

# Easter Fulfilled!

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Resurrection; Easter; Fulfill / 1 Corinthians 15:20–28

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- › Grace, mercy, and peace be yours from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our Risen and Victorious King. Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

We start the church the year with the Palm Sunday account and we end the year with words that are read on Easter. Today we are going to see how Easter will be fulfilled. Today we will see where Easter is headed. The journey from Palm Sunday is just a week long, but so much happens in between. The journey from Easter to the great and glorious day when Easter is finally fulfilled in our eyes is much longer and indeed it is, it's been over 2000 years since Christ rose from the dead and the Church still waits for the that time for Easter to be fulfilled!

The importance of what Easter means was clearly seen in a concentration camp in Dachau. This camp was liberated on a Sunday in April 1945. One week later, the Greek and Serbian Orthodox Christians who were prisoners celebrated Easter in the camp barracks. The priests wore makeshift vestments over their blue and white striped prison uniforms. They sang the liturgy, read the Scriptures, and even recited a sermon by St. John Chrysostom—all without texts, all from memory. During the long years of suffering and anguish, these prisoners had never forgotten Christ's resurrection victory over death and that it had also set them free from death. Whatever might have happened, they always believed that Easter meant something more was still coming for them. Today, a Russian Orthodox chapel at the Dachau Memorial houses an icon of the resurrected Christ leading the prisoners out of the camp gates.

Each and Every Sunday is a celebration of Easter, of Christ's glorious victory over sin and death for us. But today, the Last Sunday of the Church Year, is especially so, because the Last Sunday points us to the Last Day and it shows us where Easter is headed, where Easter will ultimately be fulfilled. So, what exactly does this mean?

Easter brought forth the firstfruits: Jesus raised to life again. Christ Jesus has been raised from the dead. Christ Jesus is alive! Christ Jesus died on the cross and his resurrection shows that God accepted his Sacrifice. His resurrection is a fact! He is alive. This is Great Good News! We need never doubt this fact that Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

But where is Easter header? Where will Easter be fulfilled? We read that Christ is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep! In the Old Testament Israel offered the first gathering of wheat as a sacrifice to God. They knew that the full harvest was yet to come. The firstfruits for the Children of Israel were just that, the first of many more to come. In the same way...

Jesus Christ will inevitably lead us to the resurrection of all flesh. Christ was raised from death as a promise that all who have fallen asleep will be raised to life again. That is The Last Day, Judgment Day, the focus of what today, the Last Sunday of the Church Year is all about. We see that in all our readings for today. In Ezekiel we see the Lord God coming to judge between fat and lean sheep and in the Gospel, we see him separating the sheep and the goats.

In the Gospel reading you heard these very words:

*31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations,*

All nations will be gathered. Every human being who has ever lived will be raised to life and they and we will be gathered before the throne of God. All of mankind from Adam to the last human to be born will be standing before Christ - the Judge, bodies raised, reunited with their souls - the resurrection of all flesh.

What a day this will be for those as Paul says, "who belong to Christ." It will be a day of great joy when Christ says to you and to me:

*Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

Christ came to this earth; He was born of woman. He was born of flesh, but without man's seed. Christ walked in the way of human beings. He became man for you and for me. He lived his life as one of us. He even died our physical death.

This was God's plan! Death came when Adam sinned. We all die because of Adam. We all die because of our evil inheritance from Adam. We inherited our sin from Adam and Eve. It does not excuse our behavior. It does not excuse our sinfulness, our selfishness. It does not excuse the times that we do not feed the hungry or we do not give water to the thirsty. It does not excuse not welcoming strangers and foreigners those that are second rate or those that we perceive as second rate. It does not excuse clothing the naked or ministering to the sick and in prison! We cannot make excuses for our sin. We need to own up to our sins. We need to repent! You are child of God as I stated last week, you live in the light of Christ. You have faith and because you have faith, you repent, and you receive the forgiveness of sins.

