

# Good News that you can believe

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning on this Easter Sunday morning.

And I want to start slightly differently this morning by reading a verse, one of the verses that we'll zoom in on in the passage that we'll study this morning from Mark 16.

And the scene is on that first Easter Sunday morning, the scene is that the three women that we'll see in the course of our studies, they come to the place where Jesus, his body had been laid after he died for our sin.

And they're met by an angel. And the angel says to them, you're looking for Jesus, the Nazarene, who was crucified.

He has risen. And that's our hope and that's our encouragement and that's our joy and that's the central focus of everything on this Easter Sunday morning.

[ 1 : 21 ] We remember the fact that he has risen. And so let us pray as we think on that. Our heavenly father, we thank you for this Easter Sunday morning.

We thank you for all that we celebrate, all that we remember. The fact that Jesus, your son, our savior, not only did he die for our sin, but he rose from the dead and promises that resurrection life to all who believe in him.

So help us, Lord, we pray as we come as these women first came and as we look in on all that Jesus has done for us.

Help us, Lord, we pray to see clearly the glory of Jesus and the wonder, the love, the hope of the gospel. Help us, we pray to celebrate the fact that Jesus Christ has risen.

And we pray all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Just by way of intimation, before we sing, can I say, first of all, that the service this evening will be online just before 6 p.m.

[ 2 : 39 ] We're looking at Mark 16 this morning, which is a continuation. We bring our studies and Mark's gospel to a conclusion today. And this evening, we're going to return to the Psalms and we'll look at Psalm 118, the service, which will be online and on the telephone just before 6 p.m.

this evening. Also, the Youth Fellowship will meet as usual and they will be given details by WhatsApp chat about that. And also to say that the prayer meeting will be on this coming Wednesday at half past 7 p.m.

The usual time we'll meet on Zoom. And this Wednesday, we'll have a word of encouragement shared as Gordon Thompson from the Faith Mission, who was with us just a few weeks ago, will open God's word and share it with us.

So be encouraged to come along to that meeting also. And I will sing to God's praise. We'll sing from that well-known hymn, that hymn that takes us through the gospel and underlines the wonder of all that Christ has done for us.

In Christ alone, my hope is fine. He is my light, my strength, my song. This cornerstone, this solid grind, firm through the fiercest drought and storm. What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease, my comforter, my all in all.

[ 3 : 56 ] Here in the love of Christ I stand. And we'll sing the whole of this hymn to God's praise. In Christ alone, my hope is found.

He is my light, my strength, my song. This cornerstone, this solid ground, firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

What heights of love, what depths of peace, when fears are stilled, when strivings cease, my comforter, my all in all.

Here in the love of Christ I stand. In Christ alone, who took on flesh, fullness of God in helpless babe.

This gift of love and righteousness, scorned by the ones he came to save.

[ 5 : 31 ] Till on that cross, as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied. For every sin on him was laid.

Here in the death of Christ I live. There in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground his body lay, light of the world by darkness slain.

Then bursting forth in glorious day, up from the grave he rose again. And as he stands in victory, sin's curse has lost its grip on me.

For I am his, and he is mine, brought with the precious blood of Christ.

[ 6 : 47 ] No guilt in life, no fear in death.

This is the power of Christ in me. From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.

No power of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from his hand.

To end this hall believing in angel dog, this Reedus came, await of war flux, To end room by waking his heart, this God crossed my lap hard trying to advance, Here in the power of Christ I'll stand Boys and girls, it's good to have you here today, or not here today, but it's good to have you behind that screen today.

And today is a special day, isn't it? We started by saying that it's not only Sunday, it's Easter Sunday morning. And so it's a different kind of a day.

[ 8 : 39 ] You'll be doing some different things, I imagine, on Easter Sunday. This afternoon, I imagine you might have some of these kind of things, some Easter eggs.

These are tiny little ones, but hopefully you'll have bigger ones than these. And you'll have that for your pudding after you have your dinner. And maybe at some point today, maybe you've done it already, but maybe you'll do it later in the day.

You'll take an egg that you've decorated, something like this. Can you see that okay? So there's an egg that's been decorated. That's something that we quite often do on Easter Sunday morning.

We hard boil our eggs. We draw some pictures on them. We decorate them. And these are decorated in different ways. And then we, what do we do?

Well, we go to the top of a hill and we take our eggs and we roll them down the hill. It's one of the traditions of Easter. I don't know if you've ever thought about why we do that.

[ 9 : 42 ] I don't know if you've maybe thought about why we have eggs and why we eat chocolate eggs at Easter time. And the answer is, it's to remind us.

We need reminders for different things. And these eggs that we eat and these eggs that we roll, especially the eggs that we roll, it's a reminder for us, not of an egg, but it's a reminder of us of a huge stone that was rolled away.

Remember, in the account of Jesus, his death and then his rising from the dead, we have this and we'll read this in just a wee while.

And you can stay listening for this. Now, these three ladies, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome, they were heading to the place where Jesus' body was laid, the tomb.

And they had seen Jesus on Friday and they saw him with their own eyes dying on the cross to take away our sin. But on Sunday morning, these same women who so loved Jesus, they came to the tomb, the place that they knew that Jesus' body had been put.

[ 10 : 58 ] And they were expecting to see this huge stone, this heavy, heavy stone that would be blocking the door and keeping the door of the tomb locked into position.

And they actually said to each other when they were going along, how are we going to roll the stone away to get into the place where Jesus' body is? And they didn't know how they were going to do that. And they probably weren't thinking all that straight because they were so sad.

But when they got to the place where Jesus' body had been laid, when they got to that tomb, they saw that the big, huge stone wasn't covering the door.

It wasn't locking everything in position. It had been rolled away. Just like we take an egg and we roll it down the hill, this stone had been rolled away.

Now, here's the question, boys and girls. I wish I could ask you this and you could answer me because it'd be interesting to hear what you would say. Why do you think the stone was rolled away?

[ 12 : 00 ] Do you think it was so that Jesus, who was dead but had risen, do you think it was so that Jesus could actually get out of the tomb?

Well, that might be what we would think first of all, but actually that's not the right answer. The stone was rolled away so that the woman could get into the tomb.

See, we could go to John chapter 20 and we see in John chapter 20 in two different places that Jesus, he didn't need doors to be opened for him to walk through.

He could walk through locked doors. He could enter rooms that were absolutely locked tight and he would just appear with his new resurrection body. So a big door locking the tomb would have been no problem for him to get through.

See, the stone was rolled away. So that the woman could get into the tomb. Because they needed to get into the tomb to see that Jesus' body wasn't there.

[ 13 : 11 ] And they needed to get into the tomb so that they could hear with their ears that Jesus had been risen from the dead. And then having seen with their own eyes and heard this amazing message from the angel with their own ears, they could go and tell others this great news about Jesus.

The fact that he loved us so much that he died to take our sin away. And then the fact that he rose from the dead so that we could have everlasting life.

So boys and girls, when you're eating your chocolate eggs today, and maybe when you're rolling your decorated eggs down the hill, remember the stone that was rolled away.

So that we could hear the amazing news that Jesus is risen from the dead. We'll pray about that now.

Lord God, we thank you again for this amazing news. We keep saying it, we keep hearing it, because it's the best news that there ever was or could be.

[ 14 : 21 ] We thank you again for this amazing news that you have been doing this amazing news that you have been doing this. We thank you, Lord Jesus, for how much you loved us, that you went to the cross on that Friday to pay the price for our sin, to wash our hearts clean.

And yet we thank you that death could not hold you. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that you burst out of that tomb, that you rose from the dead.

And your promise is that anyone who believes in you will share in that abundant, that full, that everlasting life that you have and that you offer to us.

So help us, Lord, we pray, boys and girls, mums and dad, grannies, shenners, everybody who's listening, help us, we pray, to have the faith to believe, as these women did.

And then to have the courage to tell the good news about Jesus to the people that we know and that we love. And we ask all these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

[ 15 : 27 ] We'll not sing, we'll read now again in God's word and we'll read from the passage that we glanced at just earlier, Mark chapter 16.

And we'll read the first eight verses of that chapter. Mark chapter 16, verses 1 to verse 8. This is God's word.

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.

Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in white in a white robe, sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

[ 16 : 35 ] Don't be alarmed, he said. You're looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

But go, tell his disciples and Peter. He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.

Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us. Again, let's bow for a moment in prayer.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you once more for your word. Lord, we thank you that all that we read of here gives us such hope and such an assurance of your love for us.

[ 17 : 41 ] We thank you for the gospel story. The fact that you are the God who loved us so much that you would not leave us in our sin. But Lord Jesus, you came into this world, taking on our flesh.

And we thank you that you were faithful. You were obedient to the will of the Father. In so far as not only did you come to this world with a message of hope, but through going to the cross, taking our sin upon yourself and dying in our place.

You, Lord Jesus, are indeed our hope. In Christ alone, our hope is found. And we thank you for the truth of that and the assurance of that.

And we thank you, Lord, for the joy that we have as we think about the resurrection. It's the means through which the stamp of God's approval is put on all that Christ came to do.

As he died on the cross, he proclaimed, it is finished. And we thank you that as Jesus rose from the dead, there was that clear evidence in history that the price had been paid.

[ 19 : 02 ] The wages of sin had been paid for. Death was finished. The door to hell was closed for all those who believe.

And the way into heaven was opened. So, Lord, we thank you for this message of hope and this message of love. Give us faith, we pray, that we may take hold of it and believe it and share it as we are called to.

And even though we read there in the passage of the women who were trembling and bewildered, we thank you that that's not how they stayed. But we thank you that today we're given courage to go and tell the gospel message.

And we thank you that that message has travelled over time and over continents and is with us today. So help us, we pray, to believe and to know your hope within us.

We pray for all other congregations that meet as we do. And we ask that you would be at work amongst them as we pray that you would be at work in our own hearts and lives.

[ 20 : 14 ] We pray for those who are in need just now, in particular need. And we bring them to you in prayer. For those who are sick, for those, Lord, who are struggling in hospital beds, we bring them to you in prayer.

And for those whom we have prayed for in past days who are making progress, Lord, we thank you that you hear our prayers. We are called to pray for those in authority and we pray on for our Prime Minister.

We thank you that he is responding well physically to the treatment he's receiving. And so, Lord, as we have prayed for his physical needs, we pray for his spiritual needs.

We ask, Lord, for his soul, that he may know his need of Christ and that he may turn to Christ and that he may call us as a nation to return to Christ.

We pray for those, Lord, who are in their homes, who feel lonely, who feel vulnerable. And we ask that they would know your presence, that they would know your peace.

[ 21 : 14 ] We pray for those who are on the front line, who are providing care in hospitals and in care homes. We ask for your protection, Lord, over them.

For nurses who go from home to home caring for those who are ill, we ask, Lord, that you would equip them and uphold them at this difficult time.

We pray for those who serve us in shops and to serve us as we go to get fuel for our cars and these different things.

They put themselves, Lord, in a place of danger. And yet, Lord, we thank you for all that they do.

And we pray your protection over them also. And we ask that they would know your peace as they may feel anxiety as they head out to work morning by morning.

So hear our prayers, Lord, for all those in particular need. And help us now as we turn once more to your word. Give us understanding. Give us that sense of your presence with us.

[ 22 : 17 ] And speak to us, Lord, we pray. Open our ears and our eyes that we may see Jesus. And we ask all this in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake.

