



An Incomplete Easter
Mark 16:1-8
Easter Sunday, April 12th, 2020
First Federated Church of Peoria, Illinois
The Rev. Dr. Forrest Krummel, Jr.

Text: they were afraid. (v. 8b)

This seems like an unfinished Easter.

We've been wondering what we are going to do for Easter dinner. You know, I've always found it humorous that we celebrate the resurrection of Christ with a ham dinner given the fact that Jesus and his disciples were all Jewish!

We're missing the perfumed smell of Easter lilies.

The crimson robes and gold stoles are hung in the choir room's closet. The church is quiet, or I should say that the church building is quiet for you, who are participating in this worship service are the true church.

Somehow, though, it's hard to imagine that it is Easter. But then, the Easter story as it is told in Mark's gospel also seems incomplete.

There are no birth stories.

No Christmas.

And it ends so abruptly.

The women go to the tomb and worry about how the stone that sealed the grave of Jesus might be moved so that they can give their Jesus a proper burial.

The stone is rolled away, though, when they arrive. Entering they see a young man dressed in a white robe.

Don't be afraid he tells them. But they are. They are terrified. Tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.

But the women run from the tomb and tell no one because they were afraid.

The most ancient manuscripts end Mark's gospel right there. With the words, they were afraid.

The ending, though, seemed unsatisfactory to later scribes. It was incomplete. So they added two variant endings; it says so in your bible footnotes.

Was Mark's ending lost, or did he intend to end it where he did? I believe that it is the latter.

I believe that for Mark, Easter did not end with some historical event. Easter is not a chronos story, one limited by time and history. It is a kairos story; one that goes beyond time and space. It is an eternal story.

The Easter story is incomplete because the story of Easter is still being written today, by you and me, and our children and grandchildren and future generations.

The decisions that we make, the things that we do, especially in scary and uncertain times, add chapters to the story of Easter. Easter is God's story written to us.

We know what it is to be afraid.

Fear brings out the worst in people. It plays on our insecurities. It whispers, "There is not enough. I am not enough. You are not enough. We are not enough."

But Easter tells us, "Be not afraid."

Be not afraid.

Be not afraid for God is enough.

The Risen Lord goes ahead of us to Galilee - to the place where we are called to do the Kingdom's work. Galilee is the place where the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, the sick and dying are cared for, and the broken are made whole.

Be not afraid.

Be not afraid.

Let those words ring in your hearts.

To God be the glory. Amen.