

At The Lamb's High Feast We Sing

"Mighty Victim from the sky, hell's fierce pow'rs beneath You lie; You have conquered in the fight, You have brought us life and light. Alleluia!

"Now no more can death appall, now no more the grave enthrall; You have opened paradise, and Your saints in You shall rise. Alleluia!"

When Paul and Silas proclaimed the Gospel in Thessalonica, many people believed in Jesus. Others opposed the apostles and complained to city officials: "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also" (Acts 17:6b). People who do not believe in Jesus may think the Christian faith is upside down and full of contradictions. As followers of Jesus, we do view life in different ways. For example, the apostle Paul describes the power of Christ in his life: "When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10b). Contrary to the world's warring relationships, we are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Then, this highlighted hymn presents more opposites. A victim is usually thought to be weak and helpless, yet Jesus is our "Mighty Victim." By His death as a helpless Victim nailed to a cross, He "conquered in the fight" and defeated "hell's fierce powers."

In our upside down point of view—although we know that it's really right side up—frightening things are no longer feared. We cannot, apart from Christ, escape death. The grave enthralls, that is, it enslaves, all people. But our mighty Victim died to destroy the devil, who held the appalling power of death. By His death, Jesus delivered "all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery" (Hebrews 2:15b). The grave that once enthrallled will not be able to hold us, just as the tomb could not hold Jesus. He rose to life, and we too will rise on the Last Day!

In this upside down life, what was closed is now open. After Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the fruit forbidden to them, they were sent out of Eden. Paradise was closed to them and to us, but now our sins are washed away in Jesus' blood. The gates of paradise, once closed, are now open to us. Perhaps what seems most "upside down" is God's grace, His undeserved favor for sinners. However, **by grace**, God sent His holy Son to die for sinners. **By grace**, God chose us to be His own holy people. And **by God's grace**, through faith in Jesus, though we die, yet we will live forever! The apostles were accused of turning the world upside down, but as they proclaimed the Gospel, they were really turning the

world right side up, back to God's ways. With the help of the Holy Spirit, that's what we are doing, too!

Therefore, as we continue in this Easter Season, let the celebration of victory over sin and death ring throughout our families and even into our communities. Let's make this victory banquet; yes, this "Feast" a priority in our earthly lives, where our alleluias never cease, but rather always rejoicing in the sacrificial death and the triumphant resurrection of Christ, which is our eternal life too.

Christ is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed! Alleluia!

Pastor Seehafer