

Mark 16

Well we are going to be finishing up the Gospel of Mark this week and just to remind you where we are in the narrative our Lord has now died upon the cross.

He has endured the greatest torture that a human being has ever gone through. He was scourged with a whip that had glass and metal embedded into it ripping open His back possibly exposing His organs. He was mocked while being forced to wear a purple robe as they blasphemously worshipped Him and then beat Him with a rod...At one point a bag was put over His head and they beat Him repeatedly.

And then after all of this He was forced to carry a 75-125 pound wooden beam to the place of His execution. He was so weak that a man by the name of Simon was given the task by the Romans to help carry it.

When placed upon the cross we watched as the soldiers played a game to see who would win the garments of Jesus. We also learned that there were two robbers one on the right and the other on the left and we talked about how many of the things that Jesus went through were prophetic.

We were then told that a supernatural darkness came upon the land for a period of 3 hours...It was during this time that I believe the sins of the world and the wrath of God came upon Jesus, the Lord then cried out saying "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" As for the first time in history our Lord Jesus was separated from the Father.

We might remember the whole reason Jesus was upon the cross...That you and I might be set free from the penalty of sin, that He

might take our place paying the price that you and I might be ransomed or purchased unto the Father.

It's amazing really to think that God was so full of love for us that even while we were sinners the Lord Jesus died for us...To think that God did not have to do this on our behalf. The Father has every right to just let us all go to hell forever and ever. I'm so thankful and I know you are too that Jesus willingly laid down His life for me and for you.

We were then told in our text that Jesus breathed His last and the veil of the temple that separated the holy place from the holy of holies was torn in two from top to bottom and we talked about how this signified that access to the Father which had been previously unavailable was now open to anyone that might come as they apply by faith the blood of Jesus Christ to their heart accepting the payment Jesus made on their behalf.

Finally, we saw Jesus taken down from the cross and placed in the tomb of a man by the name of Joseph of Arimathea who we were told had taken courage to go before Pilate and ask for the body of Jesus.

Let's pick up today in verse 47 of chapter 15 and read through chapter 16 verse 1 which say this ⁴⁷ **And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses observed where He was laid. Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.** I'm always appreciative of these women that had such incredible love for the Lord. It was women that stood by Jesus at the cross along with John the apostle. It was women that we are often told in the Gospels who took care of our Lord and ministered to Him as He travelled from place to place.

And these women while they were at the cross not only stayed near to the Lord during His death but they also carefully watched where the Lord was laid and we learn in these verses that when the Sabbath was past that these women wanted to honor the body of Jesus.

We were told last week in verse 42 that the crucifixion was the day before the Sabbath and the idea we get from the text in Mark 15 is that Jesus was hurriedly placed in the tomb so they could keep it.

Over in John's Gospel we learn that when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus buried the Lord that they had actually already purchased and placed on the body of Jesus some 75-100 pounds of myrrh and aloe for His burial.

The idea here is that these women are going back to the tomb with the desire to simply honor the Lord's body...Spices were often used to cover the stench of the decaying body, for the burial methods were much different than what we have today in our society.

In Biblical times there was no embalming that took place and typically when someone died they were buried as immediately as possible. It was the same way down in the Dominican Republic where we were missionaries when someone passed away. Funerals were very different and much more intense than what we have in the US.

Look at verses 2-3 which say this ²**Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.** ³**And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?"** You can imagine the women as they went through this and the Sabbath was a time of rest where they couldn't really be out in public but all that day they were

thinking of their Lord, mourning His death, upset at what had happened and making plans to go and visit the grave.

Now the Sabbath would have ended at sundown on Saturday night but because it was dark they couldn't go out and get the supplies they needed...The first thing on their agenda for Sunday was to get out the door as early as possible and get the materials that were needed, and you can imagine just the pure emotion of the moment as they are rushing to honor their Lord.

You might notice in verse 2 it says that they did this on the first day of the week and of course you know Jesus is going to be found to be risen from the dead but this is the reason that the early church met during this day for it celebrated the day the Lord rose from the dead.

This does remind me of our study recently in the book of Romans in the 14th chapter as there was much discussion in the church about what day people should meet to worship the Lord...People had different convictions about it and for me personally hey I'm a guy that says I can worship Jesus at any time and any place, I just happen to meet with other believers on Thursday's and Sunday's.

Paul said this in Romans 14:5-6 which says this ⁵ **One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.**

Now in verse 3 as these ladies are hastily heading to the tomb of Jesus at the crack of dawn they realized that they had a big problem...the problem was that there was a large stone that had been rolled in front of the door of the tomb and they had no ability to make it move. It is said that the stones that they rolled in front of the tomb could weigh anywhere from 2 to 2.5 tons.

