



SERMON OF THE WEEK

First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu at Ko'olau

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"Hope Fulfilled" - Hope Restored Sermon Series

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To all the moms out there we want to wish you a very Happy Mother's Day! My daughter makes sure that I get a haku (head lei) to wear every Mother's Day no matter where she is living in the world. She knows that one day a year I don't have to worry about what my hair looks like because it is all held together under this haku.

Today we finish our series with the last chapter in the book of Mark about the Resurrection, even though we are past Easter. The Resurrection is worth revisiting again and again. If we truly understand the Resurrection and its power, our lives will be forever changed and we will live lives that will have hope fulfilled.

Please stand with me, if you are able, to hear and receive the words of Mark 16:1-8.

¹ When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ² Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³ and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a

young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

⁶ "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

⁸ Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God
Please be seated.

Later written manuscripts in the book of Mark include verses 9–20 where Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene and later on He appears to some of the disciples. Jesus tells the disciples to go into all the world and share the Gospel. After giving them the Great Commission, Jesus ascended up to heaven and is now sitting at the right hand of God.

Some say that John Mark, the author of the book of Mark ended his manuscript right after verse 8 because he wanted to leave us pondering on the miracle of the empty tomb— the empty tomb.

I love the way Mark ended his book, because Jesus is not dead! The tomb is empty! He is risen! You know, the symbol for Christianity is the cross, and clearly the cross has great significance. But Jesus' story and our story doesn't end with the cross. I think a better symbol for followers of Jesus is an empty tomb...but that doesn't really fit on a necklace.

Truth be told there are times in our lives when we hear about the resurrection but we just don't get it. We don't recognize the presence of God and we respond to life's situations in our own power. We miss it. We live as if He has not risen. There are times when I get anxious and I don't see that God is with me personally and professionally. And here is one of those times.

During our Easter Services, we showed a video for the scripture reading featuring our keiki, where our kids illustrated the Easter Story. You might have even seen their actual artwork displayed in the other wing.

As I was taking down their artwork after our last service on Easter, one of the members of the church stopped by. She truly admired their creation and shared with me what she saw in each piece.

Slide of Mary crying is shown: She said, "I love how this child showed Mary's sadness through her tears. Don't you love how all these tears are flowing like a river?"

[Slide of darkness]: And she continued, "Look how this child used such dark colors to show the darkness of the night".

Now this woman had eyes that could see. And at that time, I realized that I had missed it. I missed truly seeing what each child created. I missed seeing the presence of God in these children who heard the text from scripture and then expressed what they heard on canvas.

The process of making that video was so busy and stressful. I got so caught up in the details and the logistics: making sure that we had enough kids to film, the right painting supplies, enough pizza for the crew—that I missed the creation and the beauty. I didn't see it. I didn't see it until that moment after Easter services, when someone else pointed out to me what was right in front of me the whole time.

And that is how it is for many of us. We get so busy and worried about our own situations that we don't see the presence of Jesus in our own life. So where is our hope and how can it be fulfilled?

Let's dig into our passage as we see a few more masterpieces of artwork created by our keiki.

Mark 16:1 - *When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body.*

Can you imagine the love and devotion that these women had for Jesus? The commitment would be so much more than us bringing flowers

to a grave site today. The women waited for the Sabbath to be over as the law required before they went to anoint and care for Jesus' dead body. The Sabbath was from Friday at sundown to Saturday at sundown.

So early on Sunday morning while it was still dark, they left for the tomb so that they could arrive at the tomb by sunrise. The big question they were asking themselves as they were walking was, "Who's gonna' roll away that big rock that was sealed from the entrance of the tomb so that we can go in to put spices on Jesus' body?"

Wonder Woman hadn't entered into history just yet and these women knew that they didn't have the strength to do it. To their surprise, when they had reached the tomb, they discovered that the huge rock was rolled away.

In the Gospel of Matthew 28:2 it states, "*There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.*"

So, the ladies enter the open tomb and see this man in white clothes. From the other Gospels we learn that this man was an angel. The women were alarmed, just as you or I would be.

And the angel man said, "*Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! **He is not here.** See the place where they laid Him.*" (Mark 16:6)

I can just hear Mary Magdalene say, "He's not here?? What do you mean He's not here??" I wonder if the women even heard that Jesus has risen.

