

SERMON NOTES:

Series: Mark -The Simple Gospel | Week 54: It's News Too Good to Keep to Ourselves

Mark 16:8 (NLT)

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

Mark 16:9-20 (NLT) [supposed extractions from the gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John]

⁹When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, *he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons.* ¹⁰She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. ¹¹When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

¹²Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. ¹³These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

¹⁴Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

¹⁵He said to them, *“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.* ¹⁶*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.* ¹⁷*And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues;* ¹⁸*they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”*

¹⁹After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. ²⁰Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20.]

“Clement of Alexandria and Origen [early third century] show no knowledge of the existence of these verses; furthermore Eusebius and Jerome attest that the passage was absent from almost all Greek copies of Mark known to them.” (Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2005, p.123)

The Shorter and Alternate Endings

[I] But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after these things Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.

[II] This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits [or, does not allow what lies under the unclean spirits to understand the truth and power of God]. Therefore reveal your righteousness now – thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, ‘The term of years of Satan’s power has been fulfilled, but other terrible things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was handed over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more, in order that they may inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of righteousness that is in heaven.

“This original ending of Mark was viewed by later Christians as so deficient that not only was Mark placed second in order in the New Testament, but various endings were *added* by editors and copyists in some manuscripts to try to remedy things. The longest concocted ending, which became Mark 16:9-19, became so treasured that it was included in the King James Version of the Bible, favored for the past 500 years by Protestants, as well as translations of the Latin Vulgate, used by Catholics. This meant that for countless millions of Christians it *became* sacred scripture—but it is patently *bogus*.” **Dr. James Tabor**

Laborious attempts have been made in modern scholarship not just to suggest that Mark really did mean to stop there, but as it were, to wallow in the dark uncertainty that results. Mark, we are told, is a book of mysteries. People in Mark are always being told to stay silent; now the women do just that. Instead of a cheap happy ending, they say, Mark has given us something far more powerful, a strange brooding puzzle which leaves every reader turning the matter over, wondering what on earth might have happened, and what it all might mean. These suggestions have an air of sophistication and literary imagination, but I am not convinced.” **N.T. Wright**

“I think it more likely that he wrote a conclusion, in which the women spoke to the disciples, the disciples went to the tomb, and eventually, they met Jesus again. I suspect that the book concluded with Jesus not only confirming to them that he was indeed alive again in a new, though certainly bodily, way, but also commissioning them for the work that now awaited them. The ending may not have been very long, but it will have been important as the intended conclusion to the book, drawing the themes to their proper destination.” **N.T. Wright**

Christians have always confidently claimed that the Bible is inspired, the bible is inerrant, and the Bible is infallible.

ONE VITAL CAVEAT: This claim we make we should understand has always applied to autographs or original manuscripts; it was these that were inspired, inerrant, and infallible.

“The Protestant church has never argued for the inspiration of copies. The manuscripts of the biblical books were copied thousands of times, often by monks and scribes whose sole task was to carefully, assiduously, precisely copy the texts word for word. Even so, from time to time we find variations between copies. So, if we do not have the original manuscripts, only copies, and those copies do not agree, why do we still speak of having an infallible Bible?” **R.C. Sproul**

*“One way or another, there is a blank at the end of the story, and we are invited to fill it ourselves. Do we take Easter for granted, or have we found ourselves awestruck at the strange new work of God? What do we know of the risen Lord? Where is he now going ahead of us? What tasks has he for us to undertake today, to take ‘the **gospel of the kingdom**’ to the ends of the earth?”* **N.T. Wright**

“The announcement of the resurrection leaves the women awestruck and confused. Mark is implicitly asking his readers, ‘How will you respond to the announcement of the resurrection?’” **Mark L. Strauss**

“This is the end of Mark’s story, because it is the beginning of discipleship.” **Mark L. Strauss**

The Lessons of the Alternate Ending of Mark (vv.9-20)

1. The Church has a preaching task.
2. The Church has a healing task.
3. The Church has a source of power!
4. The Church is never left alone to do its work.