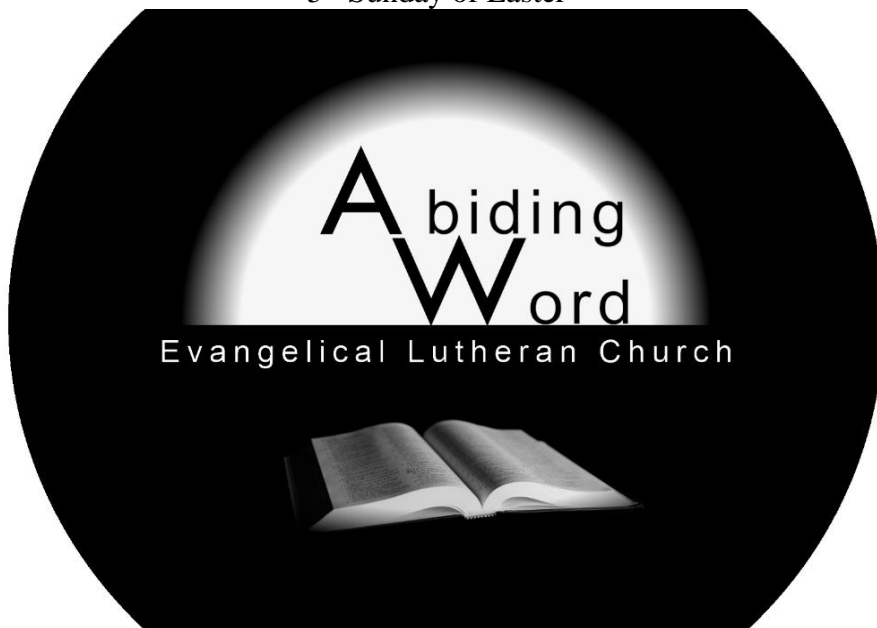


May 7th, 2023
5th Sunday of Easter



8470 Landen Drive Maineville, Ohio

*At Abiding Word
We gather around the Word (worship)
We grow in the Word (education)
And we share the Word with the world (outreach).*



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Welcome!

To all who have gathered here this morning we welcome you in the name of Christ our Lord. Through him we have access to God in boldness and confidence. (Ephesians 3:12) Join us after the service for coffee. Also join us for Sunday School at 10:45 and Bible Study at 11:00.

HE LIVES!

Life is full of either/or moments where you face an unavoidable choice between two alternatives. Some of those moments are relatively insignificant. Either I have the chicken, or I have the fish. Other times, they shape the course of your life. Either I accept this new job offer, or I keep my current job for the remainder of my career. Either I accept his marriage proposal, or... Some either/or moments are bigger than others.

Here is the biggest either/or of them all. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. One might ask, "How does that either/or affect me?" Because Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and Savior from sin. He said the proof is that he would rise from the dead.

"The Son of Man must suffer many things ... be killed and after three days rise again" (Mark 8:31). Thus, if Jesus remains dead, he is both failure and fraud. However, if Jesus rose from the dead, he proves he is who he claimed to be—the Messiah. And he did what he came to do—save us.

Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. That means, either Jesus is a complete waste of your time, or he is your only hope for salvation. If Jesus is still dead, it is completely logical that you should want nothing to do with him. If Jesus rose, it is only logical that he becomes the center and greatest priority of your life. Either Jesus is still dead, or Jesus rose. This season of Easter is a 50-day-long celebration of the fact that the Holy Spirit has answered that either/or for us. We believe this life-changing truth. Christ is risen! He lives! Throughout this season, we explore what that means.

HE LIVES TO BE THE ONLY WAY TO HEAVEN

The gospel is the most inclusive message in the world. The benefits of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are meant for every man, woman, and child who ever lived. The gospel is also the most exclusive message in the world, for it maintains that salvation can only be found in one place—the person of Jesus Christ. Just listen to how Jesus speaks: "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6). Jesus doesn't say, "I will show you the true way to eternal life." The prophets and apostles could say that. But Jesus says, "I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life you crave." And note that definite article: "the," not "a"! Jesus is not a way into heaven. He is the way. There is no other way than through faith in the One who died and rose again.

The unbelieving world finds this claim—that Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven—to be the most offensive teaching in all of Scripture. Yet this is the very truth upon which Christ builds his Church.

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: **Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: **Amen.**

The liturgy continues on page 207.

PSALM 118: THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE**Front of Blue Hymnal**

We will sing the refrain, but speak the verses responsively by the half verse.

FIRST READING**ACTS 4:8-12**

St. Peter told the Jewish leaders that the man they had crucified was raised to life and therefore is the only man in whom salvation is found.

⁸Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, ¹⁰then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹Jesus is

“ ‘the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the cornerstone.’

¹²Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

SECOND LESSON**1 PETER 2:4-10**

The claim that Jesus is the only way to heaven is like a stone over which unbelievers stumble. But that truth is the cornerstone on which Christ builds his Church.

⁴As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

⁷Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,
“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,” ⁸and,
“A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession,
that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful
light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not
received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

GOSPEL

JOHN 14:1-11

Jesus teaches that the only way to draw near to God the Father is through God the Son.

¹“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ²My
Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there
to prepare a place for you? ³And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take
you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴You know the way to the place where I am
going.”

⁵Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know
the way?”

⁶Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father
except through me. ⁷If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you
do know him and have seen him.”

⁸Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

⁹Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a
long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the
Father?’ ¹⁰Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say
to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his
work. ¹¹Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe
on the evidence of the works themselves.

HYMN: WELCOME, HAPPY MORNING

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SERMON

1 PETER 2:4-10

The liturgy continues on page 210.

HYMN: CHRIST BE MY LEADER

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