

“THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS” MARK 16:1-8

Personal Introduction

Good morning everyone. I'm Jeff - one of the pastors here at HMCC of Jakarta. And it's my privilege to preach the Word of God for us today.

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Sermon Introduction

For this Easter Sunday, we'll be taking a look at the account of Jesus' resurrection from Mark 16:1-8.

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Introduction

But first, I want us to consider what one author wrote about hope:

“Hope is to our spirits what oxygen is to our lungs. Lose hope and you die... The only way to face the future is to fly straight into it on the wings of hope... Hope is the energy of the soul. Hope is the power of tomorrow.”

- Lewis B. Smedes

I think we can agree that we all need hope and we all want it.

So the big question is: What hope do we have when all seems lost?

<pause>

During World War II, there was a secret mission known as Operation Valkyrie. The goal of this mission was to overthrow Hitler and end his regime (once and for all). But the plan failed.

And in the aftermath, hundreds of people were arrested. Many were executed.

One of them was a man named **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**.

Now, imagine if that's you... What would you be feeling if you knew that your life was about to end?

- Maybe **fear**?
- Maybe **sadness**?
- Maybe **regret**?
- Maybe **hopelessness**?

Maybe Bonhoeffer felt all of those things, except... He didn't feel hopeless... Because Bonhoeffer's hope was ultimately not in the success of his mission, but in his Lord Jesus.

And in his last words... when all seems lost... Bonhoeffer said - "This is the end. For me the beginning of life... Jesus is alive. I have hope."

Jesus is alive... I have hope...

And it's this hope in the risen Jesus that what we'll be uncovering more today...

Scripture Introduction

Please turn your Bibles to Mark 16:1-8.

For context:

- It's been a tough day for Jesus' followers. They had just seen their Lord Jesus **betrayed** by one of his own apostles, then **arrested**, **beaten**, **mocked**, and then **crucified** on the cross.
- And after Jesus died, his body was buried in a tomb, and then the entrance of the tomb was covered by a large stone.
- It seemed like this was the end...

And this is where we are in today's passage.

I'll read for us Mark 16:1-8.

Mark 16:1-8 (ESV)

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of

the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" 4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. 5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. 6 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. 7 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." 8 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.

This is God's Word.

Overview

- I. The women's expectation (vv. 1-3)
 - II. The women's discovery (vv. 4-7)
 - III. The women's response (v. 8)
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I. The women's expectation (vv. 1-3)

Let's look at verse 1 - It was the end of Sabbath Day... So we know that it's Saturday evening (*because Sabbath would normally start on Friday night and then end on Saturday night*).

And this means that if you're a Jew, then you wouldn't be able to do any kind of work during this time. *Which means that Jesus' followers... They weren't able to do anything after Jesus died - except mourn and grieve..*

And so when Sabbath was finally over, then they're finally able to go to the market and buy some spices, and go to the tomb, and anoint Jesus' body.

And, back in those days, a dead body would be anointed with spices for two main reasons:

- (1) To reduce the smell of the decomposing body.
- (2) To honor the person who just died.

So these followers simply wanted to honor their Lord, and to properly grieve his death.

<pause>

So then who were these followers who were planning to anoint Jesus' body? *Well, if you had to guess, you'd probably say that it'd probably be Jesus' apostles, right? Maybe Simon Peter, James, and John?*

- But that's not who we see here. Instead, we see three women.

Which begs the question: who were these women? And where's Jesus' other disciples?

- Well, unfortunately, back when Jesus was arrested, his disciples were so scared that they ran away. So some didn't even see Jesus getting crucified.
- So then as the men were scattered, it's these 3 women who stayed... You have...
 1. **Mary Magdalene** - who was one of Jesus' followers who he casted seven demons from.
 2. **Mary** - the mother of James (who was one of Jesus' 12 apostles).
 3. and **Salome** - also the mother of Jesus' apostles, James and John.

And very early on Sunday morning - the first day of the week - these three women went to Jesus' tomb to anoint him.

And as they're slowly making their way there... they're asking one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"

- From their question, we can get a sense of their helplessness...
 - They're willing to go into Jesus' tomb. But now, as they're getting closer, they're realizing that may not even be possible.
 - Because there's going to be a large stone blocking the entrance & they won't be able to move it by themselves.

<pause>

Now, what do their actions tell us about their expectations?

