



# gracefellowship

Mark 16:1-8

Easter Sunday- Relationship Restored

April 12, 2020

Call to Worship: (Underscore)

Easter feels different this year! You're at home watching this service rather than gathered in a building with followers of Jesus. You probably didn't get up and put on brand new clothes bought for this special day. The big family gathering you may have come to expect on Easter probably isn't happening today. But make no mistake- your worship doesn't have to be any less powerful or vibrant! We worship Jesus today because He is worthy!

*No matter where we are!*

There are a lot of things that you will find empty today...

- Restaurants
- Shopping Centers
- State Parks
- Church buildings

But the most important thing you will find empty today is the tomb of Jesus!

Because the tomb is empty and Jesus is alive, WE - WILL - WORSHIP!

I'm glad you've chosen to join us online as we celebrate! This is Easter!

Video: This is Easter

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

As we get started today here is something different we want to do: Kids, I want you to go find some paper and crayons or colored pencils and as I talk today I would love for you to draw a picture of something that stands out to you from the Bible! Parents, later today send us a picture of your child's drawings! They might just end up in next week's service!

Adults, while our kids are getting those items, let me ask you a question: Have you already begun planning what you will do when this stay at home order is

lifted? I know a lot of people can't wait to visit a favorite restaurant again, or head out to Target or Kohl's, or whatever your favorite place is to shop! Some of you are waiting for parks to reopen. A lot of us are going to need to get back to the YMCA and lose what I'm calling "the quarantine 15" – those extra pounds we are putting on! Is anyone else snacking and eating way more than they normally do while stuck at home?

In the meantime, we are waiting...

It's incredibly difficult to wait for something in your circumstances to change when you aren't sure if things will ever really go back to "normal."

Now, put yourself in the shoes of Jesus' disciples as they were waiting for the Sabbath to end so they could go to the tomb of Jesus and anoint His body with the proper burial spices.

- When Jesus was taken off the cross the Jewish Sabbath was beginning, so they had to hastily put Jesus's body in the tomb. There wasn't time for proper burial ceremonies.
- Very few people had even gone to the tomb. A few men who removed His body from the cross and a few women who had been at the cross as Jesus died. But Jesus didn't get the kind of burial he deserved.
  - o Relate this to people not being able to attend the funerals of loved ones during a time of quarantine; or not being able to attend weddings of loved ones.

After Jesus had been killed all of His followers hid away, fearful that something terrible may happen to them as well.

Because the Sabbath started at the time of Jesus's burial, His followers had to wait, in their grief, before they could go and properly anoint His body. This is where we pick up in Mark's gospel today and see the story unfold.

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

**1 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.**

**2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb**

**3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"**

**4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.**

**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.**

**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.**

**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.’ ”**

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

When you read the passage you can tell that the past few days have been traumatic for these women.

- Jesus has died in the most horrific way imaginable and they had witnessed it.
- All their hopes and dreams had died along with Jesus. And they didn't even get to say a proper goodbye.
- Now the Sabbath is over and they want to go anoint Jesus' body for a proper burial.
- They got everything they needed, spending a considerable amount of money on spices and perfumes.
- They had no plan at all to get into the tomb and be able to anoint the body!

They weren't thinking straight. But when they get there the stone is rolled away! And upon inspection of the tomb they find the body of Jesus missing, but a young man dressed in white who tells them Jesus is alive! Then the angel gives them a message: Go tell the disciples...

But he doesn't stop there:

...and Peter... The angel had to make sure to include Peter because he probably wouldn't have shown up otherwise. He may have thought because of what he had done he was no longer included and no longer invited. If you don't know the story, Peter had denied Jesus three times on the night before His crucifixion. We are going to talk more about that in a few minutes.

Here's what is powerful about the first message we get from God following the resurrection: **The cross immediately shows us that grace is extended to the worst offenders.**

Peter hadn't just run away from Jesus like the other disciples- he denied knowing Jesus 3 times in His greatest moment of need. But the power of the cross and the victory that comes through Jesus' resurrection shows us that the worst of us are still invited to take part in relationship with Jesus. No matter what you've done, Jesus still wants you!

I love the message Jesus leaves with the angel to give to Mary, because with it he initiates relationship! Jesus was separated for 3 days from those He loved and as soon as He returns from the dead His instructions are: "Go get everyone and tell them to meet me in Galilee!" Is anyone feeling that right now? Maybe you've been disconnected from people for a while and you just can't wait for the stay at home order to be lifted! I talked to a friend of mine this week who said, "I didn't

know what my love language was until this isolation period hit: it's physical touch! I can't wait to be around people and give some hugs again!"

Jesus had been dead for 3 days and his first request is, "Get my friends and tell them to meet me! And don't forget Peter!"

Peter was so disappointed with himself and his failure that he walked away from the life Jesus had invited him into. It's interesting to me as I read this, but it looks like Peter is more disappointed in himself than Jesus is! Jesus is ready to welcome Peter back with open arms and forgive him for his betrayal. But Peter has to be convinced!

Peter went into protection mode. I think his mindset led him to believe that because he had betrayed Jesus he was at risk to hurt everyone he loved. If he messed up the most important relationship in his life, what was he bound to do to other people around him?