Amen. If you could open your Bibles now, please, at Mark chapter 16. And we'll look at the first eight verses of this chapter.

Now, just before I put pen to paper in preparing this sermon, I scanned the news headlines. And one of the headlines that caught my eye on the day that I was preparing, I think it was on Thursday, was that a tiger had tested positive for coronavirus.

And I didn't read the story. I didn't go into the details of it. But I have to say the question that came into my mind immediately when I saw the headline is, is that correct?

Is that right? Is that story true? And maybe for some, that's the question that you approach the Easter story with. You know it.

[ 23 : 25 ] You've perhaps read it many times and been taught it since Sunday school. But the question that you may be wrestling with at this point in your life is, is this true?

And I want to begin today's message by saying, yes, it is true. This is a story that Mark presents to us. It's an account that Mark presents to us that I believe to be authentic.

And that's the first point for the sermon today. Authentic. This is an account that is authentic.

Sinclair Ferguson, one of the commentators on this gospel, in his book, he writes of this chapter and he says, Mark's account of the discovery of the resurrection of Jesus bears all the characteristics of an authentic report.

It is a psychological as well as moral impossibility that the early church manufactured these verses. And to my mind, that makes perfect sense what he's saying.

[ 24 : 31 ] If you were going to manufacture a story, if you were making this up, then you wouldn't present an account like this. Think first of all about the witnesses that Mark brings to our attention immediately.

As we see the story of the resurrection breaking, the witnesses, the first witnesses that are presented to us, they were women. In verse one, it says, Now you might say, well, why is that a problem?

And for us, it isn't a problem. But this, remember, was first century Palestine. And at that time in that place, the testimony of a woman did not hold weight.

It was inadmissible in a court of law. That's just the culture. That's the age that they were living in.

So if you were making this up, and you were hoping to persuade people that this story was a true story, then you would look for witnesses that were reliable and influential.

You would look for witnesses to give credence to your story. If you were looking to persuade people of an account that you'd manufactured, then you would bring in some big guns.

[ 25 : 58 ] You would bring in some names of influential, well-respected men. Those who could verify the claims you were making.

But you would not cite Mary Magdalene, the woman who had been demon-possessed, and Mary, the mother of James and Salome. These are witnesses that you would not bring to the stand if you were making this up.

And then think about, secondly under this section, the weakness of the believers. Because, again, this account that presents to us these early believers, they are presented to us in very stark terms. Very early in the morning, verse 2, on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb, and they asked each other, who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?

And I want to just say that everything about this casts the early believers in a poor light. In Jesus' final days of ministry, what is it that he had said repeatedly?

[ 27 : 11 ] Well, he repeatedly said that he would suffer, and that he would die, and that he would rise.

And we see that in Mark chapter 8 and 9 and 10. Mark 8, 31, Jesus predicts his death. It says, And then Mark chapter 9, Jesus predicts his death a second time.

He, that's Jesus, was teaching his disciples. He said to them, The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him. And after three days, he will rise.

And then Mark chapter 10, there's the third time that Jesus predicts his death and resurrection.

Again, he, Jesus, this is verse 32, took the twelve aside and told them what was going to happen to him.

We are going to Jerusalem, he said, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand them over to the Gentiles, who will mock him, spit on him, flog him, and kill him.

[ 28 : 38 ] Three days later, he will rise. That was Jesus' teaching. And it was plain, it was crystal clear.

The fact that he would suffer, and he goes into details there, on how he would suffer. And they could look back over the last few days and see how, what Jesus predicted in terms of the suffering came absolutely true.

And he taught them that he would die and they with their very own eyes, filled with tears, had seen him die. But then Jesus taught that three days later, he would rise.

And this was now three days later in the account that we have here. And here we have these women. So we might ask the question, if we were just coming in to this fresh, how do we find the women here?

Are they running in the direction of the tomb? Are they full of hope and expectation? Are their heads up? Are they expecting to see the risen Christ? And the answer is no.

