

# **“When the SON had Risen”**

## **Easter Sunday**

*Mark 16:1-8*

### **“When the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.” Mark 16:2**

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! A blessed resurrection day to all of you! The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the lynchpin of our faith. A resurrected Lord is the center of the Scriptures. As Paul says in the fifteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians, “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain” (vs. 14). Paul can say a couple of verses later, “But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead . . .” (vs. 20). And his resurrection; our resurrected Lord changes everything. So Christ is risen indeed!

According to the Gospel writer, St. Mark, the good news of Jesus’ resurrection was first delivered to a group of women early in the morning of the first day of the week. Even more specifically we read that “when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb” (Mk 16:2) A group of women were first entrusted with the most important, revolutionary news in the history of the world. What an honor! What a privilege! The angel of the Lord delivered the good news of Jesus’ resurrection to these women when they went to the tomb after the sun had risen.

When the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. I remember doing just that with a group of people when I was in high school. Once I entered high school I was finally able to drive. Once I was finally able to drive, I got up early in the morning on Sunday morning and drove myself to Church. I did not grow up in a family that went to Church on Sunday morning. So if I wanted to go to Church, I had to drive myself. So early in the morning I went to church. And one day of the year, we, the parishioners, arrived at 6:30am, just as the sun had risen, and we gathered outside at the tomb in the crisp spring, Michigan air. When the sun had risen, we went to the tomb. At the tomb, we sang songs, prayed prayers, and altogether rejoiced. At the tomb we worshipped our God.

Of course we didn’t actually go to a tomb. But, led by our Pastor, we did our best to recreate the situation at the tomb on the morning of that first Easter Sunday when the Lord had risen from the dead. It was a meaningful experience. It was a memorable experience. It enhanced our Worship. It aided greatly our reflection and devotion of Jesus’ resurrection. When the sun had risen, we went to the tomb.

Of course, the parishioners and I also went to the tomb when the SON had risen. The Gospel writer St. Mark originally uses this phrase as a designation of time. It tells us at what time of day the women visited Jesus’ tomb, namely sunrise. Though not intended in the reading, the pun is almost irresistible, isn’t it? The women arrive also at the rising of the *Son—Jesus*. There is a remarkable comparison

between the two events: the rising of the sun and the rising of *the Son*. Sunrise and Sonrise. The natural serves the supernatural. Creation serves the Creator. Chronology calls attention to theology.<sup>1</sup>

The mention of a sunrise points us to the fact that time had passed between Jesus' death and his resurrection. The women were going to the tomb "taking the spices they had prepared" (Lk 24:1) for the anointing of his body. It was a way to help with the stench and odor of death. The women still think Jesus is dead. They have a love for him. They are devoted to him. But in their mind it is a devotion to a dead body. They buy spices because they are expecting a dead body.

What they witnessed was the event that they least expected—a Sonrise. The women also happened to go to the tomb when the SON had risen. And this changed everything for them, for the disciples, for the whole world.

Sunrise at the time of the New Testament was used as a way to signal the passing of time. We use the term in the same way today. But sunrise also signals a new day of work. When the sun rises we go about our work anew. But how many of us look forward to the sun rising and work beginning anew? How many of us look upon a new day signaled by a sunrise with joy and enthusiasm? How many of us see it as an opportunity to serve and care for the needs others in the various stations and places in life in which the Lord has put us?

In January of 2013 I was listening to a radio interview of a man who wrote a book about Jim and John Harbaugh. Do you remember that the two NFL teams that the brothers coached met in the Super Bowl that year? At the time Jim coached the San Francisco 49ers and John coached the Baltimore Ravens. Of course the media had a field day with the whole thing, nicknaming the Super Bowl that year—"The HarBowl."

While the author of the book was speaking about the Harbaughs he told a story about their father. He said that their father would pack lunches for the boys in the morning and would give their lunches to them right before they headed out the door to school. As he handed them their lunches he would say to them, "Now I want you to attack this day with an enthusiasm unknown to mankind." And then he would send them off.

In the rising of the SON we see our God fulfilling his promise to redeem and restore all of creation and the days that encompass it. In the risen Christ there is reason to face each day with joy and enthusiasm! As the Apostle Paul proclaims joyfully, "Rejoice! Again I say Rejoice" (Philippians 4:4)! The joy brought by our Lord's resurrection victory over Sin and death! Through the rising of this SON and our resurrection to new life as his baptized believers our days and the passing of time have renewed meaning and purpose. We face each day with the joy of the SON who has made and remade all days in his grace. Suddenly our work has renewed meaning. Suddenly the daily passing of time has renewed meaning. Suddenly our whole lives have renewed meaning in Christ. All because when sun had risen on the first

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<sup>1</sup> An insight borrowed from Rev. Francis Rossow, *Gospel Handles*, 162-163.

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day of the week so long ago, so also the SON had risen! And it changes everything. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen!