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Sermon Notes

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## **The Resurrection of Jesus Christ**

### **Mark 16:1-8**

#### I. The Resurrection: The Climax of Redemptive History

##### A. The History of Death

1. Death has walked with cruel and bloody boots through the pages of human history
  - a. Not a single nation has been exempt... for all over the world, every culture has lavish laments for the destruction of death
  - b. The Bible is filled with deep and bitter laments over death...
  - c. Think of the wailing of a mother over her dead child, of a man over his dead daughter, of a friend for a lost friend
  - d. I would imagine every one of you listening to me today over the age of thirty has personally lost someone to death
2. How can we possibly measure the amount of sorrow that death has caused?
3. Romans 5 makes that origin plain:

***Romans 5:12 sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned***

4. Adam violated God's command at the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and received the penalty God had ordained for his sin

5. But more than that, Adam represented the entire human race at that tree, and in that moment, EVER SINGLE HUMAN BEING SINNED in Adam... and in Adam we all die
6. From the Garden of Eden until now, there has been an indissoluble link between sin and death

***Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death***

7. Only by the payment of the death penalty can we be forgiven
- B. Satan: The One Who Held the Power of Death... Now Defeated
1. What is more, Adam sinned by yielding to Satan's temptation
  2. In that way, he gave to the Deceiver, Satan, the power of death
- C. Ancient History Looked Forward to This: The Defeat of Death Predicted Again and Again in the Old Testament
1. God promised a Conqueror, a Savior, who would crush Satan and defeat death, and win for us our full salvation

***Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel***

2. God promised it again and again through the prophets... the end of death

***Isaiah 25:7-8 On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; <sup>8</sup> he will swallow up death forever.***

- D. Jesus Christ is the One Born of Woman, Who Came to Save Us from Sin and Death

***Galatians 4:4-5 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.***

- E. All Church History Looks Back to This Event: The Centerpiece of the Gospel is the Resurrection

1. Since Christ rose from the dead, the centerpiece of the gospel has been the proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus Christ

***1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures***

2. This is our hope:

***Romans 10:9-10 if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.***

## II. A Loving Errand and a Supernatural Interruption

***Mark 16:1-2 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. <sup>2</sup> Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb***

### A. A Loving Errand... But Some Measure of Unbelief

1. The Sabbath is over; now the women can finish what they started to do... they want to express the deep love they had for Jesus in the only way they knew
2. The love that these women had for Jesus is clear
3. But we also see some measure of unbelief as well
4. Their love for Jesus was based on faith... they had a genuine faith in Jesus as the Son of God... but they are still murky on the details and totally confused about His shocking death
5. So their behavior shows that strange mingling of faith and love mixed with a dose of unbelief
6. The women are certainly not expecting a resurrection... not at all!

7. Even more strikingly, they have come to anoint a corpse with sweet-smelling substances to keep it from stinking as it decomposes

8. All of this despite the fact that Jesus had made it plain that He would rise again on the third day

***Matthew 12:40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.***

***Mark 8:31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.***

9. All of this despite the fact that Psalm 16 had made it plain that Jesus' body would not suffer decay at all

***Psalm 16:10 you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.***

B. Key Issue: They Did Not Understand the Scripture

***John 20:9 They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.***

***Luke 24:25-27 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.***

C. Christ Does Not Despise the Women's Mixture of Faith/Love with a Measure of Unbelief

***Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory.***

As the women walked toward the tomb in the darkness of the early morning, one problem dominated their minds:

***Mark 16:2-4 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb <sup>3</sup> and they asked each other,***

***"Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"<sup>4</sup>  
But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.***

D. Who Moved the Stone? GOD DID!! Through An Angel

1. A profound mystery... with a supernatural solution
2. Powerful question: who moved the stone?

In 1930, an English skeptic journalist with the pen name of Frank Morison decided to try to debunk the resurrection accounts, focusing on the empty tomb. The simple truths flowing from the gospel records ended up converting him and he wrote his findings in a book entitled *Who Moved the Stone?*

- a. Matthew's account answers the question plainly: AN ANGEL FROM HEAVEN moved the stone!!

