Calling Meadows 1963

The Festival of the Resurrection — Rev. Carl F. Thrun

~~Easter~~ - 1958

Bessemer West Henrietta · 1960

IN NOMINE JESU

St. Matthew 28: 1-8 In the end of the sabbath, as it began it dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goeth before youinto Galilee; there shall ye wee Him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His disciples word.

HE LIVES !

It was Saturday, the Sabbath, the Day of Worship and of Rest. But who could worship? Who could Rest? cpr back Life Itself had bowed low before His arch-enemy-Death. It was the day after the Savior had been laid into the tomb. God's only, His beloved Son, had died. God had jumped into the open jaws of ~~death~~ the grave.

Remember? Remember what happened? The betrayer had led them to Christ in Gethsemane. Out of the agony of His prayers He comes with sweat like blood still on His hands. He holds His hands out to His captors. He gives His cheek to the kiss of Judas. Up on the hill, around the watchfire, Peter lifts up his fists and swears, I never knew Him. The Lord of Love walks out of the palace and stands in the arches above Gabbatha and even Pilate's voice cracks when he says, Behold the Man! And then there was the Cross! And beneath it the shouting mob. There was the scornful question, Are You a King? The soldiers rolled dice for His garments. From His lips the seven words fell down like white blossoms, pure and good, into the dust and blood on the cursed hill. And then, at the last, in the darkness, He bowed His head and gave up the ghost and died. The earth is shaken to its foundations -- tottering to and fro like a speck of dust tossed about by the wind. The rocks are rent, as if they were nothing more than glass. The people return to their little houses in the narrow dark streets. The darkness grows deeper and the sun goes down. Some soldiers and torch-bearers help Joseph and Nicodemus to carry Him down the hill and lay Him in the tomb. It grows darker still, and colder. There is no Man at the Cross anymore. That could have been the end.

Remember the glory? It began at Bethlehem and the angels sang. It began nineteen hundred years ago when the REVEALER came. He showed us God. He showed us all the love and the power and the goodness of God. And then He lived His life. He loved His people. He healed their sick. And then He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. Could that be the end? Has He no power by Himself?

Look at the sun. Day after day it ripened the grain and brightened the sky and made warm the heart of man -- and then it went down. We know that it wil rise again. But what if one day we stood staring toward the East and waited and it never came back? And then we waited some more and in the dark we groped for the hand of our neighbor and in hushed whispers revealed our fear - What if it never comes back? You can feel the ring of despair grow tight around the world -- never the sun again! What is there to do but to go in and lie down and die.

Or there is the Cross! What if that was all that we had? -- this relic of the past and of His dying love - this Cross standing empty and dark, with its rusting nails and its rotting wood. What if that was the end and there were no Easter and no angel to give us what we have today?

Out there you see the heavens are all aglow. The sun has arisen. Ther is no endlessness in the dark. And there comes now also the thrill and the glory and the joy of the Resurrection! Come! Let us make haste, with Mary & John & Peter and hurry to the tomb! Something has happened. In the garden are the soldiers, keeping a careful watch. The deceiver might try to deceive again - so their eye is fixed on the stone - the solid, sealed stone which stands before the tomb of death. They'll make sure no one will crash the ~~gates~~ graves. To make assurance doubly sure Pilate's symbol and seal has been placed around the opening. Then, suddenly, there comes this messen ger of the Highest like a beam of light and the stone is rolled away and they see an empty tomb -- and the soldiers flee for their lives. To the garden, after their flight, came quickly Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. They came full of

cares and sorrows. They came bitterly afraid. And then they see the Angel. You know his message by now. It is the only thing that makes Easter. He is not here He is risen! Like a flame it runs from lip to lip - from heart to heart - all hear it. They know their lives will never again be the same. THIS IS THE RESURRECTION! That is the way it was. We have no right to tell it in any other way. We have no reason to tell it in any other way. Love makes it true. CHRIST IS ALIVE! His word rings out across the world, Because I live, ye shall live als

Do you see what this means? Life is more than simply eating and sleeping and breathing and working and dying. What is all our work, if we are only conscious of work, and not of joy, or of love, or of living, or of glory. It is EASTER, and the RESURRECTION ~~that~~ has given purpose and direction and reason for our living. Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Man does not live by bread alone - not even the animals do. The horse and the dog and the cat need love and care and companionship. The body (thank God) is not all of man. There is much more. For man has a soul, and the soul is more important than the body. It is the most important thing in the whol world. What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

The devil always tempts us to forget. He tempts us to live for the moment -- for the carnal, for the material, for the earthly. In spite of every blessing, and every grace, and all of love, he whispers, It could have been more! It could have been better! Look at so and so's blessings! The devil would make us dissatisfied and discontent. He would make us restless and uneasy. He would help us to lose heart.

But it is the RESURRECTION and we must keep a quiet heart of peace and love and faith. We must be joyful in our confidence in God. We must have an eye for the good, for the great, for the lovely, for the godly - which, in spite of all evil, is always around us. Like God, at the end of His Creation, could say,

Behold, it was very good, so we must too. We need that! We need joy in life and joy in faith. And it is the angel's message, He is risen, that gives it to us. God loves us so much more than we could ever love Him - so much more than all the best of men have ever loved each other too.

We are Christians - part and parcel of the Living Christ! We are children of the Heavenly Father. We are kings and priests unto God and His Father. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. The God Who made the Day and the Night, the Seasons and the Kingdoms, Who made man a little lower than the angels and poured into him a living soul - HE IS OUR FATHER. This clod of earth is made into a living soul by God's own Spirit breathed into us. This God Who made the dust of the ground into a thousand living things, Who filled the deep with its myriad creatures - HE IS OUR FATHER. He knows us. He hears us. He loves us. He guards us. He keeps us. He runs to meet the returning son to take him to His heart. He seeks the lost sheep to bear him home. With His own shed blood He has redeemed us and made us His own.

It is the RESURRECTION and that is the faith we need. More than all else we need such a faith to put joy and hope and confidence into our otherwise meaningless living - such a faith to send us singing on our way - such a faith to make us the sons of God.

It is Easter - Christ has risen from the grave! HALLELUJAH, JESUS LIVES! He lives; and so now He gives us life -- eternal, blessed life. There will always be graves. The world is filled with them. Day by day and hour by hour there are more of them. But Christ has overcome death! Therefore, we can sing, O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? We too shall rise from the grave and with all the saints go forth to meet Him. Fathers, mothers, sons and daughters - hand in hand - shall rise to greet their Risen Redeemer. Think of it! There is another chance for our degenerate, depraved, fallen, sinful race. There is another chance for us to be what we have never

been before! For Christ hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. That is the glory of the RESURRECTION - that now we can live to the glory of God, to the glory of Him who died for us and rose again! In Him we are the CHILDREN OF THE DAWN - the children of the Living Glory - the children of the Resurrection. The world must know it by our living and by our loving. The world must know it by the triumph of our faith.

Amen.