



# ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

11856 MAYS CHAPEL RD., TIMONIUM, MD 21093

**Easter Sunday, March 27, 2016**

**✠ In The Name of The Father and of The Son  
and of The Holy Ghost. Amen.**

The passage selected for the sermon is taken from the St. Paul's first Letter to the Corinthians:

"If Christ be not raised, your faith is in vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. ...But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For so by man came death, by man came also resurrection from the dead.." 1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 15:20-21

It is by the Resurrection that we know that the price for sin, all sin, is paid in full. Death, which had been our destination has transformed into the doorway to eternal life. The purpose of the Resurrection, the glorious return of Jesus in His perfected body is to assure us of the truth declared in St. John 3:16. God so loves us that "He gave His only Son to the end that all that believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

His death is victory, as no other death before His could be, and as no other death since His could be without the grace of His sacrifice. His Resurrection is the spoil of that battle with sin, death and the devil. It is the crown of glory that is the emblem of that victory. By that victory, we are also given the gift of everlasting life in Him. St. Paul writes that, "For as in

Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

The Victory over death and sin is a Victory that was won for our benefit. We are restored to life in Him, the way that He was restored, with a real, but spiritual body and life as persons in Christ. Because these mortal bodies suffer corruption, weakness, disease and death, we often think of the resurrected bodies as the release from those mortal bonds. While the idea of a perfect body, which will no longer will feel pain and hunger and suffering is a wonderful gift, we should be more excited by the opportunity to share in life as a perfected person.

What does it mean to be resurrected as a perfected person? We are persons, not because we breathe, or eat or talk, but because we exist in relationship with God and with each other. In this earthly life we only love imperfectly because we are corrupted by sin and selfishness. As resurrected persons, we will be free to love God and to love each other perfectly, and to be loved perfectly.

When Jesus met Mary Magdalene at the tomb that morning, He comforted her. He erased her fear of separation by the barrier of death, and gave her courage and hope that her love for our Lord would not be bound by the restrictions time in this world. When He met

the Apostles, the men who deserted Him in His hour of need, men who misunderstood his teachings and lost hope in Him, Jesus greeted them all, even Peter, who had denied Him 3 times, with the words, "Peace be unto you." Even though they failed in their earthly bodies to love Him as they should, He returned in His perfected body with the promise that they too will share His Resurrection and that they will love Him perfectly, without guilt, without doubt, without failure.

Through them, He reaches out to us and consoles us. Though we may have failed Him in our devotion this Lent, though undoubtedly we fail Him in our lives, lose faith, act selfishly, and fall into sinfulness, He has paid our ransom, and we will be restored to the kingdom for which we were created.

Incredibly, we won't just be restored, we will be perfected, made men after His holiness and grace, capable of loving Him, and the Father, and each other, the way we are loved by Him. Our imaginations falter at the border of knowing how to love God perfectly, to know Him as we are known by Him. Jesus knows that about us. So His Resurrection isn't an event, the showing of His body and then the Ascension in a moment, like a display of human glory. His Victory is showed over forty days as He reconciles and comforts and loves those who loved Him. He even comes to those who had trouble believing Him, like Thomas,

and bodily engages them, so that they too can believe and persevere. He shows us how we will be perfected in our love for each other, so that we can have a tool to understand how we will be perfected in our love for God.

Imagine the opportunity to correct the selfishness, hurt, and resentment that characterized our relationships in this world, with a love that is full of consolation and comfort and joy in the next world. That is the promise of the Resurrection, and it makes persevering to life in Christ something tangible and desirable. To be restored in love to parents and children and family and friends and to love them and be loved by them the way Christ loves us is a joy that is the best that I can imagine. To know that we will Love God Himself in that way is the hope of glory.

Because Christ has Rose from the dead, and has offered us the chance to be resurrected with Him, we will be reunited in perfect love with family and friends and with God Himself. We will become perfected persons, alive through the sacrifice of a loving Father, and by the glorious Victory of His beloved Son. That is purpose for which we were created, the end to which we have been restored. Alleluia, the Lord is Risen. Alleluia, Alleluia.

***In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen***