

**“THOSE HERE...MAY CONTINUE FOR EVER
IN THE RISEN LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR”**

(BoCP, page, 307, Thanksgiving over the Water for Baptism)

Sermon notes for the Easter Sermon, 4.12.12, Episcopal Church of the Epiphany, Tallassee AL
by the Rev. Arnold Bush, Priest in Charge.

Text: Petitions within the Collects for Easter Day and Tuesday in Easter Tuesday from BOCP,
Page 222: (1) *“May evermore live with him in the joy of his resurrection”*

(2) *“Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord’s resurrection.”*

(3) *“Grant that we, who have been raised with him, may abide in his presence and rejoice in the hope of eternal glory.”*

I. Introduction: Living into the Risen Life of Christ

What may the phrase “LIVING INTO” something mean to us?

Suppose Sarah Jane has a job requiring her to communicate in writing letters and manual; she is using their math skills in percentages and trends in the business; she are using some a foreign language to communicate with customers who do not speak English well. Her parents would say she is “LIVING INTO WHAT THE LEARNED IN HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE.”

Practicing the skill they learned in school.

I took an 8-hour AARP safe driving course and instruction reminded me several things about safe driving. After the course I tailgated (5 seconds behind them); I now adjust the rearview mirror to see the cars in the blind spot; I learned that in our seventies the physical reflexes of breaking take a few seconds longer than when in one’s 20s. My spouse complements me for practicing what I learned in the AARP course. If someone asks you what went on at Church of the Epiphany on Easter, then say that the parson said, **“We need to be living to what we learn, living into new knowledge.”** **Open BoCP, to page 307 at the top of the page: “who here...born again may continue for ever in the risen life of Jesus Christ our Savior.”**

This sermon is simple LIVING INTO THE RISEN LORD, LIVING INTO THE RESURRECTION.

Sara Jane in her 20s demonstrates a Christian lifestyle of continuing in the teachings, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers.

She is turning daily to Jesus Christ as savior and following him as Lord. She renounces or has nothing to do with satanic forces or evil powers that corrupt and destroy humankind. She shares the good news of God in Christ with his friends; she manifests loving acts to all persons; she is respecting the dignity of every human being. Why? **She is living into the Baptismal Promises!** **(Page 304-305 in BoCP, bulletin, page 3)**

This Easter I plan to give you three priorities for LIVING INTO THE RESURRECTION.

II. Proclaim Jesus is alive today

But first, emphatically proclaim that this Jesus who rose from the tomb in Jerusalem about 2012 years ago is still alive today. He is here listening to the hymns we are praising him with. He is here with **big ears** listening to all of our prayers. He is the **one empowering** us to be devoted followers of his. He is the **one adopting us** into the His Body. He is the person you **can converse** with every morning you wake up. He is the person **riding with you** in the car or **walking along beside** you while jogging or taking a walk for exercise.

We do not need some special mantra to make him appear. We do not have to sing a certain way or say a special kind of prayer to make him appear or be present. In the opening acclamation, we

said Christ is risen... the **Lord is risen indeed**. He is alive now, in this moment in history. Right here in Elmore County, AL. He has given us four gospel narratives that depict his values, his actions of healing, and his mission in life, how he died and how he rose again. This first century Jewish Rabbi **has come back to us in the form of the Holy Spirit**. He blesses some ounces of wine and some pieces of bread, gives them to us as a special way to connect with us. **To empower us.**

Here are three priorities to help us **LIVE INTO THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RISEN LORD**. **If you believe in the resurrection, live into it. Live into the Risen Lord.**

(1) **TODAY, LIVE LIFE FULLY**

To live a full life means we need to live with a **mission**, not an intermission. To live life with some **PURPOSE** that is related to the God's purpose for us.

Sociologists and the Rev. Tony Campolo tell about a study in which 50 people over the age of 95 were asked one question: *"If you could live your life over again, what would you do differently?"* The question was open-ended, and people's answers were varied. However, three themes consistently emerged:

If I had it to do over again, I would *reflect more*.

If I had it to do over again, I would *risk more*.

If I had it to do over again, I would *do more things that would live on after I am dead*.

This study indicates these 95 year olds would do those things that had a lasting influence. Or they would do things that had a purpose that affected persons after they were dead.

Rabbi Harold Kushner who wrote why *"Bad things happen to good people"* writes about our **desire for meaning**. Kushner writes, *"Our souls are hungry for meaning, for the sense that we have figured out how to live so that our lives matter, so that the world will be least be a little bit different for our having passed through it."*

To LIVE FULLY is to have some PURPOSE, SOME MISSION OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE ENVIRONMENTS AROUND US.

TO LIVE FULLY is to know we are here to make a **DONATION**, not DURATION. Last Saturday at the funeral of Pam Stewart, we heard how Pam was on this earth **to make a DONATION to help children**.

Too often with some folks who are dead, the obituary has not made it official they are dead. I recall some saying to me when I officially retired 10 years ago: "Arnold, you are here to serve God, **please do not die before you are dead.**"

To live fully is to make positive choices to make life more beautiful. Each of us makes positive choices, acts of kindness. Our acts of caring are **compounded**. After the resurrection on the shores of the lake, Jesus asks Peter, *Do you love me Peter?* Peter said, *yes, you know I do. Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."* Two more times Jesus asks the same question. Peter gave the same answer. Jesus said *"Take care of my sheep."* We live into the Resurrection with a **mission** to feed and care for others. We live into the Baptismal Covenant (page 305) **by serving Christ in all persons, striving for peace among all people; by our behavior respect for all people**.

(If you make negative choices, these destructive choices are compounded. Negative hurtful decisions tend to multiply and reproduce more destructive pain.)

