

The Resurrection of Our Lord, Year B

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

Mark 16:1-8

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Analysis by Chris Repp

1When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" 4When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6But 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. 7But 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." 8So 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.



HE IS RISEN!!

TRIUMPH OF LIFE OVER DEATH

From Canva

"Freed from the tyranny of death and its threats, we begin to direct our attention to all that nurtures and encourages life, confident that death no longer has the final word. Life does. Alleluia!"

DIAGNOSIS: Death

Step One: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Preoccupied with the Details of Death

Mary Magdalene and the other women have been with Jesus during his ministry. They have heard him teach. They surely knew that he had planned to come to Jerusalem to face death. That would have upset the disciples enough for it to be common knowledge in the broader Jesus community, even if the women themselves had not been present when Jesus said the words. Now the death part has become a cold, hard reality, and the women have come to attend to all the tasks that need to be done when death comes.

Step Two: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): Trusting the Power of Death

Jesus also said that after being killed he would rise from the dead on the third day, but Peter seemed to ignore that in his rebuke (see Mark 8:31-33). Just like Peter, the only thing that had really sunk in for the women was the prospect, now made real, of Jesus' death. We get it, we who retell this story each year in Holy Week, and in abbreviated form each Sunday in our gatherings. We, like the women, have ample experience with death's devastation. When death comes, it has the final word. Always. So, no wonder we trust death. It has a proven track record of making good on its threats.

Step Three: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): Dead

Understandable or not, our trust in death betrays our profound disconnection from the font and source of our life. We are alienated from God and hostile to God's messengers, so that news of resurrection strikes us as either ridiculous or terrifying. We prefer to cling to the comfortable reliability of death, and so cut ourselves off from life.



Freed from the tyranny of death and its threats,

we begin to direct our attention to all that nurtures and encourages life, confident that death no longer has the final word. Life does. Alleluia!

PROGNOSIS: Life

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): Alive

And yet, in spite of our inability to grasp reality that doesn't conform to our expectations, the Christ who died on the cross (with and for us) has in fact risen from the dead. (He is risen

indeed! Alleluia!) We do not dictate this reality. He is not Tinkerbell whose existence depends upon our belief. He is alive, and plans to meet up with us.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): Trusting the Power of Life

I love the irony of this ending to Mark that so many have found troubling, as evidenced by the alternate endings subsequently tagged on. “They said nothing to anyone...” We know as we read the text that they must have said something to someone at some point, because we’re hearing the story now. The gospel works that way. Despite their initial terror and amazement, the good news of the resurrection that was communicated to them eventually found a crack in their armor. By the power of the Holy Spirit it has driven out their misplaced trust and has begun to work in them trust in Christ’s promise of life in him.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): Preoccupied with the Details of Life

That redirected trust now reorients and refocuses their lives and ours. Freed from the tyranny of death and its threats, we begin to direct our attention to all that nurtures and encourages life, confident that death no longer has the final word. Life does. Alleluia! And this is only the beginning (see Mark 1:1)!