**"Our brains are wired for connection, but trauma rewires them for protection. That's why healthy relationships are difficult for wounded people." – Ryan North**

When Peter doesn't know what to do because of the way he rejected Jesus he does what many of us do, he pinballs back and forth between busyness and distraction. Have you found that to be true in your life? When you have a moral failure or you blow it on some level and you feel racked with guilt, instead of dealing with the stuff going on in your heart you just fill your life with things to make you busy and keep you distracted. Peter looks at his situation, even after knowing Jesus is alive again, he doesn't run to Jesus to make amends and deal with the pain he's experienced, he takes the guys and he runs back to what his life was built on before Jesus found him- fishing.

**:: John 21:2-6**

**2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus ), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.**

**3 "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.**

**4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.**

**5 He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered.**

**6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.**

So what does Jesus do to reconnect His relationship with Peter? He recreates a moment, actually he recreates a couple moments.

### **How does Jesus restore a relationship with Peter?**

#### **- The miraculous catch of fish**

In the moment of Peter's greatest failure Jesus recreates the moment He first called Peter to walk with him. You can find the story in Luke 5. The exact same thing happens: after a long night of fishing and catching nothing, Jesus tells them to put their nets on the other side of the boat and all of a sudden they catch so many fish the boat begins to sink! Peter's response in that moment was to fall on his knees in the boat and tell Jesus, "You need to get away from me! I'm a sinful man!" But instead Jesus replies, "I'm going to change you! I have a new direction for your life!"

God's message to you today is that no matter what you have done, the relationship is still open! I don't know if you believe that right now, but it's true. Peter bombed big time. But Jesus didn't turn His back on Peter. And He won't turn His back on you either. Your sin doesn't negate the fact that Jesus has a plan for your life and He isn't done using you.

But some of us are more stubborn than others and we don't just fall back into Jesus' arms when He extends an open invitation to be reunited with Him. Peter was that way. Peter was wallowing in guilt and shame. He didn't think he was worthy of Jesus. So Jesus brings Peter to another moment. While still in the boat John tells Peter the guy on the shore is Jesus. He wants Peter to know Jesus had done this for his benefit. Peter jumps out of the boat and swims into shore while the other disciples row in. This is where Jesus recreates another moment for Peter.

#### **- The charcoal fire**

When they land on shore with this massive catch of fish Jesus is already cooking some fish and bread! But here's what I want you to really pay attention to, John tells us this is a charcoal fire (NIV "a fire of burning coals.")

- Only two places in the NT this kind of fire is mentioned
  1. On the beach where Jesus is cooking fish
  2. John 18 at the trial of Jesus where Peter was standing beside a charcoal fire as he denied Jesus 3 times.

Luke 22 tells us that when Peter was standing beside the fire in the courtyard where Jesus was on trial, he denied knowing Jesus 3 times- which Jesus had predicted would happen. Jesus had told Peter, "Before this night is over and the rooster crows, you will deny me 3 times." When his third denial came a rooster crowed and Luke tells us that Jesus looked across the courtyard right at Peter. They made eye contact and immediately Peter realizes what he has done.

Now on the beach Jesus is cooking over a charcoal fire. Why does Jesus bring Peter back to this fire? Is Jesus trying to hurt Peter? Does He want to provoke Peter? “I know what you did! Now I want to rub your face in it!” No! Jesus doesn’t want to hurt Peter; He wants to heal Peter! But to do that Jesus has to deal with Peter’s failure.

I don’t know what you’ve been through lately or what kinds of wounds you carry from your past, but I do know this:

**In the middle of great failure Jesus wants to connect with you and He wants to restore you and He does that by gently dealing with your mess.**

I love what Jesus does next. He doesn’t get frustrated with Peter. He doesn’t yell at him. Jesus deals with Peter’s failure- three denials- by asking him 3 questions. Jesus asks Peter 3 times if he loves Him. Jesus isn’t being cruel doing this. Jesus is doing what our GPS systems do when we take a wrong turn... recalculating! Peter had lost his direction and had started going backward. He had returned to a fishing boat when Jesus had spent three years preparing him to fish for people!

**Here’s how we know Jesus isn’t being mean to Peter: he isn’t pointing back at Peter’s failures, he’s pointing forward to a better future!**

Do you love me? Feed my lambs.  
Do you love me? Take care of my sheep.  
Do you love me? Feed my sheep.

Jesus saw a future for Peter that Peter couldn’t imagine. And Jesus sees a better future for you than you can dream about when you will lay everything else down and follow Him.

- It’s time to move on from the sin you have been letting weigh you down!
- It’s time to move on from everything that makes you feel empty.
- It’s time to move on from the guilt and shame you’ve been carrying around.
- It’s time to move forward in the grace and forgiveness of Jesus.

This is Easter. This is the day that reminds us because the tomb is empty you don’t have to be!

2 Groups for response:

1. If you are not a follower of Jesus and have never experienced His forgiveness I want to encourage you today to accept the grace of God to forgive your sins and change your life. There is a number on the screen you can text and we would love to follow up with you. Would you just text the word “Easter” to that number? Someone will follow up with you soon.
2. If you are a follower of Jesus but you’ve lost your way and you’ve returned to some sinful patterns of behavior, I want to encourage you to stop right

where you are and run back into the open arms of Jesus. He is waiting for you with love and mercy and compassion. He will help you deal with the things that have caused you to run, but He will do that like a loving Father, not a harsh judge. If you've been running from God today is your time to have that relationship restored.

Pray