

Easter Morning

Logan C. Jones

The Lord is risen. ***The Lord is risen indeed.***

Sing this aloud, proclaim it to the ends of the earth: ***The Lord has set his people free.***

The beeper goes off at 9:15 AM. I am sitting in my office at the hospital, on-call for Easter Sunday. I'm putting the finishing touches on my 11:00 AM worship service in the chapel. I plan to use the Moravian Easter liturgy. I cringe when I hear the beeps. I was hoping for a quiet day. I look at the number to call. My heart sinks. It is the Emergency Department. This is not going to be good, I think.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by his great mercy has begotten us again unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fades not away, reserved for us in heaven.

Blessing and honor, glory and power, be with him who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever.

The secretary in the ED tells me they have a code coming into the trauma room. It is a 15-year-old boy in full code. That is all she knows. God, no. I head down to the ED. I am not sure what exactly I will find.

He was delivered for our offenses: *And was raised again for our justification.*

Who shall bring any charges against God's elect? *It is God who justifies.*

Who shall separate from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

I walk into the ED about the same time the ambulance hits the door. I see the stretcher being wheeled into the trauma room. A paramedic straddles this young boy doing chest compressions. Help us all, dear God. The medical team rushes around him. We don't have a name yet. The EMTs tell me the family is on the way. The doctors and nurses go to work. CPR continues. Labs are drawn. Questions are asked about what happened. The EMTs give jumbled story about the call. It does

not make a lot sense. What is going here? I stand and watch. There is nothing I can do. I feel helpless. Over all the chaos, I hear shouts for drugs and stuff. It is relentless. God, this is hard to watch. I step out. Still no word on the family. Do they know? Where are they?

If you then be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth. For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

When Christ who is our life appears, then we also will appear with him in glory.

None of us lives to ourselves, and none of us dies to ourselves. If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.

Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died, rose, and lives again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

The team keeps working. I keep watching and waiting. The minutes creep by on the clock. It's been 30 minutes. The sweat pours off the tech doing the chest compressions now. Now 45 minutes. There has been no response from this young kid. He is dead. Dead on Easter Morning. His parents have still not arrived. The team slowly leaves to room, heads are down, voices soft. I cannot believe this has happened. The doctor comes up to me and asked if I would say a prayer for this kid. The staff stops. We gather round the body. The lines and the breathing tubes are still in. We stand around all the mess.

We all stand silently for a few minutes. I put my hand on his forehead. He is still warm. I am not sure what I prayed. It was something about the bonds of death being broken and the promised hope that God would welcome him into the joy of his kingdom and presence. With an Amen, I look up and all the staff are crying. A deep, deep sadness washes over us.

An admission clerk comes up to me and says the family is here. They are in the consultation room. They do not know.

We would not have you to be ignorant, brothers and sisters, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as others do who have no hope.

For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

I tell the doctor the family is here. He sighs. He does not want to do this anymore than the rest of us. He looks at the chart. He wants to talk to the EMTs one more time. He is stalling. I say it is time. We need to do this.

I knock on the door to the consultation room. The room seems smaller than usual. The mom and dad sit expectantly. There are questions all over their faces. One of the patient relations staff is sitting with them. I introduce the doctor and myself. He sits down. They look at each other, waiting. He says, "I'm sorry. He did not make it." Before he can say anymore, the mom lets out a wail unlike any other I have ever heard. It penetrates the walls. She slumps in her chair. The dad is stunned. He cannot believe the doctor. He keeps asking, "What?" Again the doctor says, "He died. We could not save him." They look at each other. Tears begin to stream down their cheeks and they collapse into each other.

As we have borne the likeness of him who came from the dust, so shall we bear the likeness of him who came from heaven.

For this perishable body of ours must put on an imperishable form, and this dying body, a deathless form.

What is sown as perishable, *Is raised imperishable;*

What is sown in dishonor, *Is raised in glory;*

What is sown in weakness, *Is raised in power;*

What is sown a physical body, *Is raised a spiritual body.*

Then shall come to pass they saying that is written: Death is swallowed in victory.

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Christ Jesus.

We go back to see the body. The lights are dim. The floor has been cleaned and all the trash taken out. He looks so alone on the stretcher. I bring chairs close to the body. The mom just rocks and strokes his hair. Tears spill from her eyes and her heart, and like Rachel, there is no consoling her. Her son is dead. The dad pushes the chair back and gets on his knees. He talks softly to his son, holding his hand.

Glory be to him who is the resurrection and the life, even Jesus Christ our Lord, the faithful and true witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. For the kingdom of the world shall become the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And he shall reign forever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords.

And so they talk to their son. They tell me about him. Finally it is time for them to leave. Holding on to each other, they walk out of the ED into the morning of Easter, the Day of Resurrection.

Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ.

To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

I am stunned and drained. I look at my watch, it is 10:50 AM. I head to the chapel. I know there will be some people there waiting for a worship service. I can't believe I am going to do this, but I am. I need to do it. So I gather my materials. There are 12 people in the small chapel. I stand in the front. My voice breaks. Tears well up in my eyes. And I say,

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Sing this aloud, proclaim it to the ends of the earth. *The Lord has set his people free.*

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