

Easter Sunday
Year A

Acts 10:34-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Colossians 3:1-4
John 20:1-18

In the epistle today, we are told that, since we believe we have been raised with Christ, we should seek the things that are above, where Christ is. Sounds great, but what does that really mean. Are we to join the astronauts on Artimus II?

The first issue to note is geographic. When ever we discuss God or heaven, we use terms like above or up. But, is God really in outer space? I remember hearing the first astronauts being asked if they saw God when they ventured into earth orbit. Perhaps it would be better to use the term beyond. This is something we are used to thinking about when we talk about those who have died, so why not use the same expression when discussing God or heaven. What the writer is really trying to get us to see is that we are not to focus our attention on the world around us, with all of the strife and problems that confront us daily, but to look beyond all of that and see how God is working in this world.

If our focus is on the violence and poverty – the hopelessness that permeates society, we will find ourselves mired down in those problems and not be able to see any hope. Those are the things of the earth that we are being cautioned to avoid.

We are not of this world; our priorities should not be the same as those who are of this world. We live in Christ and share with Him the victory over the forces that drag our neighbors down. Yes, we still have to deal with the rising cost at the pump and in the grocery store. But we can see a different way forward.

Every morning, I begin my day by reading the news. I see all of the chaos that the media pours into our homes. We don't have to look at New York or Los Angeles to see violence in the streets. It is right here in our neighborhoods. We don't need an economist to tell us about inflation. We see it every time we make a purchase. We know the problems in the world and I am not suggesting that, as Christians, we are exempt from them. What I am saying is that they should not be the defining voice in our lives.

The message of Easter and the empty tomb tells us that, even while we are still physically in this world, our identities are no longer defined by the world. We do not have to lift ourselves to God, but we are raised by God through being united in Christ. Our lives are no longer tied to the forces of this world or even our own efforts to rise above it all. We are in Christ who is beyond all powers that might attack us.

Because Jesus lives, we also live. As the gospel songs says, "Because He lives, I can face tomorrow." On this Easter morning, we know He lives, Jesus Christ is risen indeed!