straw like the ox. But the serpent, its food shall be dust. They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountains, says the Lord. The Word of the Lord.

And He has become my salvation.

I shall not die but live the words of the Lords of

Righteousness

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles. Peter began to speak to Cornelius and the other Gentiles. I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation, anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all. That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

We are witnesses to all that he did, both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, not to all people, but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.

All prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through the same. Through his name, the Word of the Lord.

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke. On the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared.

They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.

Then they remembered His words and returned from the tomb. They told all this to the eleven and took all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James, and the other women with whom told this to the apostles. But these words seemed to them an idle tale. And they did not believe them. But Peter got up and ran to the tomb. And stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves.

Then he went home amazed by what had happened, the gospel of the Lord.

Thank you for the young hearts that they represent and being shaped by the faith of Your Son, Jesus Christ. We pray the same for us, that our hearts and our minds would be filled with the knowledge and love of new life that is given in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who has been raised from the dead.

May the preaching of Your Word be Your Word for His sake and glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please. So, about halfway through my sermon, maybe a little before that, these young people are going to be digging out the hallelujahs that they buried at the beginning of Lent. And so, when you hear them yell hallelujah, wherever I am in the sermon, you got to yell hallelujah back. That's just something we're going to do, okay?

We'll just see how that goes. The nine o'clock, by the way, did it perfectly. No pressure, no pressure. So I want to confess a couple of things that I didn't really bring out in the interview process when they were hiring me. One is that I had a season in my life that I was an atheist. This was back when I was in high school, and I had been coming to school.

It actually was Episcopal High School, which you wouldn't think you would become an atheist at Episcopal, but I pulled it off, but I was learning and being taught some things that probably weren't the best theology. One of them was that there were scientific explanations for a lot of the miracles that you read about in the Bible.

And so, for example, one thing that I learned was that Jesus, when He raised Lazarus from the dead, that He really didn't raise Him from the dead, but maybe it was that He discovered that He was buried alive and helped Him in that way. And so, as I was listening to that type of version of Christian storytelling, I actually said, "Well, if it's a bunch of just made-up stories, then what's the point?" And I said, "Well, I'm just going to not believe any of it," which was the logical conclusion if those things are all made up.

And so, I would go home and argue. There's my mom right there. I would go home and argue with my mom who was, you know, trying to get me to be a believer and become a Christian and did a good job. Mom, you did great. But it wasn't until later that I actually interacted with some people that truly did believe in the truth of the Scriptures, that didn't have a skeptical version of the faith, which we can encounter in so many places.

And unfortunately, even in the realms of New Testament scholars and even clergy, there was a scholar that I had an opportunity to have a discussion with named Marcus Borg, who is one of these people that doesn't believe that Jesus bodily rose from the dead, but the way he would say it's just parabolic interpretations of Scripture. And they're there to make moral points, but they're not really based in any kind of historic fact.

And one of the goals that I had when I was interacting with him, this was at Rollins College, some about 10 or 15 years ago. One of the goals that I had with Marcus was, if I could just get him to admit the real reason why he is rejecting the historicity of the faith. And at first, he would give kind of intellectual, skeptical answers, but I knew there was an emotional one behind it.

The intellectual things are, well, you know, virgins don't give birth to children, and dead people don't rise from the dead, and the science just doesn't allow for these types of things. But then, as we got into the conversation, he admitted, he said, "I just can't bring myself to believe in a God who would intervene for some and not for others." Aha! There it is.

He has a problem with the fairness of the Bible and the fairness of Scriptures. And so what he did was he adjusted all of Christianity to become more palatable to his own way of thinking. There was a bishop named Bishop Spong that had done the same thing. I got to hear him speak one day to a bunch of clergy in North Carolina.

He also didn't believe in the miracle stories of the Bible, didn't believe in the resurrection, didn't believe in the virgin birth. And somebody raised a question asking him to admit his basic understandings and presuppositions, and he confessed that he had a daughter that was an MIT professor, and that he wanted to make a Christianity that she could accept from her atheistic scientific mind.

And so, he adjusted, again, the teachings of Christianity so as that he didn't have to confront or challenge the beliefs of his atheistic daughter. And this is the problem that we all have when we come to the story of the resurrection is that it doesn't line up with our view of reality.

