



His Word Is Truth!

This article is written by Pastor Tom Eckstein of Concordia Lutheran Church in Jamestown. "His Word is Truth" will appear in this paper every 3rd Monday.



The title for today's article is: "Death Has Been Defeated!" I chose the title for today's article back in March. At that time I thought it would be good to have a resurrection theme for today's article because of the celebration of Easter on April 12th. However, little did I know back in March that my father would pass away on April 1st. His funeral was on April 5th. Therefore, the title for today's article ("Death Has Been Defeated!") has a very personal meaning for me as I mourn my father's recent death.

So, why did my father die?

The difficult answer to that question is found in Romans 5:12, where the Apostle Paul writes: "...sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." Also, in Romans 6:23a Paul writes: "...the wages of sin is death,..." Death is a difficult reality to face for many reasons, but the most painful thing about death that we all must understand is that we deserve it! Death is God's sign to us that something is wrong with this world – *and what is wrong with this world is that we are conceived as sinners who live in rebellion against God.*

Contrary to what many think, death is NOT a natural part of life. Death had no place in God's perfect creation. The first humans (Adam and Eve) and all their descendants (that's YOU and ME) were meant to live in God's love forever. But that changed when the devil tempted Adam and Eve to reject God and decide for themselves what is good and

what is evil. God warned them that such a choice would result in death, but they doubted God's Word and trusted their own wisdom. Their sinful nature was passed on to us, and so we are by nature enemies of God who deserve His wrath (see Ephesians 2:1-3).

But the Good News is that God did not turn His back on us even though we are guilty of turning our backs on Him. God did something to rescue us from the wrath our sin deserves, and the result of being delivered from our sins is that we have also been rescued from death itself!

Holy Scripture teaches that Jesus is "The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Throughout Old Testament history God told His people to sacrifice lambs as a sign that their sins were forgiven because an innocent substitute would take their punishment. Those lambs pointed ahead to Jesus, the Son of God who died on the cross in our place of punishment. In 1st Peter chapter 1 it says that we were

redeemed "**with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.**"

But Jesus didn't stay dead! Jesus' body came to life again, just as He said (see Luke 18:31-33). If Jesus' body did not come to life, then He was not God and we are still under the curse of our sins (see I Corinthians 15:17). **But Jesus WAS and IS God – and He DID rise from the dead and He LIVES as our Lord and Savior!!** Those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior have complete forgiveness of sins NOW! In addition, those who trust in Jesus as their Savior can face death knowing that death itself has been defeated and that their bodies will be resurrected on the Final Day when Christ returns in power and glory (see 1st Corinthians 15:51-58, Philippians 3:20-21, 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18).

My father's favorite bible passage was 2nd Corinthians 5:7, which reads: "**We live by faith, not by sight.**" This means that believers trust in

Christ and His Word rather than relying on sinful human reason. *Sinful reason says that we are not sinners and that Jesus is not the Lamb of God who died for our sins.* **But God's gift of faith leads us to confess our sins and trust in Jesus who died for our sins!** *Sinful human reason believes that death is natural and that a physical resurrection is not possible.* **But God's gift of faith leads us to believe that death is the result of our sin against God and that death has been defeated by His Son's own physical resurrection!**

My father was a sinner who deserved death. But by God's grace my father trusted in Jesus as his Lord and Savior. My father's sins were forgiven because of Jesus' death for him. My father's body will be resurrected on the Final Day because of Jesus' resurrection for him. My father instructed me in God's Word, and the Holy Spirit also gave me faith in Christ and His death and

resurrection for me. Even though we buried by father on April 5th, I know I will see him again because DEATH HAS BEEN DEFEATED! *YOU can have the same hope if you trust in Jesus as YOUR Lord and Savior from sin and death.*



Please read the next His Word is Truth on Monday, May 18th!

Next month Pastor Eckstein will continue his series: "Comfort and Encouragement from Holy Scripture." *The topic of next month's article will be: "Comfort and Encouragement When You Feel God Has Abandoned You Because of Your Repeated Sins."*

For more resources about Christian teaching and issues, go to Concordia Lutheran's web page: www.concordiaajt.org

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