

A Sunday Evening in Troas

Rev. M. Karens - Acts 20:7-12

Sing: Psalter 71: 3-5

Sing: Psalter 190: 1- 2

Read: Acts 20: 1-16

Sing: Psalter 134: 1-3

Sing: Psalter 317: 3-4

Sing: Psalter 420: 2, 5

Congregation, prayerfully seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in both speaking and listening, we want to direct your attention to the portion of Scripture we have read , namely Acts 20 verses 7 to 12. And I will just read verse 12, where God's Holy Word says: "And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted."

Congregation, I ask your attention for: A Sunday Evening in Troas.

We would like to consider three thoughts on this subject:

1. Paul's Preaching (verses 7 and 8)
2. The Death of Eutychus (verse 9)
3. The Raising of Eutychus (verses 10 to 12)

1. Paul's Preaching

Congregation, the apostle Paul is on his way back to Jerusalem. His third missionary journey is concluding and he is in a hurry; he is in a hurry because he wants to be with the church in Jerusalem for the Feast of Pentecost. In this portion of Scripture, Luke the evangelist tells us about a very special church service in Troas.

Congregation, both young and old, let me ask you: - have you also experienced such special church services in your life? Not special in the sense that there was a special preacher ... but special because *the sermon* was unforgettable - because the Lord spoke with power to your soul through His Word and Spirit.

So what is special about this church service in Troas? Luke begins his account in the sixth verse of Chapter 20; where we read: "And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days." "We," (that is Paul, Luke - the author of the book of Acts, and the rest of the missionary team), sailed from Philippi to Troas. They had celebrated the Jewish Easter, the days of unleavened bread with the Christian congregation in Philippi. They had taken part in the feast which for the Christians was a foreshadowing of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had celebrated the Passover, which pointed to the Lamb of God - Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ, the

Pascal Lamb, who not only died at Golgotha, but who also rose again on Easter morning.

Then from the port city of Neapolis, they embarked for Troas and sailed via the island Samothracia. And even though it was normally only a two-day sailing to Troas, this time the crossing took five days: the winds cannot have been favourable.

And so they arrived at Troas. A congregation had been established in Troas through a wonderful work of grace by the triune God. Through Him there were people in Troas who had come to conversion and faith. Luke records that they wanted to stay there for a week: not just Paul and Luke, also the others. Why such a large group, you may ask? Do not forget that Paul had a lot of collection money with him. A collection had been held in Macedonia for the poor saints at Jerusalem. Therefore a few people from those congregations travelled with Paul to assist him, and provide extra protection.

In the end, they stayed with the congregation of Troas for seven days. The last day was a Sunday. The apostle used this last day to preach to the congregation of Troas. Luke writes: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."

On the first day of the week, the Christian church at Troas came together. That is also our Sunday - the New Testament Day of Rest. The day that proclaims Christ's resurrection from the dead; the day that commemorates Easter; the Lord's Day; the day that belongs to the Kurios, to the risen Savior - Jesus Christ. It is the same day of the week on which we also gather.

"The first day of the week." The Catechism says: "That I, especially on the Sabbath, that is, on the day of rest, diligently frequent the church of God, to hear His word, to use the sacraments, publicly call upon the Lord, and contribute to the relief of the poor." And so, congregation, take note that on the first day of the week you are privileged to meet under the preaching of God's Holy Word.

I would like to ask you, both young and old, what does this first day of the week mean for you personally? What does the Lord's Day mean to you? Would you like every day of the week to be a Sunday? Some people do, you know. Do you know that there are people who begin to long for the next Lord's Day before the previous one is over? Sunday is their best day of the week. What is your opinion of Sunday? Is Sunday, by God's grace, also the best day of the week for you? Consider these words from our opening Psalter:

*"My one request has been,
And still this prayer I raise,
That I may dwell within God's
house through all my days.
Jehovah's beauty to admire,
And in His Temple to Inquire."*

Dear listener, do these words also describe the desires of your heart? Or is it different for you? Are you only too happy when Sunday is over? Dear congregation, let us examine

ourselves: do we take the cares of the week into Sunday, or do we take the blessings of Sunday into the week? Does something of the first day of the week, something from God's Word, accompany you for the rest of the week? Is there something there that stays with you ... to meditate upon, either at home or at work? Do these words of Psalm 119 also resonate in your heart? "I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways" (Psalm 119:15).

