

Early in the morning of the third day, three women went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. Jesus was put into the tomb in haste, so that there was no time to cleanse and prepare the body for proper burial. It was probably caked in blood and dirt. The Jewish law prohibited allowing the body to hang on the cross on the Sabbath.

When the women arrived at the tomb, they were spooked to see that the stone that covered the tomb was already rolled away. And when they entered the tomb, they were scared out of their wits to see a young man sitting in the tomb. Then he told them this incredulous information: "He has risen, he is not here."

The women ran out of the tomb, and fled. I am pretty sure they screamed, too. They were just too scared to stay there and carry on the conversation and inquire further about what happened to Jesus. Mark the writer

says, "trembling and astonishment came upon them." Mark says that the women said nothing to anyone: they were just too scared.

How would people react, when they found themselves in the same sandals of the women? It is probably true that people would react at first as the women did. It was spooky. It was frightening. It was terrifying.

Would you have expected to see the women jumping for joy and high-five-ing, dancing and saying, "What did I tell you, girl, Didn't I tell you he would rise from the dead?!"

Truly terrified people cannot freely talk about what happened. At least not for a while. And that is troubling, because that is exactly how Mark ends its story in the shorter version of the Gospel. The portion that is covered by verses 9 through 20 is added later by someone else.

If we read the shorter version, resurrection of Jesus is not a certainty. The women did not tell anyone. That does not agree with the assertion that Jesus is risen.

So people are left with wondering: Was Jesus really raised from the dead? Can a rational person believe that a dead man, who was violently killed, has been indeed raised? But aren't we supposed to believe that Jesus is risen from the dead? Aren't we supposed to teach our kids to believe that? Aren't we supposed to pretend that we believe, even if we couldn't?

As far as faith in the risen Jesus is concerned, those are not the relevant questions. As far as the faith in Jesus is concerned, there is no proof. And no proof is necessary. Why is it so?

It's like learning how to swim. Did you dive into the water, only after having been given the proof that you could

indeed swim? Do people learn how to swim while sitting in the classroom? Did you learn how to swim sitting in the chair? Before one is able to swim, in order to learn how to swim, one must first jump into the water. As long as you stay out of the water, you can come up with a variety of reasons why water is dangerous, and you will never learn to swim. Who demands a proof that he or she can swim, before getting one's own toes wet?

Believing in Jesus is like learning how to swim. You need to commit yourself to the water first, and many times after that, before you are able to swim. Then one day, you realize that you are swimming!

Those who believe in Jesus come to meet him through their faith. The proof of the risen Lord comes after they commit their lives to him. May the Spirit of the risen Lord bless you.