

Pastor T.C. Arnold
Easter Sunday
Mark 16:1-8
April 17, 2022

Grace, mercy and peace be to you... brothers and sisters in the RISEN Christ... who was put to death on the cross and now lives to show us that we are given the life that belongs to Him. As Jesus put our sin to death on the cross, He is now risen from the dead which means we, too, are brought back to new life in Him.

Beloved in the Lord, He IS Risen (He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!)

When Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene entered the tomb of Jesus, they saw someone. It wasn't Jesus, but rather a messenger from heaven; an angel. And just like angels were accustomed to doing, the first thing he says is, "don't be alarmed." *Don't be alarmed* is what the angel that visited Mary said when she was told that she was with child, bearing the Son of God. *Don't be alarmed* were the first words the angel said to the shepherds in the field when they were visited while keeping their flocks by night. That announcement was about a baby that has been born in Bethlehem. It stands to reason, that seeing angels sent from heaven is "alarming."

But the message this angel wanted the "Marys" to know is that Jesus is not where they thought He would be. And by this announcement the angel reminds them that He did exactly what He promised. He is risen from the grave. Jesus LIVES! He promised it. And the promise is now fulfilled. He is Risen (He is Risen Indeed, Alleluia!)

A visit from a heavenly angel with a grand announcement. A dead Savior come back to life. We understand the alarm. Surprise causes alarm. Never experiencing anything like a person who was once dead and now is alive may make a person tremble. But what the angel says and what Jesus does takes the alarm, the fear, and turns it into relief. And for you and me, it's the greatest news, the greatest relief we could ever imagine. He is Risen! (He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!)

Here's the relief of what the angel told the Marys: "*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.*" I love what the angel says, and what he said was completely intentional. "*Go tell the disciples, AND PETER!*" Peter, you say? Yes Peter. Especially Peter. This resurrection is for him. Yes, even Peter.

What did Peter do? You remember. That faithful night, early in the morning before Jesus was crucified Peter denied Jesus three times. Jesus told him he would do it, but Peter didn't ever think he would. Three times he denied the Lord in the courtyard and after he did so, the rooster crowed and he went out and wept bitterly. He did what he said he would never do. He denied the Lord.

The angel said, “*and Peter*” so that we understand that Jesus rose for Peter too. Jesus rose for the one who lied, who fell into sin, who denied the Lord. Jesus died and rose for Peter. And this is Good news, beloved in the Lord. This is good news because Jesus rose for you too. When you have your Peter moments of denial. When you have your, “I love myself more than God,” moments. When you have your “my pleasure is more important than keeping God’s Word,” moments. The angel emphasizes that Jesus died and rose FOR PETER. This means that Jesus died and rose for a Peter just like you. He is Risen! (He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!) And, He is risen for you.

You can imagine Peter, can’t you? You’ve been there before. Something has gone so wrong. Something you’re not sure you can come back from. A mistake you made. A lie you told that changed everything. A temptation that you fell into that you regret. You are wrought with grief and you think that the rift you created is much too big to repair. You wallow in the sadness you created... the cross on which you are crucified and the tomb you fashioned for yourself. Greif and despair can seem to be too big to come back from.

Hear the angel’s appeal.... Go and tell the disciples, AND PETER. Peter stands for all of us who are ridden with guilt and shame over what we have done. Peter is you and me who are redeemed by a Savior who knows our name. Peter is you, who Jesus loves so much to die for and to come back to life. The angel says, go and tell the disciples... and make sure every Peter that is out there in the world knows that Jesus is risen. His is Risen! (He is Risen indeed, Alleluia!)

This beautiful day of Resurrection is a day for you. It reminds us that though we are sinners, Christ died for us... and rose from the grave for us. All of us. We are redeemed. We are brought back from the dead. And that’s really the important part of Easter. Without Jesus we are dead. With Jesus, we have new life because He is alive. Tell the disciples, tell Peter. And you, beloved, tell the world about this good news.

This is a scary world. Wars, worries about our families, our work, our church, and our lives. And you know that “fear” is something we experience often if angels have to say, “Do not be alarmed” when the greatest thing to happen to all humanity occurs. But we have no reason to fear. God has come to save. He has come to conquer death and to give us life and salvation. He has come to make us alive and to bring His blessed hope for this day, for every day, for all eternity. Do not be alarmed... Jesus is alive. Do not be alarmed, go and tell... “EVERYONE”. He is Risen!

Amen

The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.