

Exodus 15:1-18  
“Against All Odds!”  
Easter Sunday

April 12, 2020  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

**[Introduction]** What are the odds?

If you attend a taping of *The Price Is Right*,  
what are the odds that you will be called to “Come on down!”?  
One in 36.

If you find an oyster,  
what are the odds that you will find a pearl?  
One in 12,000.

If you swim in the ocean,  
what are the odds that you will be attacked by a shark?  
One in 3.7 million

If you buy a lottery ticket,  
what are the odds that you will win a multi-state power-ball lottery?  
One in 185 million.

BUT the most important “what are the odds” question is this.  
What are the odds that a man, brutally beaten  
and then crucified by the Roman Empire, would come back to life?  
The odds are astronomical but get this—it happened! It really happened!  
Christ is risen! ***He is risen indeed! Alleluia!***

**[Exodus]**

What are the odds?  
In Exodus 15,  
what are the odds that a group of Israelite slaves  
would defeat the most powerful military force on earth  
—the Egyptians led by that mean and mighty Pharaoh?

The drama begins in Exodus 1:11,

***“The Egyptians put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor  
who worked them ruthlessly.***

***They made their lives bitter with hard labor in brick and mortar  
and with all kinds of work in the fields.”***

It gets worse! Pharaoh ordered:

***“No longer supply the people with straw for making bricks,  
let them go and gather their own straw.***

***But require them to make the same number of bricks as before;  
don’t reduce the quota”*** (Ex 5:7–8).

But it gets worse!

As the Israelites flee Egypt, they look over their shoulders  
and see Pharaoh madly chasing after them.

But it gets even worse!

The Israelites become surrounded and stuck on all sides.

Exodus 14:11, ***“They said to Moses,***

***‘Was it because there were no graves in Egypt  
that you brought us to the desert to die?’”***

Just when the odds were completely against Israel,  
we come to Exodus 15,

***“Pharaoh’s chariots and army he has hurled into the sea.  
The finest of Pharaoh’s officers are drowned in the Red Sea.”*** (4–5)

No wonder Israelites sing,

***“The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation!”***  
(Exodus 15:2)

[***Christ***]

All of this, though,

is just a peek, a prelude, and a preview  
into the Bible’s greatest against all the odds story.

Opposition began early in Christ’s ministry.

Pharisees plot with Herodians.

Sadducees posture with Pentateuchal pride.

Scribes test him with Torah trivia.

Disparagers say he’s demon possessed.

Even His own brothers ridicule him.

It gets worse.

Once arrested, Jesus is bound, accused, blindfolded, and mocked.

But it gets worse.

They strip him naked and beat him into a bloody pulp.

But it gets even worse.

Jesus is blood-soaked and spiked to a cross for six hours.  
He is crucified, dead, and buried.

AND Just when everyone thought it was all over,  
the angel announced, "He is not here! He has risen!"

Mary shouts, "Rabboni!"

Then Thomas declares, "My Lord and my God!"

Against all the odds, Jesus lives!

Christ is risen! *He is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

*This isn't a statistical rarity, BUT a solid certainty!*

[You]

What are the odds?

All the odds were stacked against a man named Lee Capps.

Lee, who didn't know how to fly,  
took off in a private plane with a friend who was a pilot.

When they got up to cruising altitude

Lee's friend, the pilot, had a heart attack and died.

Lee grabbed the radio and cried for help.

An air traffic controller heard Lee's cry.

And he said, "This is your lucky day.

I'm not only an air traffic controller, I'm also a flight instructor.

Would you be interested in a flying lesson?"

Being otherwise unoccupied, Lee said, "Sure! Why not?"

The air traffic controller said,

"Lee, you're going to have to take a shot at landing the plane.

No practice, no dress rehearsal, no spring training!"

Lee Capps came in like a drunk duck.

He was all over the place.

And he hit pretty hard.

But Lee Capps walked away from it all with only a few minor cuts.

Afterwards, the air traffic controller was interviewed by several TV stations,  
"Did you really think he would walk away alive?"

The air traffic controller responded, "Folks, Lee Capps made it against all odds!"

Many times you feel as though the odds are against you.

I'm talking about the 1 in 3 people whose parents got divorced.

I'm talking about the 1 in 4 women who were sexually abused as children.

I'm talking about the 1 in 7 people who grew up with an alcoholic parent.

I'm talking about the people who grew up in families with

absentee dads, controlling moms, screaming parents, and abusive siblings.

You may feel as though the odds are against you.

Maybe we experienced a devastating loss.

For some of you, this means ...

your spouse died, your marriage died, your child died, or your father died.

For others, it means ...

your dream died.

And I'd venture to guess that for some of you...

your will to live has died.

Some days it feels as though Mt. Sinai is sitting on your chest,  
crushing what's left of your life.

You feel as though the odds are against you.

I know. Oh God, I know.

Stuff is going on—a whole lot of stuff is going on in your life.

It is like you're circling the runway and trying to land.

Your greatest fear is that you will crash and burn!

### [*Conclusion*]

Let me remind you of two honest-to-God facts.

Against all odds, Israel made it out of Egypt.

Better yet, against all odds, Jesus Christ is risen today!

So, we profess Easter with every ounce of our being!

Christ is risen! ***He is risen indeed! Alleluia!***

But against all odds, we *ALSO* possess Easter.

Paul says it this way,

***“If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you,***

***he who raised Christ from the dead***

***will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit,***

***who lives in you”*** (Rom 8:11)

You see, it gets better.

Through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, Easter can happen in us.

And it gets better.

God promises resurrection

for everything that looks so lifeless, so hopeless, so dead!

Jesus puts it this way, “Because I live, you also will live.” (John 14:19)

And it gets better.

We live now and we will live forever.

Christ is risen! *He is risen indeed! Alleluia!* Amen.

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As followers of Christ, “Keep loving one another earnestly

And show hospitality to one another without grumbling.” AMEN! (1 Pt 4:8-9)

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