I mean, when the women came to the tomb, what the Scriptures say in our gospel passage is that they were perplexed because what they were expecting to have was a dead body. They went there with, we learned from another passage, a hundred pounds of preparations to anoint Jesus' body for burial. And so that's what they were expecting to see.

And instead, when they got there, what they were confronted with was a reality that didn't line up with their version of reality. And you see this even later in the story when they go and they tell the disciples what they had seen and what the angels had told them. And the other disciples, they said to them, "You have believed idle tales." And they thought that they were making up something of a story.

That in and of itself actually helps give the resurrection accounts a ring of truth. And we still have this male chauvinist way of looking at things where we use the phrase old wives' tales that women were not your best eyewitness testimony to an event back then because they were believed to have made things up.

And you see that kind of skepticism even in the gospel text. Well, they're just making something up. They're just women being women. And yet the fact that the gospel writers includes that bit itself gives validity to the ring of truth of the story, that it's not based in a myth, but in Hallelujah!

Woo! You know, we got 'em. You know what that means, by the way, hallelujah? It comes from two Hebrew words, "Halel," which in the ancient Hebrew letters looked a lot like our H, and that's where our H comes from, is a man praising God, which is Halel praised. And then Yah, at the end of that word, is the proper name for God, Yahweh.

And so Hallelujah is to praise the Lord, which is a really wonderful, wonderful word. Where was I? So, anyway, we have a perplexity, and we live in a very skeptical age where we question and this is a problem that actually all of us have is that we adjust our Christianity to fit our beliefs, our lifestyle, and in our way of living life.

We don't want it to actually have an impact that it confronts our beliefs and challenges the way that we live, and so we adjust our versions. And human beings have been doing this for years. But what the gospel in our day says is that not only were human beings perplexed by the acts of God, but actually the God Himself was perplexed by the disbelief of human beings.

And so here we have the angels of the Lord sitting on the rolled away stone, and here comes Mary, and all of the spices, all the women, and they're wanting to anoint a dead body, and the angels speaking for the Lord said, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?"

Don't you remember what He told you Himself?" Jesus had told them three times that He would go to Jerusalem, suffer at the hands of the chief priests and scribes, be crucified, and this was the part that they seemed to miss and forget, and three days later be raised from the dead. He had told them that three times.

He had told them on other occasions that, "I'm going to go away, but I'm going to be coming back." And yet they did not seem to have that truth of what He was teaching them impact their lives in any kind of meaningful way. And so the perplexity of God at the women is, "Why are you seeking the living among the dead?" And if we can be honest about things, I think we all still do that, don't we?

But that's our fundamental problem, is that we try to find life in everything else except the one who is the source of life. Jesus. We do it with trying to find it in relationships where if I can just meet the right one, if I can just get married, and this will be my soulmate, my life will be fulfilled. Well, I love my wife. There she is next to my mother.

But meeting my wife was wonderful and great, and it was a wonderful experience. But she's not the end-all, be-all of my life. She can't be. That's too much heavy lifting for a spouse to do for another spouse. Or if I could just be successful, or if I could just make a lot of money, and we try to find life in things like entertainment, and we amuse ourselves to death.

I'll confess the other thing I was going to confess today was I actually have a criminal record. I'm sorry I didn't bring these things up earlier. I was arrested when I was younger at Disney World. I was a young kid with my cousins, and we were throwing pennies off the skyride, which is why there's no skyride anymore, by the way. But we were throwing pennies off the skyride and one of them hit Dumbo's head and that guy turned us in.

And so we were met at the end of the skyride ride by the Disney Police and taken to the dark side of Disney World, which is, you know, I don't know if you know there's a dark side to Disney World, but there's like a police station and all kinds of stuff back there and you know the characters walk around without their heads on smoking cigarettes. I mean, it's bad. It's bad. No, that's not true. That's not true. I know there's some kids here.

They still keep their heads on all the time. They always keep their heads on. But we got in big trouble. And what was worse is my cousin, we were recounting to the police chief, you know, what we had done, and my cousin pointed at me and said, "He threw a dime." And so it's like, "Oh, you're the rich one, huh?" And so, the worst, though, was having to have our parents come and get us. Only it wasn't our parents, it was my grandfather, and he really worked it up, so we were in huge trouble.