I think this shows us the emotional state of the women as they are clearly upset by what had taken place. When you lose someone close to you or a major trauma takes place in your life often your thinking isn't as clear as it usually is and your thoughts are jumping from one place to the next.

So the ladies are on the way to the tomb...and of course you know they are going to find that the tomb is empty for Jesus had risen but go ahead and look at verse 4 in our text which says this **4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large.**

So the ladies realize the problem and when they arrive they find that it's already taken care of...I have said this many times in Mark's Gospel but John Mark as he wrote what we have before us was very concise in his telling of the story of Jesus. He is direct and to the point and while Mark is written like this, we also get some other details over in the Gospel of Mathew that help fill in the gaps.

Listen to Matthew 27:62-28:4 which say this **2 The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. 63 "Sir," they said, "we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.'** **64 So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day.**

Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first.”

⁶⁵ “Take a guard,” Pilate answered. “Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how.” ⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

Jesus Has Risen

28 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

² 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. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴ The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

So a professional group of soldiers had been assigned to watch over the tomb...And there had been a large earthquake and the men shook with fear and became as though dead when the stone was rolled away.

The ladies didn't know these details though perhaps they felt the earthquake but we don't know for sure as they came to seek to honor the body of Jesus. So for them the stone was a big problem and I also want to point out to you that these women did not at all expect to find Jesus alive from the dead...In fact no one expected Jesus to rise from the dead.

The Lord had said that He would do so on numerous occasions, but the disciples never seemed to comprehend what our Lord clearly spoke about.

Back to the women in our narrative as they approach the tomb and they are pretty upset about things and then you can imagine that they come to the tomb and find that the stone has been rolled away...what do you think went through their minds? I bet they had some questions and I have it in my mind their eyes were popping out of their heads.

Verse 5 says this ⁵**And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.** Not only is the body gone but here we have a young man sitting in the tomb with a long white robe...I mean here this guy is just hanging out in a tomb that has no corpse in it...The women may have thought the body of the Lord had been stolen at this point or they may have even felt they were in danger as they ran into a stranger in a dark and somewhat secluded area.

From the other Gospels we know that this stranger was actually an angel...It's interesting that sometimes in the Bible angels appear as incredibly powerful beings and other times the Word indicates they looked just like you and I...Over in Hebrews 13:2 we have the following ²**Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.**

Verse 6 of Mark is perhaps the most glorious verse in his Gospel if you look at it with me it says ⁶**But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.** First a comforting reassurance that they were in no danger and then a simple

acknowledgment that this man knew they were seeking Jesus of Nazareth and notice he says He was crucified.

We should remember that Jesus was definitely dead when He was laid in the tomb. A soldier had actually come to Jesus to make sure that He had died before the body was given to Joseph of Arimathea and we are told that his side was pierced to make sure that indeed He was dead...There are some that erroneously assert Jesus had swooned meaning He wasn't fully dead but that's refuted through and through in the Gospels.

And then the angel tells them that Jesus had risen! That He was not there and that they could clearly see this was the truth for the place they laid Him was empty. Simply said this is the greatest miracle in history.

I want to ask you today what would have happened when the women went to the tomb if they had simply found the dead body of our Lord? What would it mean for you and I if Jesus had not risen from the dead?

It would mean that we have no hope, that there is no life after death, that there is no victory over sin...We of all people we are told in 1 Corinthians 15 would be pitied if there was no resurrection.

There may be some that look at the Bible and they may point out that there were others that had risen from the dead previously. In the Old testament in 1 Kings 17:17-24 there was a widow's son that was raised from the dead...in John 11:38-44 we have Lazarus that was risen from the dead...In Mark 5:21-43 we have the story of a 12 year old girl who had died who was raised to life and in Luke 7 there was another widow's son in the city of Nain that was given life.

Some might say what's the difference and I want you to know that all the other people in history that were miraculously raised to life after death were given life in the physical realm only to die again from old age...Jesus though was resurrected into a glorious body that would never again see corruption.

We know that when Jesus rose from the dead He was able to walk through walls and even instantly disappear...and that might make us wonder if that's the case then why was the tomb opened at all? Of course, the answer to that is so the women could see it with their own eyes.

In Verse 7 the angel gives these women a commission or a task to accomplish. It says this ⁷ **But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.** You know this is actually an incredible honor these women have...To go and tell others the Lord has risen and that He is going to go before the disciples into Galilee where they would physically see Him...and notice it says “As He said to you”...meaning Jesus had already conveyed this plan to them and intended to keep it and we see that said over in Matthew 26:32.

I want to point out how interesting it is that God saw fit to first give this message that the Lord had risen to women...In Biblical times women were not seen as valid witnesses in a trial. We talked about this last week but Jesus worked against the cultural norms when it came to how women were seen...He did the same when it came to children elevating both of them.

I want you to notice one more thing here, notice it says that they were to go and tell the disciples **AND PETER that he is going before**

you...You know I take great and incredible comfort in the fact that the Lord did not write Peter off when he denied Him 3 times.

I believe the Lord is here making sure that Peter knows that he is included in those that were to go into Galilee. I wonder how Peter was feeling? Probably pretty lousy at this point in his life...Have you ever made big mistakes in your life? I know that I have...and Peter probably thought he had messed up so bad that everything was lost for Him.

The Lord had plans for this man though and even though he had messed up royally we know the Lord wanted to restore him and use him. I love what the Word says over in Luke 22:31-32 which says this **³¹ “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”**

I can't help but be reminded of what we studied just last Sunday in Psalm 3...David for all the incredible faith that he had made mistakes...and yet God continued to work in him and use him. Even when he had another person murdered.

I love what we read in the gospel of John as the Lord speaks to Peter three times asking him do you love me? It's as if the Lord was addressing each failure that had happened in Peter. I'm so thankful that though you and I may fail a thousand times over that He still desires to work in our hearts.

Maybe you are here tonight, and you have a failure in your life... I want you to know that no matter how horrible that failure might be that the Lord wants to forgive you and minister to you. The Lord would say to you tonight “Come unto me and I will give you rest.”

So many in life have great sins that have never been dealt with...I was like that in my own life before I came to Christ and I can tell you for me personally that the sins that weighed so greatly in my life pulled me down, caused depression within me and drove me to sinful living and a covering of my emotions.

But when I came to the Lord or rather when He came to me and knocked on my heart and I opened the door my life changed...and the Lord can do the same for you if only you come to Him...

I love Revelation 3:20 and I quote it often as it says **Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.** If even now the Lord is touching your heart, if even now the Spirit of God is calling to you, I pray you will immediately right now respond to Him and ask Him to work in your heart.

Look at verse 8 with me which says ⁸**So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.** These women were given a commission and it would seem here that they failed as it says they said nothing to anyone but if you look at Luke's gospel it's clear they did go and tell the disciples...Probably what Mark alludes to here is that they did not stop along the way and they didn't publicly declare what had happened but instead waited until they were able to tell those they were commissioned to tell.

Verses 9-11 say this ⁹**Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.** ¹⁰**She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.** ¹¹**And when they heard that He**

was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. The first to see the risen Lord with their physical eyes was Mary Magdalene and just so we know this was a woman that had a lot of trouble in her life before Jesus ministered to her...She had 7 demons within her...I can't imagine how horrible that must have been for her as if one was not enough.

Notice that when she went back to those who were mourning that we are told they refused to believe He was alive.

Verses 12-13 say this ¹²After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. ¹³And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either.

Again, Mark is being quick here and gives no details and for homework you might check out Luke 24:13-35. This is when two of the disciples were on the road to Emmaus and the Lord suddenly came to them and began to walk with Him and they didn't recognize who He was...and the Lord asked them what it was they were talking about and why were they so sad?

Their response was that they had hoped that Jesus of Nazareth was the one that would redeem Israel, but instead He had been given over to death and crucifixion...and then the Lord told them they were foolish and slow of heart to believe all the prophets had spoken...The Lord then gave them all kinds of scriptures that spoke of Himself...and then the Lord went with them and ate with them and when he had taken bread, blessed and broke it He give it to them and they at that moment recognized Jesus and then we are told He vanished from their sight.

The two men then said this in verses 32-35 of Luke 24 which says **32 And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” 33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, 34 saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” 35 And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.**

It's interesting to note though as we look at this that after these men saw the Lord that they went back to tell the others and again they did not believe.

Let's move forward here into this next section if you look at verse 14 which says **14 Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.** Well that probably hurt when the Lord rebuked the eleven for their refusal to believe...notice it says here that He appeared to them and in Luke's Gospel again we get the idea the Lord appeared suddenly in their midst...It is at this time the Lord showed them the scars on his hands and feet...He then ate in their presence.

Verse 15 says **15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.** Here we have what we call the great commission as the Lord sends the disciples out to proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ...we see the word Gospel here and that means the good news.

You and I have that same commission today don't we? We are called to go out and share our faith, to share our eyewitness accounts of the Lord's incredible work in our hearts and lives.

