

I am very sure that you did NOT come to church today to hear a Greek lesson. <...> So, I'll make today's Greek lesson very short.

In the gospels—all four of them—the Greek verb used to tell us of Jesus' Resurrection is in a form that declares it a past.... completed.... factual .... event. "**He was raised**," is what the Greek says in the gospel accounts of Jesus' Resurrection.



Notice that the gospel accounts **do NOT** tell us **HOW** the Resurrection occurred, just that it **did occur**, and that Jesus' Resurrection is a "done deal," having accomplished whatever that Resurrection was ordained to accomplish. (What Jesus' Resurrection accomplished is the sermon for another Easter Sunday, no doubt.)

But "He was raised," is what the Greek says.

Further, in the Greek of the gospels the verb is in the passive voice. This means that the gospel writers affirm that Christ Jesus did not raise himself from death to life, something or someone else "did THAT deed." Of course, if Christ Jesus did not raise himself, the only other viable candidate for who accomplished raised Christ Jesus from death is God. So, "**Alleluia! He was raised!**" is the gospel writers' witness.

I don't know about you, but I don't think this has nearly the same "zing" as, "**Alleluia! Christ is risen!**" <...> This is how we, today, share our affirmation of the Resurrection. I put this in here right now, near the start of today's sermon, because—as usual—I am going to say "Alleluia! Christ is risen!" at the end of this sermon, and your response should be, "**The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!**" Let's try that now as a practice run:

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

**The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Excellent.

I figure that you may be wondering how and why the witness of the gospel writers that "He was raised" has changed into "Christ IS risen!" This occurred following the lead of the Apostle Paul, who used the Greek "present perfect" tense in writing about Jesus' Resurrection. What this means is **Paul's**

witness is that Jesus' Resurrection, **though completed**, is ALSO a current event. "Alleluia! Christ is risen!" <??????>

<Excellent again!>

Let this sink in for a minute, though: The event that we are here today to celebrate, to memorialize, and to proclaim is:

- A factual event, one that actually occurred;
- An event that occurred in the past, to wit nearly 2,000 years ago;
- An event that is completed in that Christ Jesus' Resurrection accomplished whatever was intended to accomplish; and
- An event whose effects are ongoing, continuing to this day.

In other words, Christ is **still** risen and his Resurrection is a present event, occurring *even now* in a very real way.

Some theologians, notably the German American theologian and existentialist philosopher Paul Tillich, say, "Resurrection happens now, or it doesn't happen at all." (The New Being, p. 24) Another way of saying this is, "If the Resurrection isn't a present event for us, the Resurrection never happened." Or, "If the Resurrection isn't a present event for us, the Resurrection might as well have never happened for us." Either way.

Maybe this point of view is too "other worldly" for some, too "far out there." This perspective definitely could play with our understanding of how our universe works: "How could something that is over and complete still be happening today?"

Well, **YOU... *have*** been resurrected, haven't you? I'm not asking if you have raised yourself from death. Rather, I'm asking if you've allowed God to raise you in some way, maybe:

- Raised you from anger;
- Raised you from despair;
- Raised you from addiction;
- Raised you from unfaithfulness or deceit;
- Raised you from disdain of others;
- Raised you from indifference to God...

I could go on, but you can name your own Resurrection list. And today is the day that we celebrate Christ Jesus' Resurrection, as well as our own fully-complete-yet-ongoing resurrection. Today is the day

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we metaphorically “visit” Jesus’ tomb to ensure that the tomb really is empty, AND that **OUR OWN humanity** isn’t lying there dead, dead, dead among the burial linens that Christ Jesus left behind.

Jim Green, Resurrection’s second Rector (two before me) famously preached the same sermon every Easter Sunday. His sermon was this, was: “The tomb is empty.” Or maybe his sermon was, “The tomb WAS empty.” You long-time members will have to tell me. But really, **THIS** is my sermon, **THIS** my witness today, “The tomb **was** empty; the tomb **is** empty, and the tomb **will be forever empty** of Christ Jesus’ body.

Jim Green apparently anchored his faith in Christ Jesus at the empty tomb. I wonder, suspect that, Jim was familiar with the work of Karl Barth, a Swiss theologian who was a contemporary of Paul Tillich’s. An oft-quoted summary of Barth’s theology about Jesus’ Resurrection (Dogmatics in Outline, Chp. 10) is, “The crossroads of faith is at the entrance to the tomb.” Where have **you** found your faith? In other words, where have you met Christ Jesus in your life AT AND SINCE your own Resurrection?

I ask because in our own lives is where we, today, can meet the eternally risen Christ. Not in creeds and other declarations of our beliefs; not in political ideology on one side or the other; not in great celebrations; and not in heroic actions. Rather, we meet the Risen Christ when he shows up in our illnesses; in our heartbreaks; and in our pain. Or ... the Risen Christ also shows up in the needs of others (sometimes others in a “most difficult disguise”); shows up in our relationships with others; or shows up in our shared meals, especially this Eucharistic meal.

This is how I understand the Resurrection: Not just as a momentous event that happened long ago, not even as a future event when we will be Resurrected from this life to the next one, but rather as an ongoing event that can change our NOW.

However YOU understand Christ’s Resurrection, we are meant to participate in it and not to just observe or celebrate it.

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

**The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.**