

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Easter – Year B – April 15, 2012 – Faith Lutheran, Radcliff, KY**  
**Based on 1Corinthians 15:12-22 written by Pastor Paul Horn**

**In Christ You are Unsinkable**

On April 8, 1912—100 years ago last Sunday—eager passengers in Southampton, England boarded the *Titanic* for its highly publicized voyage across the North Atlantic. The media hype surrounding the ship boasted it to be unsinkable. Its captain, Edward Smith, had commented earlier, “I cannot conceive of any vital disaster happening to this vessel. Modern shipbuilding has gone beyond that.” A week after boarding, Captain Smith was last seen on the bridge of the sinking *Titanic*, having just given the order to abandon ship after slamming into an iceberg. In his last moments before going down—along with 1,516 others who drowned and died—did he remember his fateful words?

Humanity’s best has always been—and always will be—sinkable. Just ask any of the formerly dominant world empires that span history. Just ask Blockbuster, Newsweek, Pontiac, Uno restaurants, and other successful brands and companies that recently bit the dust. Where is your confidence that today will be a successful day? If it’s conditional on being in control, always being right, or never needing help from others, you have something to learn from God today. Where is your hope when the doctor delivers the feared diagnosis—or can’t come up with a diagnosis at all? If it depends on our own positive thinking, you have something to learn from God today. Human pride is strong. Claims of “unsinkable” brew up inside our ego and from the outside world’s humanistic hype. “You can do anything” is a lie. But Easter says, “*With God all things are possible*” (*Matthew 19:26*). That’s why we’re here.

The message of Easter is made in heaven for people of the earth, people of fragile humanity, people who have cheated, lied, stolen, hurt others, mismanaged God’s gifts, and hated in heart...people who can’t do it all, can’t have it all, can’t make it all OK...people who are scared, lonely, stressed, and hurt...people who die. The titanic efforts of humanity haven’t solved those problems and never will, but the God of Easter buries them all in a previously occupied tomb, then slams and seals the stone over the opening to sink their power over us for good. Today’s message is this: In Christ you are unsinkable.

Wasn’t last Sunday a great Sunday? A member texted me that afternoon and said, “Today was awesome! I love Easter - can we do it again tomorrow?” Yes we can! The wonderful thing about Easter is that it is a seven week long season! We may not have the trumpets every Sunday or the wonderful choir selections, but the same beautiful message of Jesus’ resurrection is proclaimed in our hymns, lessons, and sermon themes for the next five Sundays. But have you ever thought, “What if there was no Easter?” The world probably wouldn’t miss the chocolate bunnies, egg hunts, baskets filled with goodies. They would find something else to fill that void. But as Christians we would be missing a whole lot.

Our lesson is from the Apostle Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. Apparently some were saying that there was no resurrection of the body. Paul draws a number of conclusions based on that premise. In vs12 he writes, “**if the dead do not rise from the grave... not even Christ has been raised** vs13. Then his body stayed in the tomb and decayed like the rest of us will. We should be able to find his remains or his tomb somewhere. Sadly, some churches even today allow their pastors to preach that message, that Jesus rose, but that it was only his soul. That only his spirit lived on and it still lives in our hearts. How sad... if Christ has not been raised...

**Our preaching is useless** vs14. Then our sermons have no content, no meat, filled with fluff. **So is your faith** vs14 Your faith has nothing solid to stand on, like the foolish man in Jesus’ parable who built his house on the sand. The waves came, the waters rose, and the house came crashing down... if Christ has not been raised...

**We are false witnesses that God raised Christ from the dead** vs15 Then the apostles are liars, because they told everyone that they saw Jesus alive, if Christ has not been raised... **Your faith is futile** vs17 It's pointless to believe in Christ because if Christ did not bodily rise from his grave then your faith is based on a lie. **You are still in your sins** vs17 You still carry the guilt and condemnation and sin. Which means the Father did not accept his payment for sins. Which means you and I still owe God something for our sins... If Christ has not been raised... **Those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost** vs18 Our loved ones who have died trusting in Jesus for salvation are lost then. They have sunk like the Titanic, never to rise again – and we have no hope of seeing them again...if Christ has not been raised... **we are to be pitied who only for this life hope in Christ** vs19 Why do we put up with persecutions and hardships because of our belief in Christ's resurrection, for what? Because we're masochistic?

