

Do you care that it is Holy Week and that Easter is this Sunday? My guess is that I am preaching to the choir here. I mean, those who could not care less are probably not going to go out of their way to read the "Clergy Corner" in the newspaper. But there may be someone reading this column today, perhaps you, that just stumbled across this for one reason or another (I am sure it is not because of my good-looking picture, so I just will chalk it up to the Holy Spirit). But for whatever reason you are here (and whether you care or not) I pray that you will care about what I am going to write next:

YOU ARE A SINNER.

Do I have your attention? No? Well, let me try again.

DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU WILL SPEND ETERNITY AFTER YOU DIE?

How about now because that is a serious question to consider? You see, the fact of the matter is that you WILL die some today AND either you will be taken up to heaven to be with God or you will suffer in eternal torment in hell. There is no middle ground and there is no avoiding these two options. You are not saved because you are a good person. You are not saved because you are not as bad as your neighbor. You are not saved because you believe in another god or refuse to believe in any god. There is only one way to be saved. Are you still reading and paying attention?

JESUS

And this brings us to Holy Week. You see, Jesus is the Son of God, and he lived a perfect life, meaning he was without sin. Jesus being both God and human, willingly went to the cross and bore the weight of sin and received the wrath of God that you and I deserve. Jesus suffered greatly and died. And for good measure, a Roman Centurian pierced him through his lungs and heart to make sure. Jesus was buried and sealed in a tomb. But Jesus did not stay dead. On the third day (Easter morning) Jesus was raised from the dead and thus conquered the power of sin and death FOR YOU. He destroyed Satan's hold on you and gave you the crown of life. And why did he do this?

BECAUSE OF HIS AWESOME LOVE FOR YOU!

Please consider these words because these words are words of truth and Good News from our awesome and sovereign God. There is no way around it. Each person must settle it in their hearts where they will spend eternity. So, I invite

you to hear more of this story at our community ecumenical services this week: **Maundy Thursday worship** at Bethlehem Lutheran Church at 7 PM; and **Good Friday worship** at First Baptist Church at 7 PM. And then **Easter Sunday** at the church of your choice.

Are you still with me? I pray that you are, and I pray that you are with Jesus forever, for HE IS RISEN.

Amen!