

April 11, 2004
Sid Sybenga

Easter 2004 Luke 24

Christ is risen, Alleluia!

Let me teach you something the church has done for many centuries on Easter day. When we got together for worship, the leader would say **Christ is risen, Alleluia!** And the congregation would echo back in a loud voice.

Christ is risen, indeed, Alleluia!

Lets try it. **Christ is risen, Alleluia!**

Christ is risen, indeed, Alleluia!

So every time I say **Christ is risen, Alleluia!** in the sermon. You say: **Christ is risen, indeed, Alleluia!**

OK we're ready.

Two days ago, on Good Friday,

we listened to the words Jesus spoke from the cross.

They were words of deep significance,

words we all want to hear,

words that defined his life and ministry.

Jesus spoke of forgiveness and an invitation to paradise.

But then he died. And hope died with him,
and his followers were lost, in despair.

He was buried on that Friday evening and laid in a new
tomb belonging to a wealthy councilman in Jerusalem,
named Joseph.

Joseph laid Jesus' dead body in the grave,

along with his hopes, and

quickly closed the tomb with a big stone because

at sundown the Sabbath would start and

no one was allowed to work.

And so Jesus' body lay in the tomb all day Saturday,

while the people rested.

It's amazing what God does when people rest,

when they give up in despair, or

rejoice in their own accomplishments.

Anyway, on Sunday morning,

the first day of the work week – our Monday morning

a number of women went to Joseph's tomb to

finish the work of embalming Jesus' body.

When the women came to the tomb a surprise met them.

The stone was rolled away and the body of Jesus was gone.

And two men, in dazzling cloths told them that

Christ is risen,. Alleluia. --

It was an outrageous claim. Risen?

How could that be? How is that possible?
The women ran back to the house and
told the men what they had heard and seen.
And this is what Luke tells us about how they received the
Message. Verse 11 chapter 24
But they did not believe the women, because
their words seemed to them like nonsense.

That is the point of Easter.
It seems to us like nonsense.
Christ is risen, Alleluia? --

Easter is about seeming and believing the impossible.
Easter is about dead hope coming alive.
Easter is about the lost being found again.
Easter is about despair turning into joy.
Mourning into dancing
Easter is about the dead being made alive by the power of God.
It's about unbelievers giving testimonies of faith.
It's about being dunked under water and
rising to new life.
Because **Christ is risen. Alleluia! –**

That night, Easter evening, Jesus came among his disciples,
the ones who didn't believe.
The ones who said resurrection talk is nonsense.
They were having a meal together and
talking about the bible and
wondering if the resurrection was even possible.
And suddenly Jesus stood among them and
said to them "Peace be with you." Peace.
Then he showed them his hands and his feet.
He let them touch him, and he ate with them.
And suddenly it dawned on them,
Christ is risen. Alleluia! ---

That is the truth.
Jesus stood among them with a new resurrected body.
He was raised from dead by the power of God
to live forever.
My friends, this morning, on this Easter Sunday
we confessed our faith. We stood up and said
"We as Christian brothers and sisters believe that
on the third day Jesus arose again from dead.
Even though this is nonsense to our ears and
Gublagoop to our minds we believe.
And not only that;
because **Christ is Risen. Alleluia!**

We also believe in the resurrection of the body.
We believe that somehow
what happened to Jesus on that Easter morning will
also happen to us.

That the impossible,
the nonsensical, the hopeless
is made possible and sensible and real
in our time and our lives even now.

And that is how I feel today about us,
that is what I believe this Easter.

As I look around and see what happened here this morning,
when I see this church packed full,
full of people of faith,
brothers and sisters in Christ from many nations
confessing one lord and savior
all I can say is Christ is risen. Alleluia.

Christ is risen among us his body.
And the amazing thing is God is not finished with us yet.

This morning we have the privilege of welcoming two new congregations in our
fellowship and three new pastors.

In January our Spanish ministry died. But today the holy Spirit brought new Spanish
congregation to our hope family of congregations. Their pastor is Marco Arandia.
Congregation stand up. Christian Community of the Messiah. Welcome.

Frank Obien. Brother of Yabo pastor of a small Filipino congregation. Heart attack. They
will join with the English congregation and add to the multi ethnic character of our
church. Congregation stand up, All Nations Filipino Fellowship. Welcome.

Norberto Liernur. Pastor and church planter. Lord has put in his heart that he wants to
join the CRC and he is hoping to do an internship among us as he prepares his ministry in
our church. Let's welcome Norberto.

We welcome them in our fellowship and we look forward to celebrating communion with
them and serving God together. To prepare our heart to celebrate the Lords Supper
together and to help us understand the Spanish congregation Pastor Marco and his praise
band will offer a song to the lord.

Christ is risen. Alleluia!

