

## THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD

Mark 16:1-8

*In a Garden*

It started in a garden with a woman faced with death, her man cowering behind, waiting to see what would happen. It ends in a garden with women faced with death, their men cowering behind, in this case in a locked room, to see what would happen.

It started in a garden as peace with God was shattered. It ends in a garden as peace with God is declared.

It started in a garden when fingers were pointed, excuses were made, and blame was assigned. It ends in a garden with blame having become pointless, with forgiving concern for the Apostle who had denied our Lord.

It started in a garden with *“did God really say?”* It ends in the garden with *“just as He said.”*

It started in a garden with ears filled with that which ears ought not entertain, hands clasped about that which hands ought not touch, minds dragged into the gutter and away from God. It ends with ears filled with good news of the risen Master, hands eager to grasp Him, minds taken hostage by the miraculous and divine.

It started in a garden with an attempt to hide the shame God's eyes had already seen but their hearts and mouths were unwilling to confess. It started with God's sad, *“Where are you?”* as they cowered, the world forever changed, our relationship with God broken to the point that only His only-begotten Son's pierced hands could put it back together. It ends with the glory God's eyes had already seen set on full display for the eyes of His frightened disciples, with, *“Do not be alarmed. He is not here. He is risen. And you will see Him.”*

It started with exile from paradise, with toil in thorns and pain in childbirth, with brother killing brother. It ends with sweet invitation back into paradise, with rest through His thorns and salvation through His birth first from the Virgin and now from the tomb, with Brother killed by brother to make His brothers ever alive as He is.

It started with death, the wages of sin, the fruit of unbelief. It ends with life, the wages of His perfect submission to God's will and Word, the fruit of His trust in His Father even when forsaken, even when hung on the tree.

It started with a tree, with the fruit of a tree consumed by our first parents, so that its venom became part of them and poisoned us with mortality. It ends with a tree, with the fruit of a tree eaten and drunk by us in His Supper, medicine of immortality.

It started with a lie. It ends with a promise. The lie was that God's Word is not full. The promise is that God's Word never comes back empty. *"He is risen. Just as He said,"* the angels glory, the angel reports to the women.

It started in a garden. It ends in a garden. Leave the old garden behind, with its sin and shame and blame and guilt and terror and doubt and despair and poison. No, walk out of this garden new women, new men today. No longer cower. No longer hide. No, God has seen you, and God sees you, and God will see you, and the God who sees you is the God who loves you, who pursues you, who is desperate to fix what we have broken. God today calls for you even as He called for St. Peter, for the old things are forgotten, the sins are washed away.

Today is the first day of His new creation. Today is a new day in your new life in Him. Today is the first day of your resurrection and one day closer to your resurrection, for the Firstfruits, our Lord Jesus, has burst His three-day prison, and our faith is not in vain, and it is not so short-armed as to reach only for this life, but always fixes our short-sighted eyes on the greater and everlasting life to come.

Jesus is risen. He is risen indeed. He is not in His tomb. He is not there. He is here, in His Word, in His Sacraments, in your hearts through faith, inviting you into a new and better paradise, one undefiled and eternal, one stored up in heaven for you.

There are two gardens. You've rightly belonged with our first parents in the one, but you now belong with Christ in the other. So get your gardens right today and rejoice. One is where it started. One is where it ends, and what a blessed end it is. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen, and He is risen, just as He was crucified: for you. Alleluia and alleluia. Amen.