

Acts 2:14a,22-32 (NIV84)

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ...

²² “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God’s set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him:

“ ‘I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, ²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

²⁹ “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. – NIV84

Prayer of the Day:

O risen Lord, you came to your disciples and took away their fears with your word of peace. Come to us also by Word and Sacrament, and banish our fears with the comforting assurance of your abiding presence; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Verse of the Day:

Alleluia. Alleluia. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed. Alleluia. (John 20:29b)

Sermon Text:

In the words of our first lesson today, Peter stands up and begins what we usually consider to be the Pentecost address to those gathered in Jerusalem. Of course, it’s not Pentecost, at least not yet in the church year, but these words also point us to some Easter truths, no doubt why they are set among the lessons for the Second Sunday of Easter. Nestled in among these words are some of the words from our Psalm today. Psalm 16 which are extremely comforting, especially in our context today. And so dear friends, as Peter recounts the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, David reminds us as well to **Live in Hope: Let nothing shake you because in Christ, you are secure!**

So how does that last sentence play for you? Things hopeful? We found out Thursday, that the safer-at-home order has been extended all the way to May 26 now. Schools across the state will complete the year at home. I’ll admit, I’m starting to wonder when the end of this will come? Financial forecasters are saying things look bad out there. Businesses, especially small businesses are struggling. People are using words like depression to describe the financial outlook. People are being laid-off. Jobs are vanishing. Worse than all of that, people are dying! Yes, from the Corona Virus but other ailments as well. So hey, **live in hope! Let nothing shake you!** Sounds a little easier said than done right now, doesn’t it?

Of course, David was no stranger to trouble. From Saul chasing him around the country-side trying to kill the would be king, to His own sinfulness with Bathsheba and the fallout from it, his own son trying to usurp the throne. Peter who quotes the words in our lesson knew trial and tribulation too. Holy Week

had just passed after all: Jesus arrest, Peter's denial even after his bold statements to the contrary, Jesus death. Oh, and Jesus' promise that if the world hated Him then the disciples could expect the same. And yet they both stand before all who will listen whether in word or in song and proclaim the truth,

“ I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, ²⁷because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. ²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

You see, when we place our hope, our trust, our future in the hands of anything other than God, the results will always be the same. Money, fame, job, government, health, even in people, well things can get shaky dear friends. Just look around right now, the entire globe seems to be trembling whether in fear, anger, or just plain uncertainty. So, it is with all things that have been touched by sin. So David falls, Peter runs, death seems to reign. Peter says as much, Brothers, *I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day.* Everything seems to shake.

Well everything except our Lord. That's what David had pointed too. The promised descendant would come. He would defeat the grave, and death along with it. He would defeat sin for the people who are plagued by it. He would provide us with stability and something to trust in, something to hold onto even as the one hymn puts it, even when steeples are falling, even when church doors are shuttered by violence, or law, or pandemic. So David says *I saw the Lord always before me.* This was his reason for joy, for hope for strength in the face of the sin that raged within or the evil which raged without.

Yes, by God's grace, he saw everything Peter describes, *Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.* Yes, God has raised this Jesus to life for such a time as this dear friends.

How so? Because if this is all true, and it is, then you are free. Purchased and won in the blood of Christ, His resurrection is your own. His eternal life belongs to you. Heaven is our eternal dwelling. The more we peer through the lens of the cross, the more we begin to see just how fleeting the things of this world really are. Sometimes, pandemics help us to see it more vividly than we had before. Other times the death of a loved one. Still other times the uncertainty of life, our finances, maybe even our own friends or family, show us how unstable life can truly be.

Instead, stability has always been found in one place: Jesus, His life, His death, His resurrection all of it for us and for our forgiveness that we might as the author of the book of Hebrews once put it, look *“forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God (Hebrews 11:10).”* This one can't shake or shatter. Pandemic can't touch it and we will be eternally safer-at-home not confined in houses or limited to our interactions but home with Jesus, home in heaven, perfectly seeing, acknowledging, reveling in a God who has always been with us and will be for all eternity. So Peter urges us as does David to live in this hope, the hope of our Savior Jesus and His salvation because only then do we find solid ground which will never move even as we live in a trembling world. Yes, let nothing shake you because you are secure in Christ Jesus!

“ I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, ²⁷because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. ²⁸You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

Yes, dear friends we are privileged to be witnesses of these things! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!! Alleluia!!! Amen!