



# Hear the Word

from Pastor James N. McEachran



Gather... Encourage... Equip... Send...

## Resurrection of Our Lord, Easter Day

April 1, 2018

### Grace and Encouragement

Mark 16:1-8

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ. The Time of Lent is complete and now we celebrate the great gift of Resurrection!

Tradition has it that a family gathers for dinner on the Friday before Easter. The generations at Table for a meal. Celebrating new life in Christ and the bonds of love.

Scene is set; at table; time for grace. The young grandson reminds all that you begin with hands folded...not just any way, but like this /...hands folded high to chin.../

Prayer is spoken, meal shared. Time for a Q and A. [As in Passover Meals of old when the youngest at table asks, "Why is this night different than all others?"]

Day before yesterday, the grandmother asked "What happened today?" (Good Friday)

A younger child simply said, "Uh, Jesus died." As if everyone knew this truth. Moment in silence... older sibling simply reports "But, I know the rest of the story." Point-Counterpoint and the gift of being a bit more mature/IN THE KNOW AND EAGER TO SHARE!

We know the rest of the story. Knew it on Ash Wednesday and celebrate it today.

Mark was the first to record the account of Jesus' resurrection; near 70 CE (Common Era); nearly 40+ years after Jesus' ascension to the Father.

Words written for grace and encouragement to ground the house churches in Rome to remain faithful and courageous in witness and service.

We easily remember the essence of the story: Sabbath over, sun rises, the women ("Who will roll the stone away?"); it was open; walk in; young man/white robe (Spoiler Alert: ANGEL!); "Jesus the crucified has been raised."

Hard to grasp, abrupt, unexpected...how would it have been for you? Total meltdown following days of grief, desertion, hiding for fear of those who might crucify you too. Recall? "Did not we see you with Him?" NOPE!

Did you catch the key words that are so real, so human, so like each one us: "**alarmed**," "**terror**," "**amazement**," "**afraid**." Not unbelief, but shock of beginning to REMEMBER that was how Jesus said it would be---"on the third day raised from the dead."

Hard to believe, at first, until they were together again in Galilee. The place where they were first called to “follow.”

Easter Sunday 2018. We have kept the Time of Lent, lived toward the Table of the Lord, heard the Good Friday narrative and now live beneath and around a Cross of New Life and confess the mystery of the faith we share that---

**CHRIST HAS DIED.**  
**CHRIST IS RISEN.**  
**CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN.**

In those words, we claim our center and our foundation in our call to continue the mission of Christ in the world.

Here is what it looks like for our new day in the Lord:

First: No need for Alarm! Look! Simply put: the tomb was empty! It was Paul, no first friend of Christians, who called the congregation at Corinth to “hold firmly to the message.”

We base our confession of Faith on the truth that Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world and if the Victor over sin, death, and the Evil One!

In the face of the always breaking news and the creeping, seeping, surging ways of darkness...there is NO WAY that the darkness can overcome the Light and the Love of the Christ.

Then, to Tell. To be willing witness to the lives we share in Christ. No fear! Hope-filled. Peace-making. Joy-abounding and living each day in the trust that we are, as Paul notes in the final sentence of the First Lesson---“a servant of the Gospel.” As in, “I, JIM, A SERVANT OF THE GOSPEL.”

For each of us the life of managing and delivering the Gospel in the way we live as brothers and sisters in Christ and being discipleFit in our daily lives.

Finally, to know that Jesus goes ahead of us. It is significant that they meet on the ground of their first calling and at Pentecost became the soul force of the good news we keep today.

We are on the ground in the mission we share at Saint Andrew’s. To be a force of the common good as we are the Body of Christ in the world.

Like the first witnesses, we are at times ALARMED, but armed by the power of the Holy Spirit; AMAZED at God’s provision that supports us each day; yet at times AFRAID until we know that ministry is not a solo sport, but the work of the Church which continues to be the presence of Christ, the assurance that God provides GRACE AND ENCOURAGEMENT we share along the way.

This is not, for most of us, our first Easter Sunday. I challenge you, invite you to remember of how good it is to dwell in the serenity, the unity, the assurance that God’s provision is never a brief booster, but a life consisting of the certainty that we are the beloved of God in Christ forever.

In his book, Living the Resurrection, Eugene Peterson sets the tone for our life together:

*“In realizing and responding to the resurrection, we enter into the full operation of the Trinity, which is the formation of the life of Christ in the company of friends.*

*So we understand our formation-by-resurrection as being unavoidable present in both sides---from our side in the company of personal friends and from God’s side in the company of the three persons of the Trinity.”*

Consider this to be “Reset Sunday”---no foolin’... Jesus lives and nothing, not one thing, can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. And we live IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND OF THE SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. Amen.