So, it was bad. But one of the things about Disney World, and I hope you know this, and this is true of so many things that we think will give us life, but actually don't deliver. Disney World's all fake. Did you know that? I mean, they have a tree there that is made out of cement and metal. It's the Swiss Family Robinson tree. And all the leaves on that whole tree, there's like millions of vinyl leaves that are all fake.

The whole thing is one big facade. It's not real. And in fact, when you go to work for Disney World and you get hired and you're being interviewed, you're actually not interviewing for a job, you're interviewing for the cast. And you are being hired to be one of their actors, no matter what you're doing, whether you're pushing a broom or working behind the scenes in the police department, you are part of the caste.

And it's all about creating an environment that says and purports to be the happiest place on earth, but actually, and I don't know if you've been there recently, can often deliver a lot of misery, especially when you're waiting two hours to get onto Space Mountain. And it takes all your money.

I mean, we are constantly pursuing things that promise life, that don't really deliver life. You know, one of the things I mentioned about Marcus Borg is he would have made scientific arguments to avoid the emotional one or the real argument. But one of the things that's often said is, well, you cannot prove that Jesus rose from the dead historically.

And that's scientifically true because the way science works is you would have to react it. You would have to be able to make it happen again and measure it and scientifically do your tests and all that sort of thing. And it's a one-time event. There isn't going to be an opportunity for us to pull out our instruments and scientifically measure whether Jesus was all the way dead and then became all the way alive again.

But what science does do is it does tell us that we can look at repeating things and make extrapolations and think using our brains and our reason about the reality things based on the things that we can see and that we can know.

And what convinced the disciples and the earliest followers of Jesus Christ, many of whom didn't actually see the risen Lord Jesus Christ was the testimony and the witness of those who did. That their lives were so impacted and dramatically changed from people who were filled with fear to

going out and being willing to die for a profession of faith that they knew to the core of their being that was historically true.

And this testimony has been living with us down to this day. And the best proof for the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is actually your transformed life.

That when you don't adjust Christianity to fit you, but you allow Christianity to change your lifestyle and the way that you think about things and the way that you give your life and your vocation and your work and the way that you go through each day, others will see that, just like I did when I was a young high school and college student, wrestling with the faith, having fallen for skeptics and unbelief.

And I met some people who believed in the power of the resurrection and didn't just believe it and speak it, but you could see in the way that they lived their life, by the way that their morals and their life had been transformed by the risen Christ, that it was impossible for me not to give my life to Jesus in that moment. You know, the Lord wants you to embrace the life that truly is life.

Not to find your meaning and your significance in the things that are passing away, but in the things that will last for all eternity. Ask yourself this Easter Day whether you are pursuing life in that which is dead, or whether your heart is ready to be given over by faith to the one who brings life and is risen from the dead. Hallelujah. Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed.

Hallelujah. Please stand and let us confess our faith in the words of the Nicene Creed. We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one being with the Father. Through Him, all things were made. For us and for our salvation, He came down from heaven. By the power of the Holy Spirit, He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man.

For our sake, He was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day, He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son, He has worshiped and glorified.

He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen. The prayers of the people follow Form 3. Father, we pray for Your Holy Catholic Church. Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you.

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons. We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world. Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake.

We pray for healing in the lives of Ken Ray, Anna Fordham, Annie McAvee, Carol Bowling Merritt, Denise Hudman, Joan Haskell, Sandy Clark, Sarah McCarty, Walden Pope, Jackie Walker, and George Ellis. Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble.

Gracious God, our strength and consolation be present with all students, faculty, and staff that are a part of the Florida State University community and their families. Dispatch your angels to any families whose loved ones have been affected. Help them to feel your love and care even at this dark hour. Heal those who have been hospitalized through the care of skilled professionals and restore them to health.

Bless the first responders and law enforcement officers who run towards danger on our behalf. And finally, we pray for the one who committed this violence that they would repent and live the

rest of their days as your healing instrument. This we pray in the name of Jesus, Lord and friend. Give to the departed eternal rest. We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy.

