

Easter Sunday  
April 21, 2019  
Lincoln Heights Lutheran Church  
**The Crosses of Lent: The Glory Cross – Victory**

**Colossians 3:1–4 (NIV84)**

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

Dear Friends in Christ,

In our midweek services during Lent we looked at various forms of the cross. Each one reminded us of a different aspect of our salvation through Jesus' suffering and death. Today, we also consider a cross, the Glory Cross. It is a simple Latin cross with rays of glory shining from it. This cross signifies victory! Even though the cross looks like defeat and death for Christ, it is truly victory and life for all people. The glory of Christ's victory may seem hidden at times in our lives. Sometimes, we hide this victory. Sometimes this world of sin attempts to cover Christ's victory. But the rays of glory and victory still shine, for Christ is risen.

**Don't Hide the Glory of Christ's Victory**

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*

Of all the days in the Christian year, today is one where we can easily set our hearts and minds on things above. It is Easter! Jesus is alive. He has overcome the grave. But I wonder how the ham is doing. Did I remember to turn on the oven? Jesus has defeated the devil who wanted to drag us all to eternal death. I hope the pastor doesn't get carried away with the sermon today. I have to get ready for visitors. The Lamb of God who was slain on Friday has forgiven all my sins and proved it by his resurrection. I've got some housework, homework, and other work to get done before Monday morning. How easily our minds get distracted by earthly things. The eternal victory Christ won on Easter gets hidden behind the to do list for this afternoon or tomorrow.

And sometimes we set aside the glory of Christ's resurrection victory for longer term goals and plans. We know that Jesus died for us to pay for sins. We know that Jesus rose for us to give us victory over sin, death and the devil. And then we are tempted to set our minds on the things of this world. So we treat Christ's victory like an insurance policy that we file away in a lock box. It is a trophy that sits on the shelf collecting dust while we pursue real life.

Easter can become for us a nice celebration that we put away on Monday when real life begins again. Real life is work and careers, money and retirement, family and friends, health and food, entertainment and travel. Real life is what happens between the times we are in church. At least, that is what the devil and the world want us to think. Satan wants us to focus only on the things of this earth. And while the

real life examples I gave are neither good nor evil in and of themselves, acting like that is real life while Jesus' victory gathers dust on a shelf is hiding the glory of the resurrection.

Jesus' victory is real life. He really died, really rose and really gives you new life and eternal life. This is not make believe. The resurrection is not a fairy tale. Jesus Christ, true God and true man, rose physically from the dead. This is real life. And this real life and real victory is for you. Paul says "You have been raised with Christ."

You have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we are to live as though we are the victorious children of God – holy and righteous, forgiven and forgiving, loving and serving. Each day we are to put away the sins that would flow from our sinful nature – greed, anger, jealousy, pride, etc. If we live on Monday like Jesus did not rise on Sunday, we hide the glory of Christ's victory. Then our friends and neighbors and family, those people in our "real lives" will not be able to see how the resurrection of Jesus changed us.

Setting our hearts and minds on things above does not mean we remove ourselves from the things of this earth. Instead, everything we do is now influenced by Christ. We work to the glory of God. We raise families to the glory of God. We use our money in thanks to God. We don't leave Jesus behind when we spend time with friends. We praise Christ for the wonderful places we see and people we meet when traveling. Instead of hiding Jesus' victory in your life, let his glory be seen and proclaimed in all that you do, whether on Sunday morning or Friday evening.

### **The Glory of Christ's Victory Cannot Be Hidden**

*For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

Put yourself in the sandals of one of the disciples or one of the women who saw Jesus die on Good Friday. Jesus had told them what would happen three days later but they did not understand or believe that he would really rise from the dead. We can look back and see the glory of the cross. We know the rest of the story and can see Jesus' victory even on Good Friday as he hangs on the cross. But his friends and his mother and his disciples could not see the glory. Just as the darkness on Good Friday hid the sun for three hours, so the darkness of despair and fear hid the glory of Christ's victory from their eyes. They had no hope. The enemies had won. Jesus was dead. They were next.

Though I don't think any of us can truly appreciate the fear and despair of those disciples on Good Friday and Holy Saturday, Satan still uses every method possible to hide the glory of Christ's victory from us. If he doesn't get us to set our minds on pursuing earthly gain, he will try to focus our attention on what we have or might lose. What hides the glory of Christ from you? Is it loneliness or fear of the future? Maybe sickness or stress at work makes you forget that Jesus is alive again. Do family troubles or financial problems make it difficult to see the glory shining from Christ's cross and empty tomb? Maybe it is the worry about violence in our community, violence that took the life of a young high school student recently. It could be unrest in your home country where your relatives still live that hides the glory of Jesus. Maybe it is office politics or national politics that takes our eyes off of the victory of Christ.

There is much in this world of sin that makes it look like Jesus accomplished nothing by his death and that he is still in the grave. We could ask the why questions. We could ask why Jesus doesn't fix problems and stop pain and suffering in this world if he is truly the victorious Savior. But the glory of Christ is always connected with the cross. His victory is in his resurrection and in his suffering and death. Jesus tells us that we should expect the same in this life. The life of a believer in this world will be one of trouble but Jesus tells us that he has overcome the world.

You see, our life is hidden with Christ. What we are has not been fully revealed. Our lives may not look like victorious lives right now. We all still struggle with sin and fall into sin daily. Yet, our lives are hidden with Christ. The sin that would condemn us is removed by Christ. We look guilty but God declares us to be innocent through Christ.

Believers will not all look the same in this world. Some will be victorious and successful in business, in athletics, in academics, with family and friends and in all the so called "real life" ways as the world judges. Some believers will be poor, weak, oppressed, lonely, sick and struggle for all of their earthly lives. The earthly success of a person tells us nothing about their eternal victory. The earthly struggles of a person tells us nothing about their eternal victory. A believer's life is hidden with Christ. The victory we have over sin is real right now. The victory we have in Christ over death will be seen when Jesus raises us back to life. The victory we have over the devil will be seen we get to heaven and he no longer has any power to tempt or harm us. For, *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

Maybe we are a little like the disciples and women waiting for Easter morning. Jesus told them he would rise on the third day. Jesus tells us that we will appear with him in glory. For them, the cross of suffering hid the promise of victory. We all have a cross to bear as we patiently suffer in this world of sin, waiting for Jesus to return. But he will. His resurrection proves that he always keeps his promises. He rose from the grave on the third day, just as he said. For now, his glory and victory is hidden. But it is real glory and real victory and will not be hidden from anyone on the day Jesus returns.

Set your hearts and minds on Christ's real suffering, real resurrection and real victory. For you have been raised from spiritual death to life in Christ. Sin and death fought hard to defeat you but in Christ you have been given the victory. Set your minds on Christ's victory for you every day of the year and every year of your life.

Amen.