

April 4th – Easter Sunday

Centering Breath Prayer: Christ is risen...he is risen indeed.

Loving God, who has become my salvation, one more time I come before you to worship and adore you. As we commune with one another, may I glean wisdom and knowledge of your ways and set my mind on things above instead of earthly things. In your saving grace, I pray. Amen.

Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 15:19-26; Colossians 3:1-2

Key Verse: 1 Corinthians 15:20; Colossians 3:1-2:

(1 Cor. 15:20) “But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep. (Col. 3:1) Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. (2) Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things” (NIV).

Halleluia! Christ is risen, he is risen indeed! Today is truly a day of rejoicing. After seven weeks of preparation for this day, we have finally reached the day of triumph. As wonderful as the resurrection is, as joyful as this day is, the repercussions for us are even more staggering. For all who have accepted this gift of salvation “*have been raised with Christ.*” If Jesus arose from the dead just for himself, it would have been a marvelous, joyful occurrence. But, Christ came, died and was raised to be our Savior and to conquer death for us as well. The triumph does not belong to Christ alone, but to all of us as well.

Our scripture from Colossians today reminds us that our hearts and minds need to be set “*on things above, not on earthly things.*” Our resurrection is not about beating the odds and living forever on this earth. Christ was raised, and “*is seated at the right hand of God.*” Sin and death are part of this world and are what separate us from God. It is through the resurrection that the triumph is ours. It is through the resurrection that sin and death are swallowed up in triumph. We have now been given the means to cross the chasm which separated us from us enough to sacrifice God’s own self in the person of Jesus, the Christ, to make this possible. But, as has so often been stated, Christ’s kingdom is not of this world. It is a spiritual kingdom and if we keep our minds set on earthly things, we will miss the glory and personal, loving relationship which God’s sacrifice made possible.

So, how do we “*set our minds on things above?*” There were, and still are, many people who believed that the only way to “*set our minds on things above*” meant separating from all earthly life and spending most of their daily lives in prayer and meditation. There is a certain value in this, but it leaves compassion for others and witnessing to God’s love for others out of the equation. There are others who go about setting their minds on things above by spending their lives totally in witnessing and bringing others to faith in Jesus. There are still others who spend their lives in serving others in love by working for justice for the oppressed or feeding the hungry or building homes for the homeless or in ministering to those in prison. These are just a few of the many ways people have interpreted the call to “*set your minds on things above.*” How will we respond to this call? I believe that all these are valid ways to respond, but that

we should not all respond in exactly the same way. Just as we are given different gifts from the Spirit of God to edify the body of Christ, we are called to use those gifts in many different ways. How we respond to the call to “*set our minds on things above*” is not as important as that we do respond. But, we need to remember that others may not respond in the same way we do and that does not mean that they are wrong. Jesus kept his mind on things above while living and working within the community of earth. We, too, can live within this earth, caring and sharing with each other and still be a vibrant part of the kingdom of God. Let us rejoice in the triumph of this joyous day and “*set our minds on things above*” so that this glorious triumph will continue to be a part of our lives everyday and in every way. Christ is risen! He is risen, indeed! And so are we!

Additional Scriptures: Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; John 20:1-18; Luke 24:1-12; Acts 10:34-43

Questions for reflection and/or journaling:

1. What does the resurrection of Jesus mean for me, personally?
2. How do I set my mind on things above instead of earthly things while living within the world?

Suggestions for action:

1. Continue some form of daily devotional time with the Lord and seek ways to set your mind on things above.
2. Give thanks for the wondrous gift of salvation the Lord, Jesus made possible for you.
3. Make your praises known and share this great gift with someone who needs to hear the story.

Risen Savior, I thank you with my whole being for the precious gift of yourself which allows me to have a wondrous and loving relationship with you. I know that I am not worthy of your gift and it is more precious to me than I can ever tell you. Keep my mind on you and the things which you desire instead of held captive by earthly things. Use the talents and spiritual gifts which you have given me to edify your body and to serve the needs of your children. As we leave this Lenten season and this glorious resurrection Sunday, help me keep my mind set on things above and not on earthly things which have no meaning in the kingdom of heaven. In your glorious, risen name, I pray. Amen.