- It tells us that they had no idea that they're about to witness the greatest event in the history of the world.
- What they're expecting to see is - not a miracle - but... for Jesus' tomb to remain untouched.
 - **(1)** For a large boulder to still be blocking the entrance.

- (2) And for Jesus' body to be decomposing inside.
 - That's what they're expecting.

So none of Jesus' followers really expected that he'd rise from the dead!

And to be honest, that seems to be a reasonable expectation, right?

- Because that's what we'd naturally expect to happen.

But here's the thing, from the other Gospel accounts, we know that Jesus had already told his disciples - **at least 3 times** - that "I will die, and - in 3 days - I will rise again."

- He literally gave them this heads-up.

So you'd think that at least one of the disciples would jump up and say, "Hey guys, everything has happened exactly as Jesus said!"

- He said that one of the apostles would betray him (that happened)!
- He said that his disciples would scatter (that happened)!
- He said that Simon Peter would deny him 3 times (that happened)!
- He said that he'd die (that happened)!
- You know what? All that's left is the resurrection!
- Guys, I think maybe we should expect Jesus to rise again!

But that didn't happen; that's not what they expected - they expected for Jesus' body to remain dead and to be decomposing.

<pause>

In that sense, their expectation was wrong.

But... before we judge Jesus' followers, let's try to put ourselves in their shoes...

- After all that's happened, what would their mental and emotional state be like?

They've just gone through something very traumatic, and I think they must've been so discouraged...

Because - remember - for these followers, they'd literally left everything behind to follow Jesus.

- And they'd put all of their hopes into one person. And now, that person was gone before their very eyes.

- So for the disciples (including these women) - they're not only mourning the death of their Lord Jesus, but they're also mourning the death of their hope and future.

And so each second, it must seem like everything around them was getting darker.

And I think this is something that we can relate with - maybe some of us here have been in a similar position before - or maybe we're going through something like this right now - where it feels like your world has been turned **upside down**.

- And we see no way out or no signs of improvement.
- And it feels like our hope is disappearing and now blocked by a giant boulder.

Well, in that kind of moment, some of us may be aware - at least intellectually - that the truth is that God is still with us. He will not abandon us.

- But to be honest, emotionally, it may feel like God is far away.

And as humans, we're emotional beings, aren't we?

- It can be difficult for us to remember what God's Word says when we're feeling down.
 - *Now, to be clear, this shouldn't be an excuse for us to ignore what God says when everything seems lost, but this is a **reality** that Christians go through - sometimes we still feel like all is lost...*

It's the same thing with these 3 women - their world was spiraling down. It's difficult for them right now to put together what Jesus said, let alone believe in it.

They're falling into a **state of discouragement**, where now... every little discouraging thing - like remembering about this boulder - is causing them to fall deeper into despair and helplessness.

So really, these women... they're just asking what we all may be thinking when all seems lost, "Who will roll away the stone for us?" / "What can be done?" / "Is there hope?"

These women will find out...

First, the women's expectation. And second...

II. The women's discovery (vv. 4-7)

Now, these women actually don't have to wait very long to realize that this day is not going to go according to their expectations.

Because as they finally reach the location of Jesus' tomb... **the first thing they see** is that the large stone was already **rolled away!**

And that must've been so shocking and confusing for them! *What could've happened?!*

And as the women started to enter the tomb, it must've also been weird for them to realize that there's no smell from a decomposing body.

And then... as they finally reached the inside of the tomb - what do they see?

- **Jesus' body is no longer there!**

They look around...

- Instead, they see a young man (sitting on the right side of the tomb) dressed in a white robe! **And they're in shock!**
 - Just imagine what this might've been like for them - Maybe they thought that they'd seen a ghost!
 - But the other Gospel accounts make it very clear here that who they're seeing here is no ordinary young man, but an angel...
 - A heavenly messenger who's delivering a message from heaven to Earth...

And in the midst of their shock... the angel first gives them words of comfort. And he said, "Do not be alarmed..."

And then he gives them the good news: "You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him."

- The angel affirms that they're talking about the same Jesus here - Jesus of Nazareth.
- The angel affirms what happened to Jesus - Yes, this Jesus was indeed the one who's crucified and he did die (that actually happened).
- The angel affirms what has now happened to Jesus - this Jesus is no longer dead, but is now alive!