But isn't that just like us in our lives? We live as if He is not here. We live as if He is dead in the tomb. We forget that He has risen. The power of the Resurrection reminds us that Jesus is here with you.

But this is what makes me think that the women at the tomb didn't hear that Jesus has risen because this was their response: "*Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.*" (Mark 16:8)

How many times have I acted like He is not here and I tremble with fear? How many times do I forget that my Lord rose from the grave? He is not dead lying in a tomb. The tomb is empty. HE IS WITH US EVERY DAY.

Maybe you are in the waiting room of a hospital and you forget that He has risen. Maybe you are in a marriage that is hard and you forget—He has risen. Or maybe on this Mother's Day it is hard for you. Your mom hasn't been the nurturer you needed and you forget – He has risen.

It has only been less than a month since Easter and we forget: He has risen!

In the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation. Jesus said: *17"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever!"* (Rev 1:17,18)

Jesus was not just a man who lived 2,000 years ago. He's not just a historical memory. He is alive, and seated at the right hand of God the Father and has power.

This is the power of the Resurrection that He offers to us.

his next verse is so packed with hope and renewal to the women and the disciples: *7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.'* (Mark 16:7)

The first thing that we see is that women were given the task to share the Good News that Jesus is alive! WOWZIE! This is the greatest news of all history and it has been entrusted to women? A woman, where in their culture they were not allowed to be taught from the Torah and they could not even give testimony in a court of law? And wasn't this woman, Mary, the one Jesus had casted out seven demons? God is trusting this woman to be the first apostle or evangelist. She is the first to preach the good news—the first to tell others, Jesus is alive! This confirms it: Jesus values women.

Mary was moping around planning to honor her Savior by anointing his dead body with spices. But, Mary, He is not here in the tomb. He has gone ahead of you and there you will see Him. For He has risen. The power of the resurrection is moving from death to life.

Maybe you are feeling like you just can't do it:

That test is just too hard; or
I don't have enough money to make ends meet; or

I'm overwhelmed with all the responsibility that is expected of me.

In that moment we feel as if He is not there. But take delight in knowing that He is with you and that He has gone ahead of you and there you will see Him. He is taking you somewhere.

He already knows the outcome of that test. He already knows the outcome of your finances and what you are capable of handling.

Maybe at that moment Mary didn't realize that her life was so much better. She was afraid because she hadn't seen the conclusion.

As I said earlier, the Bible reports that Mary had seven demons. We don't know what they were, but they probably affected her in many ways—maybe anger or pessimism or divisiveness or lust.

Yet, if one pauses to think back on your life maybe, like Mary, she would have known how life was and what a difference Jesus made. Did you ever notice how living things have to move—that living things don't stay stagnant?

Jesus has gone ahead of you into Galilee. Go and you will find Him.

For He has risen! This is the greatest miracle that has ever happened on earth!

This is what else we find in this verse: *"But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'*" (Mark 16:7)

We know that these frightened disciples are the same disciples that deserted Jesus in His greatest hour of need and now these women are to go and tell THEM the best news 'evah! Jesus is alive and He goes before you in Galilee—there you will find Him.

Did you see that this verse says that the angel tells the women to tell the disciples AND PETER?

[slide: artwork of Peter] This is Peter. Look at Peter's face. Do you really see it? Why did Peter get singled out? He is one of the disciples too. But wait, isn't Peter the one who denied Jesus three times?

One scholar writes this passage: "Peter must have been tortured with the memory of his disloyalty...and then there was a message just for him!!!"

7 But go, tell His disciples AND Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.' (Mark 16:7)

In the Greek this word for "and" can mean especially. Tell the disciples and especially Peter. The artist portrayed Peter's face to show that Peter feels so loved and valued that Jesus would want to remember him and forgive him.

You see the cross was not the end as the disciples had thought, but a new beginning that brought hope and forgiveness for all. Jesus is not in the tomb. He has gone ahead of you and there you will see Him. And that is our hope.

This was our sermon series for a year and a half: "Hope Restored".

I didn't see Jesus the first time I saw the children's artwork. I couldn't see Jesus there in all my busyness. I couldn't see Him in the tasks or on the to do list. But Jesus had already gone ahead of me. And He has gone ahead of you. We just need stop to see His presence and follow Him.

We see that Jesus has gone before us. He is out there in the world. We will find Him with the hungry, the naked, the poor and the vulnerable.

It is not enough to recognize His presence in our lives. But to know how can we be His presence in the lives of others—especially those who are vulnerable. For if we claim His presence—that is the power of the resurrection.

[Slide of Team] Last month our Young Adults Director, Jeff Page, our High School Director, Matt Yamamoto and I got invited to visit an orphanage named Prince of Peace, which houses and cares for 143 children with special needs in Tianjin, China. We were invited by the founders of that orphanage, Ken & Becky Yeung, and incredibly, they paid for all of our expenses for the trip. Maisie, who is standing next to Matt, is Ken's assistant.

You see Jesus is moving. He had already gone ahead of us to China and there we saw Him. We are hoping to bring our young adults and youth to the orphanage to serve in the summer of 2020.

Many of the children in this orphanage have, autism, down syndrome, cerebral palsy or some have physical disabilities.

Ken and Becky Yeung have a heart for these vulnerable children. By God's grace they are wealthy. Their business has been very successful. They could have used their money to purchase a couple of Ferraris, a bigger house, or have lots of jewelry. But instead they choose to live in the power of the resurrection by caring for the vulnerable.

Over 20 years ago Ken and Becky adopted a child from China named Melissa. Even though Melissa did not have special needs they saw many children who did and who were not being adopted. Their hearts broke for these children.

Ken & Becky know that the tomb is empty, that Jesus is moving in the world, and they have gone to meet Him. As a result, their heart and their vision have influenced so many in a country where these children are considered disposable. Their love is truly unconditional, for these children will never be able to pay them back in a worldly sense.

Ken & Becky have learned that each child has a name and a story, and each one is made in the image of God.

[Slide of photo of Joshua] This child's name is Joshua. These children love to sing, dance, eat, and be valued. We all made dumplings together and then had a feast. May I just say the food in China is amazing! It is NOTHING like Panda Express which Kimo and I had for dinner last night.

We were amazed to see business people of status coming together to join the vision by donating state-of-the-art equipment to the orphanage's learning center so that the children can be trained in appropriate jobs that they could do in the community.

China has a law that once orphans turn 14, they are no longer adoptable. Prince of Peace is hoping that some of the children would have been trained for employment. They do fear though that their children may be bullied when they are released from their care. They asked for our prayers for their protection and that they would be adopted by nurturing families.

I knew that the purpose of our trip to China was to help plan for next year's trip with the high school students and young adults, but I asked why Ken would fully

fund the three of us to come. His assistant Maisie, said Ken intentionally invested in us so that our hearts would be changed, and that we would have a heart for the vulnerable. Likewise, he wants to influence the hearts of our students and young adults who will be going to China in 2020 to have a heart for the vulnerable. Not just the 143 vulnerable children in that one orphanage, but all the vulnerable. Everywhere.

As our students and young adults pursue their next steps in life, whether it be the military, college, or a job, no matter what they choose to do or be, Ken is hoping that the 2020 China experience will also encourage them to live in the power of the Resurrection—like it has for me. I will never forget the way Joshua sang his heart out sitting in his wheelchair, and the dignity and joy that the children had in learning their job skills. It made my heart grow.

Lee Strobel once said: "Jesus Christ did not come into this world to make bad people good; He came into this world to make dead people live."

So, what does that mean—to make dead people live? If we are honest with ourselves, at times we forget that Jesus is not in the tomb. We forget that the tomb is empty.

If we forget that Jesus is making Himself available to lead us and guide us, then we are dead. If you and I don't see Jesus then we are dead. We are not living in the power of the Holy Spirit. So therefore, we are not operating in the power of the resurrection.

It is not enough to do good but it is that we do good in Christ's name and in His power. This is the power of the Resurrection.

In the Message, a paraphrase of the Bible found in the Book of Romans 8:15-17, it says: *“This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It’s adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike ‘What’s next, Papa?’*

“God’s Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who He is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what’s coming to us—an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with Him, then we’re certainly going to go through the good times with Him!”

This is the power of the Resurrection. This is our hope restored. Jesus is NOT lying dead in the tomb. He is not there! Let’s take a moment and ponder in awe at the empty tomb.

“Father, we praise You for the empty tomb and the power of the Resurrection. In Jesus name. Amen.”

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Note: Sunday sermon texts, as well as audio & video recordings of sermons, are also available at fpchawaii.org by clicking the eSermons tab.