

# Easter Day 2024 April Beckerleg

## Mark 16.1-8

### 1 Corinthians 15.1-11

He has been raised. He is not here. The women fled in terror, they said nothing to anyone. The End

What? Is that it? The women fled in terror and said nothing to anyone? What kind of an ending is that? And so the Gospel writer rolls up the scroll and exits,

How frustrating, how disappointing, how unsettling. Certainly the early church, couldn't cope with such uncertainty, so tacked on a couple of extra endings to make everyone happy. Whereas, the brilliance of the Gospel writer, I think, is that he knew exactly what he was doing.

Mark doesn't give us a mysterious gardener, or a stranger on the road who explains everything to dull witted disciples. Mark refuses to give us the conquering hero returning to power, the kind of neat tied up ending, when we close the pages and smile- the resolution which sends us out of the cinemas satisfied, when we all go ahh, that's alright then.

but that is the kind of ending that keeps the story inside the book – and that is the last thing Mark wanted to do.

So what does Mark gives us? a moment of wordless bewilderment, of disorientation, of challenge and the most wonderful promise

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Of course the story teller is winking at us even as he rolls up the scroll and prepares to walk away, do we want to stop him? grab his sleeve, That's not the end we say, the women **did** find the words we say, they did tell that story, the story of living a risen life,

we all know that we are all here only because of what they said, you can't end it there we say.

And the Gospel writer turns, and smiles, ahh he says, I was hoping you'd say that. Can we pause for a moment, to notice how the Gospel writer has led us to this empty tomb?

Mark uses the same word egeiro (iggayero)– rise, risen arise, 19 times – which in a book with 16 chapters is pretty startling really. So far from missing out the resurrection appearances, you could say, rather than being confined to a single moment in the last chapter, we find the risen life soaked through every page of the Gospel story,

Might we learn through Mark that resurrection isn't a 'thing' over there that happened once 2k years ago. Instead we are asked to participate, to find the risen life in the place we are now, in uncertainty, in our unknowing, yes, but also of promise, of beauty, of love and of wonder?

How can we comprehend this? Where can we catch a glimpse of this enormity?

One of those places is here, as we gather at the Eucharistic table, Perhaps this sacrament gives us a place to allow for bewildering strangeness of the Easter Dawn - We are invited to this table this morning to that moment of recognition, to enter into the mystery of the risen Christ, to consume the bread and the wine, the body and the blood, Perhaps the Eucharist is an opportunity for us to wonder, to be struck again at the magnitude of this deepest connection to eternal love and life

He has been raised. He is not here.

By leaving the ending as it is, the Gospel writer invites us to notice where the resurrected life breaks through, in moments, those encounters often when we aren't even looking, that catch us by surprise, the love and grace and everyday moments of healing and exquisite beauty we can all find, if only we can open our eyes to see them – is that the risen life Jesus came to show us?

Are we afraid to be plunged into that place of unknowing – the loss of certainty, of losing what we know or thought we know, which is disorientating, unsettling, bewildering - and thrilling and inspiring

Can we allow ourselves to be bewildered by the Risen Christ? Mark does not give us a Jesus we can possess, Instead of having it all figured out, Mark says the presence of the risen Christ is not something we can capture, contain, confine or even fully describe

But the Gospel does point us in the right direction, Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee – to the place where it all began, the place they called home, the place where Jesus was found ministering, teaching, healing, in the midst of the people. That is where the disciples are sent – back home. That is where they will encounter the risen Christ. Not in trumpets and golden glory and unending celebration – the risen Christ is not out there, distant, and remote but here and now in each of us and in every person we meet.

Mark offers us not a tied off ending, and the satisfaction of a completed distant tale, a long time ago in a galaxy far far away, but an ever present, continuing, unfolding story of possibilities and potential - we are invited to participate, to be drawn in to this beguiling story, which is both familiar and strange, both deeply rooted in our very being and freshly experienced each new moment, this is not about a moral code, good works, but a change of heart, a letting go, a living a life of promise and abundance – we are asked to be expectant, to be awake, ready and alive, ready to notice Christ in the everyday, to be included in the ongoing story of living the risen life.

And for those of you waiting for a touch of poetry, well it could only be T S Eliot, who captures this with his usual profound elegance

*We will not cease from our exploration/and the end of all our exploring/will be to arrive where we started/and know the place for the first time*

Alleluia! Christ is Risen! He is risen indeed!