On the evening of the Day of Rest, on that Sunday evening, the disciples assemble together and Paul starts to preach. Remember that at the time of the Roman Empire, people were not free on Sunday. For us it is a given, but in Troas most of the members of the congregation were slaves. And slaves first had to do their masters' work, and only when the day's work was done could they go to a congregational gathering in the evening.

Congregation, how long will we be permitted to meet together, without interruption, on the first day of the week? There is a lot of pressure on the Lord's Day in our time! Oh, we ought to pray that the Lord will protect His day of rest from being swallowed up by the demands of the twenty-four-seven economy.

Luke writes: "When the disciples came together." We should note that when Luke writes about disciples, he means God's children. Interestingly, when the apostle John refers to disciples he also includes non-believers. For instance, we read in John 6:66: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." But, in our text, Luke refers to the true believers in Troas - God's children.

There were, indeed, true believers in the church at Troas; all of whom expected salvation in Christ Jesus. You can see them coming from all parts of this port city. Not many noble, not many wise, but God has chosen the despised of this world. In the epistle to the Corinthians, Paul refers to them as the offscouring and the filth of this world.

The disciples have come together. In our thoughts, we see a church service in a port on Turkey's coast two thousand years ago; an evening in an upper room in Troas. It is a special evening, for that evening the apostle will be in their midst. That evening Paul will preach to them. Verse 7 mentions that they "came together to break bread" and to hear the Word. One commentator says about this breaking of bread: "To eat with one another, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper." Therefore the 'breaking of bread' refers to two things. It refers to the practice of the early Christian church where the rich brought gifts, and then ate together with the poor. However, the breaking of bread also refers to the celebration of the Lord's Supper which was held on the first day of the week.

So it refers to both an ordinary meal (think of the breaking of bread of those journeying to Emmaus) *and* it also points to Holy Communion, where bread is broken in remembrance of Christ and accompanied by the preaching of God's Holy Word.

Paul preached unto them. The original Greek means 'conversed' with them; to both speak *to* them and also to speak *with* them.

The apostle *preached*. He preached the Word of God. But he also spoke with them. He

answered their questions. He endeavoured to explain to them the mysteries of their hearts. He conversed with them! You could compare this to a post-sermon discussion.

Paul conversed with them. This evening in Troas, there was an opportunity to discuss the topic of the sermon with the congregation.

Luke does not record what the topic of the sermon was. It may have been interesting for us to know what the apostle preached about on that Sunday evening in Troas. But, congregation, we do not need to ask that! We do know what Paul preached about. We find it recorded in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 2 verses 2, 4, and 5: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

The apostle preached to them - but not with human wisdom. He preached to them the whole counsel of God. He preached Law and the Gospel unto them; death and life; sin and free grace; damnation and salvation. He preached to them that man was created in God's image and likeness. He preached that God created man in a state of perfection. But he also preached to them that they had become fallen sinners through their own doing.

Paul conversed with them. He exhorted them to truly repent. He preached to them God's eternal thoughts of peace. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world" (1 John 4:9). Paul knew the fear of the Lord and the love of Christ; it was because of this that he was driven to exhort the people to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We read in Acts 20 verse 21: "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Dear congregation, that is what Paul preached in Troas too. The necessity of true repentance, but also the riches which a lost sinner can find in Christ by faith: the Way of Salvation - as revealed in God's only begotten Son.

The apostle Paul himself had been privileged to experience these lessons on his way to Damascus and in the street which is called Straight. And, this Sunday evening in Troas, he may bring the same message: Christ Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life!

Paul preached Christ in the upper room at Troas. There he proclaimed: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). He also declared unto them that we must through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God. He preached unto the church at Troas that, in all their trouble, God is true to His promise: the Lord is both faithful and strong!

And dear congregation, even now, you - two thousand years later, may still hear this message from week to week. The Lord in His sparing faithfulness continues to send other ministers with the same message: "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him and... Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him" (Isaiah 3: 10-11).

