

## Mark 16

Mark 15 – the darkest chapter in the bible – the crucifixion of Jesus.

My big takeaway from chapter 15 – the soldiers mocking Jesus

**<sup>16</sup> The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) (Pilate's temporary headquarters in Jerusalem) and called together the whole company of soldiers (a company of about 600 soldiers). <sup>17</sup> They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. <sup>18</sup> And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king of the Jews!" <sup>19</sup> Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. <sup>20</sup> And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.**

Jesus is mocked, most likely more severely than a common criminal.

But again, something is going on at a deeper level. There is some amazing irony here, a truth hidden that they cannot see, although they validate the Messiahship of Jesus with their actions:

I want to ask you to complete the sentence:

There's a robe that is the color purple

A thorny crown

They stuck him on the head with a staff

They chant "Hail, king of the Jews"

And they paid homage to him by falling on their knees

So there's a purple robe, a crown, a scepter, an acknowledgment that he is King, while they fall on their knees. What do you make of that?

So the truth about Jesus cannot be suppressed, even in their mocking.

And here's one of the things I love about Jesus: How he was treated did not change who he was. (And neither should it you, right? You live according to your purpose).

Even with the mocking, he still went to the Cross and prayed for his enemies – "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

So we have this dark moment – the darkest day, the darkest chapter in all of the Bible.

Friday was terrible. Saturday the Sabbath – was filled with heartbreak and grief.

But guess what? Sunday's coming. (Turn to your neighbor and say, "Sunday's Coming")

Chapter 16 –

**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.**

So why do they go to the grave?

Because Jesus had died on Friday afternoon at 3:00, and the Sabbath would start on Friday at sundown. So they didn't have time to complete the preparation of his body for burial, and they weren't allowed to do it on Saturday, the Sabbath.

By the way, I've just got to say—when you get to this point in the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—you notice something: all the male disciples are gone. They vanish. They're hiding.

And here's the amazing thing: in a world where women's testimony wasn't trusted in court, God deliberately entrusts *women* with the most important story in human history. They're the only ones present for all three—Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

If you lived back then, you wouldn't pick women as your key witnesses. Not because God didn't value them, but because the culture didn't. But God says, "I'm giving them the story. They're going to receive it first."

<sup>2</sup>Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb (by the way – this is the reason why for the last two thousand years Christians meet on Sunday to worship).

<sup>3</sup>and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

Don't you love this? This is what people of faith do. They know he's been buried in a borrowed tomb. They know the stone was massive and had to be rolled away. They knew it would be impossible for them to do that in their own strength.

But they take off anyway to the place where Jesus lay.

They didn't say, "It can't be done." They didn't try to figure it all out. They said, "Let's go."

And sometimes – you've just got to go in faith – and let God work out the rest! Right? Because He's faithful!

So the women just charged down to the tomb.

<sup>4</sup>But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. <sup>5</sup>As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they

were alarmed. (The other Gospels tell us it was an angel who gives them the good news).

<sup>6</sup>"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.

He says, "I want you to see it. I want you to experience this. I know you came here looking for a dead man – but he is not here – look inside – see the place where they laid him - he is risen!)

Listen – that stone wasn't rolled back so Jesus could get out – he could do that any why he wanted to – it was rolled away so they could look in and see – He is risen!

6-8

<sup>6</sup>"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. <sup>7</sup>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.'"

You've got to love verse 7, because the word of the angels is a message of hope, not scorn, for Peter and the rest of the scattered disciples.

They had been together in Galilee – they were scattered in Jerusalem – but Jesus will gather them again in galilee, where they will finally see him with new eyes.

And what we see here is - grace in action.

In the Kingdom of Jesus, failure is not the end.

Because think of Peter. The one that failed the greatest publicly, was the one who was reinstated by Jesus to powerfully lead.

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

Notice: they trembled, and they were afraid.

Now, before we get to verse 9, you may have a note in your Bible that say something like this: “The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20.

There are many manuscripts that record the words and events of the Gospels, and the older the manuscript, the better (because it’s closer to the original and less likely to have been added to or a mistake to be made by a scribe who copied it – because everything had to be written).

And so the vast majority of old manuscripts don’t have this text. In fact – most scholars are convinced these are not the words of Mark, but added by a scribe.

Now why?

Well – because of verse 8. (Do you see how it ends? The women are scarred, afraid even to speak? What kind of ending is that, right?

So here comes a scribe who wants to tidy that up. And maybe he’s the type of person that has to straighten crooked picture frames when you walk into a room, or – you can’t call a cake a dessert until you spread some frosting on top.

So – how was the ending formed? Well, the author took information from the endings of the other Gospels, and put them together as an ending for Mark.

And so here’s the good news! Everything we read here – is true! It wasn’t Mark that said it – but it was right, and it was true.

(We’ll look at a couple of verses from that section in a minute).

But it’s interesting that Mark doesn’t put a bow on his Gospel in verse 8. He leaves it open-ended. And this is where we have to carry the Gospel forward - with fear or faith!

It’s what the whole Gospel has been driving us to – Jesus has risen. Will we be fearful, or will we be faithful?

If there’s anything I’ve learned, it’s that we have to fight! We have to fight!

