

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Stewardship Newsletter Article: April 2016

The greatest surprise about Easter is not that Jesus is alive, risen from the dead, out of the grave, that He conquered death and hell, and comes to meet you as He promised. The greatest surprise is that He did all that and is not angry. There is no fear for us in His return because He is not angry. He bears no grudge. He seeks no vengeance. He comes to give peace, with mercy and forgiveness and salvation.

Jesus lives and is not angry. Imagine that. He is not angry. He doesn't blame those who killed Him. He doesn't blame you. For no one takes His life from Him. He lays it down of His own accord. He gives Himself into death to win us back from sin, death, and hell. He does it willingly without coercion. He does it sacrificially, Him for us. He gave what was His to give. Thus His petition to the Father from the cross, "Forgive them" is granted to you in His resurrection. He comes alive out of death to forgive and to give His life to you.

There is nothing to be afraid of because Jesus is raised from the dead and is not angry. Thus we are free—free from worrying about how to make it up to Him, and free to give as He has given to us. He gave Himself as a gift, His life in exchange for our death, willingly and sacrificially. And so it is that we are now free to give in like manner: willingly, sacrificially, with what we have been given.

We give to the church because it is in the church where our eyes have seen and our ears have heard that Jesus lives and is not angry. It is here where we learn of God's mercy and forgiveness in Christ. It is here where we continually receive that message of life, where He visits us to give peace, with mercy and forgiveness and salvation.

So do not be afraid. Jesus lives, and He is not angry. The sacrifice has been made. The debt is canceled and forgotten. Righteousness is declared. Jesus lives. He lives, and He is not angry. You are restored. You are reconciled to the Father in the Son. Your future is assured: Jesus lives. It is not just death and Hell, the devil and his demons, that are undone. Your sins, your fear are undone. They are gone, forgotten, destroyed. Jesus lives. Hallelujah! Jesus lives. And because He lives, you are just. You are right with God, pleasing and delightful to Him. You are forgiven, clean, pure, holy, and filled with His good works and with His Name. He is not angry. He is glad to have you. He wants you. He loves you. He gave everything that is His to and for you, willingly and sacrificially. In faith and trust in Him, let us do likewise.