You and I are privileged to hear the preaching of God's Holy Word. We are under the

outward calling - God calls us earnestly. He calls, and He desires that those who receive this call also come to Him, for He promises them rest for their soul and eternal life.

How often has He called you? How many times has He invited you? Congregation, take a moment to reflect. How often has He called you? Not by the words of men, but by the Word of the Living God. "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock" (Rev. 3:20).

In Troas, Paul preached death in Adam and life in Christ. How needful it is, congregation, that the Holy Ghost opens our hearts for the Word. The Lord can and will do this according to His good pleasure. We read of Lydia that the Lord opened her heart, and that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Oh, if the Holy Ghost were to open your heart today, if the Lord were to pierce your ears by the mighty, sovereign ministry of His Spirit, then you would hear for the first time what you have heard so many times before. Then you would not only hear, but you would also obey. Then the seed would fall into a heart prepared by God; the seed would fall into a heart that will bring forth the fruits of true repentance.

Paul conversed with them. And because he was going to leave the next day, it was also a farewell sermon. That is why it lasted for such a long time. The apostle simply could not stop. If one is urged on by the love of Christ and sees the need of souls, young and old, on the way to eternal damnation, then it is not easy to stop warning and preaching. The apostle does not know how to stop. An hour goes by, two hours, three hours... It becomes midnight and he continues even further. You can read in verse 11 that Paul preaches until morning light: until the break of day. Indeed, there is no end to speaking of the great works of God; the works which He has accomplished in Jesus Christ to save sinners.

And then something remarkable is written: "And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together." Why does Luke emphasise this? Why is it significant that the third floor of a building was so brightly lit up with many lights? Congregation, all of Scripture is written by the inspiration of God. Luke was directed to write this so that we may understand that the room is very warm and stuffy - filled with the heat and smoke of many lamps!

Furthermore, some commentators add another dimension to this. They say that when the faithful assembled by night, they intentionally lit many lights in their assemblies to prevent suspicion. Apparently, those first Christians were often slandered about secretive practices in their meetings, and so the church in Troas wanted to declare with these lights: "What we do here can bear the light; We don't do anything secretive here."

But, congregation, Luke also included this verse to tell us that the stuffy atmosphere and oppressive heat from the oil lamps contributed to Eutychus falling asleep. The church at Troas is listening. They have had a busy day. And now they are seated under God's Word. They have no eye for the many lights in the room; they are focused on Paul's sermon ... for they may hear of that One Light: the one and only Light of the world is preached to them, a Light to lighten the Gentiles and a Light for God's people.

They may experience that the Lord is in their midst -with His divinity, majesty, Spirit ... and mercy. The apostle preaches, and the congregation hungers and thirsts for the Living Word. They hang on Paul's lips; they thirst for the spoken words and drink them in like water. For them these are the words of eternal life. No, not Paul's words, but the Word of the Living God. This Sunday evening in Troas they are given to experience: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105).

They forgot the time in Troas - on that Sunday evening. They were given to taste something of the eternal Sabbath in their heart. *With the abundance of Thy house we shall be satisfied* (Psalter 94:3). That is the blessed future for all God's children, congregation! There will be no time in eternity! In heaven, church will never end: in heaven, there will be an eternal rejoicing in the Triune God.

Has it ever happened to you, congregation, that you lost all sense of time in church? Did you ever listen with such concentration that you were surprised when the minister ended the sermon with "amen"?

Have you ever experienced times like these, when God's Word became a treasure to you, a treasure because the preaching of sin and free grace worked powerfully in your life? Times when the Holy Spirit revealed to you who you really are, and where Christ began to shine in the Gospel, because He enabled you to hear His voice? Oh, when that happens to you in church ... then it is as if time stands still.

Young friends, older ones, may I ask you this: how can it be that a birthday or a party often doesn't last long enough? And how can it be that, in church, under God's Word, it often takes far too long? Can you give an honest answer to this? Is that also your experience? And is this not a sad sign? Does it not reveal much about our hearts and the priorities of our lives?

