

## Easter 2024 A Message from Bishop Laurie *AN INCOMPLETE SENTENCE Mark 16:8*

*Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed. Alleluia!*

The gospel of Mark begins with this verse, Mark 1:1, *The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ*. Then it ends with an incomplete sentence<sup>1</sup>. Mark's Easter Story ends with an incomplete sentence. What was the editor thinking? Where are the punctuation police when you need them?

Look at it for yourself. Mark 16:8 in Greek

καὶ ἐξελθοῦσαι ἔφυγον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου, εἶχεν γὰρ αὐτὰς τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις· καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν, ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ



See, it ends with the word “gar” which can be translated “for or because.” Why did the writer of Mark end the gospel with the word “because?” Word-for-word the last part of the verse reads *to none nothing they spoke they were afraid because*

So just to be clear, the purpose of the gospel of Mark is to tell the good news of Jesus Christ and then it ends with an empty tomb and the only witnesses to it run away in fear saying nothing to anyone because...

It should be noted there is no punctuation in the original Greek and we can of course rearrange the English words and make a sentence, but still the incompleteness of the Greek sentence, abrupt ending and the incompleteness of story itself are telling.<sup>2</sup>

Matthew, Luke and John end their Easter story with Jesus appearing to the disciples after the resurrection. These gospels end with proof of the resurrection that others see with their own eyes and some even touch Jesus. Mark has no proof of the resurrection. He doesn't even finish his last sentence.

Mark 1 was intended to be just **the beginning** of the story of the good news of Jesus. It can't be completely recorded with paper and pen because it is still being written in the lives of the believers today. Friends, the story of Easter didn't end with the frightened women. If it did we wouldn't be here today. Some of Mark's Easter story will be written by your life, my life, our witness to the empty tomb and the transforming power of God love in our life. The rest of the story will be written by those who come after us and whose lives bear witness to God's power to transform death to life. We are proof of the resurrection. Our lives transformed by the power of God's love and forgiveness are proof that Jesus rose from the dead. We are writing new verses and chapters for Mark's gospel, so that the next generation will come to know and love Jesus and all generations will experience God's grace.

*Rev. Laurie M. Olson*

**Mark 16** *When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. <sup>2</sup>And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. <sup>3</sup>They had been saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?” <sup>4</sup>When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. <sup>5</sup>As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. <sup>6</sup>But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. <sup>7</sup>But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” <sup>8</sup>So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid*

<sup>1</sup> McCoy and Fistler, Pulpit Fiction Podcast #540, Easter 2023

<sup>2</sup> Mark has two alternative endings (Mark 16:9-20) which many biblical scholars believe were added at a much later date by those who couldn't tolerate ending with an incomplete sentence!

<sup>3</sup> Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay