

Media and Graphics Notes

Sermon Starter Video?	There is no sermon starter video.
Sermon Notes?	There are no sermon notes on screen.
Other Notes	There will be a video to be played at the beginning of the service, as part of the Easter Greeting. I will introduce the video, play the video, then I will continue with the call and response Easter Greeting: One: Christ is risen. All: He is risen indeed!

Key Questions

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about the story of Easter and what it means of your lives today.

Why is this sermon important?

It is important because the resurrection is any the center of the Christian life.

What is the context of this sermon?

This sermon concludes our series moving through the gospel according to Mark.

What are the next action steps?

Live with hope for eternity, live as part of God's kingdom today and join us on our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news of Easter is that Jesus, the one who died, lives!
He is not dead, he is alive.
He is risen from the dead, just as he said!



Metadata

Topic(s)

1. Change Lives
2. Make Disciples
3. Share Christ

Sermon Books of the Bible

1. Mark

Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, Eldorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, resurrection, hope, life, goodnews

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Mark 16:1-8, CEB

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they could go and anoint Jesus' dead body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they came to the tomb. They were saying to each other, "Who's going to roll the stone away from the entrance for us?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away. (And it was a very large stone!) Going into the tomb, they saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right side; and they were startled. But he said to them, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised. He isn't here. Look, here's the place where they laid him. Go, tell his disciples, especially Peter, that he is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you." Overcome with terror and dread, they fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: Thanks be to God!

Introduction

Mark: Eyewitness to the Gospel

This morning, over 2,000 years ago, Jesus left death behind.

The story of Easter and the resurrection concludes the gospel according to Mark.

We have been reading through this gospel over the last several weeks and today we reach the culmination of the story.

Transition

Perhaps, the question that you have on your mind is this:
What does Easter mean for my life today?

Today we are going to take a closer look at that question.

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

Take Notes

I invite you to open your bulletin to a place where you can take notes during the message today.

God Speaking

Listen for God's word for you – something that helps you live as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Whenever you hear it, write it down.

Tool for Spiritual Growth

Then, take this bulletin home with you so that you can grow in your faith outside of worship by reflecting on what you heard today, praying for others connected with our community and reading scripture.

Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Favorite Movies

Robin Hood Prince of Thieves

When I was growing up, one of my favorite movies was *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* starring Kevin Costner. My brother and I watched it over and over again. It never got boring. I knew what was going to happen, but it was still exciting. Of course, my favorite part was when Robin shoots an arrow and the camera is on top of the arrow, flying toward the target. Do you remember that?

Up

Another of my favorites, which came out more recently, is the movie *Up* which tells the story of Carl Fredricksen and a young Wilderness Explorer named Russell. Carl ties thousands of balloons to his home and sets out to fulfill his dream to see the wilds of South America and to complete a promise made to his late wife, Ellie.¹

You may remember the opening sequence which tells the story of Carl and Ellie as they journey through life. This scene makes me cry every single time. I know it's coming, yet I am weeping after just a few minutes.

Personal Connection

I wonder, do you have a favorite movie that you can watch over and over again? Perhaps a book or a song by a favorite artist. It never gets old, even as you experience it over and over again.

Transition

I invite you to consider that the story of Easter might be is like this.

The same story is told year after year, yet we find ourselves in a different place.

You may know how the story goes, yet it is still good news.

So, let's go back, over 2,000 years to that Sunday morning and hear the story fresh and new.

¹ Wikipedia contributors, "Up (2009 film)," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Up_\(2009_film\)&oldid=711737174](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Up_(2009_film)&oldid=711737174) (accessed March 25, 2016).

Sunday Morning

Start of the Work Week

It was the day after the Sabbath, which was the Jewish holy day of rest. It was like tomorrow will be here in El Dorado. People were getting up and going about their regular business, but not all of them.

Women Arrive to Prepare Jesus' Body

There were a few women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome who woke up before sunrise and were bringing spices to Jesus' tomb to anoint Jesus' dead body.²

You remember that Jesus had died on Friday afternoon.

They could not do the burial preparations on Friday because the Sabbath began at sundown and touching a dead body made you ritually unclean.

So, here they are a few days later, finishing the work on Sunday morning.

Stone Rolled Away

As they were walking up,

"They were saying to each other, "Who's going to roll the stone away from the entrance for us?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away. (And it was a very large stone!)"³

It was a very large stone that had been used to seal the entrance to the tomb. It would have taken 4 or 5 strong people to move, but here it was, open.

Young Man in the Tomb

Going into the tomb, they saw a young man in a white robe seated on the right side; and they were startled.⁴

Personal Example: Being Startled

Have you ever walked into a room and you think you are the only one there? Then you hear a sound or see a shape and about jump out of your skin. I have moments like this. It is not uncommon for me to be walking through our house in the morning or at night with most of the lights still off and startle at the look of something

² Mark 16:1-2, CEB.

³ Mark 16:3-4, CEB.

⁴ Mark 16:5, CEB.

that seems out of place. It's nothing and yet my mind thinks it's much more than that for a few moments.

I imagine it is 10 or 20 or 30 times worse for these women.

They expect to find Jesus' dead body.

They don't find it and instead they find a young man who begins speaking to them.

They are startled.

Message at the Tomb

"But he said to them, "Don't be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised. He isn't here. Look, here's the place where they laid him. Go, tell his disciples, especially Peter, that he is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you." Overcome with terror and dread, they fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid."⁵

Can you imagine what it is like for these women?

They are in grieving Jesus' death and now they can't even find his body.

This young man could be a grave robber or worse.

Transition

They are overcome with terror and dread.

They run from the cemetery in fear.

Dark Places in Our World

Personal Connection

I wonder if you have you found yourself in a place like that.

A place that is filled with terror and dread...

A place where all you want to do is run...

Times when when you find yourself disoriented by what is happening that day, that month or even for years.

You may be in that place today.

If you are not there today, you might know what it feels like.

Evil Without

The truth is that bad things happen in our lives.

Life does not always go as we planned.

⁵ Mark 16:6-8, CEB.

People are oppressed, ignored and turn to hate instead love.
We live in a world where:

- children are abused.
- people don't have enough food to eat
- some can't find a safe place to sleep.

A world where:

- Three people were killed and fourteen others injured in a series of shootings in Newton and Hesston.
- At least 34 people are killed and more than 270 injured in attacks in Brussels.

There is darkness in our world.

Evil Within

But it is not just the things on the outside.
There is some darkness that lurks inside each of us.

When left to ourselves:

- We tend to act selfishly instead of generously.
- We ignore the needs of other people and focus on ourselves
- We break down relationship others instead of building them up.

Transition

So, what does Easter mean for our lives today?
How does this story make a difference in the face of our reality?
That question gets to the heart of the story of Easter.

The Story of Easter

God's response to evil, sin and darkness

God know all this. God sees it. God grieves.

The reality of evil, sin and darkness in our world needed to be
taken care of,
cleaned up,
brought to light and forgiven.

God's response to the sin and evil both inside and outside us, is not to force us
into line and crush anyone who disagrees.

Jesus

Instead, God sends God's only son to win us over by love.

Jesus, the one that God loves so dearly, is born as a baby and lives as one of us.
He showed us what life is like as one of God's own children.

Jesus taught us what it is like to live as part of God's kingdom.

God's Kingdom

God's kingdom is a place in which:

- The first are last and the last are first.
- The sinners who repent enter before the righteous people who are filled with false virtue.

God's kingdom is:

- Like a wedding banquet to which all are invited and yet some ignore the invitation.
- Like a father who waits for his messed up son to come home and when he does arrive, throws a party and celebrates.

This is the kingdom that Jesus proclaims.

This is God's response to the sin and evil we find around us and inside us.

God's kingdom turns the world upside down by love.

Jesus as a Threat

But this message of God's kingdom was too much for some people to take.

It was outside of their comfort zone.

It overturned what they assumed about religion.

Jesus was a threat and needed to be eliminated.

So, he was arrested on Thursday night, put on trial long after dark and executed on Friday.

