

March 2023

# Ministers Message

Mission Department Newsletter

## Easter Nears

The days of Lent have been passing. We're now midway through this 40-day period of fasting and prayer. It is a time for reflection and preparation for our observation of the events of Passion Week and Easter. It is a good time to begin refreshing our memories and reading and contemplating those events as we prepare to serve God's congregation in the weeks ahead. The events that are concealed in the Old Testament types are revealed and fulfilled in the gospels, in the events of Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter. The great cost and consequence of our sin is laid bare in Christ's suffering and death. They reveal God's great love as well. The texts of Easter and the resurrection reveal God's power and our hope.

May God bless your labors and service during this special time. May He grant you faith and strength to serve and put His Word in your mouth. We wish you and your families a happy and blessed Easter.

Reminder: The LLC Ministers Camp is March 31–April 2 at Stony Lake Camp. If you plan to attend, please sign up if you have not already done so.

## Noteworthy

### Upcoming Events

LLC 2023 Ministers Camp  
Stony Lake Camp  
March 31–April 2, 2023

LLC 2023 Ministers Webinar #2  
May 25, 2023  
8:00 pm CDT

LLC Summer Services  
July 6–9, 2023

LLC 2023 Ministers Webinar #3  
August 24, 2023  
8:00 pm CDT

LLC Ministers & Wives Camp  
Stony Lake Camp  
September 22–24, 2023

SLC Bible Course  
Stony Lake Camp  
October 6–9, 2023

LLC 2023 Ministers Webinar #4  
November 2, 2023  
8:00 CDT



## Resurrection Deniers

Esa Tuomaala

“He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err” (Mark 12:27).

When we meet a person in our time who does not believe in the resurrection at the end of time, it is not a new phenomenon. The writers of the Bible tell of resurrection deniers. Paul battled against such in his First Letter to the Corinthians: “How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” (1 Cor.15:12).

### THE SADDUCEES’ AND PHARISEES’ UNDERSTANDING OF THE RESURRECTION

There were also resurrection deniers among the pious Jewish tribes. An entire sect, which was generally appreciated and from whose ranks were chosen the higher priesthood, the Sadducees, completely denied the possibility of the



## JESUS CONVERSES

The gospels present us with a rich picture of Jesus’ public ministry. There we find His works and miracles, teachings, parables, and also some of His conversations. Some of those conversations were with adversaries, some with the curious, and others with the downcast or seeking. Some of the conversations were with individuals and others were with groups.

In these conversations we can see how Jesus approached people and responded to their questions. His teaching, methods, and manner offer us valuable lessons. We can apply them in our own lives and in our work as servants of the Word. The articles in this series will examine some of the enlightening conversations that took place between the Son of God and His contemporaries.

resurrection. Their cool reasoning did not accept it. The Pharisees, Jesus’ other opposition group, believed instead that the dead would rise in their bodies. To be sure their understanding didn’t correspond with the understanding of Jesus and the Christians, for the Pharisees believed that the forms of life on earth continued beyond the grave. Jesus however, according to Mark chapter 12, clearly renounced this.

### WHOSE WIFE WILL SHE BE IN THE RESURRECTION?

The Sadducees approached Jesus with a problem, which was based, on one hand, on the Law of Moses and, on the other hand, on an invented case. It was, in fact, stipulated in the Law of Moses that if two brothers lived together and the one of them who was married died childless, the unmarried brother must marry his widow. The reason for this was that children would be born in the new marriage who would inherit the name of the childless man who had died. Thus the name would remain in the family. The Sadducees saw this stipulation of the Law of Moses to be in conflict with the doctrine of resurrection. Wishing to show this conflict, they related a scenario, according to which the same woman after

being widowed again and again married seven times. The Sadducees asked, "In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them?" (Mark 12:23). The question was cleverly thought out. If one believed according to the Pharisees' understanding that marriage continued in the life after death, one encountered immense difficulties for a spouse could only belong to one person. Jesus and His opponents agreed on this matter.

## THE BORDER OF TIME AND ETERNITY

Jesus solved the cunningly woven web of problems quickly and clearly. Jesus first stated that the questioners were in error. The nature of the question testified to the delusion of the questioners. The error resulted from the fact that the questioners had not understood, on one hand, the content of the Scripture and, on the other hand, God's amazing power. After this negative statement Jesus revealed the matter which for critics of faith in the resurrection is the most important: "For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven" (Mark 12:25). Based on this belief, a clear border is drawn between time and eternity. Many modes of life, even though they are based on God's commands, like marriage, cease when our bodily life is extinguished in this world. Even marriage, a part of God's creation order, is only temporal. It does not continue beyond the grave and death. The blessing and faithfulness of marriage extend only until death according to God's Word. The new life in glory is the same as that of the angels of glory who have never had any secular vocation, nor ever married. Biblical faith rejects those forms of religion which in some way or another have mixed human sexuality with their worship of God and their concept of heaven.