One thing is certain: when God works through His Spirit, a deep desire for the Word will awaken in our heart, there will come a hunger and a thirst for the living God, there will come a desire for the testimony of God's Word which can make us wise unto salvation. Certainly, one of the first fruits of regeneration is love: love to God, love to His Word, love to His house, and love to His Day.

And so, boys and girls, do you like coming to church? Young people, are you eager to take your place under the Word? Are there times when you may experience that the Lord is speaking to you? Congregation, are there times when there is food for your soul? Do you, in the midst of all your soul's questions, come to church with a full expectation that the Lord will answer you? Dear congregation - remember the words of Paul in Romans 10, verse 17: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

But let us now turn to our second thought:

2. The Death of Eutychus

In the ninth verse of our chapter Luke focuses on just one member of the congregation: “And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.” Luke draws our attention to a young man in a full upper room, on the third floor of a building in the port of Troas. A young man is seated there whose name is Eutychus. The Greek word used for “young man” indicates that he would have been about eighteen years of age. Eutychus is a nice name - it means: he to whom something good will happen – or, the favoured one. And what a remarkable name in connection with this account: indeed, Eutychus is a very favoured young man ... this night something amazing will happen to him.

Eutychus, the favoured one. Maybe he was late getting to church that evening. He has had to work hard. And when he finally arrived, there was no room anymore; the meeting room in Troas was full. What would you expect him to do? Perhaps you think he might have returned home - 'someone is sitting in my place.' But no, not Eutychus: he chooses a place in the windowsill. Scripture says: “and there sat in a window”. Now we must not think of windows with glass like we have, no, these windows are just holes in the wall. And Eutychus is sitting in such a wall opening. No, he doesn't go home. He doesn't say: "It's much too uncomfortable and it takes far too long."

But during Paul's long sermon, he falls asleep. You must read carefully what it says. It says that he fell into a deep sleep. In his commentary, Matthew Henry says that he was overpowered by sleep – he fell asleep against his will. He wanted to be present, he wanted to listen, but he fell asleep. Remember the irregular seating arrangement, the heat from the many lamps, the smoky atmosphere, and the long sermon after a hard day's work. It is understandable, and it is also noteworthy that later Paul did not reprimand him for falling asleep.

But congregation, how is it with us? How do we sit under the preaching of the Word? The Devil can influence your listening so much. The Devil also goes to church - have you ever thought of that? The prince of darkness is the most regular church-goer that there is. He sees the church doors opening and is often the first one inside. He does his best to make your thoughts wander, doing all he can to prevent you from listening to God's Word. He tries to distract you ... and makes someone else fall asleep. The Devil is always in the church. He has just one goal, and that is to render the message of the living God powerless. He tries to fill our thoughts with other things; with our work or the cares of life: anything ... anything but the Gospel!

Congregation, are we vigilant under the Word? Or do you sleep when the pastor laments the

state of your heart, or when the sermon rings with the sweet sounds of the Gospel? Is your life in such a state that even the sweetest invitation to salvation doesn't arouse you and the most earnest expression of hell no longer frightens you? Maybe Christ must say of you: "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented" (Matthew 11:17). Oh, consider how you receive the Word of God: congregation – remember, consider, and repent!

Dear congregation, if you are unconverted, then you are asleep under God's Word. Then you are overpowered by the sleep of carelessness, the sleep of indifference ... the sleep of death. Oh, congregation, this spiritual slothfulness and this spiritual sleepiness will one day condemn you for all eternity. Because congregation, if we in our carelessness continue to sleep under the preaching of the Word, then we will fall much further and deeper than Eutychus. He fell to the ground from the third floor. But if we remain asleep, we will fall into outer darkness, we will fall from the lofty heights of pride to the depth of everlasting destruction. God's Word warns us earnestly! It says: "Watch and pray!"

There sits Eutychus - under the preaching of the Word. Nobody in the congregation sees him struggling to stay awake and nobody notices him falling asleep. Ever deeper he slumps further, and then, all of a sudden, he falls. Oh, how terrible; he falls from the third floor and plunges to the ground of the inner courtyard or street. A dull thud and a distressing cry tear the peaceful scene. Shock takes hold of the congregation.

