

Easter Reflection

A sermon by the Rev. Frances Savill

Sunday, April 4, 2021

Mark 16:1-8

Most of us do not live too long without losing someone close to us, someone we love.

And as we get older, it happens again and again, someone we love dies, and we find ourselves at the cemetery again.

So maybe we can imagine something of what the women faced as they went to the tomb on that first Easter morning.

They had been with Jesus for his ministry, they heard his teachings, they had seen his healings, they followed him, prayed with him, prayed for him, believed in him, and then they watched him be executed and die on that cross.

Such grief and pain, the loss of their friend and teacher, the Rabbi they loved, but also the loss of hope, surely he was the Messiah, but they had watched as he was laid in the tomb.

So early in the morning, just as the sun was rising, they went back to the tomb, to fulfill the custom, to do what they could to show their love.

But there was no body.

The stone was rolled away and a messenger from God was waiting for them instead.

“Do not be afraid” he said.

“You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.”

“He is not here. He has been raised.”

The women were overwhelmed, overwhelmed with fear and amazement, what could this mean, they left the tomb and fled telling no one.

The women, the consistent witnesses – the ones who saw Jesus crucified, who saw where his body was laid, who were with him in his life, death and burial, now fled, filled with fear and amazement.

They are like all the other disciples.

Judas the betrayer, Peter the denier, and all the rest who deserted Jesus.

If this were a story of Jesus’ disciples this would be a rather sad, and hopeless moment.

But Easter is not about the women, or the other disciples. Easter is about God, and about what God accomplished in Jesus.

Easter is God’s story.

While it was still dark, while everyone else was keeping Sabbath, when everyone else was hopeless and grief stricken, God was working.

The tomb would not hold Jesus for long.
After they laid his cold and lifeless body in the tomb, God raised him to new life, resurrected life.

Jesus lived our life, he died our death, but God raised Jesus from death to life eternal.

God trampled down death by death, giving life to those in the tomb.

And the message the women received was that Jesus would meet his disciples in Galilee.
Jesus was going ahead of them, and they would see him again.

And that is the story again and again.
Jesus goes ahead of us, and we will see him.

And the main character in this unfolding story of salvation is God.
God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit continue to accomplish the plan of our salvation and redemption.

God acts and we are filled with awe and wonder and amazement.

Jesus went before the disciples, Jesus met them in Galilee as was promised.

The work was not ending it was just beginning, and Jesus was not abandoning them, but filled them with his very presence through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The women found their voices, the deniers found courage, all of them found forgiveness and new hope, hope eternal.

God's story doesn't end in death.

God's story isn't thwarted by our faithlessness or fearfulness.

God accomplishes his plans in us, through us, sometimes despite us.

Ponder anew what the Almighty God can do, has done, and continues to do.

Thanks be to God!

Great and gracious God, in this holy week we see the truth about our sin and sin of our world. But in this resurrection morning we see the truth that you are greater than our sin. You are greater than any power, you are greater than death. And we see the full extent of your love for us, and the wondrous hope we have in Jesus our Lord, who is the name above every name.

We bow our hearts in love, in praise, in worship.

Amen.