***Matthew 28:2-3 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it.<sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.***

- b. The Gospel accounts were clear on the location of the stone: it was completely removed from the entrance to the tomb... not just rolled back

***John 20:1 Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.***

The Greek word used for "taken away" is usually translated "lifted up" ... it was also used for Joseph of Arimathea taking away the body of Jesus in John 19:38. So we should picture the angel literally lifting the stone up and carrying it to some place removed from the entrance and setting it down... God didn't want that stone in front of the physical evidence for the greatest event in human history

To some degree, the removal of the stone is like the opening of the curtain on a dramatic play that will rock the world

How appropriate that there was an EARTHQUAKE when the stony curtain was pulled back!! More about that in a moment!

3. What was the significance of the moving of the stone?

a. First, the stone was NOT MOVED to let Jesus OUT? NO WAY!

- i) Jesus was the resurrected Son of God. Fully glorified, awesome in power, the Ancient of Days, and there is nothing that He cannot do
- ii) He could have moved the stone Himself, but an even more amazing fact stares us in the face: He didn't need to move it!
- iii) Jesus' resurrection body was made of a supernatural "stuff" that defies comprehension
- iv) The first matter in this present universe that will also be in the New Heaven and the New Earth... Jesus' resurrection body
- v) Called the "firstfruit" from the dead, nothing else in the history of the universe is like it
- vi) Some indication of the strangeness of this "material" is found in Paul's description of 1 Corinthians 15:

***1 Corinthians 15:42-44 The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; <sup>43</sup> it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; <sup>44</sup> it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.***

vii) A SPIRITUAL BODY... **What's that?**

viii) You can touch it, as Thomas did when he put his fingers in the nail marks... it can eat, as Jesus did with a piece of broiled fish... it is not a ghost, for it has "flesh and bones"

***Luke 24:39-40 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.***  
<sup>40</sup> ***When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.***

Amazing: Jesus says “I’m not a spirit” (pneuma)

BUT Paul calls Him a “life-giving spirit”

ix) Paul emphasizes its essentially otherworldly, spiritual nature

(i) Imperishable, glorious, powerful, spiritual

(ii) Jesus is called a “life-giving spirit”

(iii) He is called the second Adam, the Heavenly man

(iv) Adam gave us his earthy nature, Christ will give us His Heavenly nature in the resurrection body

(v) WHAT DOES ALL THIS POINT TO? A higher level of “physical existence” than we’ve known before

x) Jesus’ resurrection body was utterly beyond our ability fully to comprehend, and it did strange things

(i) It appeared totally normal, like any other guy walking along the road as He conversed with the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus

(ii) YET Jesus didn’t look like His normal self, because people who knew Him well before He died didn’t recognize Him... they were “kept” from recognizing Him... so perhaps the issue was not so much how Jesus looked but how they perceived Him

(iii) Jesus could eat bread and fish, but He also suddenly disappeared after breaking the bread with the two disciples from the Road to Emmaus

(iv) And twice He passed through the walls in the upper room where the disciples were hiding out, scared of the Jews as recorded in John 20, “Though the doors were locked”

- xi) Bottom line: if Jesus' resurrection body couldn't "pass through walls", then how did He get out of the tomb? Then we would have to imagine the angel was sent to let Him out! I find that preposterous... Jesus waiting for the angel to open the door!
- b. Second, the moving of the stone shows the limitation of human government and its authority... remember, the Roman soldiers SEALED THE TOMB so that if anyone broke the seal, the wrath of the Roman government would come down on them... the angel broke the seal without any hesitation!! God rules over all human laws
- c. Third, the moving of the stone points to the importance of the physical evidence for the resurrection: God wanted the disciples (and perhaps others) to see the evidence for the resurrection: the moved stone, the grave clothes, the head cloth, the missing body

***John 20:8-9 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. <sup>9</sup> (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)***