And he then invites the women to look at the physical evidence for themselves - See the place where they laid him.

Take a peek at Mark 15:47...

- We know that both Marys had seen Jesus' body laid here in this very place. And now with their own eyes, they see that his body is no longer there!

Imagine that... (just as clearly as you all see me here standing in front of you with your own eyes - these women saw just as clearly with their own eyes that Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, died, and buried). And now, they clearly see that his body is no longer there!

What does this all point to?

- The evidence points to the amazing truth that Jesus Christ is indeed alive!
- And not only spiritually, but physically... he has resurrected from the dead - just as he told his disciples.

<pause>

Now, what do we think?

- Right now, some of us may be thinking, really? Can this really be true? This sounds almost impossible!

So I want to take some time now to address a few objections that people have had in the past about Jesus' resurrection.

- And even if you don't have these objections, it may be helpful for you to know so that you can help explain to those who do have questions...

First, some people may think: Maybe this story was just made up by Jesus' followers!

- But this is very unlikely - Why? Because who were the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection? Three women.
 - Back in those days, the witness of a woman was considered to be unreliable in a court of law (They'd just dismiss it as untrustworthy news).
- Which means that if this story was made up then it wouldn't make sense for them to say that the first witnesses were three women...
 - It would've made more sense for them to say that it's 3 men. And why stop at 3? Just say that it was the 11 apostles who were there!

- But then why make up a story of them scattering when Jesus was arrested - that'd be shameful for them. So it wouldn't make sense for them to make up this story in this way.

Now, if people really wanted to disprove Jesus' resurrection (once and for all), all that they had to do was provide a dead body - So that they could say, "Well, you thought Jesus was raised, but look: here's his body!"

- (But no, they couldn't do that, because the tomb was empty).

Now, maybe some would think: Well... Maybe Jesus' body was just moved or stolen?

- Again, that'd be very unlikely - Mark didn't mention this detail, but from Matthew's Gospel account, we know that there were actually Roman soldiers guarding the tomb.
- The leaders who were against Jesus... they actually thought about the same thing (because even they've heard that Jesus said that in 3 days, he'll rise again), and so they feared that Jesus' disciples would just steal his body and say that he's risen.
 - So they thought of **a simple fix**: "Let's have Roman soldiers guard the tomb all day and all night for 3 days."
- But do you know what happened? According to the Gospel of Matthew - On the third day, there was **a violent earthquake...** and an angel of the Lord came down from Heaven and rolled back the large stone!
 - The guards saw all this, and ran away in fear!
 - That's why by the time these 3 women came, there were no more guards and the stone had been rolled away.

Now, one last thing to consider - We know from 1 Corinthians 15:6 - That the resurrected Jesus appeared physically (in-person) in front of over 500 people.

- And many of Jesus' disciples in the years to come would be tortured and killed because they wouldn't deny Jesus and his resurrection.
 - So what does that reveal to us about what they believed to be true?
 - Would they be willing to die for something if it's made up? I don't think so.
- Imagine - If you knew that this was actually a lie, would you be willing to die for it? Wouldn't it be easier to just go back to being a fisherman?
- **No, people will not die for a lie. But they will die for the truth.**
 - And the truth is that Jesus Christ has indeed risen from the dead!

Look at verse 7 - the angel now tells the women what they're to do with this truth that they've just received...

He said, "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."

So the angel basically told them, "Go! Tell the others!"

And so we'd expect these women to start running with joy and for them to tell the disciples right away, right?!

But surprisingly... How do they actually respond? Let's see...

First, the women's expectation. Second, the women's discovery. And third...

III. The women's response (v. 8)

Let's look at verse 8 - "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."

That's not at all what we'd expect to happen, right?

- Their reaction looks more like the other disciples when Jesus was betrayed & arrested!
- Not a reaction you'd expect for Jesus' resurrection.

But again, before we judge these women, let's try to put ourselves in their shoes.

- I think their reaction is actually a very natural & raw, human reaction.
- Because remember, they just had a supernatural encounter with a spiritual being - that doesn't happen everyday!

And they were already emotionally drained and grieving... and now, add on top of that shock and awe and confusion and fear!

They're not sure what just happened... "Was that an angel? What happened to Jesus' body? What should I believe? What should I do?"

- All these thoughts and questions might've been in their minds.

And so they're emotionally paralyzed... And as they're heading back, they said nothing to anyone...

