THE FEAST OF THE RESURRECTION
Rolling Meadows - 1967

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IN NOMINE JESU

St. Luke 24: 5 WHY DO YOU SEEK THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?

YOU COME TOO LATE!

When last you were here the GREAT CROSS was draped in black. Today everythi is light and white and bright again. That is the way we come from Good Friday to Easter - out of darkness into light - out of death into life - out of fear into faith! That is the whole message of Easter -- out of the Cross and Death comes Life and Light and Hope again. Our Lord, Who promised to go before us, has fulfilled His Word. He went before us into death and the grave -- He goes before us now into Resurrection and Ascension and the glory of life which is eternal. Therefore the question is faithfully proper: WHY DO YOU SEEK THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?

The women came early to the tomb to perform the last tender offices of honor and love on the body of Jesus. On the first day of the week, very early, they came to the grave. In the freshness of the new dawn, halfway between light and dark, they started out for this place of sorrow.

Why so early? Perhaps they were mortally afraid of being seen or even caught in the act of tending so lovingly to the Man who had died as a Criminal. Shy and concerned they go quietly through the sleeping, narrow streets of the city and come to the place where they had laid His tortured body under bitter tears on Good Friday. They came so early and YET THEY WERE TOO LATE!

Something TREMENDOUS has happened on this morning. It happened even before they reached Joseph's Garden. JESUS HAS RISEN! Or, to state it more accurately, He has been raised up from the dead! No one was a witness to that. An ANGEL OF GOD startled the soldiers. This awakening from the dead on the early morning of Easter happened between the Father and the Son alone - without human spectators or witnesses. Nowhere in the Scripture do we have a description of this. ~~All the representations of Christian art cannot make us forget that~~ The first we know is that these women found the empty grave. As they stand there - troubled and confused - asking themselves where the body might be - there come these TWO WONDERFUL MEN in white garments - MESSENGERS OF HEAVEN - who ask them in all kindness WHY DO YOU SEEK THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD? HE IS NOT HERE, HE IS RISEN! In other words, YOU COME TOO LATE!

Coming too late is usually not the best. It can lead to all kinds of bitter disappointments and can have the most serious consequences. These two little word TOO LATE are most often filled up with bitterness and deep reproach. But here it is — a joyous, blessed, wonderful COMING TOO LATE. What happens here is what happens occasionally as we come to visit the sick in the hospital - and as you inquire at the desk for the patient's room, they will tell you that You are too late. The patient is well again and has been sent home; the bed is empty!...That is about the picture we have here. The women came with spices and ointments, deeply distressed, conscious of the fact that even their great love for Christ can do so little now. And then they hear the question, WHY DO YOU SEEK THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD? HE IS NOT HERE.... HE IS RISEN FROM THIS GRAVE AND FROM THE POWER OF THIS DEATH. SEE, THE GRAVE IS EMPTY! SEE THE PLACE WHERE HE LAY!

You really should have known all about this. Had He not said, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinners and be crucified and on the third day rise again! This was the PLAN OF GOD! This was the way in which sin should be atoned and death conquered, and the world overcome, and the kingdom of God on earth established — THROUGH DEATH AND RESURRECTION!

You should have known that on the 3rd day you would not find a dead Man any longer - because death could not hold Him, the Prince of Life, in his power. You have made the journey to the grave in vain. Go back with your ointments and your spices - you do not need them! Leave the place where He once lay entombed. HE IS NOT HERE! Tell it to His disciples! THEY ALL COME TOO LATE if they come to see a dead Man in a grave. He has already left it forever. He that was dead is alive forevermore and has the keys of hell and of death. Death is destoryed - the world is defeated - the plan of God is fulfilled. Your Lord and Savior lives and reigns - and His work continues! This was only the beginning! The Kingdom of God comes - and from the graves all over the world the Resurrection is begun - and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

As yet they have not seen it! The foes of the Savior still believe that He lies safely in the tomb in Joseph's Garden - and even when they hear about the

empty grave , they come with lying and deceit to say that His body has been stole by His disciples. But even the disciples are full of despair and doubt. When th hear the report of the women, it sounds like a fairy tale... And we - we always sink back again into fears - and doubts - and sorrows - as we see around us death upon death and consider that all about us and without any interruption this goes on in our world. We have only to think of the many good friends, and relatives, and saints of God who have been torn away from us by death - we have only to remember the utterly empty and helpless feeling as we watched a casket of a loved one being lowered into the ground!