[ 29 : 56 ] Their heads are down. They're dragging their feet. They are full of grief. They are carrying spices. Verse one, did you notice that?

So they can anoint Jesus' dead body. And they are at a loss as to how they will be able to roll away the stone that sealed the tomb where Jesus' body was laid.

So, this is hardly a story of great strength of faith on the part of these women. They'd seen Jesus suffer.

They had seen Jesus die. And they, we presume, through the disciples, knew that Jesus would rise. But as they come to the tomb, they're not expecting resurrection.

But let's not be too hard on the women because at least they were at the tomb. And they were there because they loved Jesus. J.C. Ryle says, these holy women had tasted of our Lord's pardoning mercies.

[ 31 : 02 ] Their hearts were full of gratitude to him for light and hope and comfort and peace. They were willing to risk all consequences in testifying their affection to their Savior.

So, let's not be hard on these women. But let's now ask the question, where were the men? Where were the disciples that Jesus had taught?

Where were these disciples, these disciples that had seen time after time that everything that Jesus says actually comes true? Surely they, who had been taught one to one by Jesus, repeatedly, surely they were expecting Jesus to rise.

Surely they were close by, expecting to see Jesus in his resurrected form, we might say. But the answer to that is, surely not.

They were nowhere to be seen. they were in hiding. They were full of fear and dread. They were in lockdown. So that's part one of Mark's account.

[ 32 : 24 ] And we might ask the question of Mark. Why did he write this? Why did he give us the Easter story this way?

And the answer is, because it happened this way. This account, it may not cast the believers in a good light.

In fact, it definitely doesn't. It may not have met with the approval of the first century Palestinian lawyers when they see the witnesses that are brought to the stand.

But this is the way it happened. It's authentic. This is not some contrived account to get the Christian faith off to a flying start with some strong heroes and heroines of faith.

This is the authentic account of how it all happened. It's gritty. It's warts and all. But it's a fully believable and authentic account of what happened on that day when Jesus rose from the dead.

[ 33 : 39 ] So that's the first point to think of. The second point is to note the response of these women as this story unfolds.

And their response is to be alarmed. Verse 4. But when they looked up remember they're going now to the tomb they're expecting to see that Jesus they're expecting to see that the stone would be sealing the tomb.

But when they looked up verse 4 they saw that the stone which was very large had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side and they were alarmed.

So we note here the alarm on the in this in the woman who came. Now when I think back to the first proper job I had it was in a firm called ESL contracting in Inverness and every Tuesday afternoon the fire alarms would be tested.

Now in week one when I worked there the fire alarms were tested on Tuesday afternoon I near jumped out of my skin. I wasn't expecting it I was taken by surprise. But in week two Tuesday afternoon I was expecting it so I jumped a little but not too much.

[ 35 : 00 ] By week three and four and five and six the fire alarms were going and I hardly even noticed them. Now we come to these verses and we know what happened.

So sadly in a sense for us some of the impact of this is lost but let's try and think ourselves back into this account.

For these women Mary Magdalene Mary the mother of James and Salome on this first Easter Sunday as they came to the tomb they were in shock. They were surprised they were in a state of alarm understandably so.

Why? Well because the stone that they couldn't figure out how to move was rolled away. Mark who very often is the master of understatement he says in verse 4 that the stone was very large. Now the scholars tell us that this stone would likely have taken 20 men to be able to move. It may have weighed up to two ton they say but it's not only moved it's rolled away.

[ 36 : 14 ] So you can imagine their faces as they stop confused at what they're seeing and then they begin to inch forward into the tomb and as they enter the tomb they see a young man dressed in a white robe.

Luke tells us in his account that this man's clothes gleamed like lightning. Luke 24 I think it's Matthew that says that this man's clothes they were dazzling white like snow.

And there he is he's sitting there. So who was the man? Well John tells us in chapter 20 that he was an angel and they were alarmed and so would you be as would I be.

