

Mark 16:1-7 (NIV)

1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.

2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb

3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.

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.

6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

7 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.'"

41-16-01-A Resurrection from Fear

Sabbath, darkness, light, death, fear, witnessing, Easter

Mark 16:1-7

For the faithful, Easter morning has broken the power of fear.

INTRODUCTION: (Text as Scripture reading)

–[In *My Glimpse of Eternity*, Betty Maltz tells how she died for 28 minutes, had an experience in Heaven, then came back to life. When she pulled off the sheet they'd put over her, it frightened the hospital staff. They hadn't been afraid seeing her near death or as a corpse, but for her to sit up and start talking really scared them. The nurse's aide tending her body said, "*Ma'am, you're a ghost!*"]

–That story helps us identify with the 3 women who found the empty tomb on Easter morning. They weren't afraid to minister to His dead corpse. But they were so frightened by the unexpected that the angel had to tell them, "*Don't be alarmed.*" ("Don't be afraid!")

–That's what Christ's Resurrection has brought: title. This passage illustrates how **HOM.idea.... first**, because Easter morning brought...

I. The End of a Long Night (v.2, "*just after sunrise*")

A. Christ's resurrection was the dawning of a new day [It turned the *daily sunrise* into a holy illustration of the rising Son of God].

1. *OT prophets had anticipated a new day: a dim view turning into a full view; darkness becoming light; the long night would be over*

– **Isa 60:1-3**, Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light... kings to the brightness of your dawn.

2. *NT apostles exhort us to live in the light of that new day–*

a. *Peter wove it into his evangelistic message– 2 Pet 1:19*, And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

b. *Paul & John identify it with believers– Eph 5:8*, For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. / **1 Jn 2:8**, Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. [**Every dawn** reminds us that Christ's resurrection began this new day!]

B. His resurrection also completed the OT Sabbath and inaugurated a new day of rest– v.1, "*When the Sabbath was over...*"

1. Is the OT Sabbath *fearful*? Didn't God memorialize it as the day

He rested from creating? *Yes*, but *for us* it's a *weekly* reminder of *our mortality* picturing our *rest from earthly toil in the grave*:

- a. Let's look at fallen humanity's work-week— Gen 3:17b,19a,
“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.... By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken...”
- b. Then look at the OT description of Sabbath-keeping— Exo 20:9-10a (NKJV), Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work...
- c. Now, how does God *average* the human life span? *A week of years!*— Psa 90:10, The length of our days is seventy years—or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. [Eskaton is full of *average-breakers!*]
2. Jesus slew our death, then spent the last OT Sabbath putting our death to rest in the grave. But on “*the first day of the week*,” (v.2), He arose to begin a new creation! (Easter morning was *Sunday morning*, starting the *first day of the new creation's work-week!*)
3. Most believers meet on Sunday, not Saturday, the 7th day. *Why?*
 - a. Our rest isn't in the *old creation* but in the coming Kingdom!
 - b. For us, Christ's resurrection turned *each Sunday* into a *weekly reminder* that the OT has ended and that the NT has *begun*.
 - c. Sunday reminds us that, *in Christ*, our *Sabbath rest* has already begun! **The long night is over!** And this present *Sabbath rest* awaits its full completion in Heaven, where Christ will be *our perpetual light*— Rev 21:23,25, The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.

TRANS: Easter morning's bright light ended the OT's dim light. “*Don't be alarmed*”: a New Covenant of perpetual Sabbath rest has begun *in Christ!* Darkness is dispelled, death is defeated, the power of fear is broken. *How do we know?* Because, Easter morning brought us...

II. The Evidence of an Empty Tomb— v.4 (The women asked themselves), “*Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?*”

- A. They hoped for a small miracle, but a bigger one waited them. (Christ's *Resurrection* was as miraculous as His Incarnation—He had entered human life through a sealed virgin's womb, and He exited human death through a sealed rocky tomb.)

- B. The stone was removed *not* to let Jesus *out*, but to let believers *in*. (It was *strong evidence* that activated a life-long meditation.)
- C. Why does God invite us to enter and *examine* the empty tomb?
 1. He wants **this** to *sink in*: death has lost its significance *for us*, because death has lost its power *over us!*
 2. Also, We *serve* and *honor* a living Savior! (Our *service* may include using burial *spices* to honor others, but we honor His death at the Communion Table.)

TRANS: *Doubts* cause *fear*. But **Easter morning broke fear's power**. Many hearts are sealed with large stones, or ones rolled back partially, still blocking the rays of Easter glory. This is another of our fears: “*Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of hearts shut to the Gospel?*” Our *spiced oil* isn't to *anoint* Christ's body but to anoint blind eyes! *How do we perform this healing task?* The angel said in v.7, “*go and tell*”—share the good news of Easter!... *But, to do that, we need...*

III. The Empowerment of a Risen Savior

- A. We are *not empowered* by a *story* but by a *Person*. (The NT and good books can *encourage* us, but our real power is in Christ!)
- B. Neither is our empowerment in education (*Training is helpful*, but only by knowing Him can we *share the living Christ* with others.)
- C. The risen Christ alone can empower us...*
 1. *to announce, as did the angels, what people are really searching for— v.6, “*You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen!*” (This is our good news, and it's everyone's Good News!)
 2. *by His leading— v.7a, “*He is going ahead of you into Galilee*” (We're not alone in our witness: Jesus is our guide and our *example*.)
 3. *by His presence— v.7b, “*you will see him, just as he told you*” (*Is this possible for us today?* **Yes!**— Mat 18:20, “where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.”)

CONCLUSION: The past shadows of darkness and the present threat of death are *no more to be feared!* “**Christ is risen!**” (pause...) And because He “**is risen indeed**,” because our future security rests in Him, we can be *bold messengers* of *this living Savior* Who broke **the power of fear on that very first Easter morning**.