I'm thankful that today 2,000 years later the good news of Jesus Christ continues to be proclaimed throughout all the world...I have to ask you this evening when is the last time you told someone about Jesus? Perhaps that's a struggle for you but I believe that you and I as we go through life talk about the things that we are excited about...People talk an awful lot about politics and sports and all kinds of topics but do we as the children of God, do we as recipients of the grace of Jesus Christ share what He has done in our lives with others?

The good news is that Jesus Christ died for sinners of whom we are all chief, that He took our place upon the cross, that He paid for our sins with His own blood and that He died that we might not have to taste death and that death could not hold Him as Jesus rose again on the third day...and then we finish that off by simply saying the truth that is found in John 3:16-17 which says **16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.**

It is our amazing privilege to share Jesus just as the disciples did with the world around us...and we do see them being obedient to that calling as the Holy Spirit fell upon them in Acts 2 and they were then emboldened and empowered to speak the truth...We can't do this on our own we must be filled with the Spirit of God on a regular basis to accomplish this.

Look with me at verse 16 which says ¹⁶ **He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.** I need to take a second here and just let you know that believing in Jesus is what it takes to be saved...the idea here is not that you must be baptized to be saved but that you will be baptized in response to believing the gospel and being saved.

Jesus commanded that we should be baptized in water so of course we want to be obedient but it's not required for salvation...The thief on the cross is a great example...when he placed his trust in Jesus the Lord didn't look at him and say "well tough luck buddy to enter into my kingdom you have to be baptized first" that's not what the Lord did at all instead He said "today you will be with me in Paradise"

I want to point out something Paul said also if you listen to 1 Corinthians 1:17 which says this ¹⁷ **For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.** Why on earth would Paul say this if baptism was required to be saved?

Now I want to tell you tonight that if you are here and you believe in Jesus, but you haven't been baptized in water that you should...Baptism doesn't save us but instead is seen as a public declaration of the inward work of God in a person's heart. If you need to do that see me after the service and we can work on getting that taken care of.

We might also notice in this verse that it says what of those who are condemned? It specifically says those who DO NOT BELIEVE...Again no mention of baptism. Your salvation, your eternal standing before God is all wrapped up in whether you believe in Jesus and His finished

work on the cross or you refuse to believe and find yourself condemned.

Look with me here at verses 17-18 which say ¹⁷ **And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.**

As the disciples went into the world to preach the gospel the Lord is here telling them that they would be supernaturally protected and they would see supernatural works of the Spirit of God.

Demons would come out of people...certainly we see that in the book of Acts and I know we don't see it as often here in the United States but these things do happen throughout the world. Always remember that the name and power of Jesus is far superior to the power of Satan...Jesus can break strongholds, He can open the eyes of those who are spiritually bound by the enemy...Jesus can bind the strong man and cast him out.

New tongues would be spoken...probably when the disciples heard that they were perplexed...but then when Acts 2 took place and they spoke languages they didn't know they understood fully.

Serpents would be taken up and anything they drank that could cause death would not hurt them. Of course this doesn't mean you should handle snakes and tempt the Lord by doing so or go out and drink antifreeze because the Lord will protect you...We should think of Paul in Acts 28 when he was suddenly bit by a snake when he was tending

to the fire...and the locals thought he would die...Paul just flung it in the fire and moved on unharmed.

Finally, we are told that they would lay hands on the sick and they would recover...and that's certainly something we see take place in the book of Acts.

So the Lord kept these words and they did come to pass.

Look at verses 19-20 which say this ¹⁹ **So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.** ²⁰ **And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.** We then see the glorious ascension of Jesus as He was received up into heaven where He now sits at the right hand of God...I like it that He is sitting for it gives the indication that the work is finished...and of course one day the Lord will come back to rule and reign upon this earth...in the mean time the Lord is slow in fulfilling this in the hopes that every person on the planet will be saved.

Verse 20 really points us forward into the book of Acts where you can see all these things come to pass as the Apostles were used by the Lord to plant the seeds of the Gospel which has grown into the glorious church age that we now live in.

How amazing to work our way through the Gospel of Mark...I'm so thankful that God has preserved His Word for us all these years and He desires to work in us and through us each and every day.

Today, if you need to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior or you need to be baptized in water please come forward after the service as I would love to talk with you about it.

Let's pray.

Mark 16 "Best News Ever"

Cross References

Verses 2-3

Romans 14:5-6

Verse 4

Matthew 27:62-28:4

Verse 5

Hebrews 13:2

Verse 7

Luke 22:31-32

Revelation 3:20

Verses 12-13

Luke 24:32-35

Verse 15

John 3:16-17

Verse 16

1 Corinthians 1:17