## A NEW BODY IN THE RESURRECTION

It is repeatedly emphasized in the Bible that this now visible body will die forever. It is corrupted and weak, in many ways imperfect

and sinful. That is why in the resurrection we will receive an entirely new, glorified body, from which sin, all weakness, and imperfection is removed. The Apostle Paul has most clearly described this change. Battling against resurrection deniers, he spoke with powerful words about the weakness of this temporal body. At the same time, he portrays the placing of the body in the ground, or its burial, as a sowing that is followed by the rising of barley and grain in time. "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain" (1 Cor 15:37). Thus the body of a believer which is lowered into the grave is like a seed, but it does not rise, but like a seed decays into the earth. But from the same place of sowing or burying rises a new body, which has the unending power of life.

## THE GOD OF THE LIVING

The Sadducees were able to hear from what Jesus said how far they were from Jesus' teaching about the resurrection. But Jesus yet justified faith in the resurrection with the Scriptures. When the Sadducees referred to Moses, Jesus referred to Scriptures and to the word that God spoke to Moses himself. "Have ye not read in the book of Moses?" God revealed himself to Moses as the God of the patriarchs who had slept away, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Jesus stated that God did not then declare himself to be the God of the eternally dead. Those patriarchs lived. From behind the border of death, they awaited the resurrection, as was said also of Daniel, "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days" (Dan. 12:13).

One source of unspeakable joy for a child of God is faith in the resurrection. The border of death is not a black stone wall, but rather a thin curtain that will soon be drawn aside. When this one day happens, a clear view will open before those who have slept away in faith.

"Oh, when I once can

Wake as His image.

And with enlightened eyes

See God."

(VK 623:2)

1 Peter 2:1–3

## The Spirit of Power and Love

Kyösti Heikkilä

### THE PURE WORD

The Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, is offered in the Holy Word. The apostle has written before this text that this is the incorruptible, living Word of God, which endures forever. It is the proclaimed glad tidings (1 Pet. 1:23, 25).

Jesus sent His apostles to preach the glad tidings of the resurrection through the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Thus, the living word was also proclaimed in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Bithynia, and the province of Asia. The letter was addressed to these places. For those who had accepted the word, Jesus had become their own in the gospel.

### THE SIMPLE WORD

To the recipients of his letter, the apostle compared the proclaimed word to mother's milk. It is the food of the



## Jesus Christ–The Bread of Life

### 4th Sunday in Lent

The theme for this Sunday in the middle of Lent is the Bread of Life. This Sunday is also called Bread Sunday. At first glance, the theme would seem to completely deviate from fasting. This deviation also highlights the Sunday's designation Laetare. It means a call to rejoice.

Becoming familiar with the Sunday's gospel texts and reading passages convinces one that Bread Sunday fits especially well in Lent. The first year gospel text tells of Jesus performing a feeding miracle. In the second and third year gospel texts, Jesus reveals himself to be the Bread of Life. The events of Easter fulfilled Jesus' declaration.

The time of Lent before Easter in the Christian Church is a time of preparation for the commemoration of Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection. The most important message of the Sunday texts is to glorify that Bread of life which God gifted from heaven in His own Son. On Good Friday, He gave His body and blood for the life of mankind.

Bread Sunday, situated in the middle of Lent is like a place of rest and refreshment for God's people on their journey. It testifies of God's care. The Bread of Life, Jesus Christ, travels in the midst of His people in the word of the gospel.

newborn child. The comparison richly portrays both God's Word and its reception. To the human mind, God's mighty richness and strength is hidden in this simple word. This word can be received in the same way that a newborn child accepts his mother's milk, with simple faith and complete trust.

The relationship between God's kingdom



# Epistle Postil

and a child of God also comes forth in the mother and child simile. It is the relationship of a mother and child. God's congregation is the mother through which the Holy Spirit cares for the office of preaching and begets children for God. The children are in the mother's bosom and care. The congregation mother cares for her children with the pure gospel and unfailing love.

## IN THE CARE OF GOD'S WORD

The core message of Peter's epistle highlights the importance of hearing God's Word. This is what he encourages us to pursue and to own. Our old church Bible speaks of the wholesome milk of the word. It is nothing but nourishment for the undying soul, through which faith is begotten and strengthened. Peter reminded the former Gentiles who had been helped into faith that in that Word they had already been able to taste the Lord's sweetness. Through the word of the gospel, they had received the forgiveness of their



sins, living faith, and the hope of heaven. The Lord Jesus had come to dwell in their hearts. At the same time their hearts were filled with God's peace and heavenly love.

God's Word teaches a continuing endeavor and obedience. The apostle also instructs about that in his letter. It encourages us to reject all kinds of ungodly life, envy, and slander. Strength for this can only be obtained from the gospel. God's accepted mercy is a teacher and source of strength for this in battling against the powers of the enemy.

The Apostle Peter's encouragement is also instruction about proper fasting, of which the prophets have written (Zech. 7: 5-10, Isaiah 58: 6,7). Proper fasting happens to the glory of God and for the benefit of our neighbor. Improper fasting is the seeking of one's own glory and enjoyment.



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