

Mark 16:1-8

## There is Hope – there is Resurrection

When the Sabbath ends at 6 pm on the day after Jesus was crucified, trade can again take place, so three of the Galilean women who were close to Jesus go to buy spices to anoint Jesus's body. The women are, firstly Mary Magdalene; secondly, Mary the mother of James the Younger – her son was one of the Twelve (in the older versions he is called James the Less); and thirdly, Salome, who was probably Zebedee's wife and the mother of the disciples James and John. These three were among those at the cross and two of them were also at the burial of Jesus, so they know exactly which tomb to go to. They probably also know that Nicodemus has already anointed the body at the burial, but they want to be able to express their own grief now that the Sabbath is not preventing them.



So at the earliest opportunity, as soon as it is light on Sunday, they make their way to the tomb. In their haste and grief they have forgotten about the difficulty of moving the stone. But when they get there, the stone has gone! The Greek grammar of this sentence suggests that God has done this. The tomb has a low entrance so it is only once they are inside that they see the person sitting there. The white robe is a hint that he is an angel. They are completely shocked! The angel knows who Jesus is and how he died; he affirms the truth of the crucifixion but immediately proclaims to them the resurrection. Jesus is not in the tomb any more, he has been raised to life. The risen Jesus is going to appear to his followers in Galilee – where his ministry began. So this will be a new beginning. The women are to tell the disciples that they will see him in person. Peter gets a special mention, to reassure him after his denial.

The women are dumbstruck! 'Trembling and bewildered' can also mean that they were awestruck. They are clearly afraid, and for the time being say nothing to anyone. The testimony of women was not given much weight in those days – which is all the more reason to believe that this is a true account Mark is recording.

Mark is writing his gospel for a church about to face persecution, who need to take up their cross and follow Jesus. BUT Jesus is not left in the tomb – there is hope, there is resurrection.

What large or small challenges are we (personally or as a community) facing today? Are we counting on the reality of Jesus in our daily lives – or are we leaving him in the tomb?

