UNIV. HTS. PRESBY. CHURCH EASTER 2019

SERMON TOPIC: “A NEW THING FOR A NEW DAY”

The Resurrection of Christ Jesus has been a subject of major import and controversy throughout history. To those who bore witness of this glorious reality, who saw Him, ate with Him, spoke with Him and touched Him, His resurrection was an amazing event of new life and new hope for humanity. Except for Lazarus who Jesus called out of the grave after being buried for four days, Jesus was the only one who got up on His own, folded up His linen wrap and spoke to the women who came to the tomb to embalm His body. He told them to go and tell His disciples the truth that He is risen just as Scripture predicted and just as He told them Himself. THIS WAS A NEW THING THAT NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE, HAS NEVER HAPPENED SINCE, AND NEVER WILL HAPPEN AGAIN. THE FATHER GAVE LIFE IN CHRIST JESUS THAT HE MIGHT GIVE LIFE TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM AND IN WHAT HE REPRESENTS IN THE GOSPEL. This is why He was able to tell Martha: “I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. …YOUR BROTHER WILL RISE AGAIN.” (John 11: 25…) THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW THING FOR A NEW DAY. Life on this planet called earth would never be the same again. The calendar changed from B.C. to A.D., Salvation would be by grace through faith and not by the righteousness of the Law, and Sins would be washed away by the Blood of Christ Jesus and not by the blood of animals.

Isaiah wrote some 800 years before Christ came in Isaiah 65: 17-25, that Jehovah God said that He, God, was about to create a NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH. The former things shall not be remembered. But be glad and rejoice forever in what is being created. Here is what the LORD said He was creating: “I AM ABOUT TO CREATE JERUSALEM AS A JOY, AND ITS PEOPLE A DELIGHT. (That includes the true church.) No more shall there be the voice of weeping, crying, or distress. Everyone will live out the full measure of their days in good health. They shall prosper and their produce shall prosper. God will be quick to listen to them and grant their requests speedily. There shall be peace everywhere and no one will harm or destroy the other. SURELY, THIS IS NOT YET HAPPENING IN OUR DAY. YET WE KNOW CHRIST JESUS IS TRULY RISEN FROM THE DEAD. THIS PARTICULAR PROPHECY IS STILL IN THE MAKING, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO ITS REALITY.

John repeats the same theme of new beginnings in Revelation 21. In his vision on the Island of Patmos where he was exiled, John saw in vision what Isaiah prophesied. He wrote that he saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. He saw the Holy City coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. He heard a voice saying: *“See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them, and they shall be His* ***peoples.*** *God Himself will be with them; and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, for the first things have passed away. (v.5) THE ONE WHO IS SEATED ON THE THRONE (JESUS) SAID: “SEE, I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW!!!*—QUESTION: “CAN JESUS BE TRUSTED? HAS HE DONE WHATEVER HE HAS SAID? WILL HE DO WHAT HE HAS PROMISED? --YES.  **Then be sure that this new Jerusalem, new heaven, and new earth will happen too.**

When John wrote these words, which lined up with what Isaiah wrote hundreds of years prior, Jesus had already died and was already risen from the dead. According to John, Christ was in the beginning in the first creation with the Father and the Holy Spirit.  *All things came into being through Him. IN HIM WAS LIFE, AND THE LIFE WAS THAT LIFE THAT ENLIGHTENED ALL PEOPLE. HIS LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS AND THE DARKNESS DOES NOT OVERCOME IT. He came into the world and to His own but was rejected. They did not know Him. BUT TO ALL WHO BELIEVED IN HIS NAME HE GAVE THE POWER TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD, WHO ARE BORN, NOT OF HUMAN BLOOD, OR OF THE WILL OF HUMAN FLESH, OR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF GOD. And the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen His glory… full of grace and truth.*

So, what is all this saying to us? Clearly, something new was birthed when Jesus entered the world born of the Virgin Mary. Surely no one could do any of the great miracles, signs, and wonders that He did. Obviously when the sun darkened at noon and the earth quaked at His death on Good Friday, there was a seismic shift in all that was the norm in those days. TO USE THE VERNACULAR… JESUS WAS “SURE ‘NOUGH DEAD AND BURIED! He did try to tell His disciples that He would suffer and die, but they didn’t understand fully what He meant. However, when the women went to the tomb on the first day of the week, and an angel spoke to them, asking: *“Why are you seeking the living among the dead? Jesus is not here. He is risen just like He said He would.”* It was crystal clear that IT WAS A NEW DAY AND A NEW THING HAD TAKEN PLACE. For those who believe in His name, the New Life has already begun. For those who do not yet believe, that reality is NOT YET. EMMANUEL HAS COME AND IS ALREADY INDWELLING SOME OF US. HE HAS COME AND WILL BE COMING BACK AGAIN TO RECEIVE HIS BRIDE –THE UNBLEMISHED CHURCH ADORNED AND READY TO MEET HIM IN THE AIR.

THE NEW THING HAS ALREADY HAPPENED, BUT THE NEW DAY HAS NOT YET BEEN FULFILLED COMPLETELY. WHEN JESUS TOLD JOHN IN REVELATION 22: “I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA” He was saying: “I WAS IN THE BEGINNING, I AM NOW, AND I SHALL BE IN THE END”—when all things will be consummated and fulfilled. THE NEW THING HAS HAPPENED. WE WHO BELIEVE, ALREADY HAVE IT AND WE ARE AWAITING THAT FINAL NEW DAY WHEN CHRIST RETURNS TO RECEIVE HIS BRIDE. WE HAVE HIS LIFE IN US FOR HE WAS GIVEN THE POWER TO GIVE US NEW LIFE. Maybe some of you are saying to yourselves: “I don’t really understand all of this.” Well, you know, Thomas, one of the twelve disciples refused to believe the testimony of the women and the other ten disciples that Jesus was risen. He was alive and they had seen Him. Thomas declared that he would never believe unless he saw the nail scars in His hands and feet and His sword pierced side, He would not believe. Well the next Sunday, Jesus obliged him with the evidence. **Thomas, in amazement declared: “My Lord, and my God.!”** But then Jesus said: “Thomas, you believed because you saw. **But more blessed are those who do not see, but yet believe.”** He did not say that we are to come by our own understanding. He said: “Come by faith. Believe and you will see.” The human mind wants to see in order to believe. God’s way is the reverse. (Let’s consider this and be clear about it.) BELIEVE, AND THEN SEE!

I just want us to realize that we who believe in the RESURRECTION OF CHRIST JESUS WILL ALSO BE RAISED WITH HIM AND SHARE IN HIS GLORY. **The question for some of us is: Do we know who we are and what we believe? Just in case we have not paid attention to our “Profession of Faith” in the Apostle’s Creed, this may be a good time to study it and learn it. So that when others ask us what Christians believe, we can say it clearly and with conviction.** LET ME EMPHASIZE AND RE-ITERATE THIS TRUTH: CHRIST JESUS IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN IN DEED! IT IS A NEW THING THAT GOD, THE FATHER HAS DONE AND IS STILL DOING. WE ARE LIVING IN A NEW DAY WHICH IS TO BE FINALLY FULFILLED IN GOD’S APPOINTED TIME. When this New Day is fulfilled, there will be no more sorrow, no more pain, no more strife. There will be peace and contentment everywhere. There will be love in every heart. The church, the Bride of Christ, will be as a spotless Bride ready to meet the Bridegroom. So, I urge us not to pollute the church with anything dark, and sinister, no evil talk or action of any kind. May we do our best to keep our personal churches clean in heart, mind, body, soul, and spirit. But if anyone does stumble, then be quick to repent and get back into grace and favor with God.

So, know this, you/we are a part of something BIGGER THAN WE CAN IMAGINE. IT IS SOMETHING WE CAN HARDLY COMPREHEND. BUT WE RECEIVE IT BY FAITH AND WE TRUST IN OUR FAITHFUL GOD TO MANIFEST IT AT HIS APPOINTED TIME. If we do not believe in the resurrection, our faith is futile, and we are as people most miserable. (according to Paul) --So, let us rejoice and be glad, for God has chosen us for Salvation unto life abundant and life eternal beginning here and now and eternally in heaven with Him. Those/we who believe in the resurrection are children of light and children of God. We are children of the New Day and are a part of the New thing that God is doing. For these rights, promises, and privileges, we should rejoice and be glad. We do not take such an awesome thing for granted for it yields eternal rewards that the world cannot understand unless they come to faith and know the truth that CHRIST IS RISEN IN HIS GLORIFIED FORM, THE FIRST FRUIT OF THE RESURRECTION, AND IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN GIVE US THIS NEW LIFE, THIS NEW THING, IN THIS NEW WAY, AND IN THIS NEW DAY.

PRAYER: FOR A GREATER REVELATION AND ACTIVATION OF THE RESURRECTION POWER OF THE RISEN CHRIST IN OUR LIVES AND IN THE CHURCH.

AMEN.