TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader /Opening Prayer by: Ken Coleman

Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#346 He Lives
#344 Low In the Grave He Lay

Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard
#180 Jesus Is Lord
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#300 Praise Him! Praise Him!
Sermon: "The Meaning of the Resurrection "
1 Corinthians 15:12-20

#947 Jesus Is Tenderly Calling
#648 Stand up, Stand Up for Jesus

Closing Prayer by: Tommy Cary

Tonight is our
3rd Sunday Evening
Singing

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

April 17, 2022

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

He Has Risen!

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. – **Mark 16:1-8**

The best ancient manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark do not contain the last dozen verses that appear in our modern editions. Your Bible probably even has a footnote that mentions some end the text right here. One possible explanation for this is that the original ending of Mark's account was lost: he wrote more after v. 8, probably including resurrection appearances and meeting with the apostles that are alluded to here and included in the other Gospels. Somehow, early in the transmission process, that last bit was torn away from the scroll, that last page misplaced, and some well-meaning scribe thought the story was incomplete without those things. So he added a summary of what the other reports of Jesus' life say to bring things to a proper close.

The other possibility is that Mark ended his gospel here by design, with that paragraph above. But that seems strange, doesn't it? The women leave the empty tomb afraid. They keep silent rather than fulfilling the command to go and tell what they've seen. Jesus himself does not appear again on the scene at all. If this abrupt and puzzling non-ending was indeed the original conclusion, it's no wonder someone tacked on a bit more.

I believe this was precisely Mark's intention. So the obvious question is why? What point is he trying to convey to us? Let's think our way through the text to help answer that.

Saturday evening at sundown—when the Sabbath ended—three women go to buy spices. These same three are mentioned in the previous chapter as witnesses of the crucifixion, and two of them saw where the tomb was. They intend to finish what was started on Friday afternoon, completing the process of Jesus' burial. Those spices would not only honor his body, they would also mask the smell of decay. In accordance with the custom of the day, the body would be placed on a shelf in the tomb until it had completely decomposed; the bones would then be gathered and placed in an ossuary. But the time they made their purchase, it was already dark, so they intended to go first thing Sunday morning.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Joe Edd Stifflemire is taking chemo treatments.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Harold & Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Frank & Tina Garcia, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Gary Nielsen, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Minister meeting Monday, Apr. 18th at 5:30 p.m.

We will have a fellowship meal on Wednesday, Apr. 20th at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Thursday, April 21st at 8:00 a.m.

We will have a fellowship meal on Sunday evening Apr. 24th at 5:00 p.m. in the family life center.

A brown box has been placed in the foyer for suggestions as to Deacons, and will be there until Sunday, April 24th..

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Daniel Balch	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Danny Balch	
Don Taylor		
Robert Ward		

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Office Phone Number (936) 336-2213; Fax (936) 334-8280;
Minister's (Bryant Perkins) Cell Phone Number (903)407-5737
Website: libertycofc.org Facebook page: Liberty Church of Christ

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But when they arrived, they were shocked: the stone had already been rolled away. That in itself was surprising because it was massive—there was a reason they were worried about that in advance. But the greater surprise came when they entered the tomb: instead of the body of Jesus, they find a young man, dressed in white, likely sitting where Jesus' body had been laying. They are naturally alarmed, but he tells them not to be afraid: *You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here.*

He has risen! That is wonderful news, a message that needs to be proclaimed! The women are commissioned to do just that, to share it with all of Jesus' followers. Peter is likely singled out not only because of his role as the de facto leader of the Twelve, but especially because of his need for restoration after denying Jesus. They are to tell them to meet Jesus in Galilee, the place where he spent the bulk of his ministry, the place where they were called. They were to go back to the beginning, in a sense, so they could be prepared for the next steps.

But the women to not do that. In shock, they rush home without saying a word to anyone. *For they were afraid.* That is where the text ends, and it leaves us scratching our heads. If we only had Mark's account, we might wonder if they ever got over their fear and announced the resurrection, or if Peter and the others ever saw Jesus alive. Of course, we know the answers from the other Gospels. But for Mark, why not go ahead and tell all of that, the way that the others do? Why leave with such uncertainty, on a note of terror and failure?

It's worth noting that this sort of enigmatic ending is fitting for Mark. There is mystery and awe surrounding Jesus throughout the story. Characters repeatedly ask, "Who is this?" As readers, we are left to answer that question. I believe that is what is happening here, too.

The women responded wrongly—in fact, they are wrong throughout the entire chapter: they prepared for anointing a body that was already gone; they worried about moving a stone that had already been rolled away; they responded to the angel with alarm, and he told them immediately do not be alarmed; he gave them a message to tell, and they did not tell it. Instead, they are afraid, and where there is fear, there is not yet faith, as Jesus told the 12 **(Mk 4:40).**

But let's not be too harsh on these women. In their failure, they are only becoming like the apostles. Peter confesses that he will follow even to death, but he cannot accept that Jesus will die. James and John ask to be at Jesus' right and left hand, but they are not ready to drink the cup. Unlike them, the women have been faithful all the way to the cross and the tomb. But here, entrusted with the resurrection message, their faith fails.

At this point, everyone who has followed Jesus has proved to be faithless. The question the story leaves hanging is: what about us? How will we respond? At the precipice of the incomplete story in which all have failed, we are faced with a decision to make. Will we go to Galilee and meet him? Will we be willing to follow him, to obey him, to pick up our cross? Will we go and tell the good news? Or will we stand there afraid, inactive, even fleeing in terror?

You see, how the story continues depends on us.

Bryant Perkins