Almighty and everlasting God who in the Paschal mystery established a new covenant of reconciliation. Hear our prayers of your people and grant that all who are reborn into the fellowship of Christ's body may show forth in their lives what they profess by their faith through Jesus Christ our risen Savior. Amen. The peace of the Lord be always with you. Please greet one another.

Well, welcome, everyone. I want to, one, just wish all of your families a blessed Easter.

It's really great to see all of you here. If this is your first Sunday at St. Mark's and you're looking for a new church home, we would be delighted to be that for you. We would love to have you and I'd like to get to know you and so forth. So please do come back and there's also a little card that are in front there. If you want to let us know that you've been with us and give us some information, that'll help us follow up with you. We would love to be able to do that. And welcome to those who are watching online.

We are about to enter into a new phase in the Christian year. So we've just finished Holy Lent and Holy Week, and now we're moving into what is known as the Great Fifty Days, where we really begin to explore this idea of newness and new life. And so, over the next fifty days, we'll be preaching on the themes of the resurrection and the resurrected life. There's a devotional book that we would love for you to take as a gift.

This is a book that I wrote on how God makes all things new, and it looks at new life, new temple, new body, new covenant, new creation, and new day. And so, I hope that you'll engage in the worship life and in the devotional life, and that this Easter season will be a tremendous blessing for all of you and for your families. Walk in love as Christ loved us as He gave Himself up for us in offering and sacrifice to God.

The Lord be with you. Lift up your hearts. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to You, Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

But chiefly are we bound to praise You for the glorious resurrection of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. For He is the true Pascal Lamb who was sacrificed for us and has taken away the sin of the world. By His death, He has destroyed death, and by His rising to life again, He has won for us everlasting life. Therefore, we praise You, joining our voices with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, who forever sing this hymn to proclaim the glory of your name.

Holy and gracious Father, in Your infinite love You made us for Yourself. And when we had fallen into sin and become subject to evil and death, You and Your mercy sent Jesus Christ, Your only and eternal Son to share our human nature, to live and die as one of us, to reconcile us to you, the God and Father of all.

He stretched out His arms upon the cross and offered Himself in obedience to Your will, a perfect sacrifice for the whole world. On the night He was handed over to suffering and death. Our Lord Jesus Christ took bread. And when He had given thanks, He gave it to them and said, "Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me." After supper, he took the cup of wine, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them and said, "Drink this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.

Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me." Therefore, we proclaim the mystery of faith. Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again. We celebrate the memorial of our redemption, O Father, in this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Recalling His death, resurrection, and dissension, we offer You these gifts.

Sanctify them by Your Holy Spirit to be for Your people the body and blood of Your Son, the holy food and drink of new and unending life in Him. Sanctify us also that we may faithfully receive this

holy sacrament and serve You in unity, constancy and peace. And at the last day, bring us with all Your saints into the joys of Your eternal kingdom.

All this we ask through Your Son, Jesus Christ, by Him and with Him and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is Yours, almighty Father, now and forever. And now as our Savior, Christ has taught us, we are bold to say, "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.

The gifts of God for the people of God take them in remembrance that Christ died for you and feed on Him in your hearts by faith and with thanksgiving.

King of glorious of death are

gathering groundly Upon the cross thy falls have only weakness and

surrender Oh can be like thee Pilot high in Zion dwelling Rome with arms a world compelling
Proud though

they be Thou lots of lime Far more awful in thy weakness More than kingly in thy weakness

Forty and honour Let the world divide and take them Crown its monarchs and unmake them But
destroyed and bleeding

There in glory interceding Thou art the king Then glory into

Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness Even so Must the Son of man be lifted

in him That so ever

believes

pray, almighty and ever-living God, we thank You for feeding us with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, and for assuring us in these holy mysteries that we are living members of the body of Your Son and heirs of Your eternal kingdom. And now, Father, send us out to do the work You have given us to do, to love and serve You as faithful witnesses of Christ, our Lord.

To Him, to you, and to the Holy Spirit, the honor and glory now and forever. Amen. Hallelujah.

Thank you all. Glorious day and all that put together such a beautiful worship service, glorious flowers and singers and everything. It was just glorious. Thank you for being here. And now may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds and the knowledge and love of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit be among you and remain with you now and always. Amen.

Let us go forth into the world rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Thank you guys. Thank you.