

Sermon for the Feast of the Resurrection of Our Lord

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

'And Mary turned and said to Jesus in Aramaic, "Rabboni!", which means "My Teacher." Yet Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father."'

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What shall we say this morning, which the Church accounts as the beginning of the Most Holy Season of Easter, that is, of the Passover? What have we heard this week?

For The Lord entered the holy city Jerusalem, amid accolades and palms; shouts of joy and acclamation; but Jesus bids us *'Do not cling to me'* for he went forth to tear down the Temple money-changers, and to bring down the fires of sacrifice. For he had come that he might become the Temple. He had come that He might enter into the consuming fire of God. *'Do not cling to me'* lest you be destroyed by the fire of God's righteousness.

For The Lord entered into the upper room, there to celebrate the Passover with the disciples, with greatest solemnity. And having foretold, *'You will all fall away because of me this night,'* Peter, and all of us, the disciples of Jesus, declared, *'Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!'* But Jesus bids us *'Do not cling to me'*, for He came to offer His last words as an intercession in the garden of Gethsemane on behalf of us in our weakness. Even as we slept during the watch of our night. Even as we fled during the fright of our waking, as the persecutors of Jesus came to arrest Him. *'Do not cling to me'* lest you be destroyed by the frailty of your flesh before the soft hand of sleep; lest you be destroyed by the frailty of your nerve before the sharp spears of men.

For the Lord entered unto the mount of Sacrifice, Golgotha, there to be lifted up

as the sin-offering for all mankind; there to pour out the blood and suffering which was owed on behalf on humanity. But Jesus bids us *'Do not cling to me'* for *'You cannot drink of the cup from which I must drink; nor can you be baptized with the baptism with which I am to be baptized.'* The baptism of the brutal death; the cup of unimaginable agony. *'Do not cling to me'*, lest you be destroyed by the countless lies and lashings, the slanders and scourgings which the Son of Man must endure.

For the Lord entered into death, and *'descended into hell'*, there to sack the infernal pit. But Jesus bids us *'Do not cling to me.'* As he declares: *'Where I go, you cannot follow.'* For, indeed *'God desires not the death of any man', but that 'whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.'* *'Do not cling to me'*, lest you destroyed by that unending torment *'prepared beforehand for the devil and all his angels.'*

For the Lord entered into life, *being raised on the third day*, in the glory of his Resurrection. But now still, he bids us *'Do not cling to me'*, for his course has not yet been completed, for even as he descended from heaven, so must he now ascend into heaven, to the right hand of His Father; to everlasting Dominion and Life.

'Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' And Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, *"I have seen the Lord."*

'Do not cling' for He has not yet ascended; but when He ascends, Jesus bids us: *'Love the Lord your God, and walk in his way, and cleave unto him.'* Cleave unto Him as he begins His ascension out of hell, his ascension into the blessedness of heaven; and hear His promise:

'Where I am, there will my servants be also.'

Indeed,

'This day, you shall be with me in paradise.'

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Preached by Pastor Fields

Sermon Text: John 20:1-18.