Sermon: **They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid** (Mark 16.8)

Ever been frightened? Phobia? People react in different ways – forgetting, denying, rising up to challenge.

TEXT. Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, and Salome who went to the tomb were afraid. Why?

There were some things they knew

* Jesus had died. They were there, they saw it happen, they saw where the body had been buried.
* They had come to anoint the body, as was right to do for burial – there had not been time before.
* There was a huge stone covering the tomb, so they would not be able to get to the body.
* Not only had Jesus died, but all he stood for died with him –Roman Empire was stronger than Kingdom of God.
* The Cross meant that death was victorious over life, that evil was greater than love, that despair had conquered hope.

But things were not as they expected (stone rolled away, young man there with a strange message)

And they were confused about what it meant (if anything) – “been raised” = taken somewhere else?

How could he be going to Galilee? He was dead, wasn’t he?

So when they reached the tomb their certainties were blown away. That’s why TEXT.

Mark ends the gospel here, though there have been two additions, probably not original, and speculation that the ending has been lost. To me it makes more sense to end here, as if to say “Would the church be here today if Jesus’ death *had* been the end of the story?”

You see, God had played an enormous April Fools Day joke.

The joke is that though Jesus *had* died, death was not victorious over life, but the other way round;

The joke is that though evil was strong, love was greater still

The joke is that though crucifixion brought massive despair, hope had conquered despair.

The Resurrection is an affirmation that nothing, not even a brutal death on a cross, can defeat God.

It is an affirmation that Jesus’ ministry, the nature of the Kingdom he proclaimed, is the ultimate reality.

Whatever we think of the resurrection story, the existence of the church is evidence that Jesus’ death was not the end, that though TEXT, the women did tell the tale, share the gospel.

Our task is not only to acknowledge this truth, but allow God to live it in us and through us, so that the resurrection becomes not just something that happened to Jesus, but something that also happens to us.

TEXT – and yet they did talk. Thanks be to God!