Jesus takes on evil

When Jesus is hanging on the cross, all of the evil from the beginning of time to the end was placed on his shoulders.

All the evil and sin, hate and ugliness which we find in the world.

Our own sin - even those things which we wish no one will ever know about.

Jesus carried all of it as he suffered and died on the cross.

He descended to the heart of darkness and evil so that he could leave those things behind and drag us out – from darkness to light.

Conclusion

Conclusion of Mark

Yet, here we find these women running from the tomb in fear, overcome with terror and dread.

This place in the story is where the gospel according to Mark ends in most of the critical editions of the Greek New Testament. How does it make sense to end the story with the women fleeing in terror?

It makes sense, because we know that this is not the end of the story.
We are here today because the women see the empty tomb and tell others.
They meet Jesus who has gone ahead of them into Galilee, just as he told them.
Jesus calls them by name.
As they are walking with him, they feel their hearts burning within them.
They recognize him in the breaking of the bread.

Good News

The good news of Easter is that Jesus, the one who died, lives!
He is not dead, he is alive.
He is risen from the dead, just as he said!

Call to Action

Hope for Eternity and Now

This means that we can look forward to the day when Christ returns and there will be no more sorrow or pain or suffering for this life will have passed away.

God offers us the opportunity to experience a life today that is filled with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and self-control – this is the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ. We can live as a part of God's kingdom today.

Our Mission

Then, together, we go out to be part of God's transformation of the world.
This is our mission here – to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.
We would love to have you join us.

No Easy Life

Of course, being a follower of Jesus does not mean promise an easy life.
Yet, God knows what it is like to experience suffering.
God knows what it is like to see the death of a son, but death is not the end of the story. Jesus has been raised.

Worst Thing is Never the Last Thing

When you are filled with terror, dread and fear, keep going...
When darkness seems to overcome you, keep going...

The worst thing you can imagine is never the last thing.

Our tears will be replaced by laughter.
Our confusion will be clarified.

Our broken relationships will be healed.

The resurrection is stronger than any evil.
There is always hope.

This is what Easter means for our lives today.

I believe: Witness to the Resurrection

Do you believe this?

I want to recognize that some of you may be saying, "That sounds nice."
But you don't understand my life.
This story of resurrection, it is good enough for today
But really, preacher? You believe that is true?

I know that it is true.

I know that it is true.
I have based my life on this good news.
I have seen the power of the risen Christ in the stories of lives changed right here
in El Dorado.
I have felt it. I have seen it.
I see the truth of the resurrection in you.

Invitation

You may find yourself saying, I think I want a life like that.
I want to follow Jesus and experience the power of the resurrection.
I want to live knowing that I will rise.
I want to be certain that death, sin and evil will not have the final word.

You can.
All you have to do is ask.

I'm sorry. Thank you. Please.

- It's a very simple thing to pray – I am sorry. Thank you. Please.
- Turning away from the things that we know are wrong, saying "I am sorry".
 - Thanking Jesus for dying and being raised for us; putting our faith in him.
 - And finally asking, 'Please come and fill me with your Spirit.'

Not ready to pray

You may not be sure if you want to pray a prayer like that and that's okay. If you are curious about Jesus and being part of a Christian community, then I invite you to get connected here at First United Methodist Church. We would to help you find out more.

Ready to pray

And, if you would like to pray, then:
it may be the very first time in your life to pray something like this,
it may be the first time for you in a long time, or
it may be a prayer that you have prayed every day for a long time.

Logistics

You do not have to pray it out loud, but just quietly under your breath.
You can repeat after me.
I'm sorry, thank you, please.

Jesus, the one who died, lives!
He is here. He is alive.
You can follow him today.

Will you pray with me?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, I am sorry for all the times in my life when I mess up.

And if anything comes to mind, ask God's forgiveness.

Forgive me of my sin and all that I know is wrong.
Thank you that you died on the cross and rose for me.
I trust you with my life.
Help me receive your forgiveness.
Please fill me with your Spirit and help me to follow you.
In your holy name, Amen.