We may be scarred, but you just need to know today – the devil doesn’t win! Jesus does!

Satan thought he had won when he saw Jesus hung on that cross – and in some of your lives, he thinks he has won – but the only power he has over you is the power you allow him to have.

I think Mark ends as he does because the rest of the story is left to be written!

And so we can go forward in fear, or we can go forward in faith!

And to go in faith means – just like Jesus, just like the disciples – we’re in a battle, and we have to fight!

How do we do that?

### **1. We fight in faithfulness!**

So, can I just throw something out here? What if these ladies had slept in?

What if they had looked at one another and said, “You know, it’s too early; it’s dark outside, it’s cold outside.” They would have missed it all!

But because they sought the Lord early, they made the discovery of a lifetime!

They saw the angel – they heard the angels’ voice – they saw the tomb empty – they carried forth the message – all because they were there early, seeking the Lord!

There are discoveries you’ll never make – unless you seek the Lord early.

Psalm 63 – “O God you are my God, early will I seek you.”

How do we fight?

## **2. We have to fight for our children.**

As we carry the Gospel forward, our focus has to be on the **next generation**.

So when I say “next generation,” I’m talking about kids in elementary all the way through college. That’s basically Gen Z and Gen Alpha — anyone born between 1997 and 2024. That’s the age range we’re talking about.

And I want you to lean into this statement right here:

**They are the NEXT generation of humanity, but they are the NOW generation of impact.**

We’ve got to embrace that with our whole hearts.

I believe this generation is facing challenges that previous generations never had to deal with. At the same time, statistics show us that this generation is also *more open spiritually* than many that came before them. That’s exciting — because it means God is stirring, God is moving, and the church has an opportunity like never before.

**Ephesians 2:10.**

*“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us long ago.”*

This verse is true for every believer, but I especially want to declare it over the next generation.

But the Holy Spirit reminded me: *It’s not just me. We all have skin in the game.* Whether you have kids in this generation or not, we are all responsible to pray, to declare, and to believe God’s best for them.

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## **Three Prayers for the Next Generation**

### **1. That they would understand their value.**

Ephesians 2:10 says we are God’s masterpiece. Every student, every child, every young person is *one of one*.

So today, we break off every lie of the enemy that says, *“You’re not worth it. You don’t matter. You’re not enough.”* In Jesus’ name, we declare that this generation will know their value.

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### **2. That they would embrace their identity.**

1 Peter 2:9 says, *“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession.”*

We’re living in an age where there is an identity crisis all around us. But we declare today: God is a God of clarity, not confusion.

Young people, your true identity is found in Christ alone. And as your church family, we speak over you: you are chosen, you are set apart, and you belong to Him.

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### 3. That they would fulfill their calling.

2 Timothy 1:9 says, *“He has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace.”*

God has a calling on this generation. Adults— we cannot just see them as *future* leaders. They are leaders *now*. God has placed them in strategic positions to lead, to serve, and to set an example.

That’s why Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 4:12, *“Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, and in purity.”*

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I heard this: You know how to tell if a church is dying? When it cares more about serving us here, than it does about the lost and dying out there.

And so we have to fight for the next generation, we have to fight for our children and youth, we have to fight for our friends and loved ones.

3. We become disciplemakers (verses 15-16).

*<sup>15</sup> He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

Now – what does that echo? (Remember, the author here is giving us an addendum that reflects truths in the other Gospels):

So – Matthew 28:16-20

*<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority*

*in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Most churches judge their success by how many attend, how big their budget is – but heaven doesn’t celebrate those numbers. It only celebrates disciples.

Did you know the word “Christian” only appears in the Bible 3 times? Yet the word “disciples” appears 281 times in the NT.

Which means we celebrate attendance – but heaven celebrates disciples.

So becoming a Christian is to trust in Christ – believe with all your heart, to be baptized. That’s conversion.

But true conversion leads to lifelong discipleship, which means you pursue Jesus for the rest of your life and do all that he commands.

And for you and me, that means we become disciple makers of others. Because every follower of Jesus has been given the responsibility to make disciples.

Church is not something we just do at a couple of services each week – it’s who we are. Right?

John 15:8 – *“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”*

How is God glorified? When you bear MUCH FRUIT -which is not a little fruit.

And doing so proves that you are a disciple. Because things that are ALIVE multiply and grow!

And so God gives you your relationships, your vocation – in part, as a platform, as a network through which you can make disciples.

Because here's the thing – your vocation naturally puts you into contact with people in your profession that are more likely to listen to you than they are to your preacher.

So here's the assignment – “Go into all the world and make disciples” – people who look and act like Jesus.

You see – the biggest thing you and I can do, is to simply own the assignment by using your words to invite and encouraging.

Understanding that Jesus' method of saving the world, was LIFE on LIFE.

**Dwight L. Moody said, “Out of 100 men, one man will read the Bible, the other 99 will read the Christian.”**

Our responsibility is so great!

When we follow a risen Savior, he is not just some guy who taught a bunch of good stuff, and he died, and we look back and say, “wasn't that wonderful!”

He's alive today, and he's working.

**Mark 16:16 says:**

***<sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.***

*Those are sober words – so have you given your life to Jesus?”*