

**SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**  
**An Inspiring View**  
**May 17, 2020**

We hear the inspired words of Peter speak about suffering “for righteousness’ sake” living in the very resurrection hope of Christ. Peter wants to convince us that it is precisely in our suffering that Christ meets us and acts for us. For He knows suffering intimately but also possesses the triumph over it. He points us to our Baptism, where Christ’s victory becomes our victory. His resurrection life gives us new life, which for now is but the beginning to be stretched out into life eternal.

**“Jesus Christ, My Sure Defense” [LSB 741]**

1 Jesus Christ, my sure defense, And my Savior, now is living!  
Knowing this, my confidence, Rests upon the hope here given,  
Though the night of death be fraught, Still with many an anxious thought.

2 Jesus, my Redeemer, lives; Likewise I to life shall waken.  
He will bring me where He is; Shall my courage then be shaken?  
Shall I fear, or could the Head, Rise and leave His members dead?

3 No, too closely am I bound, By my hope to Christ forever;  
Faith's strong hand the Rock has found, Grasped it, and will leave it never;  
Even death now cannot part, From its Lord the trusting heart.

4 I am flesh and must return, To the dust, whence I am taken;  
But by faith I now discern, That from death I shall awaken  
With my Savior to abide, In His glory, at His side.

5 Glorified, I shall anew, With this flesh then be enshrouded;  
In this body I shall view, God, my Lord, with eyes unclouded;  
In this flesh I then shall see, Jesus Christ eternally.

6 Then take comfort and rejoice, For His members Christ will cherish.  
Fear not, they will hear His voice; Dying, they shall never perish;  
For the very grave is stirred, When the trumpet's blast is heard.

7 Laugh to scorn the gloomy grave, And at death no longer tremble;  
He, the Lord, who came to save, Will at last His own assemble.  
They will go their Lord to meet, Treading death beneath their feet.

8 O, then, draw away your hearts, From all pleasures base and hollow;  
Strive to share what He imparts, While you here His footsteps follow.  
As you now still wait to rise, Fix your hearts beyond the skies!

**1 Peter 3:13–22**

<sup>13</sup> Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? <sup>14</sup> But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” <sup>15</sup> But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, <sup>16</sup> keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. <sup>17</sup> For it is better, if it is

God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. <sup>18</sup> For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. <sup>19</sup> After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— <sup>20</sup> to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, <sup>21</sup> and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, <sup>22</sup> who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities, and powers in submission to him.

We have a clear conscience toward God. It is the hope that we have. This is what carries us forward. Hope cannot be based on what we control. We really control little in this world. Even the most powerful, the leaders of nations and industry, are learning how ineffectual they are in the face of a virus. We certainly have no control over having a clear conscience before God. A clear conscience before God would require a life without sin. The lack of control over our day to day lives in the face of this pandemic represents our lack of control before God. On the one hand we might be boastful and then on the other hand angry or fearful. We are no different than Peter who on the one hand said he would never deny Jesus and then turned around and did exactly that. Our hope is based on Christ. He controls what we cannot. Our clear conscience is based on His actions.

Christ actions are perfect. He is in total control. Peter puts it simply, "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous." In the midst of our chaos, our unrighteousness, He brings His righteous and establishes control for us. We come to understand as John writes, "perfect love drives out fear." (1 John 4:18)

We are given hope not just for what is, the forgiveness of our sins today, but also for what will be, the forgiveness of sins for eternity. The clear conscience we have been given is not just for today but for all our tomorrows until we join our Lord in eternity. We are confident because the pledge of a clear conscience that we have from Baptism is faith. The faith we have been given by the power of the Holy Spirit and God's Word is the evidence that this is true. "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see." (Hebrews 11:1) It is the certain hope we have in the forgiveness of Christ. It is the evidence of God's perfect love and so we do not fear the chaos around us. We have the pledge of a clear conscience toward God.

### **LORD'S PRAYER** *Matthew 6:9–13*

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

### **BENEDICTION**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. *Numbers 6:24–26*