

Easter Sunday - April 4

When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. 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." So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Mark 16:1-8 (NRSV)

The Gospel of Mark ends with these words, "So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid." In the early centuries of the church, more was added to the gospel because it was felt this ending was too open ended and too negative. But, I've always thought Mark got it right. When we face our greatest threat, the loss of everything we know and trust, which is what death brings to us, fear is what's left. The power of Easter meets us there and waits for our response.

Recently, we lost my dad, George, to death following a long struggle with Parkinson's disease. My dad was a faithful pastor. He had a resonant, baritone voice, about which folks often made comments. Some even said, "When George Brown speaks it sounds like God is talking." Dad would smile. He wasn't "God talking" but I do think God spoke through him, and the voice of God speaks through many experiences in our lives, especially when we need assurance that the resurrection is true.

One of the last times I was with my dad, my mom and I decided to sing hymns. He wasn't awake but I'd like to think he was aware. Later on, I wondered how we were able to sing when sadness and loss were so near. God's voice made it possible, which speaks to us through hymns, scripture, worship, our shared mission, and our caring for others. Death makes us fearful. It always does. But God is always speaking so our stories will continue with hope and faith.

Pastor Larry Brown

Prayer: Holy God, may we hear your voice calling us to hopefulness and life on this Easter Day. Amen.