

Rev. Todd R. Lattig / General

Resurrection; Easter / Mark 16:1-8

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## Focus Statement

- Sisters and brothers, fear may grip us,
  - but courage empowered by faith in the risen Christ
  - leads us forward."

## Things to Consider

- Now, before we move forward in to the passage:
  - Let's consider a few key points.
    - Firstly, let's acknowledge the power of fear in our lives,
      - hindering us from experiencing God's abundance.
    - Secondly, let's reflect on how fear might be present within our congregation,
      - holding us back from embracing God's call.
    - Finally, let's approach this passage with open hearts and minds, ready to receive whatever God may speak to us today.
      - Let's be attentive to the Holy Spirit and allow ourselves to be transformed by the truth of God's Word.

## What Scripture Says

- In [Mark 16:1-8](#), fear emerges as a central theme,

- intricately woven into the narrative surrounding the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- This Easter morning, let's delve into this passage and let's focus on the fear the women were experiencing:
- **In Verses 1-2):**
  - The passage begins with the women,
    - Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome,
      - approaching Jesus' tomb.
    - Their actions are driven by devotion, as they bring spices to anoint Jesus' body.
      - However, their journey is accompanied by an underlying sense of fear.
        - They approached the tomb cautiously,
          - expecting to find a closed tomb, a dead body
            - and definitely apprehensive about the events that have transpired.
              - Remember: Jesus was publicly crucified as a traitor...a criminal.
- **In (Verses 3-4):**
  - As the women arrived at the tomb,
    - their fear intensified upon finding the stone rolled away.
    - This sight would have been startling and perplexing, prompting a surge of apprehension and uncertainty.
      - The absence of Jesus' body amplified their fear,
        - as it contradicted their expectations and raised serious questions about what had occurred.
- Inside the tomb, **in Verses 5-7),**

- the women encountered a young man dressed in white,
  - presumably an angel.
- His sudden appearance evoked a profound sense of awe and fear.
  - They were expecting a very dead Jesus lying on his death bed...and instead they find a young LIVING man delivering them a message.
    - Then the angel's proclamation of Jesus' resurrection further compounded their fear,
      - as it challenged their understanding of the natural order and confronted them with the divine.
    - The angel's instruction to go and tell the disciples added a dimension of responsibility to their fear,
      - as they grappled with the enormity of the message entrusted to them.
- **Finally we see in Verse 8a:**
  - The passage culminates with the women's response of fear and amazement.
    - Their initial reaction is one of overwhelming fear, overshadowing
      - even their amazement at the miraculous event they have witnessed.
    - This fear compels them to flee from the tomb, unable to process the magnitude of what they have experienced.
  - Imagine, if you will, the scene at that tomb.
    - Picture these women, their hearts heavy with grief, their steps laden with sorrow,
      - as they make their way to the resting place of their beloved teacher, Jesus.
        - But woven into the fabric of their devotion is a thread of fear, a gnawing uncertainty that tugs at their souls.

- As they draw near to the tomb, their fear reaches a crescendo.
  - The sight that meets their eyes—the stone rolled away—strikes them with a profound sense of disquiet.
    - It's as if the ground beneath their feet has shifted,
      - leaving them adrift in a sea of doubt and confusion.
- Then, suddenly, they encounter something beyond their wildest imaginings—
  - a messenger from the heavens, clad in robes of dazzling white.
    - His words pierce through the darkness of their fear, declaring the impossible:
      - Jesus, the one they saw crucified, has risen from the dead!
- But friends, in that moment of divine revelation,
  - fear still holds them in its grip.
    - It's a fear born of the unknown, of the unimaginable,
      - of the sheer magnitude of what they've just witnessed.
    - And so, they flee from the tomb, hearts pounding, minds reeling, unable to make sense of the miraculous truth laid bare before them.
- Yet, oh, sisters and brothers, let us not overlook the tension that lies in that gap between fear and courage.
  - For what we don't get in Mark's Gospel, we get knowing that that message about Jesus' resurrection did not stay a secret...
    - That is how we are all here to celebrate the event nearly 2,000 years later.
  - For in the trembling of their hearts, in the trembling of their hands,
    - lies the stirring of something greater—
      - a seed of courage,
      - of hope,

- of faith.
- Yes, they may have fled from the tomb in fear, silent and trembling,
  - but hear me now: that fear did not have the final say!
    - For those same women eventually found their voices.
      - They found the strength to overcome their fear,
        - to embrace the truth of the resurrection,
          - and to boldly proclaim it to the ends of the earth.

## What This Means for You

- For each one of us sitting here today,
  - the lesson of courage over fear
    - speaks volumes to our daily lives.
  - We all encounter moments of fear—
    - fear of the unknown,
      - fear of failure,
      - fear of rejection.
    - But just as the women at the tomb discovered,
      - fear does not have the final say! Christ does!
    - In our moments of greatest fear,
      - we must remember that we serve a God who conquered death itself,
        - who holds the power to overcome every fear that grips our hearts.
          - As Paul wrote in [Romans 8:31b](#) “If God is for us, who can ever be against us?”
- So, how can we apply this lesson of courage to our own lives?

- It begins with a shift in perspective.
  - Instead of allowing fear to paralyze us, we can choose to lean into faith
    - —to trust in the promise of resurrection hope,
      - even when the world around us seems shrouded in darkness.
  - We can take comfort in knowing that we serve a God
    - who goes before us,
    - who walks alongside us,
    - and who surrounds us and empowers us
      - to face our fears with courage and conviction.

## What This Means for Us

- And now, my dear friends,
  - let us turn our attention to our congregation as a whole.
    - As we look out upon the challenges that lie before us—
      - declining numbers,
        - lower giving,
        - uncertain futures—
    - let us not be overcome by fear.
      - Instead, let us stand firm in the knowledge that
        - we serve a God who is greater than any obstacle we may face.
    - Let us embrace the call to courageously step out in faith,
      - to seek innovative solutions,
        - to reach out with love and compassion
          - to those in need.
  - It most definitely means stepping out of our comfort zones,

- trying new ministries,
  - or reimagining the ways we engage with our community.
- It also means coming together as a congregation,
  - united in purpose and vision,
    - to boldly proclaim the message of hope and redemption
      - to a world in desperate need of good news.
- And so, my friends, as we leave this place today,
  - may we carry with us the lesson of courage over fear.
    - The one promise that is carried throughout the Scriptures is this:
      - FEAR NOT! Have No Fear! For I am with you.
        - I will not leave you nor forsake you...
          - Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.
- May we be emboldened by the example of those brave women
  - who stood trembling at the empty tomb
    - and found the strength to proclaim the risen Christ.
  - And may we, too, have the courage to face our fears head-on,
    - knowing that with Christ by our side, fear does not have the final word.
      - We are a resurrected people...death lays no claim over us.
  - May we go forth from this place with hearts ablaze with courage,
    - minds steadfast in faith,
      - and hands ready to do the work of God's kingdom. Amen? Amen!