Luke writes: "And was taken up dead." Oh, what an dreadful event! Just imagine it - take a look at the third floor of some complex. That is high, isn't it? And Eutychus fell from that height.

There lies Eutychus - dead on the ground. He died instantly. No, not as another Bible translation renders it: as if dead. After all, Luke was a physician. If anyone can ascertain death, then surely a doctor can. Luke was there in a flash ... and pronounced him dead.

Congregation, you can understand that this history is also a picture of our natural state. See Eutychus lying there on the street, a picture of you and me in our dead spiritual state; our state by nature - our state of death. By sin we have become unwilling and unable. We, through our own fault, are dead in trespasses and sins. We have torn ourselves away from the living God. We are fallen. Oh, the unspeakable depth of our fall in paradise! We have turned our backs on the Wellspring of Life and declared with the Gadarenes: "Depart from us" (Luke 8:37).

And now our life is pictured by Eutychus lying there. Dead. Spiritually dead through our own fault. Dead in trespasses and sins. Actively dead! We walk according to the course of this world and follow the lusts of our flesh.

Congregation, maybe an even better picture is to imagine yourselves asleep in a burning house. Oh young friends, just think about this for a moment. Even if you forget the entire sermon, please remember this: by nature we are fast asleep in a burning house. The flames are

getting nearer and nearer and in our fallen state we just lie there blissfully dreaming ... dreaming of a long life, rich possessions, a beautiful world, and many other things which we plan to get in this life. Dreaming, while the flames get closer and closer - asleep in a burning house. The picture of the dead Eutychus is you and I in our natural state.

But, in His mercy, the Lord still calls out to us: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Eph. 5:14). We must not only preach the terrible reality of our natural state of death, we must also preach it as being entirely our own fault. A dead man hears nothing, knows nothing. A dead man does not hunger or thirst. You can give the kindest encouragements or the most dire warnings - but he will not change at all. A dead man is cold and has no feelings. What an awful reality!

"But," asks the Catechism, "are we so corrupt that we are totally unable to do any spiritual good?" And the answer is "Yes, unless we are born again by the Spirit of God." Unless we are quickened and renewed by the resurrection power of Christ. And that is the miracle that the Lord is willing to work - through free and sovereign grace - through the preaching of the Word.

Maybe you say: "Yes, but -surely- the dead cannot hear?" Oh Yes, thankfully they can. Congregation, don't forget that Easter became reality! Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ His people will also live. They shall have eternal life. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John 5:25).

Under the preaching of the Word and through the power of the Holy Spirit the spiritually dead become alive in Christ. Has this wonder taken place in your life? That question can be answered! Rather, it needs to be answered! What is your answer? Has your answer brought you to the feet of Jesus?

Congregation, we must receive this miracle of grace shall it be well for eternity, but it is also possible to receive it; because of Easter and Pentecost it is possible for each of us.

Before we focus on our third thought - The Raising of Eutychus - we will first sing from Psalter 317:3-4

Psalter 317:3

*Tho' nations compass me about,
The swarming hosts of sin,
Yet in the Name of God the Lord
I shall the vict'ry win.
The Lord hath helped and kept me safe
When foes were fierce and strong;
The Lord my Saviour is become,
He is my strength and song.*

Verse 4

*Salvation's joyful song is heard
Where'er the righteous dwell;
For them God's hand is strong to save
And doeth all things well.
I shall not die, but live and tell
The wonders of the Lord;
He hath not giv'n my soul to death,
But chastened and restored.*

We are considering a Sunday Evening in Troas. We have heard something of the preaching of Paul and of the death of Eutychus. Now, in our third point we will consider:

3. The Raising of Eutychus

The Lord is about to perform a miracle, a sign to accompany the preaching of the Gospel. A wondrous miracle, for we read: "And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him."

It says: "And Paul went down". The apostle interrupts the sermon and he too hurries downstairs. Three flights down. He pushes some members of the congregation aside. There lies the motionless body of a young slave. The apostle bends over him. "And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him" - he embraced him.

