

## Beloved Joy

(Sermon #7 in the Beloved sermon series)

Mark 16: 1-8

May the words of my mouth and the meditations in our hearts be acceptable and suitable in your sight oh Lord.

Our rock, our strength and our redeemer. Amen

Can you imagine the surprise? Can you see the look on

their faces? All they had just witnessed was

horrifying. After all they watched Jesus being nailed

to the cross. Watched, helplessly in agony as the

savior bled and died. Lifeless they placed him in the

tomb. So can you imagine?

Of course the women at the tomb were terrified that first Easter morning! Wouldn't you be? Expecting to find a body, they instead met with a man dressed in white who proclaimed, "Jesus of Nazareth is not here!

He has risen from the dead, just as he proclaimed!"

Fear, yes. I can only imagine the amount of fear those women must have had in that very moment. So afraid, they left and were so terrified with fear they could not tell anyone.

This is the part of Mark that I really wish there was more to the story. Mark is quite brief and to the point and the gospel of Mark is itself only 16 short chapters.

The written story of Jesus ends right here in Mark. The women leaving the tomb in fear and amazement. Unable to speak. In Matthew we read in chapter 28 about these same women. "So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples." In Luke we read in chapter 24, "and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the 11 and to all the rest." In the gospel of John, Jesus appears to Mary and when she realizes who Jesus is and that he is in fact alive, it says in chapter 20 verse 18, Mary Magdalene went and announced to the the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!"

Proclaiming the good news is what we are called to do.

Christ is risen!

There is reason to celebrate! There is reason to spread the good news to all who will listen and even to those who will not! The joy found on that first Easter

morning is very difficult to contain!

My grandmother had Easter joy all throughout the year. For those of you who may not already know, my grandmother was also Nelia's aunt. Grandma was just one of those individuals who were filled with joy and she loved to share that joy with others. I remember one of our last Easter's with her.

We were gathered at my parent's home as we do each Easter. Grandma sat on the rocking chair in the living room and we were all gathered around her. As she did from time to time, she began to laugh a little to herself, so of course, we were all like, "What? What's so funny grandma? What did you do now?" Because grandma always told us little stories of things she would do throughout the day that would make her laugh. They say getting old isn't fun, but apparently, grandma didn't believe it because grandma could find joy in any ordinary day somehow.

Grandma shared with us how she filled a bunch of Easter eggs with candy and waited until everyone in her apartment building was tucked in for the night. Then, with her Easter basket filled, and dressed in her nightgown and housecoat, she went around to each door in her apartment building and left an egg for each resident. She laughed again at the end of the story and we laughed with her. "I wonder what they thought when they opened their doors this morning?" Grandma said with laughter. The joy that filled my parent's living room that day was contagious.

The joy that grandma shared throughout her life was an Easter joy that could not be contained. All through her life, grandma attended church and grandma held that Easter promise with her until that promise was fulfilled for her as well.

That first Easter joy, that moment when the women realized the miracle of all that Jesus said. When they saw with their own eyes, the empty tomb! The wonder and amazement that filled them that day is ours this day and always.

Be filled with that Beloved Joy! Do something, be it ever so small as an Easter egg filled with candy.

Share this Beloved Joy this day and always as Jesus has defeated death and the grave. As we sing again shouts of Hallelujah and our joy cannot be contained, in this place, in our homes, in our lives, in our very souls! Carry this Beloved Easter Joy this day and always and know Christ is Risen! Christ is Risen Indeed!

Hallelujah!

Amen