Do you see what a difference this makes for you and me today? If Christ has not been raised... Then we have no living God – but a dead god like every other religion – who cannot hear us or help us. Then Christ is a liar – he said he would rise. His word cannot be trusted – if the Bible is his Word, what else is not true if he did not rise? Then we have nothing. Then my body will die and sink to the depths like a ship hitting an iceberg, never to rise again. Then the grave is the end road for me.

And some days I feel that way, when my heart is loaded down with depression and anxiety – just because life is the way it is. Some days I feel that my heart is down at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, cold and unreachable – not even Celine Dion's singing will lift me up. I feel sinkable when faced with the doctor's prognosis, or lack of it. I am sinkable when I as a parent feel that I have failed my child, or my spouse or my friends or coworkers. I am sinkable when I feel like my sins are too great for even God to forgive.

It would be impossible to lift the Titanic from its icy grave below the water. What is not impossible is for God to lift us up from the depths of our emotional and spiritual pit. What is not impossible is for God to lift us up out of our graves and deliver us from death. Today, we celebrate Easter again because he says to you and to me...

Vs20 **"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead!"** These are the historical facts. #1 –Jesus died. God the Father put him to death because of our sins. He accepted the full payment. And proved it by raising his dead body from the grave. #2 – Jesus rose from the dead. God proves it to us. He sent his own angelic messengers to proclaim the good news! His grave is empty. There is no body to see there in the garden tomb outside of Jerusalem today. The Risen Savior appeared to more than 500 of his followers after his resurrection. He ate and drank with them. The eye witnesses recorded these incidents which are preserved on the pages of the Bible. God through his prophets predicted centuries earlier that Jesus would rise again. God does not lie. He always keeps his promises - and it happened.

Vs20**"But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."** We have to explain this – firstfruits. This means Jesus is the first one to rise with a resurrection body: a body not subject to corruption or aging or death. Others were raised from the dead... only to die again. Jesus is the first of the harvest of the last and final resurrection. Christ's resurrection has eternal consequences for everyone – that is why he is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. Paul then explains why all fall will asleep, why death happens at all.

Vs21-22 **"Death came through a man... as in Adam all will die."** Death proves that we are all sinkable. Death will come to all because we all belong to Adam, that is, we are all descended from Adam. Because he is the

first one to sin, he possessed sin in his body and so his descendants that follow him will all suffer death because they too possess sin. We will die. But, Paul goes on...

Vs21-22 **“The resurrection of the dead comes also through a man... in Christ all will be made alive.”**

Death came through a man, Adam. Life comes through a man, the God-man, Jesus Christ. Because of his resurrection all will be made alive. On the last day all people will rise from their graves. But Paul points out that not everyone is going to heaven on the Last Day of the resurrection of the dead. But Paul says, **“In Christ all will be made alive.”** Those who are in Christ, those who belong to him, who are related to his life through faith, will be made alive at the resurrection, and will live forever in heaven. So the big question is, “How do I know I am related to Christ?”

You may have noticed that our Paschal candle is lit during baptisms, because light symbolizes life. In baptism God gives you a new life. But you may have also noticed that it was lit last Sunday and this Sunday – and will shine the next five Sundays. This candle represents the close connection baptism has to Easter and to Good Friday.

In baptism you died with Jesus. He was not the only one buried in that tomb on Good Friday. You and your sins were, too. And who else rose on that first Easter Sunday? Not just Jesus, you did, too! Through baptism, buried with Christ; through baptism raised with Christ. Through the power of baptism you are in Christ. Through faith in Christ you are unsinkable. Neither your sins nor death hold you in their grave forever. Because he lives, you too shall live. As he rose on the third day with a new, glorified body, so you too will have a new glorified body. He will raise us up from the dust, and change us, and so we will be with the Lord forever. This is the confidence we have in death and in life. **“In Christ all will be made alive.”**

Last Sunday the *M.S. Balmoral* cruise liner, operated by the same parent company as the *Titanic*, embarked from Southampton on a memorial 12-night journey following the same route as the *Titanic*. Passengers were treated to the same menus, music, and entertainment enjoyed by the original passengers. And, yes, the cruise stopped somewhat eerily at the very spot the *Titanic* went down at 2 a.m. this morning. Our world’s enduring fascination with the *Titanic* continues, perhaps as a testimony to the lesson it taught us: that we are all sinkable. Except for one. The God who died and came back to life. The Lord, who always keeps his promises. For with our God, our living God, all things are possible. Through faith in Christ we are unsinkable. We will be raised with Christ. We will live forever in heaven. For Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Amen!