

**FIND & FOLLOW**  
**The Gospels: He is Risen!**  
**Mark 16:1-8**

The simplicity of this story astounds me. There was no FIREWORKS SHOW in the heavens when Jesus rose from the dead. This is one of the reasons why this story rings TRUE to me. It is not like a fairy tale. It does not solve all of our problems the way that WE want them to be solved. It is UNEXPECTED. It is intensely PERSONAL. **I believe that this story ACTUALLY happened, and that it is the MOST IMPORTANT EVENT in HUMAN HISTORY. In fact, I have based my ENTIRE LIFE upon Jesus and his resurrection.** I am in good company with so many others who have done the same. Yet, this story is DISMISSED by most people because it just seems . . . well, too GOOD to be TRUE. I don't think anyone here necessarily WANTS the resurrection to be a LIE. It just radically CHALLENGES our everyday understanding about DEATH: **Everyone dies, and when you die, you STAY dead!**

**But, what if it IS TRUE?** Could you entertain that idea for just a moment? **Some of you already know what life is like WITHOUT faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. You have not put your faith in Jesus Christ, and you live every day with the feeling that all that is or ever will be, is only what already IS. But think about what would CHANGE if Jesus Christ really was the Son of God, and if he really did DIE a brutal death on the cross to pay for the sins that we have all committed. And, what if he really did RISE from the dead by the power of God to demonstrate his ultimate power over our greatest enemies: Sin, Death, Sorrow, and Satan! Some of us are already learning what life WITH Christ is like, and we don't want you to miss out on it!**

Author Phillip Yancey recounted the story about some early Spanish explorers that ran out of drinking water toward the end of their arduous ocean voyage to South America. They unknowingly entered the estuary of the Amazon river, but they wrongly assumed that they were still in the Atlantic Ocean because the expanse of the river was so vast. **Tragically, several of these sailors died of THIRST as they floated on the largest body of fresh water that can be found in the entire world.** [Yancey – Finding God]

Sometimes the thing we need MOST is right before our very eyes . . . but we do not see it. Some DIE from the failure to take hold of that which is right before them. Maybe that is you and me sometimes. Have you ever been looking for something only to realize that it is embarrassingly close to you? [Lisa and me forever looking for our reading glasses!]

Sometimes we cannot find what we are looking for because there are some PLACES that we just don't want to go and look. [People that fear death and funerals]. **The Easter story actually makes no sense if we are not willing to think about the reality of death. Today, I want us to learn how we can FIND LIFE in the very place where we only expect DEATH!**

Now, back to our story in Mark. Note how unremarkable it is at first. **Mark 16:1-4 NIV**

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.

It is often noted that one of the prime factors that support the truth of the resurrection is the fact that it was WOMEN who first discovered and then reported that Jesus had been resurrected. In this culture at that time, women were not even allowed to testify in court! If the Gospel record was some kind of HOAX, then there is no way that they would have used women as the PRIME TESTIMONY for the resurrection! [Even though we all know that women pay more attention to detail than most men.]. But even those women that were the first witnesses of Jesus' resurrection were not prepared for that fact when they went to the tomb that morning. This may seem like a simple observation, but I believe it is important: **THEY WERE WORRIED ABOUT THE WRONG THINGS**

Imagine how these women must have felt as they were walking to his tomb on the third day to anoint his body with spices and pay their last respects to him. Each of the Gospel accounts give us insight into the fear and depression into which all of Jesus's followers fell into after his death. They huddled in secret rooms, hiding from the religious leaders that had crucified Jesus, so that they would not experience a similar fate. **They were worried about their own death.** They wept. They talked about how they had wholeheartedly believed that Jesus was the Promised One (they called him Messiah, or Christ) that would deliver their people from Roman oppression and bring peace back to their world. Now he was dead. **They were worried about how they could go back to life as it was before Jesus had invaded their world now that they believed he had FAILED and was GONE.** They were speechless with sorrow. **Now, their only concerns were simply about their CURRENT situation.** As they walked toward the tomb, their only concern was about how they were going to move this huge boulder that covered the opening of the tomb.

**What are you MOST concerned about right now in your life?** Maybe you are worried about whether you be able to get a seat at your favorite restaurant after this service is over (Clearly, the blame will be on ME if you can't!), or will you be able to make this month's car or house payment, or will you be able to lose 10 pounds by the time of the wedding. Maybe your concerns are bigger than that. Are you worried about your job, or your marriage, or your health? These are all worthwhile concerns. This is the stuff that our life is made of! **But how many of you are concerned about your RELATIONSHIP with GOD, or with your ETERNAL DESTINY? Whatever you are most concerned about, the truth is that most of us tend to obsess mostly over things that pertain only to THIS life.** Jesus said, "What does it profit you if you gain the whole world, yet .."

