

SERMON AT GELORUP: EASTER DAY 2018: GEOFF CHADWICK

Mk 16: 8: WE ARE THE CONTINUING STORY OF THE RESURRECTION

For a mixed age group.

Here's a story.

A long, long time ago in a country far away called Israel, some cruel people had Jesus put to death on a cross because he said he had been doing the work of God. Jesus had some followers who hoped he would stop the cruel people from being so nasty, but in the end the nasty people had more power, and Jesus lost his life.

His followers were scared that the nasty people would arrest them too, so that hid away being sad and disappointed.

Two days later, in the morning on the first day of the week (which is Sunday), some of Jesus' followers went to the tomb to prepare his body for a proper burial.

They were the women and took perfume and spices to put them on Jesus' body as a final act of love before his burial. But a strange thing happened! In the tomb, Jesus was missing and a young man who looked like an Angel told them that, Jesus who they were looking for had been raised from the dead, and to go and tell the rest of his followers about it.

The women, we're afraid, ran away and didn't say anything to anyone because...

Oh, sorry-the next page is missing! Has anyone got the next page?!.....

(When I gave this address at school some of the little kids went to look for it!

There seems to be a page missing! Did you know that Mark's story or Gospel ends at chapter 16 verse eight in the middle of a sentence? It ends with the word "because" and stops suddenly. Sadly many English translations don't quite do that (which is a shame). But in the original stops mid-sentence.

Why?

Some people think that the last page is missing and it's never been found. It's like somebody ripping the last page out of an Agatha Christie model novel and you never get the last page!

Some people think that Mark did that deliberately to create some suspense. I.e. "*I wonder what's going to happen next?*"

Some people were so worried that there was no ending that they added extra bits to fill out the story. If you look in the Bible at Mark's gospel, you'll see there's two little sections added on at the end. One is called *The Shorter Ending of Mark* and one is called *The Longer Ending of Mark*. It's longer because that person had more to say.

Well we will never really know why Mark's Gospel doesn't finish properly unless someone finds the last page from 2000 years ago. I gave this as a challenge to our youngsters at the school that they might like to become archaeologists and find that page. If they do they will be very famous!

But you know, I like the idea of suspense. I like the idea that Mark's gospel doesn't end properly *because we are the rest of the story. We are the ones that continue the story!*

I like to think that the history of all believers in Jesus' resurrection, including us, and including those who are to come in the future, are all the next part of that story.

Mark's Gospel doesn't end because belief in Jesus goes on forever, and the way Jesus told us to live our lives also goes on forever!

I also like this idea of suspense because it reminds us that Jesus' death and resurrection are not just historical events in the past. They're not just things that happened 2000 years ago that we might read in a history book. No! They are not just events of the past; they are events for all time! The resurrection is so amazing that it includes the past the present and the future! Jesus resurrection is an all-powerful event that has changed the course of history

and has challenged the lives of millions of people throughout all of history. It has challenged me - it's changed me - and I hope it's challenged and changed you as well!

Now it pays to ask a few questions:

- Do you need to be changed for the better?
- Do you need to find a better meaning in life?
- Do you need some outside spiritual help to get you through the day?
- Have you got hope in your heart that you can't explain?
- Do you long to see love and goodwill overcome pain and suffering?

If so, so you are part of the ongoing story of the resurrection of Jesus!

As I said to the kids at the school:

How cool is it to be part of a 2000 year old story! And I wonder what chapter you will add?!

The Lord be with you.