**Easter Sunday Service
“Hope in the Midst of Terror”**

Mark 16:1-7

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| **Slide** | **Sermon** |
| 1 | Title Slide |
| 2 | Introduction – Mark is the earliest gospel to be written. It is the shortest. It was used by Matthew and Luke as a guide to writing their gospels. Mark has only 16 chapters. It is thought that it was written by John Mark, a disciple of Peter, the one in Mark 14:51-52, “A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment was following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.” John Mark followed Jesus, but when the guard tried to seize him he fled barely getting away, slipping out of his clothing as this was all the soldier grasped. |
| 3 | Mark’s description of this first day of the week is sparse. It is only 6 verses but has the hallmarks of what happen; ones that Matthew and Luke agreed happened. Basically, it tells of three women close to Jesus who felt compelled to anoint Jesus’ body as is prescribed by Jewish law. They were:* Mary Magdalene – the one Jesus cast out demons
* Mary – the mother of Jesus
* Salome – mother of James and John

I know they were afraid since any association with Jesus would cause the religious leaders to consider them as Jesus’ accomplices and therefore possibly lead to their arrest. They had to do this to honor Jesus’ life and death. But, in their haste, they had not considered the heavy stone that covered the tomb. But when they arrived, that problem was gone as the stone was rolled away. They entered the tomb expecting to see Jesus’ body. But upon entering, their attention is grabbed not by Jesus’ body but by a “young man dressed in a white robe” on the right side. They were alarmed to say the least!“Don’t be alarmed,” he said, “you are 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 to Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you.’”Now, what we hear is great news, but these women receive it with fear, trembling and bewilderment. They just want to get out of there as fast as possible. And they said nothing to anyone! |
| 4 | This is the end of Mark’s gospel, yet later on others added to it (verse 9-20) to make it complete. But we know it was added by the way it was written and the fact that it doesn’t explain how the first part ended. It sounds a lot like the other gospels. In this ending, Mary Magdalene is the only woman he appeared to, and she tells the disciples, but they didn’t believe her. Even the two followers Jesus later appeared to while on the road and came back to tell the disciples wasn’t enough to convince them! Jesus finally appeared to them while they were eating, chastised them for not believing and then instructed them to share the gospel with others with these signs: driving out demons, handling snakes and not dying from poison. Nowhere does this ending mention Jesus’ instructions to meet in Galilee where He would talk to them and demonstrate He had risen. So these verses 9-20 are added and I’m not sure about them.But what Mark leave us is a problem – If the women left and didn’t tell anyone about the news that Jesus was raised, then the story would end there!  |
| 5 | But we know this is not true. We are a witness that Jesus’ resurrection happened because for ages the story of Jesus has been passed down through two centuries of generations and God’s Holy Spirit has changed people’s hearts to believe Jesus is the Messiah!How did this happen? Mary is used in the other gospels to fill in the blanks left by Mark. But I like to think that after a while the women overcame their fear and the shock of that morning and went to tell the followers that Jesus had risen and to get themselves to Galilee! Matthew and John record how the disciples meet Jesus at Lake Galilee where he talks to them, demonstrates He is the risen Lord and eats fish with them. It is in the context of being with Jesus at Lake Galilee that we learn an important lesson from Jesus that is still worthy for today. (Jesus also teaches this in Luke’s gospel in relation to Thomas.) The lesson is God gives us 2nd chances when we fail Him. Certainly, he did this for Peter. Peter had proudly announced that he was Jesus’ most reliable disciple (Matthew 26:33). Yet, Peter not only fled with the other disciples in the moment of crisis but also blatantly denied he even knew Jesus 3 times (Matthew 26:69-75). Peter failed so miserably that he went out into the night and wept bitterly (Luke 22:62).How compassionate the risen Christ was to Peter! The angel gave the women at the tomb instructions to let Peter know that He is risen. Jesus took Peter aside to allow him the opportunity to reaffirm his love and commitment (John 21:15-17). The risen Lord also chose Peter as His primary spokesman on the day of Pentecost when 3000 people were added to the church. |
| 6 | On this Easter Sunday, we forcefully and without doubt proclaim Jesus didrise from the dead! We join our voice to the thousands before us, even the millions before us, to tell the world that Jesus is the Messiah and in Him eternal life is found and a loving relationship with God is re-established!God’s desire is to take you from where you are and bring you to where He wants you to be. When He found His dejected followers hiding together in the upper room, Jesus’ first word was “peace” (John 20:19). Jesus’ first word to you after you fail may also be “peace.” Jesus will find you in despair and bring you peace. Then, He will reorient you to Himself so that you can believe Him and follow Him. Don’t give up if you have failed the Lord. Remember it happened to Peter! God has not yet finished developing you as his disciple!Whether you are a child or teenager – God has lots to teach you, to mold you in the young man or woman God desires for you. If you are not seeking God, not seeking His will for your life, then you will end up unhappy, in the wrong profession and have strained relationships with your family and friends. If you are in the midst of making a living for yourself and your family but not seeking God, then that life will leave you unfulfilled!If you are retired or retiring like me, if you don’t seek God and that love relationship with God, then your retirement will not be the dream that you have had for it!Yes, God is a God of 2nd, 3rd, 4th etc. chances. His resurrection proves that! But our part is to believe that Christ rose from the dead and that He comes to us by the Holy Spirit and seeks that love relationship so that we can know his will for our lives. When we commit to this relationship, then the joy, satisfaction and hope in our life will be restored! And we will have the strength to face anything life throws at us! Of all days – Easter is the day we can proclaim this truth!Christ Is Risen!He Is Risen Indeed!Amen |