God's plan was for Jesus to come. In His infinite Wisdom, God sent His Son Jesus into human flesh and blood to overcome sin and sin's death by his death on the cross, the cross on Calvary's Holy Mountain Side. This Cross is yours. In Baptism you were drowned and raised, in the

Lord's Supper and In His Word proclaimed to us, Jesus' cross has been given to you. We have been made to belong to Christ. As we sang in our hymn:

"To them the cross with all its shame,  
With all its grace, is giv'n;  
Their name an everlasting name,  
Their joy the joy of heav'n.  
They suffer with their Lord below,  
They reign with Him above,  
Their profit and their joy to know  
The myst'ry of His Love  
The cross He bore is life and health,  
Though shame and death to Him:  
His people's hope, His people's wealth,  
Their everlasting theme.

Christ's cross is for you! You belong to Christ because of His Work on the Cross and...

Christ's resurrection is the beginning, then, giving you certain hope of eternal life with him. His Cross, His Resurrection gives certain hope of eternal life with him to all who believe in him. And where is this headed? Where is this fulfilled?

Our resurrections to life will mean that death and all its allies are destroyed under the feet of Jesus. If death cannot hold us, as it could not hold Christ, nothing can hold onto us...not sin, not Satan, not disease, not depression...and not death itself. On the Last Day - all our enemies will be destroyed. Our enemies are not flesh and blood...they are sin, the devil, death, and other evil forces.

Christ has defeated sin and its powerful grip over us.

Christ has defeated the devil and all his demonic forces. He went down into hell after he was alive and proclaimed victory over them. They have no power over us. Remember, one little word can fell him.

Christ has destroyed every other evil force in the world that opposes him. It may not look like it today...but as St. Paul proclaims, "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." He has

not so simply brought them under control, but so thoroughly vanquished them that we have nothing to fear. That is the believer has nothing to fear!

This, though, is why far too many will be raised on the Last Day only to hear the judgment:

*41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.*

*"For you did not belong to me by faith."*

*'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'*

You present yourself based on the basis of your deed in life, but you have nothing to show. You stand condemned because of your sin. Those who have no faith, those who have no belief are dead in sin

*And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."*

But for you, for us, who belong to Jesus Christ, the last enemy of will now be defeated, death itself. Death is the last fruits of sin. Christ, the firstfruits of life, changes the end of the story. Is that where we are headed? Is that where Easter is fulfilled? Almost!

Finally, even Christ will be subjected to the Father. Hear again from St. Paul:

*28 When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.*

For Christ, the mission will be accomplished. Every need of God's people in a fallen world met - every enemy, the universe, conquered. Christ will lay it all at His Father's feet.

Then all things will once again be as they were in the beginning: God will be "all in all." Will we need food, clothing, and shelter come that day: No, God will clothe us and feed us.

Will we need comfort, love, and relationships? Not really, we will have God.

Will we need protection and deliverance anymore? No....the final deliverance will happen when Christ returns. We will have God; we will be with God...with all those good things he is.

*24 Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.*

**THIS THEN IS THE END, WHEN CHRIST DELIVERS THE KINGDOM TO GOD THE FATHER.** This is where Easter is headed. This is when Easter will be fulfilled.

Thanks, be God that the Holy Spirit has granted us faith in the Son who reunited us with the Father. This faith is in the one who rose again for us. Who rose again for you. Christ's victory over death give us certain hope in our own resurrection and eternal life with God. Thank God

that Easter will be fulfilled when Christ returns. Christ is going to return because he promises us that. He is going to return because Christ is risen! So on this Last Sunday of the Church Year, a blessed fulfillment of Easter to you!

Thanks be God that we are headed towards a fulfillment where death will ultimately be destroyed and that we will live for eternity. Thanks be to God that Christ Jesus rose from His own grave and defeated death itself.

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed. Alleluia! Amen.

- › Now may the peace of God which passes all human understanding, guard your hearts and your minds and keep them focused on Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.