We understand their alarm. Verse 6 Don't be alarmed he said that's the angel you're looking for Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified.

He is risen. He is not here. See the place where they laid him. And as these women heard these words from the angel I think their state of alarm likely went from 10 to 100.

[ 37 : 33 ] Not only was the stone rolled away as impossible as that would have seemed and not only had they just seen and heard an angel but this angel was telling them that Jesus the Nazarene whom they knew this same Jesus whom just days earlier they had seen with their own eyes die he was no longer dead said the angel he is risen.

This same Jesus whose body had been laid in the tomb and they seen that was no longer in the tomb he's not here said the angel see the place where they laid him as I said to the children that's why the door of the tomb was open so they would go in and they would be able to see the place where Jesus body had been laid but was now no longer there so they could see he was gone no wonder they were alarmed they had just encountered the supernatural they had become witnesses the first witnesses to the power of God who was able to push aside a stone that 20 men couldn't move like an Easter egg that we rolled down a hill they had become witnesses to receive news from an angel who had been sent from heaven as a messenger personally to speak to them they had become witnesses the first witnesses to the fact that

Jesus was alive death could not hold him and they were being confronted here with the reality of life after death and initially it left him in a state of alarm and by way of application let me say I hope some of us are in a state of alarm as we receive this report sometimes I think our Christianity is very limited to the natural realm we think in terms of how Jesus can help us in this life he can help us to do our work he can help us to pass the exams he can help us to handle the problems and carry the weights that we're not able to carry ourselves and clearly Jesus he can do all that he's our ever present helper he's the one who's close at hand in times of distress in this world and sometimes when we listen to the statements from churches it's very this worldly it's all about climate change and social care and don't get me wrong we're called to care for each other we're called to be good stewards of the natural world that

God has made and placed us in but what we are being confronted with here is that Christianity is much more than just life lessons for this natural world Christianity is about the supernatural Christianity is not just about this life which is so short Christianity is about life beyond the grave Jesus died and rose again so that if we believe in him we too can die and rise again John chapter 11 Jesus said at verse 25 and 26 I am the resurrection and the life he who believes in me will live even though he dies and whoever lives and believes in me will never die and then he comes with that very pointed question to the sisters in that passage and to us do you believe this you and I need to believe this if we are to be saved from our sin and if we are to have the hope of resurrection you and I need to believe this to take hold of this by faith if we are to be saved and if we are to share in this resurrection life of Jesus this is an authentic account of what actually happened in history that Mark records here this may well alarm us as we think about the supernatural realities and implications of this but we need to believe if we are to know this eternal life that is beyond the grave so we have an authentic account that Mark presents we note the alarm in these women as they see the reality of

[ 42 : 59 ] Jesus resurrection the third point we come to hear is we can give it the title action these women are called to action when they see and hear this news about Jesus the angel still speaking to the woman in verse 7 says to them but go tell his disciples and Peter he's going ahead of you into Galilee there you will see him just as he told you so having received this message of resurrection having seen with their eyes having heard with their ears the news that Jesus has risen what comes next action it's what comes next James 1 22 we're called to be to be doers of the word and not hearers only and this angel says to these women go you've seen the good news you've heard the good news now go be carriers of the good news tell his disciples and

