

Of all the tellings of the Resurrection of Jesus, Mark's is one of my favorites. At the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the ANGELS spoke to the Shepherds instructing "Be Not Afraid!" Over and over again throughout the Scriptures, the most frequent statement is "Be Not Afraid!" YET, after being the first to witness the Resurrection, these three disciples were so afraid THEY TOLD NO ONE.

What would have happened to Christianity, what would have happened to the whole of Jesus' Life, Teachings and Ministry, if no one had ever told anyone anything? That was the whole point of the Crucifixion! To quiet this insurrection. To put an end to Jesus. Had everything ended there, The High Priests, Pontius Pilate, all would have gotten their way, rather than GOD's way... YET, somehow GOD's Way prevailed.

There is a POSTSCRIPT to the Gospel of Mark, saying some other sources (Matthew, Luke and John) attest that Jesus did appear again and again, first to John and Peter, then to Disciples on the Road, then in the Upper Room, a week later, at the Shore. YET, that same postscript notes "They thought it a Foolish Tale."

Over the last 2000 years, the Church has nearly died out over and over again, because of FOOLISHNESS, because of persons trying to control the story for their own means... YET, somehow GOD's Way prevailed.

In the Book of Acts, GOD spoke to Simon Peter in a DREAM 3 times, a Great White Sheet let down from heaven, containing every living creature, Kosher and Non-Kosher, with command to eat, instruction that the CHURCH must be about more than Old Laws of KOSHER & NON-KOSHER, and PETER SAID: NO LORD! Yet, GOD'S WAY PREVAILED.

Peter was taken to a Gentile's' Home where he witnessed THEM receiving the HOLY SPIRIT so Baptized them. After which the Leaders of the Church all questioned Peter for having done the wrong thing.

The Roman Emperor Claudius attempted to remove all Jews from JERUSALEM & ROME, YET GOD's WAY PREVAILED.

The CRUSADES pitted Christians against Muslims and Jews... YET GOD's WAY PREVAILED.

During the CRUSADES the FRENCH CATHOLICS attempted to destroy the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH by kidnapping the POPE. After 3 Years, when the Roman Catholic Cardinals had already consecrated a New Pope, the French decided it would frustrate the Romans more to send the KIDNAPPED POPE back, so there were 2 POPES! Yet, GOD'S WAY PREVAILED.

At the rise of Nazi Germany, the Pope recognized Adolf Hitler's cause and blessed him! For which, the Confessing Church rose up, Pastors, Priests, Church Leaders affirming that though it would mean their death, they were called to stand up against the evil of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reich, and GOD'S WAY PREVAILED.

I was not your pastor at the time, but I am told there were those who appropriately feared, that with all of the problems of the first 20 years of this Century, that this Church could die, YET GOD's WAY PREVAILED.

Around the world, the lack of Ministers attending Seminary and seeking Ordination, the great number who because of the struggles of churches do not continue beyond their first 5 years, the shortage of people coming to churches, there are fears Churches will close... Yet I have been amazed throughout history, that the Church has adapted, Christianity has adapted, The Church of the next Century may no longer be adorned in Stained Glass, Pastors may not wear robes and stoles, There may not be Pastors, YET I AM CERTAIN GOD'S WILL WILL PREVAIL and the story will be told from one stranger to another, from Parent to child and grandchild. Christ's Story will be told and we will not be afraid.