<pause>

So interestingly... What Mark is highlighting here is that the best news in the entire history of the entire world was first perceived with **fear** and **shock**.

- Now what does that tell us?

I believe that this shows us that hope doesn't always feel like hope at first.

<pause>

And in a way, I think this is encouraging for us... Because isn't that also what we feel sometimes...

For some of us here, we may already know that the tomb is empty, we've heard the Good News before - we believe in it, and maybe we've even shared the Good News to others. But if we're honest, sometimes... we still feel afraid...

- Sometimes our hearts are still overwhelmed with anxiety.
- Sometimes our relationships are still strained and we feel alone...
- Sometimes our future still feels uncertain...
- And sometimes, we feel like we're barely holding it together...

Maybe we're like these women... We know that the tomb is empty, but that feeling of peace and joy hasn't caught up with us yet.

So the question is:

- **What do we do when we feel like that?**
- **What do we do when we're spiraling down, and - even after we've heard the Good News - fear is still holding on to us?**

<pause>

Well, let's see what God's Word has to say to us about this. Let's consider these 3 women... Did they continue to be overwhelmed with fear?

Matthew's Gospel actually tells us what happens next...

<Resources Team - please note: NIV version for this verse>

Matthew 28:8 (NIV)

So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples

Isn't that amazing? So they did initially react with fear and overwhelm...

- but notice how over time, their fear (it's still there), but it's now mixed with joy.
- And then eventually, joy took over and that's what moved them to action, and they ended up sharing the Good News to the disciples!

<pause>

So now the question for us is: **What happened? How'd these women get from fear to joy?** (We want that too!)

I think we're actually already been given a glimpse of their turning point.

Because what did the angel say to them? (specifically, at the end) - He said, "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."

That's key... Just as JESUS told you!

As the women were heading back, this message was probably just replaying in their minds over and over again.

- And finally... they remember to go back to what Jesus already told them! "*I will die, I will rise again in 3 days, I will meet you in Galilee.*"
- And Jesus' words broke their downward spiral!

And it must've clicked for them... Beforehand, they're just focusing on every little discouragement, and now... they're focusing on every little thing Jesus said... And they remember...

- Jesus is Lord!
 - And that means that even in this moment - that may feel out of control for us - Jesus is still in control!
- And if everything has happened exactly as he says it would, then that means that Jesus is truly who he says he is.
 - Which means that all of his promises are also true!

And suddenly, the women start to feel something that they thought they wouldn't feel again... Joy.

- So that was their turning point... It was by going to what Jesus already said...

<pause>

For us... This means that when trembling and astonishment grabs a hold of us, we're also to go back to what Jesus has already told us.

And we have the entirety of Scripture to read and to go back to...

And we'll see that Jesus not only told us that "I will rise again", but he also told us...

- "Take heart, I have overcome the world."
- "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
- And Jesus said, "I am with you always."
 - Always...
 - That means even when you're down and when you're barely hanging on (at work, at home, at church)... Jesus is there with you...

And, brothers and sisters, when we go back to what Jesus said... we're not just going back to some words, but ultimately... we're going back to **Jesus himself**.

And so isn't it comforting to know... That in our moments of fear and trembling - we're going to an actual person - our Lord - who doesn't just roll his eyes at our panic, but who meets us even in the middle of our fears.

And he cares for how we're doing.

- Just think of how the good news in the tomb didn't just jump straight into the news, it began with words of comfort... "Do not be alarmed..."

Words of comfort... Because we have a God who cares for us...

<pause>

And His care is very clear if we go back to the reason **why** Jesus died in the first place...

Matthew 20:28 (ESV)

"the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Jesus died because he cares for us so much that he gave his life for the sake of his people.

Which implies that we need to be saved from something...

- And more than us needing to be saved from a tough job, or a tough conflict, or a tough situation... we need to be saved from our sins.

Because we're all sinners - who've disobeyed and sinned against God (none of us are perfect).

And the consequences of our sins... won't only affect our lives now (and they definitely can affect our lives now because our sins can destroy relationships and cause conflict even now), but ultimately... The consequence of our sins is eternal punishment in Hell **(a far scarier reality than just physical death)**.

- And so if there's something that we should be rightfully afraid of - it's God's judgment upon our sins.

