

### THE AMAZING WORK OF CHRIST

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! This is now the fourth time we are celebrating the resurrection of Jesus. Are you beginning to see what a difference the resurrection of Jesus makes? The resurrection is big - it is very big!

The resurrection is big because it is God's doing. That's the key. When we talk about the resurrection of Jesus we are talking about God's work and God's power. God raised Jesus from the dead and now Jesus is loose in the world. He is alive and he is here and he is active in the lives of people - people like you and me.

And because Jesus is alive and here and active in the lives of people, amazing things happen! Take the story we heard today from the book of Acts. There was a woman in Joppa named Tabitha - in Greek her name was Dorcas. She became ill and died. So Peter got up and went to Joppa and knelt down beside Tabitha and prayed. And then he said, "Tabitha, get up." And she opened her eyes and sat up.

Amazing! But we miss the whole point, if we don't see Jesus in this story. Peter was just an ordinary person - like you and me. He had no special powers. He wasn't even a medical doctor. This is a story of Jesus working through Peter. The power belonged to Jesus. Peter simply allowed Jesus to work through him.

And the same can be true for you! You may wonder about that. Have you ever asked yourself, why do other Christians have such exciting ministries and are able to do amazing things in their ministries - but not me?

Well, let me tell you something. The secret is right under your nose - literally. The ingredient for an exciting, power-filled, Christian life is inside of you. The New Testament book of Colossians says, "And the secret is that Christ lives in you." (Col. 1:27) That's why the resurrection of Jesus makes such a huge difference. Jesus is alive and he lives in you and it is his power that can do amazing things in your life.

A lot of Christians doubt that they can do much for the Lord. But all they have to do is trust that Christ is in them and then let Christ go to work. Someone once said that if all the Christians in the world were suddenly killed off except for one little Christian girl, she would have all that is necessary for God to start the entire Christian movement from her alone. The power of the kingdom of God is in Christ and Christ is in you! Trust the resurrection. Trust that Christ is alive. Trust that Christ is in you. And trust that Christ can and will do amazing things through you.

This weekend we are commissioning five new Stephen Ministers. They are well trained, but the secret of their ministry is Christ who is in them. They will do amazing things because of Christ.

This weekend we are also welcoming a number of new members. They will have an exciting ministry with us because Christ is in them.

And the same is true for you - whether you teach and or provide hospitality or work for justice and or share the story of Jesus with others and or care for the poor and or provide a ministry of music or whatever your ministry may be. Amazing things can and do happen when Christians engage in ministry -

all because of the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is alive and he is here and he is at work through you and me. Just like he was at work through Peter.

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday. Like a shepherd, Jesus cares for us. He leads us, guides us, provides for us, fights for us, protects us, feeds us, empowers us, and ultimately, gives us eternal life. Jesus is our Good Shepherd. What we sometimes forget, though, is that Jesus often does this work of shepherding through people. Jesus shepherds us through people around us. And Jesus shepherds others through us. The Stephen Ministers are part of that work. The new members are part of that work. And so are you!

We all are part of a massive, world-wide ministry of Christ. Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead in order to save the world. Jesus is alive and he is here and he is at work doing amazing things through us.

This is what we mean when we talk about the Body of Christ. This is what we mean when we say that we are part of Christ's team. Christ is at work through us. And this is how the resurrection of Jesus makes a real difference in the lives of people.