As we come to Resurrection Sunday each year I am reminded of all of the symbols of hope that surround the day. Resurrection Sunday reminds us that no matter how dark things seem, no matter how far away we think we have run, there is hope. There is hope because in Jesus we aren’t just cleaned up a bit and sent back out. No, in Jesus we are made new.

2 Corinthians 5:17–20 (HCSB)
17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come. 18 Everything is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed the message of reconciliation to us. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, certain that God is appealing through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf, “Be reconciled to God.”

Because Jesus is alive we can be made new. What a remarkable, wonderful truth. We can be made new. Think about that. You aren’t becoming the best version of yourself. You aren’t cleaning up as best you can, no you are becoming a whole new creation. You are a new creation and that means you have a new reality, and whole new way of doing things.

Think about this, if a fish suddenly became a person and started walking around on land it wouldn’t get very far if it was trying to move around by shaking its backside. That would work in the water, but on land you can’t get anywhere that way. The fish would have to want a whole new way of handling life.

That is the same with us. We are new creations and we have a new reality. That reality we have is a Jesus one. So then what does that new reality look like? Well, Paul tells us right here in 2 Corinthians. Our new reality is as people who are ambassadors for Christ.

We are no longer living for ourselves, we are living to show the world Jesus. We are no longer worried about our own interests, our own victories, we are focused on kingdom values, on the kingdom mission. Since we have been reconciled to God we are now in the reconciliation business taking the message of God’s transformative love to the nations. If you are in Christ, if you have been made new by Him, you are no longer wandering around following your own selfish ambitions. You are no longer chasing after every fad and wild idea. You are no longer speaking only for yourself. You are made new, and you have a mission to take that message of the renewing power of the death and resurrection of Jesus to everyone you meet.

There is such amazing joy in knowing you have been made new. So take that joy and share it with the world.

Shane
Sometimes we look at the world around us and wonder, “Is that all there is?” To which Paul answers a resounding, “No!” We were made for something better than the sadness we see in this world. We are made for a new life and a new body and a new existence with the Lord. God Himself has made us for this very purpose. 

Think about the difference between a tent and a building. Tents are temporary and flimsy, easily torn, and meant to be replaced. A building is strong, anchored to a foundation, and not meant to be moved. Someday we will give up our tent and replace it with a building made by God Himself. This tells us something important about death. Death is not the end. Death is a trade-in. One day we will trade in our broken-down bodies for a new body. Note what Paul says about that new body: it is from God; it is not made with hands; it is eternal; and it is heavenly, not earthly. This is what Paul meant when he said, “We know.” There are many things we don’t know about the future, but this much is certain: we won’t have to live in tents forever. Someday our “tent” will be replaced with a “building” made by God. Our future depends on the eternal purpose of God who called us to be His children. We are saved by an eternal love that will not let us go. Not even death can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So how do we know there is a coming day of resurrection?

Answer #1: God raised His own Son. The first answer is that God raised His own Son from the dead. This is the objective ground of our faith in the coming day of resurrection. If God would not leave His Son in the grave, He will not abandon those who trusted in Him. Death cannot win in the end because our Lord conquered the grave.

Answer #2: God gave us the Spirit as a sacred deposit. According to verse 5, God gave us the Spirit as a “deposit.” Some translations say “down payment” or “earnest.” When you buy a house, you put down a sum of money called “earnest money.” It’s a small amount that legally binds you to pay the full amount later. This is what God has done through His Holy Spirit. The Spirit who indwells us is God’s “down payment” on our future resurrection. God signed on the dotted line and said, “I will raise from the dead all who have trusted in My Son.” Then He made the down payment through the gift of the Holy Spirit making it as good as done.

Death will not have the last word for Jesus has conquered the grave. Because He rose, we too shall rise. We have a promise from God that death itself cannot break. In that faith we take courage to live for Christ with reckless abandon because death is not the end of our story.

God is good! All the time!

Jason

“God is good! All the time!” is a quote by (2 Corinthians 5:1, 5)

Wednesday, April 14, 5:00 p.m. The menu is: Pork Loin, Baked Beans, Potato Casserole, & Dessert. Sign up in the worship center or call the church office by noon on Tuesday, April 13 if you plan to attend. Family Night Supper will look different at this time, but we are excited about the opportunity to provide this fellowship once again.

For we know that if our earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made by hands, eternal in the heavens... Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave us the Spirit as a pledge.”

One of the most popular of 20th century songs, and not just for Easter, is the hymn “He Lives” written by Alfred Ackley in 1933.

“I serve a risen Savior. He’s in the world today, I know that He is living, whatever men may say; I see His hand of mercy; I hear His voice of cheer; And just the time I need Him, He’s always near.”

Ackley, born in 1887 in Pennsylvania, showed great musical potential as a child. He was tutored by his musician father and then went to New York City to study and on to the Royal Academy of Music in London. There, Ackley played the piano and cello and showed great promise as a composer. After completing his musical training, Ackley returned to the states to attend Westminster Theological Seminary in Maryland and was ordained as a Presbyterian minister in 1914. Ackley pastored in Pennsylvania and California and for a few years he worked with evangelist Billy Sunday.

While in California in 1932, Ackley began witnessing to a Jewish man who attended some of the evangelistic meetings. This young student kept saying, “Why should I worship a dead Jew?” This bothered Ackley and it stayed on his mind. After waking early to prepare his Easter Sunday message, he was amazed to hear on the radio a famous liberal preacher in New York say, “Good morning. It’s Easter! You know, folks, it really doesn’t make any difference to me if Christ be risen or not. As far as I am concerned, His body could be as dust in some Palestinian tomb. The main thing is, His truth goes marching on!” Ackley’s anger at this was displayed as he threw the radio across the room, yelling, “It’s a lie!”

During the Easter service that morning, Ackley preached with strength and urgency about the reality of Christ’s Resurrection. But later that night, he continued to dwell on his Jewish friend’s words and the sermon on the radio. His wife told him it was time for him to do what he did best — write a song — and in his study, Ackley re-read the Resurrection account from Mark’s Gospel in the Bible, and soon the words began to pour from him. A few minutes later, he put music to the words, and answered the question, “Why should I worship a dead Jew?”

“He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life’s narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives! He lives within my heart.”

Under the Master’s Baton, Bro. Chad

Resurrection Weekend – At Friendship, we celebrate the truth that the tomb is empty, the stone has been rolled away, and Jesus Christ is risen! We are excited to provide several meaningful worship opportunities during Resurrection Weekend. Join us for Good Friday Worship on April 2 at 6:00 or 7:30 PM. You won’t want to miss Resurrection Sunday Worship on April 4 at 8:30, 9:45, or 11:00 AM. We will livestream the 6:00 Good Friday Worship Service and the 9:45 Worship Service on Resurrection Sunday. To make reservations for Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday, go to www.friendshipontenmet.org or call the church office for assistance.