<pause>

But the Good News is that God - in His grace and mercy - decided to take on our punishment Himself in the person of His Son, Jesus.

So even though Jesus knew that he'd be betrayed, humiliated, and crucified... he still went through those things. **Why?** Because he wanted to save his beloved people from eternity in Hell.

- That's what our Lord is like... He looks at us, and says *"No, don't punish them, I'll take their punishment instead."*

If not for Jesus' sacrifice - then Simon Peter, Mary Magdalene, Mary, Salome, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, you, and me... we'd all be heading to Hell.

- We'd have no hope...

But the Good News is that - because of Jesus - ANYONE who believes in him as Lord and Savior will not perish, but will have eternal life in Heaven!

So, friends, if you've not yet put your faith in Christ, I'm really glad you're here.

- And please don't feel discouraged if this hope doesn't feel like hope right away.

Part of the reason why the Good News of Jesus may not feel like hope right away is because before it comforts you, it confronts you....

- It tells you something that goes against everything we naturally believe in about ourselves...
 - That you're more sinful than you really think, that you cannot save yourself, that even your best efforts are not enough before a holy God.
 - And that can be shocking, even frightening... because it strikes at the very thing we hold onto most tightly - ourselves (and our sense of control, and our belief that we're doing okay).

And especially if you don't know Jesus personally yet... of course it's going to feel dangerous to trust your life and your future into the hands of someone you don't know... And so it can feel safer to try and remain in control.

- But ask yourself: Are our lives really that safe in our own hands?
 - We're actually more like a child, running with scissors, thinking we're fine, when in reality we're the ones in danger.
 - If we see a child running with a sharp object, we think, "Surely, that'd be safer in someone else's hands."

The Good News of Jesus can begin to feel more like hope when we begin to see who we are as sinners, and who Jesus truly is...

- Jesus is the one who is fully God and fully man, who went to the cross for his people and rose again in victory...
- He is God Himself - And when we consider how much we're loved by this good and sovereign God... the more it makes sense for us to surrender our lives into His hands...
 - The more we'll see that there's no better place that we'd rather be than in His arms.
- Because on the other side of that surrender is something greater than anything you've been trying to build or protect for yourself:
 - What you'll receive is forgiveness of sins, Jesus' righteousness counted as yours, adoption into God's family, a new identity as a child of God, a secure future in Heaven, contentment in this life, and ultimately... you receive God Himself.
 - What once felt like loss becomes gain, what once felt like fear becomes joy, and what didn't feel like hope at first becomes the greatest hope you have.

So please don't walk away just because it feels unsettling right now. Lean in. Get to know Jesus. Because as you see Him more clearly, you'll find that this isn't something to fear... This is the best news you could ever receive.

<pause>

And brothers and sisters, the same thing actually applies to us...

- As we follow Jesus, there will be times when we're going to face trials and temptations of various kinds. And when we try to remember God's Word during those times... It's not going to feel like hope at first...
 - But we're to remember what Jesus said and who God is...

- And think about it this way... As we walk with Christ, and as we're being sanctified by the Holy Spirit...
 - That purifying fire of sanctification is not going to feel great at first; it's going to feel uncomfortable when our faith is being strengthened; it can be difficult to surrender more and more of ourselves and our lives into God's hands.
 - But we trust that God is sovereign and working for our good.
 - And He'll continue to do that until we're with Him in Heaven.
 - And that the end result would be us becoming a more sanctified Christian... Who glorifies God all-the-more... who's hope is not in this world, but in our risen King, Jesus.

Conclusion

As we conclude, I want to help us look at our lives and our future... beyond what we can see in front of us...

- I believe this is what Dietrich Bonhoeffer was able to do before he died.
 - He was able to see his life - not merely in light of the next day, or the next year, or the next decade... **But in light of eternity.**

- And so he probably still felt a bit of fear - but even amidst his fears, he's able to have hope and a deeper joy... Because what comes after death is not unknown or a mystery to him.
 - He knows exactly what will happen because Jesus - his Lord and Savior - has died for him and is alive!

- And what's awaiting him is eternal life in Heaven where he'll be face-to-face with his risen King and where he'll be with his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ forever.
- This is why - before his execution - he was able to say, "**Jesus is alive. I have hope.**"

And for anyone who puts their faith in Jesus, let's remember... that we can always say - "Jesus is alive. I have hope."

Let's pray...