

Jesus is risen from the grave! Jesus die on the cross for our sins. Jesus paid the price for our misdoing and has set us free from sin's curse. Jesus is risen from the grave to prove to us that he is the Only Son of God. Jesus is risen from the grave as proof that we have eternal life in him. Jesus is risen from the grave so we can have faith in him. Jesus is risen from the grave and we have the testimony of eyewitnesses, recorded in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Jesus is living today and we have the witness of generations of those whom believe in him and follow him. Nothing is more important today than Jesus is risen for the grave!

I have spent the last few weeks counting all that we have lost in this Coronavirus shutdown. I will share some of them with you. So far, we have "lost" four weeks of worshiping our Lord, three weeks of Bible studies, a Church Council meetings, Loretta was planning an Easter Choir, we didn't get to rejoice together and wave Palms on Palm Sunday, we never held Good Friday services, we never got to sing of Jesus Resurrection in a sunrise service, we didn't have sunrise breakfast together, we didn't experience an overflowing crowd in our Easter Worship, our children didn't get to hunt Easter eggs and we haven't been able to greet one another in Christian love. And still, Jesus is risen from the grave. We can count our "losses" if we like, but the greatest victory is ours in Jesus Christ, just because he is risen from the grave.

The truth is I have been "down" not depressed by any means, but down over all that we have not been able to do. It's easy to set and count perceived losses or list what we think we have missed. Yet when we consider that all we celebrate on Easter is not our doing but God's love and grace, all else doesn't matter. It really doesn't matter at all. In Jesus' Resurrection from the grave we have forgiveness, mercy, love and grace? What else can we possibly want? If we have these things, how can we lose anything? Most of Lent, all of Holy Week and

especially Easter Sunday was less than we expected, less than what we wanted and less than what we are use to. And Easter hasn't changed in the lease. Even if we can't gather in worship, sing triumphant hymns of joy and give thanks to God; Easter is still the same. The world can't take anything from Easter. Easer is still God's doing and God's gift to us. Rejoice, read your Bible, pray and give thanks to God. Even in this pandemic mess, Jesus is Risen from the grave. Our sins are forgiven. We have eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Be safe, be healthy and be of good cheer.

In Christ's love,

*Pastor Paul*