



“Trembling Days: Resurrection”

The Great Vigil of Easter
7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 31, 2018
The Reverend John H. Brock
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

Mark 16:1-8

Grace to you and peace, from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen.

I cannot even begin to imagine what Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome were feeling as they headed toward the garden that Sunday morning. They had been through as close to hell on earth as anyone who had not been in a war zone.

Their friend, their teacher, their Lord, had been falsely arrested, because someone they all trusted, or at the least, understood that their **teacher** trusted him, had arranged for Jesus to be handed over to the religious officials. He was then bounced around from religious high council, to paranoid high priest, to government puppet, before finally having the living daylight hours beaten and whipped out of him. Barely able to stand on his own, and with no sleep (unless, of course, he passed out during the flogging), he was forced to carry the means of his own execution, in public, no less. Stripped naked, spikes pounded through his flesh and bone, hung there to be mocked, and ridiculed, insulted and abused, all before, finally, dying.

And he did die. He was *dead*. Stone. Cold. Dead. Those women knew that. They watched Joseph from Arimathea take the body down, off the cross. At the very least, Joseph wrapped the corpse in the burial cloth, and laid it in the tomb carved out of the side of a hill.

What did they think? How did they feel, as they watched Joseph roll the stone across the entrance, sealing their friend, their teacher, their Lord, in his grave?

And here they are, Sunday morning - two nights, three days - later. Here they are, walking to the garden.

What happened during those intervening hours? Did they tremble as they watched him die? Did they tremble as they ate, as they slept? Did anyone talk to one another? What did they do, those women? Those women who loved Jesus, those women who listened and knew and followed him? Were they anything more than trembling, animated zombies *themselves*, as they walked to the tomb?

Finally, they arrived, in the early morning dusk, the not-quite-real light that permeates over the horizon. They had enough presence of mind to know they faced yet, one more obstacle: the stone across the entrance.

Upon their arrival, they see, perhaps, their first glimmer of something going their way: the stone is moved! They can enter the tomb, anoint the body, get their friend, their teacher, their Lord, finally, properly, prepared. Numbness of emotions *might* have felt a tremble of something positive, an imperceptible crack, in their frozen center. The door is open; they can enter.

But any warmth, any inkling of hope, any iota of light, is immediately **stopped!** There is some man, dressed in white, telling them the second most absurd thing they have ever heard - the first most absurd thing being, of course, hearing that lonely, last cry of Jesus as he breathed his last. This man, this *stranger*, tells them that Jesus is **not** there. That Jesus is **not** dead. He tells them they are to tell Peter and the others that Jesus *will* meet them all in Galilee, where it all began.

What were they feeling? Were they trembling with Joy? Anticipation? Unbelief? Their Lord was *alive*? Their friend, beaten to shreds, was now *living*? They **saw** him on the cross; they **heard** his cries of despair; they **witnessed** his death. Who **IS** this to tell them that He. Has. Been. Raised.

Is it any wonder they shot out of the cave, Ran from the garden, terrified and trembling? How could they possibly even **begin** to hope in those awful, amazing words: Jesus. Is. Alive!

Alleluia!

Amen!