- i) The physical evidence was a valid ground for faith in the resurrection, though it was only temporary
- ii) WHY temporary? Because soon it would all be gone...
- iii) Almost certainly, the Jewish authorities would have collected the grave clothes and changed the empty tomb so that its evidence could not scream RESURRECTION
- iv) That's why John added the statement about "understanding from Scripture" that Jesus had to rise from the dead
- v) Eventually, their eyewitness accounts would themselves become part of the Scripture's testimony to the resurrection

***John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***



***1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched-- this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.***

- d. The moving of the stone also points to the importance of HISTORY to Christianity... it is ESSENTIAL whether or not Christ has actually been raised from the dead

***1 Corinthians 15:14 if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.***

#### E. The Earthquake and the Angel

***Matthew 28:2-3 [And behold] There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup> His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.***

#### 1. The earthquake

- a. "Behold" gives a sense of the suddenness and shock of the earthquake
- b. The Greek intensifies it... a GREAT earthquake... not a mere tremor
- c. The ground beneath their feet shook; a symbol of the way that the entire world was about to change
- d. The second earthquake connected with all these events... the first was at the time of Jesus' death
- e. We use the expression: "earth-shattering experience"; it shows that everything is about to change forever
- f. Now that death has been conquered, the very earth beneath our feet must move... for even the earth is temporary, but Jesus' life is eternal and death is forever conquered

#### 2. The Angel

***Matthew 28:3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow.***

- a. His origin: he descended from heaven
- b. His allegiance: he was called “an angel of the Lord”... he serves King Jesus
- c. His touchdown: His feet landed somewhere, such that he had to walk to the tomb
- d. His power: He caused the earthquake... it says “There was a great earthquake FOR an angel of the Lord came down...”.. AND look at what the angel could do... seemingly effortlessly, he picked up the stone and moved it away from the entrance to the tomb
- e. His demeanor: I love how comfortable and casual he is, as he sits on the stone after moving it! Completely unconcerned about the soldiers or any power
- f. His appearance: BLINDING LIGHT! BRILLIANT WHITE!! “like lightning”, clothes “white as snow”... God gave some of His glory to this angel, and he is blinding to look at! A picture of purity and holiness and supernatural existence
- g. Mark’s account is much simpler:

***Mark 16:5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.***

### III. Terror and Assurance

Remember that there was a detachment of Roman soldiers guarding the tomb to prevent the disciples from stealing his body.

Matthew tells us the effect the angel had on the soldiers

***Matthew 28:4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.***

#### A. The Reaction of the Guards

1. The guards were Roman soldiers who were among the toughest men on the face of the earth

2. Fearless in battle; filled with pride at having conquered an empire in the name of Caesar
3. But they were utterly terrified at the sight of this angel and the earthquake he caused
4. The word for “shook” is the same as that used for the earthquake
5. They ended up like dead men, paralyzed from fear

#### B. The Reassurance of the Women

1. The angel spoke to the women, reassuring them and calming their hearts

***Mark 16:6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.***

2. In Luke, there seems to be a gentle rebuke

***Luke 24:5-8 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? <sup>6</sup> He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: <sup>7</sup> 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" <sup>8</sup> Then they remembered his words.***

In other words, THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN that he would be risen... they didn't even have to read the prophets and remember the many prophecies of Christ's resurrection... Jesus' own words should have been enough!

3. Same thing for the angels in John's Gospel toward Mary Magdalene

***John 20:13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."***

4. The time has come for them to turn away from their mild case of faithlessness and their mournful love and REJOICE BY FAITH!

### C. The Basis of their Joy: The Empty Tomb

***Mark 16:6 He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.***

1. The empty tomb is the lasting physical evidence for the resurrection in Mark's Gospel
2. The Jews have never denied that the tomb was indeed empty
3. How could it be denied? The proclamation of Jesus' resurrection on the Day of Pentecost could have been easily disproved by producing Jesus' corpse... so it is obvious and logical that the tomb was empty
4. Matthew 28 tells us the Roman guards reported back to the chief priests and the elders exactly what had happened...

"We were alert, doing our job when suddenly there was a massive earthquake, and a being descended from the sky wearing brilliant clothes, picked up the stone and rolled it completely away from the tomb and sat on it. We don't remember anything after that, except when we came back to consciousness, the tomb was empty."