In 1 Kings 17 we read how Elijah stretched himself upon the dead boy and his life returned unto him. And in 2 Kings 4 we read about Elisha stretching himself upon the dead child in Shunem. Maybe Paul thought of these two similar situations? He did the same thing that these two Old Testament prophets did. Paul firmly believed that God would perform a miracle through him. Paul's faith was strong. Later on, in his letter to the Hebrews, Paul writes that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Paul firmly believes that the Lord will glorify His own name through this terrible event. This is about God's honour!

People could have said: "Paul, it's all very well preaching for one and a half hours about life in the resurrected Christ, but what do you have to say now just look - there lies Eutychus" But, congregation ... both then, in Troas, as well as today: the Lord will take care of his own glory.

Paul implores the Lord and embraces the boy with a prayer of faith in his heart.

*Blest be the Lord Who daily our heavy burden bears;
The God of our salvation Who for His people cares.
Our God is near to help us, our God is strong to save:
The Lord alone is able to ransom from the grave. (Psalter 183)*

Paul's faith is a faith that conquers the world; the type of faith that can remove mountains. And in the exercise of this faith, Paul embraces the dead boy.

The congregation at Troas is in shock. This is quite something. Dear congregation, what would our reaction be if someone were to suddenly pass away during the celebration of the Holy Supper? We, too, would be in shock and very likely would not talk about anything else on the way home. But, here, in Troas the Lord is about to work a miracle: the raising of Eutychus.

"Trouble not yourselves", says Paul, "for his life is in him." Paul says, as it were, that Eutychus is alive – he was dead, but is alive again. His soul, his life has returned.

Paul is speaking by faith. He is fully persuaded and convinced that God works miracles. Once more, the Lord grants life to Eutychus.

"His life is in him." His heart starts beating again. His blood flows once more. His eyes open. What an incredible miracle, what a glorious miracle, what a God-glorifying miracle!

"His life is in him." God revived Eutychus by means of His servant, Paul. The Lord clearly shows here that He is the God of life. In Troas, on the first day of the week, the living Christ showed that He is the true Life. That served as a confirmation of Paul's preaching, a confirmation of the miracle of the truth of God's Word.

Oh, it has been shown here that there is One Who is stronger than death, stronger than the state of death in sin, stronger than all impossibilities. Here the Prince of Life Who stood up from the sepulchre on the first day of the week, demonstrates that He is Jesus Christ, the Prince of Life, the Fountain of Life. He who was sent by the Father to this accursed earth, and he who was engaged in the struggle on Golgotha, has conquered death and hell.

The glorious victory of Christ is typified on this Lord's Day evening. He is the exalted One at the right hand of the Father. He has the victory over death. Here in Troas He proved: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). "I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore. Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:17-18). Here Christ proves that His Word, the Word that is still preached today, is the Truth.

And, congregation, know that He is still willing to take the spiritually dead and raise them up to life. And He especially does this under the preaching of His Word, on the first day of the

week, when the church meets together. So, dear congregation, never leave your place empty in church for, also today, Christ still applies the meaning and efficacy of His resurrection to sinners.

The Catechism states that "By His resurrection He has overcome death, so that He might make us share in the righteousness He obtained for us by His death." And so, congregation, by this power He revives His Church to a new life. The resurrection of Christ is a sure pledge of the glorious resurrection of His Church.

The Prince of Life demonstrated in Troas that He is the Almighty One. The Lord is pleased to repeat this throughout all ages. That is why the dead are revived by the preaching of the Word. Because Christ obtained eternal life for His people, He will revive them from their spiritual death.

Congregation, it still pleases the Lord to work that quickening wonder, the miracle of a new creation, the raising from the dead. This sovereign and Divine miracle, which is spoken of so wonderfully in Scripture, and which God works in us without our aid, He still works among us and our children. He causes the spiritually dead to stand up from the sinner's grave. The all-important question for us is: are you dead or are you favored with life? Have you experienced the words from Ephesians 2 in your own heart: "And you hath he quickened"?

Do you know that life which flows from Him, that life of faith? Do the words of the apostle John resonate in your heart when he says: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3)?

The congregation of Troas saw that Eutychus was revived. Also today, people will take notice if a sinner is quickened unto new life. The marks of grace will become noticeable. The mark of Godly sorrow. When the Lord works in the heart of a sinner, a hunger and a thirst after righteousness, a hunger and a thirst after the surety-righteousness of Christ, will become evident. As it says in Psalm 42: "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God."

