

My memory is taking me back to my 9th grade year of school, 45 years ago. We were in our old high school, and the classrooms all had these big heavy metal doors. Every room, going into everything, we had these big big doors. There was no air conditioning, so on a warm Fall or Spring day, windows would be open in the rooms, and doors would be open for the breeze to come in. But you know what happened very often with those doors! **KABLAMM!** The wind would force them to shut, and that sound would make you jump out of your chair! You might know that same experience!

When I was in seminary there was a famous teacher who wrote about the Gospel of Mark. And when he was at the end of the book, commenting on the words we just heard, he said that Mark ends just like someone slammed a huge door! **KABLAMM!** And we all jump. And it is over. This is Easter? We find frightened women, who were at least good enough to stick around as Jesus was killed ( the men had all run for the hills ). So three of these women go to the tomb to wash and prepare the broken body of Jesus, who had not received a proper careful burial. They buried him in a hurry. So these three faithful women go to the tomb to care for Jesus's body, but they do not find him. They find literally "a young guy" sitting in there. He is well dressed, and happy. And he tells the ladies that they need to go to Galilee to meet up with Jesus just as he had told them. But then it says that they were terrified. It then says that they didn't say anything to anybody, with great emphasis on the **NOTHING** that they said. And then two little Greek words,

“ephobounto gar!”      **FOR THEY WERE AFRAID!**  
**KABLAMM!**

Is there a problem with this? What were the women supposed to do? Who remembers? First, they were supposed to go tell the men so that they might all meet up with Jesus in Galilee, the home area. Well, does the message get through? According to this, it looks like the message does not get through! How terrible is that? That message must get through. Is it too late? Maybe we can take that message out today. Maybe we can continue the story that Mark gives us, maybe we can go beyond a big door slamming which makes us jump out of our seats!

We have 3 other Gospel stories. All three have different versions of what happens on Easter day ( in fact I invite any and all who would like to stay for a Sunday School gathering right here in this sanctuary to remain and we’ll actually take a look at the Easter stories, and talk about them ). The other stories do not remind us of a big door slamming, although they have their moments as well. I personally think that this original Easter story, and ending of the First Gospel, Mark, I think that it is very helpful for us in today’s world.

Over the next few days, will there be any big doors slamming around us? Probably there will be lots of slamming big doors! There is much that will frighten people in days to come. But, we need to continue the story. The Story has a challenge for all of us this Easter Day: if Jesus would ask us to continue the story, to friends and family and co-workers, what might we say? Let’s move past the fact that these poor ladies

were scared to death and ran away and not looking back. Now it's our turn. What do we say? What does this Easter thing even mean? Spring? New Life? Rabbits and Butterflies? I think we can do better than that. What could we say?

I think that the first thing we must say is that the story is far from over. Sometimes I think we get tricked on Easter, we are tricked into thinking that the ball game is over! Now its time for the parade, and the Victory lap, and all that. Jesus has triumphed o'er the grave. Well, God did raise Jesus up, Jesus didn't just automatically come back to life on his own. They had in fact killed him. Jesus is raised by the power of the living God and is proclaimed Son of God with power because of this resurrection. St. Paul will tell us such a great secret about this: he says that Jesus becomes the First-born of the Dead. He is the first to be resurrected. And Paul tells us that "if we have died a death like his, then we will have a resurrection like his as well." To me this seems like such an important part of this day that does not get mentioned. What God does to Jesus on Easter is what will happen to us as well, and even to our world. Just as Jesus is filled with the life and power of God, we will experience the same resurrection. Have we been getting that good news out to all the people we know? Have we been telling people, about this Easter thing, that it is the celebration of the beginning of what God intends to do with all the world, and that Jesus is in fact the First-born from the dead?

When we look out at the world, does it all look lovely? Is there no suffering, is there no heartache? Is there no violence, is

there no disease? Is there no injustice, is there no evil? Sadly all of those things are still out there. We cannot look at Easter and think that everything has been healed and mended in our world. We need to get our story straight on this. It is not time for a victory parade. Jesus, the First-born from the Dead has been raised by the power of God, but he is just the beginning of what God will do. It is that hope that we must give to others in a world of too many slamming doors. And we need to not be silent like the women who run from the tomb, too frightened to speak. We have been given the chance to finish their work. Will we do it? We are the Church of Jesus Christ, we are his Body in this world. We come into the Church by Baptism, and I invite you now to walk up as you choose to touch the water and to be reminded of your baptism, and the fact that you are a part of this Body. And the story of this day needs to be continued, and we need to be the ones to keep telling others. Alleluia. Christ has been raised. We also will be raised by the power of the Living God. Alleluia. AMEN.