

✠ ✠ ✠ JESU JUVA ✠ ✠ ✠

JUBILATE / THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Text: St. John 16:16-22

CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! ALLELUIA!

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

Do you wish to see JESUS? Then read your Bible, for JESUS is the Word made flesh. Do you wish to see JESUS? Then come to confess your sins and receive absolution from the LORD Himself. Do you wish to see JESUS? Then come, bow down in worship. Do you wish to see JESUS? Then receive from His hand His Body given in death for you; receive from His hand the Cup of blessing in His Blood shed for you. Come and worship that your hands may touch, your eyes see, your ears hear, and your heart believe. Come, taste and see that the LORD is good, and His mercy endures forever. Come and see JESUS.

Yes, come and see JESUS, for these are the only means by which you will see Him in this life. These are the only way to heaven. For in these are CHRIST, and these are His gifts to His Bride, the Church, and the vehicles of His presence through which the HOLY SPIRIT creates and sustains faith in all those who will hear and believe. Cling tightly to these that your joy will not be taken away.

Therefore, know this—you will not see JESUS in worldly pursuits. You will not see JESUS in wishful thinking or fanciful daydreaming. You will not see Him in self-indulgence, self-centeredness, or self-pity. Nor will you see JESUS in the saccharine-sweet emotions of feel good theology or worldly entertainment dressed up and disguised as worship but created to deceive, as if it were possible, even God's elect. From these you should run. They are manifestations of the anti-Christ whose father is the devil, who is a liar and murderer from the beginning.

Life is a war played out on a spiritual battlefield. The army against whom we fight is not an army of flesh and blood, but an army composed of principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. The enemy's intent is to wrench your joy away from you; to obscure your vision of CHRIST and cast you into despair by taking away your faith.

His tactic is to make you forget our LORD's promise to always be with His Church. The enemy would have you concentrate on the little while of our LORD's absence that you would forget that the little while is just that—a little while. They would have you forget that though we may not be able to see Him, He has not deserted us but is with us always even to the end of time, as He has promised.

Our LORD has said, *“...a little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while and you will see Me....”* JESUS is here warning you that there will be those *“little whiles”* when it seems you are not able to experience much joy, when life is cruel, when life’s circumstance seems to taunt and laugh at you, when love and friendships turn cold, times when you are sharing in the trials of our Lord; times when He seems distant—so distant that you are unable to see Him. But He reminds you here, *“It really is only a little while that you must endure. That pain, that disease, that heartache, that darkness is almost over. Just hang on, hang on to Me. Trust in Me. It may seem like an eternity, but it is only a little while. Your Easter is coming.”* As the Psalmist writes: *“Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.”*

Therefore, do not be surprised that in this life you must struggle under the weight of sin and the burden of the Law, forgiven, certainly, but all the time clinging with all your might to the promises of God made yours through Baptism into the life, death, and resurrection of JESUS. As the Bride of CHRIST we await the consummation, the fulfillment of our joy, even while we yet suffer the temporal effects of sin in this fallen world.

Thus, our focus is not to be on the sufferings of this life, but on the returning CHRIST and the promised joys to come. For our desire is to be for JESUS, our Husband. No other end can satisfy a Christian, save that which is found in CHRIST JESUS who is eternal. Our one and only hope is to be under His loving and gracious rule forever.

It is, as JESUS said, *“A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come....”* In this world you will have trouble. The Christian life, the life we live, is lived out in the *“little while”* of heartache and pain, sickness, suffering, and death, however, our focus is not to be on the *“little while”* of suffering in this life, but on the eternal joys which we have in CHRIST JESUS, which we will have to the full at His second coming.

It is for this reason JESUS suffered the pain and death of crucifixion giving birth to His Church in Water and Blood that the sorrows of this life would last for no more than a season and our joy in CHRIST and the promised life to come, would be everlasting. Therefore, our LORD tells us that the pains and sufferings of this life are fleeting and transitory, they last no more than a moment and then are gone, and in their place will be a joy, complete and unending. A joy no one can take away from you.

So now, as you live through this *“little while”* of suffering, keep your eye on the prize—the long while, the never-ending moment in the unending Day of our LORD. For while the cursed sorrow and the devilish despair last only a little while, then comes the joy which knows no end and the peace which surpasses all human understanding. Is this not a blessing that far outstrips any temporal heartache?

Behold, this little while of suffering that we now know, even death itself, is nothing more than birth pangs—the travails of passing from the baptismal womb of the Church into the eternal light of CHRIST, where we are loosed from the pains and sufferings of death and raised up a new life in CHRIST JESUS.

How long must you wait? How long is this little while? Does it really matter? It is but a *little* while after all. And when the time of this little while is fulfilled JESUS will return for you on the clouds of heaven, and all your suffering will be forgotten and the extasy of your unending joy will begin.

Until that time, turn with joy to the gifts our LORD gives to you in His life-giving Flesh and Blood, gifts given to forgive you, uphold your faith, and renew your strength for this present hour, and sustain you until the life to come, where all pain, all sorrow, and all suffering will cease; gifts given to keep your eyes on the promise that you will, one day soon, see JESUS. For after all, it is but "*a little while.*"

In this you may rightly rejoice, for it is a joy no one can take from you. In it can be heard a blessed Word that no devil or enemy of God can undo, for in it JESUS says unto you, "*I forgive you all your sins.*"

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

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Rev. Raymond D. Parent II
Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church
Crestview, Florida
4/30/23 A✠D