

To put it in a nutshell, Christ came to die that we might live, and the devil, blissfully ignorant of God's design, obliged Him by acting in character. By the nature of the victory that Satan sought, he engineered his own defeat. As St. Paul points out, if the rulers of this fallen age had a clue to what God was up to **“they would not have crucified the Lord of glory”** (1 Cor. 2:8). But they didn't have a clue. They walked straight into the mother of all practical jokes. In his High Noon showdown with God, Satan the cosmic thug and bully drew his ultimate weapon with a smirk and a flourish, but when he pulled the trigger it blew him to smithereens!

That's why in heaven there is laughing aloud.

—Brooks Alexander (2002)



## We See The Lord

(1) We see the Lord, we see the Lord,  
He is high and lifted up and his train fills the temple, (2X)  
The angels cry: Holy! (2X) The angels cry Holy is the Lord!

(2) We see the Lord, we see the Lord,  
His face shines forth as a light in the temple; (2X)  
The seraphs cry: Worthy! (2X)  
The seraphs cry: Worthy is the Lord!

(3) We hear the Lord, we hear the Lord,  
His word issues forth and resounds thru' the temple; (2X)  
The elders cry: Amen! (2X) The elders cry: Amen, it is so!

(4) We bless the Lord, we bless the Lord,  
As incense goes up, so our prayers fill the temple; (2X)  
The people cry: Glory! (2X) The people cry: Glory to the Lord!

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

Old Orchard Church  
Fifth Sunday after Easter  
May 2, 2010—10:15 to 11:45 a.m.

*I will declare your name to my brothers;  
in the congregation I will praise you.*

*Psalm 22:22*

## *Celebrating Jesus Christ as the Resurrection Community of Praise*

Praise the Lord!

Easter morning was the first day of a new creation!

Christ is risen, Death has been conquered!

All who have bowed before Jesus,  
Who trust in the power of his dying  
To be the death of their guilt,  
Are made children of the resurrection,  
Partakers of an indestructible life.

Whoever has tasted truly  
Of the powers of the age to come,  
Sings from the heart:  
Refrains of relief, carols of gladness!

The Pleasure of all that is to come  
Tunes our tongue,  
And our inward joys arise  
And turn into a song!  
Praise the Lord!



### *Today's Scripture*

Old Testament Lesson: Psalm 98

Epistle Lesson: I Corinthians 15:1-11

### *Sermon Series on Matthew*

#### Sermon

“The ‘E’ Word”

Matthew 28:16-20

*Mark Tucker, Associate Pastor, preaching*

## *Praise and Laughter*

Never let it be said that God lacks a sense of humor. If puns are the lowest form of humor, irony is surely one of the highest. The dictionary says that irony is a form of humor "based on acts or events that produce results opposite to those intended or expected," as in, it's ironic that the firehouse burned down. Irony can also be a comedic version of tragedy. Both are based on a reversal of circumstances, in which the mighty are brought low by their own weaknesses—but with different effects on the audience. When Macbeth falls into ruin because of his own ambition, we feel sorrow and pity. When the snob who holds his nose so far in the air that he can't see the banana peel at his feet falls on his rump because of his own snootiness, we feel pleasure and satisfaction. Everyone loves to see the stuffy come unstuffed and the pompous get deflated, especially when they do it to themselves. When wrong provokes its own undoing, justice elevates irony to cosmic humor, and laughter ascends to the level of mystical insight.

The works of God throughout the Bible are infused with that kind of irony. Noah, despised and derided, secured the survival of the human race; his despisers and deriders, too smart for their own good, did not survive. Solomon, blessed with Wisdom beyond measure, was unable to live wisely himself. The king of Babylon who exalted himself above the stars was reduced to the condition of a beast in the field. Scripture's larger lessons, too, are ironic: the arrogance of man results in degradation; the power of man produces calamity; the pride of man inexorably ends in shame.

But all those historical ironies are just echoes of the thunderous irony at the center of the universe itself, i.e., the gospel. The stunning irony of the gospel lies in its simultaneous double "reversal of fortune." Christ wins in seeming defeat while Satan loses in apparent victory—all in the selfsame events.

The gospel hoists the devil on his own petard in dramatic and astonishing fashion. Satan sought to win his contest with God by eliminating God's savior. Death is the devil's ultimate weapon, and he used it with all of its brutal finality to snuff out Christ when he came in the flesh. "No savior, no salvation" was Satan's way of thinking. Jesus was the beachhead of God's invasion of history. If Satan could just get rid of Jesus, he could stop the invasion in its tracks and toss God out of history forever. Having the power of death in his hand, the devil mobilized the evil in fallen man and battered the body of Jesus into a bloody corpse, thus thwarting (so he thought) God's plan.

Only then did he discover that in fact he had fulfilled God's plan. He had done the one thing needed to guarantee God's victory and seal his own defeat: direct the full force of our fallen hatred against God's coming in Christ. Too late he discovered that by doing so he had assembled, directed, and delivered to God in one neat package all the concentrated hostility that Christ came specifically to receive and bear, and thereby to neutralize. In trying to shut God out of the fallen world, Satan instead had flung open the door to God's presence. Talk about having your schemes backfire!

*—Continued on the back*