

“The Non-Negotiable – He is Risen; He is Not Here”

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © 2011 - pastorpat@waukeshabible.org
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Becoming the People of the Resurrection

Read Mark 16:1-8

Prayer:

Despite our efforts to keep him out, God intrudes. The life of Jesus is bracketed by two impossibilities: a virgin’s womb and an empty tomb. Jesus entered our world through a door marked “No Entrance” and left through a door marked “No Exit.” (Peter Larson in *Prism* Jan/Feb 2001)

The last act and final triumph of the Son is seen in His resurrection from the dead on the third day. Again we find the women disciples coming to tenderly care for the dead body of their Lord and Savior (Mark 16:1). This narrative is marked by several salient features.

First, those who came fully expected to find a dead body (Mark 16:1-4, 8). Everything about the narrative communicates the idea that the disciples had not yet wrapped their minds around the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The bluntness of His communication concerning His death and resurrection and the failure on their part to grasp the theology of *The Story* (i.e., creation, rebellion, redemption, and re-creation/consummation) left them confused. Their hearts were crushed at the brutality of the previous days. Yet they came out of full devotion to care for His broken body.

The shock of the moment cannot be underestimated. Here is one of *The Story’s* unexpected surprises. We expect the worse but find hope and grace. The stone is removed, the tomb empty, and a divine messenger inviting us with words of comfort and expectancy. From this deliberately placed shaft of divine light, comes the message.

Second, the message we share is succinct and powerful, “He is risen; He is not here; Go and tell” (Mark 16:5-7). After two centuries of development, the Christian church blathers much and muddles greatly when it comes to the pristine simplicity of *The Story’s* message; “He is risen; He is not here; Go and tell.”

Where else might we find such a message? If we search the world over and expose all thinking fabricated by the fallen mind of man, where might we find such a message? “He is risen; He is not here.” What critic can stand against the resilient strength of *The Story*? Deny its veracity, reject its simplicity, rebel against its authority, shun its beauty, but the integrity of its woof and fiber holds against the onslaught of the rebel’s heart. They came to kill life and to extinguish light, yet from death comes life and in the darkness, light.

Within our own church’s Doctrinal Statement we have attempted to distill and display *The Story*. I believe the introduction to our doctrinal statement is a gracious attempt to clarify the nature of all doctrinal statements.

The purpose of a Doctrinal Statement is to put the basic elements of Biblical truth in writing. Since the times of the New Testament, those who believe its special revelation have intentionally articulated the ideas of Scripture in precise words. The intent is never to add to Scripture, but to be exact and precise. It is also to make available to the inquirer what a voluntarily assembled group of like-minded people believe in common. Here is how the early Church captured the simplicity of *The Story*.

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen”
(1 Tim. 1:17).

“By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory”
(1 Tim. 3:16).

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⁴ “There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all” (Eph. 4:4-6).

¹² “giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. ¹³ For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything” (Col. 1:12-18).

⁵ “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:5-11).

The Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6)

⁹ “Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (Matt. 6:9-13).

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Lutheran Service Book, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 159, 175, 192, 207; *Lutheran Worship*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 142, 167, 186; The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has a slightly different text posted on their website, and the version used by the German Lutheran Trinity Church Melbourne is also slightly different.

Finally, our responsibility and privilege is simple, “Go and tell.” Jesus Christ is the fullest and final embodiment of *The Story* written by the Creator prior to all creation. He is the promise fulfilled and the picture completed. “He is risen; He is not here.” Now what? “Go and tell.” With equal simplicity, the believing has been entrusted with the divine mission, “Go and tell.” Go where? “Go into the world.” And do what? “Make disciples of all the nations, teaching them to observe all things.” Go and tell the world, “He is risen; He is not here.” Oh friend, we gather for worship and now we must scatter for mission. The mission is to, “Go and tell He is Risen; He is not here.” We serve the risen Savior. He is alive.

Oh how refreshing is this simple, yet profound articulation of *The Story*. May we cease our striving for division and may we celebrate the richness and wealth of His body as it personifies *The Story*. For you today as the confessing church, “He is risen; He is not here; Go and tell.”

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in **the Storyline of the Bible**. She is determined by design to have a **God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching** focused on personal **discipleship** through intentional and systematic instruction; a **Global-impacting mission** that resolves to be a **church planting church**; and a **Grace-based fellowship** where disciples are invited to live under a **reigning grace** characterized by a **Gospel-driven sanctification** that celebrates a divine **monergism** to the Christian life.