

“He IS Risen”

“He is not here: for he is risen, as he said.” (Matthew 28:6a, KJV)

In a congregation I previously served, one of the members who was decorating the sanctuary for Easter asked me which banner sign should be put up. One said, *“He is risen”* and the other one said, *“He has risen.”* Which one is right? I said both. See, very good English translations differ in interpreting the Greek word **“egerthe”** in Matthew 28:6 – some say “is” and some say “has.”

Without taking a deep dive into the grammar, I have to say that I like the translation ***“he is risen.”*** It is used in a number of well-loved Easter hymns. It is also commonly said among Christians – especially on Easter morning. And you know, the words ***“he is risen”*** make a strong witness to Jesus’ miraculous resurrection being more than just a past historical event. For see, unlike Lazarus or any other person whom Jesus raised from death, Jesus didn’t rise from the dead only to one day die again. Jesus bodily rose to everlasting life – never to die again.

My friends, Easter is a celebration with present-day relevance. For our crucified Lord and Savior, who sacrificed His life into death to pay for our sins and reconcile us to God, rose again for us. He who conquered Satan, sin, and death for us now lives for us. Therefore, every Easter Sunday, in fact every Sunday and every day, our risen and living Savior serves the forgiveness, salvation, and unending life that He earned for us at the cross. He does so through His Gospel in the Word and Sacraments. And Jesus can do so because ***“he is risen”*** and now lives (and will live forever). For He who was seen by the disciples that first Easter Sunday and spoke with them is also present with His disciples today.

“He is risen.” There could be no more beautiful words for Christians to hear on Easter Sunday or on any other day of their earthly lives. For in a world of trials, suffering, and death the Good News that ***“he is risen”*** tells us that a better day, a day of unending life with God in glory, awaits all who trust in Jesus. For our risen God and Savior promises: ***“Because I live, you also will live”*** (John 14:19b, ESV).

Thanks be to God that Easter is more than the celebration of a miraculous and triumphant event that occurred two millennia ago. It is also the confession of a glorious event that is still true today – namely, that the only and true God and Savior we worship ***“is risen”*** now and forever.

Shay and I wish each of you a most blessed Easter,
Pastor