

## MARK 16:1-8 IT IS FINISHED, BUT NOT OVER

<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb <sup>3</sup> and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" <sup>4</sup> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. <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> "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. <sup>7</sup> 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.'" <sup>8</sup> Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

According to the best existing manuscripts of Mark's Gospel, his rendition of the life and ministry of Jesus ends here. The women come to the tomb to make the final ritual preparation of Jesus' body. For the women, the light of Jesus had been extinguished and the hope that he had provided was gone. As his work ended in apparent failure, they would perform the utterly futile task of anointing a body destined to decay. In both cases, the story was over. It had provided a brief respite, but now it would be back to life as usual; drudgery, pain and relative meaninglessness.

What a shock it must have been to find the tomb empty. How dread-filled the women must have been to come face-to-face with an angel. So great was their fright that they were apparently rendered speechless. Yet, Mark records the instruction that the angel gave the women, so although the Mark may have ended his account here, the story was not over.

Indeed, the report of the good news of Jesus' life and sacrificial death was finished, but the Gospel is not over. The tomb was empty. Jesus is alive. The resurrected Christ is waiting to meet us in this world, as he has promised. The Disciples are to return to the place where Jesus taught them. We, too, will encounter the risen Christ if we will go back to the place where he instructs us; his word. It isn't over, there is still time for you to be written into the book.

**Jesus, thank you for showing me the way to the Father, and making that way possible for me. Help me not to stop with the empty grave, but rather guide me into a closer and life-transforming relationship with you. Raise me with you through the power of your Holy Spirit so I might live as an Easter person. Amen.**