5. The chief priests and elders should have become Christians at that moment. Instead they bribed the soldiers with a huge sum of money to say, "The disciples came while we were asleep and stole him away." They promised to appease the governor (Pilate). The story was then widely circulated among the Jews... but it MAKES NO SENSE! If that were true, why weren't the Roman guards executed?
6. Mark doesn't go into any of that! He just simply focuses on the angel's message to the women

***Mark 16:6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.***

#### IV. The Joyful Mission Begins

***Mark 16:7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'***

- A. This is the Beginning of the Spread of the News! CHRIST IS RISEN!
- B. The Fact That It Was Entrusted to these Women Shows the Honor The Lord Held Them In
  - 1. Their loyalty and their love was rewarded with the privilege of telling this news to the disciples (here meaning the Apostles)
  - 2. The message: Christ is risen! He will be going ahead of them into Galilee
  - 3. Notice how the angel singles out Peter... certainly because God knew he would need special care after his denial of Jesus
  - 4. Also notice concerning entrusting this message to women, it shows how truly God's ways are not our ways
    - a. In their era, the testimony of women was not admissible in court
    - b. The attitude against their testimony is made plain in how the disciples reacted to the report from the women

***Luke 24:9-11 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.***

- c. This is one of the strongest evidences that the early Christians did not merely invent these stories about the resurrection... there is absolutely NO WAY that they would have invented the idea that the news of the resurrection should be first entrusted to women, and especially to a woman like Mary Magdalene
  - d. And he made it plain that he wanted women testifying to the resurrection of Jesus throughout church history
- C. BUT the Women's Reaction is Not What It Should Be

***Mark 16:8 Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.***

1. In the New Testament, faith always drives out fear
2. They were commissioned to report to the disciples, but instead they were paralyzed by the events
3. In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus himself appears to them at this point to strengthen their faith

***Matthew 28:8-10 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."***

This is one of the most remarkable omissions from the Gospel of Mark, if it really does end at verse 8... the women failing to do what the angel told them to do, paralyzed by fear... and NO PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS with the resurrected Lord Jesus.

Personal encounters were the greatest physical evidence in Matthew, Luke, and John... and in 1 Corinthians 15... "He appeared to

***1 Corinthians 15:5-8 he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, <sup>8</sup> and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.***

***Luke 24:39 Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.***

Why would Mark end his gospel without any actual encounters with the resurrected Lord?

We'll talk more about that next week!

## V. Applications

### A. What Does the Resurrection of Jesus Christ Prove?

1. The Word of God is perfectly true and reliable... since the centerpiece of Scripture is the defeat of death predicted many times in the Old Testament
2. Jesus of Nazareth is truly the Son of God and Savior of the world, and He has absolute power over death
3. Salvation from sin is complete, and God the Father is completely satisfied in the blood of Jesus as atonement for our sins
4. Jesus Christ has conquered all our enemies: sin, Satan, death, hell; because He lives, all who believe in Him can live forever without fear
5. The church of Jesus Christ is established, since the gates of Hades have been rendered powerless and death cannot stop the church's living advance
6. Eternal life in heaven is guaranteed for all who believe in Jesus!

B. Come to Christ!!

C. Christians: Know the Certainty of What You Believe

D. Be Encouraged Even in the Face of Death

E. Risk More for Jesus

F. Use Apologetics for Evangelism

The three truths are:

1. The tomb in which Jesus was buried was discovered empty by a group of women on the Sunday following the crucifixion.
2. Jesus' disciples had real experiences with one whom they believed was the risen Christ.
3. As a result of the preaching of these disciples, which had the resurrection at its center, the Christian church was established and grew.

Virtually all scholars who deal with the resurrection, whatever their school of thought, assent to these three truths. The resurrection of Christ is the best explanation for each of them individually. But then, even more significantly, when these facts are taken

together we have an even more powerful case for the resurrection – because the skeptic will not have to explain away just one historical fact, but three. These three truths create a strongly woven, three-chord rope that cannot be broken.