Thank God - NONE OF THIS changes one bit of the RESURRECTION MESSAGE - no unbelief - no fear - no despair - can change the message: HE IS NOT HERE: HE IS RISEN! Remember, no one had figured on that - not even His disciples, or His own mother, or His closest friends - and anything that we can now say against it comes TOO LATE! All our doubts and fears - our sorrow and despair - our constant depression and dull hopelessness - with which we look at His grave and our own — ALL COMES TOO LATE! God has acted for us with the splendid haste which is His mark! Our lateness has been overcome by Him. He has challenged us - and all the world - friend and foe alike - WHY SEEK YE THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD? HE IS NOT HERE, HE IS RISEN. YOU ARE TOO LATE!

We listen - only half believing - not much different from the women at the tomb. What kind of a WORD is this in our world of seed-time and harvest - with its hard, unchanging way from birth to death? RISEN - that means not only return from death and the grave into this poor life - the way it happened to the Young Man of Nain, or the daughter of Jairus, or Lazarus. They were not RISEN for anything except a short, brief time of return to the life that was left for them on earth. All of them had to go back again into the grave - like a soldier returned to his company when his furlough is over. DO YOU SEE THE DIFFERENCE? Jesus is not returned into this life for a shorter or longer period. He is RISEN not only for all this life but into the life of God Himself. At this grave God has disarme death itself - and He has given Him whom He raised up - once for all - the

TRANSFORMED LIFE which is forever. He lives, and rules, and reigns from this time forth with His Father in heaven.

That is why the RESURRECTION is not celebrated only this day - but every day and for all the days. It is not remembered merely for a short time as we remember other great days in history - days in which others triumphed momentarily - and are often forgotten. NO! - This is the HERO OF THE ETERNITIES, by Whom both the world of the living and the dead are now conquered!

Are we still looking for Him is some remote past? Are we still seeking the living among the dead? He is with us, even though we cannot behold Him. His is with us - full of grace, and truth, and the government is upon His shoulder!

Can you imagine ANYTHING that Satan, the world, ~~and~~ our flesh and death, would fight against with more united power? They gather themselves together - especially today - in order to make this message seem to be too good to be true. In a thousand different ways the devil has delivered the lives and minds of men into death - and in the same way death has turned around to deliver millions in fear into the hands of Satan. And the WORLD - this poor, blind, stumbling world - that has let itself be duped by these tyrants ~~has to experience that they~~ must look with fear and dread into the abyss of self-destruction with the weapons and the wars which ~~they~~ man have made.

But YOU - what are YOU afraid of? THEY ALL COME TOO LATE why try to take away the triumph from our Lord - and take the keys to all the graves and to the kingdom of death out of His hands! CHRIST IS RISEN! Beyond all the hallelujahs of this day there is the solid fact that SIN, and SATAN, and DEATH ITSELF have been put on the defensive. The days of their tyranny are numbered. They must soon give back all their victims out of their graves. WITH THIS DAY the breakthrough has begun - and there is no man, or devil, that can stop the breech in the dykes of God. The floodtide of His mercy breaks through the front of death, and the fate of all mankind is changed. The victory, and the power, and the glory, are in the Hands of Christ. In only a little while all power will finally be delivered to Him. The ultimate and last triumph cannot be held back!

That is truth - eternal, everlasting, glorious truth! There is no need to try to prove this point because the Living Lord brings His own conviction into the hearts of those who seek Him - and then the glorious Light of Easter falls strong and warm on all our life. Not for Himself - but for us and for our faith HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD! FOR US! - who are on the way which ends in a grave. There is no need now for us to look on despair and death. We can turn now - denying all the pleas of the world and Satan and death and sin - and go toward our Lord and our meeting with Him. His battle is our victory - and His death is our life! We can defy death - DEATH COMES TOO LATE! Everything has already been decided. You can no longer separate me from Him - Who is my ever living Lord. Amen.

Stand up now & cast the same into his teeth - Death