

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior

[*Introduction*] Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia.

Bet you didn't expect to hear that this time of year!

At this time of year we see the resurrection through a new light.

Beloved in the Lord, I pray we will never get tired of this message.

We say it to one another throughout the season of Easter.

— It's a proclamation of truth that restores all mankind and creation from death to life.

— It's a message that brings hope to a dying world, a world that cannot save itself.

— It's the message that makes all the difference in the universe.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS DRIVES THE WHOLE DIVINE STORY.

I. The resurrection of Jesus drives the mission of the Church.

When Jesus was preparing to leave the disciples and to take the sins of the world to the cross in His death, calls upon the disciples to keep his Word.

1. This is how God shows love to his creation, for his Word gives life and presence with God.
2. Jesus said to the disciples when He met them after his resurrection, “*Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations*” (Lk 24:46–47).
3. That message of the resurrection is what sent the apostles on their way down the dusty road.

Our reading in Acts begins with Paul in Athens waiting for Timothy and Silas to join him.

But he can't wait! (vv 16–17).

The spirit within him is provoked by all the idolatry in the city, people ignorant of the true and living God, enslaved by false gods.

You know the feeling...

You just read a good book, and you tell everyone they must read it!

You just saw a good game, and you tell everyone they should have been there!

You watch a good movie, and you tell everyone they should go!

Paul couldn't wait!

He couldn't wait for the arrival of his companions to begin speaking to the people.

He has a message of the resurrection of Jesus that drives him forward!

It must be told!

Paul preaches the resurrection of Jesus

first to his fellow Jews and those devoted to the faith.

God is known to them.

They wait expectantly for God to save them.

Although that is not a guarantee they will trust in Jesus.

I. The resurrection of Jesus drives the mission of the Church.

II. The resurrection of Jesus drives away false wisdom.

Paul next moves into the marketplace.

Like Jesus' parable of the great banquet (Lk 14:23), the servant, Paul,

goes out into the streets and marketplaces,

where people gather to call for all to come and receive life.

Paul's call is to proclaim Jesus and his resurrection.

The philosophers in Athens overhear this proclamation and find it strange (v 18).

They use that technical term – babblers.

You see, the philosophers of the day were Stoics and Epicureans.

The Stoics looked for their god in nature. Nature revealed truth. So if something died, it was for the betterment of the cosmos and was the will of nature.

The Epicureans believed that the gods were material and made of the same basic building blocks as man. The Epicureans did not bother with rituals or observances. Their way to live in harmony with the gods was the pursuit of happiness through moderation and relationships.

The Stoics and Epicureans labeled Paul a babbler,

one who didn't know what he was talking about.

Still, they wish to know more about this teaching.
“What does it mean, its implications?”

So they invite Paul to speak formally at the Areopagus,
a place where new ideas are discussed (vv 19–25).
And Paul used the altar of the unknown God
as his starting point to speak of the living God.

This God they do not know created all.
And since he is Lord of both heavens and earth,
there is nothing God needs from us.

Rather, he gives to the Athenians, Paul, and YOU sitting here today,
life and breath and all things required to sustain them.

Paul then alludes to the problem of man’s separation from God (vv 26–28).
The natural man, the old Adam, is like a man in the dark groping about,
feeling and searching for God.

This seeking is not a virtue
but a symptom of a dead soul devoid of the Word of life.

This illuminates two false ways to God: mysticism (using feelings or
emotions to find God) and ration-al-ism (reason or logic as a way to him).

Not that feeling and reason are bad.
God intends them for good and,
when used in service to his Word,
they edify you and your neighbor.

But the resurrection makes no sense to these men so dedicated to their own
false wisdom. They thought death was a liberation of soul from body.

- I. The resurrection of Jesus drives the mission of the Church.**
- II. The resurrection of Jesus drives away false wisdom.**
- III. Nevertheless, the resurrection of Jesus drives you back into the arms of God.**

Despite the Athenians’ foolishness,
Paul proclaims that God is not far from them—or you.

Not that they would ever find him by their own groping;
sin has made that impossible.

But Jesus' cross has removed the sin that separated us from God,
has reconciled us to God.

The resurrection announced that God has accepted Jesus' sacrifice as sufficient!
God is no longer angry with the human race!

So now God is where he promises to be for you.

- In the proclamation of Jesus crucified and raised,
- in water,
- in bread and wine,
- it is there he embraces you.

By Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension,
he has authority to fulfill these promises.

The proclamation that Jesus is risen means life for you!
This is the certainty, the proof.

Jesus risen from the dead means you can be certain that you, being baptized,
will also rise to life with him eternally.

[Conclusion]

So die, old Adam! And rise, beloved of the Father, to new life.

Walk in the new life, proclaiming and assisting his sent ones
to proclaim that Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Now, you are the body of Christ, each one of you part of it! Amen!