Oh, then that precious faith is born in the heart. Through the convicting work of the Holy Spirit a quickened soul will learn to die to self and everything outside of Christ; the quickened soul will learn to seek life only in Him, the Prince of Life. Congregation, do you know something of that life in Christ - by faith? If that is the case, then nothing but the righteousness which has been merited by Christ will satisfy! Congregation, do you experience the hunger that the life of faith characterizes?

Luke adds two more details. He writes: "When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed." Paul returns to the upper room and he continues the meeting. He does not suggest that, after all that has transpired, everyone should go home. No, he continues to talk with them about the miracle God has just wrought. And after all these things, the Lord's Supper is held.

The bread is broken in Troas that night. The bread – the image of the precious body of the Lord Jesus Christ. The bread is broken for God's children in Troas, it is given by Paul as God's minister, and it is eaten in faith.

What would have gone on in the hearts of the congregation in Troas? They must have been amazed! Luke writes: "and they were not a little comforted." Comforted beyond measure by the preaching of the Word, by the celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and by the miraculous resurrection of Eutychus. Comforted by the visible signs of God's might, God's love, God's majesty and God's grace. That grace strengthens more than the choicest food!

Then the apostle departs. The morning light shines through the windows of that upper room in the port of Troas. Paul lays the blessing on the congregation and "so he departed." While Paul travelled onward, in the direction of Jerusalem, the congregation of Troas stayed behind, not in sorrow, but strengthened beyond measure.

God's children in Troas experienced a very special night. They have been strengthened in the faith, by the Word and by the Sacrament, but also by the miracle they were given to witness. Comforted beyond measure. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God" (Isaiah 40:1). Surely, the congregation of Troas must have rejoiced and marvelled at the works of God in their midst.

What a rich and merciful blessing if it is true in our hearts: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35). "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

Through the administration of the Lord's Supper God's children were given a foretaste of the eternal Sabbath. There God's children will be fully and perfectly comforted– that is what life in heaven will be. We read of Lazarus: "but now he is comforted" (Luke 16:25). Comforted beyond measure! In heaven the Church will sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In heaven the Church will see Him, Who merited eternal life for them; they will behold Him Who gave them that eternal life, forever. Then, in heaven, God's children will eternally adore the Lamb Who saved them from their sins.

Congregation, in heaven, salvation will never be interrupted by sleep or death, but death will be swallowed up by eternal victory. There God's children will always be with their Lord.

Their joy shall then unbounded be who see God's face eternally, their heart's desire receiving!
(Psalter 420)

Congregation, it is time to go home. Together, we were privileged to consider an

unforgettable church service on the Lord's Day in Troas! And, congregation, the God Who worked a miracle on that day in Troas ... some two thousand years ago ... the same God still lives today! Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and unto all eternity. Christ still lives and still brings to life - also today!

May the words spoken be of comfort to a father and mother who do not know how their wandering child can ever be saved. May these words be an encouragement to boys or girls in the church who have become aware of their stoney heart - a heart that is so cold and so dead. May these words speak to a child who has become knowledgeable of his or her own state of enmity and death. Seek salvation in the gathering of the congregation, under the preaching of the Word of God. Plead for a miracle. Remember that the God of Paul and Eutychus still does miracles. Seek salvation in prayer and in the reading of God's Word. Be busy with your salvation. *"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon (Is 55: 7).*

Today, with many shortcomings, we have placed before you death and life. Death in Adam and life in Christ. Oh, congregation, seek the Lord and live!

Blessed are you, if, through faith, you can say with God's children: *For God, (that is the God of Eutychus), as our own God forever will abide, and till life's journey close in death will be our faithful Guide (Psalter 134).*

This is the comfort of God's children. They have been quickened in Christ. So often they are dead in themselves, but Jesus is their Prince of Life. And he who believes in Him shall live, even though he was dead. Oh, congregation, there is nothing more precious than that blessed eternal life! Wherefore comfort ye one another with these words from John 14 verse 19: "because I live, ye shall live also."

Amen.