

Sermon for Easter Day
Sunday, March 31, 2024
“Rejoice in the unexpected”

Texts: Mark 16:1-8

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

I speak to you in the name of the one true God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

During the Triduum this year, the theme I have focused on is how the story of Jesus the Christ, his passion, death, and resurrection challenged and defies expectation and challenges us to something new. Today, on the day on which we celebrate the Resurrection, God in Jesus Christ defied expectation. When the disciples of Jesus witnessed him being crucified, they thought it was the end, but Jesus defied their expectation. When the civil and religious authorities thought they had stopped Jesus, his message, and his followers, Jesus defied their expectation. When Jesus died, he rose again.

The short Gospel lesson for today from Mark says, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here.” The women who arrived at the tomb to finish embalming his body expected his body to be waiting for them inside; instead they found him gone, and a young man, presumably an angel, but Mark does not say, tells them of his resurrection. Then he challenged them with something new: “But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.”

As his followers, we are supposed to tell the message. We are supposed to be ambassadors for Jesus Christ, telling others about Jesus Christ, but more importantly, demonstrating the love of Christ in all that we do. What’s more, we are supposed to share the hope that Jesus’s resurrection brings: that no matter where you are, who you are, where you’ve been, or what you’ve done, there is hope for the here and now and hope for the future.

Whenever we feel like we have been defeated, the Easter message reassures us that victory is possible through Christ. His crucifixion seemed like the powers of the world had won, but Easter is the declaration that, No! God is the victor. We can’t always choose the battles that we must fight in life; we don’t even know how long our life is going to be. But the message of Easter is that no matter what the powers of earth try to do to us, in Christ we have the victory. No matter what life throws at you, no matter what choices in life you’ve made—good or bad—no matter where life takes you on your journey, nothing compares to what Christ did on the Cross. Nothing compares to the gift God gave us in his son. Nothing compares to the victory over death, the grave, and hell that Jesus achieved. For that reason, we must go and show the world that we know has been raised. Alleluia! Christ is risen!...Amen.