It was during a resurrection appearance on the Northwestern shores of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus stood before the disciples saying, (Matthew 28) **"Go into all the cultures** of the world, baptizing and making disciples..." This was their MISSION, of spreading the Gospel.

We live fully as we make donations to care and help others!

(2) TODAY, TO LIVE LIFE THANKFULLY

Sometimes when we are in the homes where our young grandchildren live, we will go the bed to say “bed time prayers”. Often I will say or the parent will say let’s say our “*thank you prayers*”. They will say thank you Jesus for all the cousins, uncles, aunts, teachers, and classmates, President Obama, the pet dogs and the neighbors’ pets. Some may respond to bed time thank you prayers as childish and cute. But really, **we adults need to expand our thank you prayers.**

Are you thankful for everything around you?

Here are some experiences that increased my thankfulness: (1) In taking a course on Christian finance and budgeting, called the *Crown Financial Ministries Course*, one weekly exercise was to walk through your home and thank Christ aloud for every object in the household. Books, computers, wedding pictures, vacation pictures of family, swing on the back porch, stained glass, beds. This was a great exercise to do several times a year. I did it this week when two small grandchildren slept upstairs last Saturday.

(2) I made two Medical Mission trips to Guatemala, where we had a small amount of cold water to shower and saw a lack of safe drinking water. Those two mission trips elevated my thanksgiving to the Lord. Warm running water, drinking water, central heat, roof not leaking, etc. Thank you Jesus for ...

The Mission Trips to Guatemala, seeing the poverty and unstable culture in Central America, helped me live life thankfully in this country and state of Alabama.

(3) A third event in my life created a deeper sense of gratitude for this democracy of the USA. Two years ago Zoe and I participated in a six day Elder Hostel in Little Rock, AK. (The first week of June we will be in Charlottesville, VA to study three presidents, Jefferson, Monroe, and Madison.) We spent five nights in the Double Tree and had several tours of the Clinton Presidential Library. We attended lectures at the Library and the Clinton School of Public Service, a graduate school in the University of Arkansas. Lectures dealt with history of Arkansas, current counter terrorism activities, foreign relations in Southeast Asia. As we heard about other economies and cultures, **I came away for a deeper appreciation of being born and living in this country.** Go visit the presidential libraries.

(4) Still something personal, finally we have pulled out many family pictures, letters, newspaper clippings, etc. and placed them in a scrapbook. We have five grown children and married 52 years so we have a lot of photos to file and place in the books that Zoe is so faithful in organizing. I came across some letters thanking me for things I did as a priest and citizen in the 1960s. Those 40-year-old thank you letters brought bring many tears to my eyes. I need to write more letters of thanks and appreciation to folks who have helped or influenced me.

Live into the Resurrection by writing thank you notes how God has used a friend or colleagues to encourage you. Remember every Sunday a Thanksgiving Service is offered right here at 9:30 AM. Eucharist is the Greek word for “Giving Thanks”.

Remember as you express your gratitude, it also is compounded. Like a fresh spring welling up. You become more grateful and more contented as a Christian!!!

(3) TODAY, LIVE LIFE FAITHFULLY.

To live faithfully is to live doing the right thing. Being faithful to the Christ you know and love.

In the NT, the Greek word for “FAITH” IS *PISTIS*; FAITHFUL IS *PISTOS*. I spoke of “Faith a few weeks ago in preaching on John 3:19: Those who believe/trust in Him will

experience Eternal Life. In the NT, faith is a personal living trust in the Risen Lord. Later, it became a noun to refer to the Christian Religion or Faith.

To live faithfully is to commit to those practices that tend to increase your trusting in Christ. See Rule of Life forms hanging in the pews.

After the resurrection of Christ, the early Christians were known as morning worshippers. In the Jewish calendar, for several decades the Christians were Jewish Christians, who worshipped on the Sabbath. But the first day of the week, Sunday, was a work day, so they would arise early for an Early Eucharist, turn to the East and recite the Apostles Creed. Also they would bury their dead facing East. You are facing east in this building.

The women were at the tomb, early on the first day of the week. In Mark 16:2, just **after sunrise**. Also in John 21:4, **early in the morning**, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize it was Jesus. He called out, "*Do you have any fish?*" They answered, "*No.*" "*Then throw the net to the other side of the boat and you will find some.*"

I know some of you think that Jesus does not get up before the TODAY SHOW or GOOD MORNING AMERICA. EG news articles on Today Show and GMA stated folks like to hear a human voice. Whatever time you arise, **greet the risen Lord everyday!!!** The Baptismal Liturgy uses images such as *Open* their hearts to your grace and love. *Fill* them with your life-giving Spirit. *Send* them into the world to witness your love. (BOCP, 305)

As you and I open ourselves to the Risen Lord, as we allow him to sweep into our thoughts and feelings. I jotted down some ABC's as to what will happen to us. I love alliterations!

Available to the Risen Lord enhances our **A**bilities.

Bring to the Risen Lord our **B**rokenness.

Control our will to **C**hange our attitudes.

Donate your time and talents to **d**esperate persons.

Enlist yourself into His power to fill your with supernatural **E**nergy.

Faith will make you **F**ly with elevated **F**eeling.

The Risen Lord is coming to us this Easter Season. Let us **live fully** as we open ourselves to Him. Let us live **thankfully** as the awareness of his Gifts compounds and multiplies. Let us live **faithfully** to live into the practices and postures that tend to give us His power to conquer any adversity or difficulty.

Prayer: We acknowledge your Risen Presence in our midst again this Easter. We thank you for being the Risen, Reigning Lord of our lives. Give us the desire, right now, this week, **to live into your Resurrection.**

Live fully with purpose and mission...

Live Eucharisticly, thankfully...

Live faithfully, trusting in our relationship with Christ.