Peter and note that the instruction they're given is to tell his disciples tell Jesus disciples not his ex disciples not those who were once his disciples but who now were no longer his disciples because they had failed so badly because they had fled and left him no these disciples are still called by Jesus his disciples in spite of their failures and there's encouragement there for us we'll come back to that so what were they to tell the disciples they were to tell the disciples that Jesus is alive and that Jesus wants to meet with them that was their mission that was the activity that they were called to and that's what we're called to to that's our mission as well we are to go and share what we have been told what we know what we believe about Jesus when we recognize truth and value in something we want to share it you know even something as mundane as making a new dish a dinner you follow a recipe you taste it it's delicious what do you want to do after you enjoy it you want to share it you know you watch a box set that you enjoy you immediately want to share it with somebody else you hear news that's important you want to share it so that those that you know and love are also able to take hold of this news and there's nothing more important there's nothing more valuable and true than the gospel there's nothing worth sharing more than the good news about Jesus Christ the fact that Jesus lived for us this sinless life that we have failed to live and that Jesus died for us in our place to take the punishment for our sin and that Jesus rose from the dead and promises that he will share that resurrection life with us if we believe in him you and I if we are if we are Christians we are called to action we're we're called to share this message so will we have the courage to do that I suppose is the question that comes to us will we have the courage to act as these women were called to act did these women have the courage to act is the next question and according to Mark no they didn't not at first anyway they were afraid that's our final point afraid verse 8 trembling trembling and bewildered the woman went out and fled from the tomb they said nothing to anyone because they were afraid and actually and slightly strangely this is this is where Mark's account ends verse 9 and following is believed to be what Sinclair Ferguson terms a postscript as you see in the NIV here and the ESV and in most translations there's a footnote and in the second half of the chapter from verse 9 following is in italics and the reason for that is because as it says here some of the earliest manuscripts do not include verses 9 to 20 so what we're sure about is that Mark's gospel certainly goes up to verse 8 and the likelihood is that's where it finishes it finishes on that note of fear the women are afraid and initially they said nothing to anyone we might say to Mark why are you like that and Mark's answer is because that's the way it happened and because

I believe also by way of application we we need this strange encouragement that's transmitted through us because sometimes if we're honest we have been where they are afraid and silent I think for many of us in a culture that has been in past years even decades quite hostile to Jesus we have often been afraid of what people will say if we share the gospel so with these women we have been trembling and we have been silent and so there's the strange ending of Mark's gospel trembling and bewildered the woman went out and fled from the tomb they said nothing to anyone because they were afraid maybe the end of

[ 50 : 07 ] Mark's gospel but was it the end for these women was this the end for the disciples and Peter who is singled out here so significantly is this the end for this disciple who had failed his Lord so terribly and so publicly and we know from the other gospels that the answer to that is no Jesus was not finished with Peter Jesus was not finished with the disciples he was not finished with these women yet yes they were afraid at this point but soon their fear would be overcome by faith and yes they were silent at this point but soon their silence would be broken with good news about Jesus good news that has carried all the way through the years over land and sea even to us so this is how it all happened according to

Mark this is how it happened with them and with these characters and I think the question that's been left with us by way of application by Mark is what's going to happen with you what will you and

I do with this Easter story I hope we're persuaded that it's authentic it's not manufactured it's not contrived but it's true I hope it brings into our lives some sense of alarm that will be awakened to the supernatural realities of Jesus and life beyond the grave but if we're awakened and if we believe what comes next will we be silent and afraid and stay there or will we act will we go and tell the good news about

Jesus we have story after story and report after report in our news streams and it's bad news the world needs to hear good news a message of hope a message of love a message that's true and we have been given that message and it's all about Jesus so will we tell it may we be encouraged to tell it let's pray our heavenly father we thank you for this account that we have studied we thank you for the reality for the truth of the death and resurrection of Jesus we thank you for the implications for us in terms of time and eternity give us faith we pray that we may take hold of it that we may believe and be saved and begin to know the reality of everlasting life and give us the courage we pray to go and tell other people the good news about

Jesus and we pray this in Jesus name and for Jesus sake amen we'll sing to conclude from psalm 72 and the last three stanzas of the psalm his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call now blessed be the Lord our God the God of Israel for he alone doth wondrous works and glory that excel and blessed be his holy his glorious name to all eternity the whole earth let his glory fill amen so let it be his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call now blessed be the

Lord our God the God of Israel for he alone doth wondrous works in glory that excel and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity the whole earth let his glory fill amen so let it be and now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all both now and forever more amen