

Continue to Exult in Easter!

1 Peter 1:3-9

April 12, 2026 (Eas. 2-A)

St. Paul's Lutheran, North Freedom

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. (1 Peter 1:3-9 NIV)

In the name of our risen and ever-living Lord Jesus, dear friends:

In most homes by now, the chocolate bunnies and candy eggs have been eaten. Easter decorations are in the process of being put away. It seems like the joy and celebration of Easter is gone for another year, right?

Not at all! The apostle Peter brings us a most joyful message today stemming from “the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” with words such as “Praise (literally, blessed) be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!” and “In all this you greatly rejoice” and “an inexpressible and glorious joy.” In a word, we “exult” in Jesus’ Easter message. Peter’s message for his readers then and today is: **Continue to Exult in Easter!**

I’m sure you were in an exulting mood last Sunday with our Easter celebration. But were you exulting all week long? Probably not. We suffer trials and tribulations with the rest of the world. We endure pain and sorrow. We encounter the cross: Persecution and sufferings that are unique to Christians, with temptations that Satan tries to use to get us to doubt and deny the faith. And we suffer loss, the loss of things we love, the loss of people we love. Difficulties such as these may plant doubt in our minds: If Christ has won the victory, why do I feel like such a loser in life? If my sins have been taken away, why do I still go through suffering like this?

Over 3 decades after Jesus died, rose and ascended, the apostle Peter wrote to Christians who were going through severe persecution. The Romans under emperor Nero were ramping up imprisonments and the death penalty for those proclaiming the gospel of Jesus. Peter himself was martyred, according to tradition, a few years later, on an upside-down cross because he didn’t want to die the same way Jesus did.

But Peter wrote to encourage these Christians, “Though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.” When trials and even temptations come, we are to understand this as the Lord testing the strength of our faith. He uses these things, which we call the

“cross,” as a chance for us to grow, to rely on the Lord all the more. Think of it: In good times, we might become forgetful of God and just enjoy this life. But in a time of testing, we learn to rely on the Lord instead of our own strength. Peter reminds us that our faith is “of greater worth than gold,” which will perish one day, the Last Day. But when Jesus appears that day, our faith will lead us to praise, glory, and honor him, exulting in his exaltation!

Indeed, we exult in him now, even in a time of testing, even in this time when we do not see him. As Peter notes: “Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.” Peter’s words echo what Jesus told Thomas in today’s gospel reading: “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29). That’s what faith is all about: “Being sure of what we hope for, being certain of what we do not see,” as defined in Hebrews 11:1.

We continue to exult in Easter because of the blessings Easter gives us both now and in the future. Peter writes regarding the present time: We are filled “with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.” How can we not stop praising the Lord and rejoicing when we know our souls have been saved! Our sins are no longer charged against us, we are forgiven, we’ve been saved from sin by Christ’s death and victorious resurrection!

We have also been given, in Peter’s words, a “new birth.” When Christ rose from the dead, we have been raised to a new life. The apostle Paul put it this way: “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Ro. 6:4). Baptism really is like a second birthday. We start a new life, one to live for Christ and not for sin; we become members of a new family, we’re children of God. Don’t forget: Your old self is buried; your new self lives!

Peter goes on to say that we are born “into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Hope is really the same thing as faith, except that it’s focused on the future. It’s better than the hope this world can give, like, “I hope the war in Iran is over soon and we win”—that’s uncertain. But because Christ has been raised, our hope for a better future is certain. Christians don’t walk around dejected, but hopeful, joyful, and exulting!

More specifically, this is what we’ve been born into: “An inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade... kept in heaven for you.” What a precious inheritance! On earth we might inherit gold or estate money that’s valuable, but riches don’t last and are fleeting. The inheritance of heaven will never perish, it will last forever. The possessions we enjoy here, even the finest things in life, can spoil and tarnish, but heaven will never spoil. Earthly fame and glory fades, but not our inheritance in heaven; that glory will shine eternally. What a precious inheritance indeed!

But what if someone like the devil comes to rob us of this inheritance? Peter assures us that through faith we “are shielded by God’s power” until the Last Day when our salvation will be revealed. The devil and all evil will try their best, but the Lord shields and protects us with his Word, with the sacraments, and with his gracious love for us.

For all these reasons, continue to exult in Easter, today, and all year round! Amen.