We fail to think about the things that are BIGGER than this life, that last LONGER than this life, and that can actually make this life - and the life to come - BETTER! **Jesus**

**Christ presses us to think about REAL LIFE; life that is both NOW and NOT YET.** Our discussion today is meant to do the same thing for you. **I ask you: Has it ever concerned you that you are NOT CONCERNED about your relationship with God?**

These women, along with all of the other disciples of Jesus, had spent the last two days thinking about the breathtaking swiftness of Jesus' arrest, trial, crucifixion, and burial. After all of the miracles that they witnessed and all of the life-changes that they experienced and seen in others, they now had to face the fact that Jesus was DEAD. They could not get past this! Here is why:

**THEY FAILED TO REALLY ACCEPT WHAT JESUS HAD TOLD THEM.**

**Mark 16:5-7 NIV**

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.**' "

**One of the most surprising things about this story is that these women were surprised by this story!** They genuinely did not expect to discover that Jesus had risen from the dead. Jesus had told them over and over that he would DIE by crucifixion and then rise again. **I challenge you to read the Gospel of John (it is only 21 chapters) and see how many times Jesus directly alluded to his coming death and resurrection. It will amaze you!** The closer he got to the last week of his life, the more frequently he reminded them that he was going to die. Jesus was very clear with his disciples about the awful death that he was about to endure for the sake of the entire world. He told them that:

- He would be delivered over to the Chief Priests
- He would be betrayed by one of his own disciples
- He would be abandoned by the rest of his disciples
- He would be beaten and mocked
- He would be crucified on a Roman cross
- He would RISE AGAIN on the third day

The night before his crucifixion he even gave them DETAILED information about where he was going to be right after the resurrection! **Matthew 26:31-32 NIV**

31 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: " 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' 32 **But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.**"

This was exactly what the angel reminded them of when he told them, "**He is RISEN. He is not here. He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you!**" Jesus warned all of those that had followed him for 3 years that their problem was that they did not understand or really accept what the Bible said about the Messiah. And they did not truly accept what Jesus said about himself as well. **It never**

seems to have occurred to them to just **CONSIDER** what they had already experienced with Jesus when it came to death. **In fact, this was not the first stone that they had to move away from a tomb.** In John 11, Mary Magdalene's brother, Lazarus, had died and was in the tomb for FOUR DAYS. Mary and her sister Martha, wept with anguish when Jesus finally arrived on the scene, sobbing out to him that, **"if only you had been here, Lazarus would not have died!"** Jesus's response was astonishing. Here is what he said: **John 11:23-26 NIV**

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, **"I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"**

How could anyone EVER forget a statement like that, especially when he followed it by actually raising Lazarus from the dead before the eyes of a huge crowd? **But the death of Jesus seems to have eclipsed the faith of these followers,** because they had NO EXPECTATION that Jesus would rise from the dead himself. Forgetfulness was a common problem for these followers of Jesus. We struggle here as well! **When these women heard what the angel said, Mark tells us what they did:**

**Mark 16:8 NIV**

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

All of the Gospel accounts tell us that these women, along with all of the other disciples (and over 500 other witnesses during the 40 days after his resurrection) eventually got to SEE Jesus in the flesh. They heard his voice and touched the scars on his hands and his side. One day, we will get to do the same thing. **Part of me wishes that I could tell you that Jesus was making a SPECIAL APPEARANCE here today so you and I could see him. Actually, he will. But his presence here can only be known BY FAITH. Like those disciples at this point in the story, you are going to be given the chance to BELIEVE him BEFORE you see him. Will FEAR keep you from believing?** Simon Peter wrote these words just for us a few years after the resurrection:

**1 Peter 1:3, 8-9 NIV**

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead . . . 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

This is actually MY STORY. I love those words that Peter wrote, because they describe my experience with Jesus Christ. And I am so SATISFIED with him! The issue is BELIEF. What do you believe about Jesus Christ? **If you REJECT his claims and his death and his resurrection, then what are you putting your HOPE in? I think it is very important for each of us to ADMIT what we are trusting in as our HOPE in life.** For many of you, it is whatever is giving you some measure of JOY or PROMISE right now in your life. It might be your JOB, or your new SPOUSE, or your CHILDREN. But as

awesome as those might be to you, they are not LASTING. They cannot give you sustainable HOPE. Jesus can.

Will you believe?  
Let's pray.

**FIND & FOLLOW: The Gospels**  
**EASTER - He Is Risen!**  
**Mark 16 – Hernando Facilitation Guide**

**Start Talking**

What is your favorite Easter food or Easter memory?

**Start Thinking**

Why is it so easy for us to be most concerned with things pertaining to this life and not with eternity?

**Start Sharing**

[Read Mark 16:1-4](#). Why is it significant that women were the first witnesses of the resurrection? How do you think you would have reacted to the news they heard that day?

[Read Mark 16:5-7](#). Why do you think the disciples never really accepted what Jesus had told them about his death? Why did Jesus have to die?

[Read John 11:23-26](#). How does Jesus's power over death affect the way that we as believers face death now?

[Read 1 Peter 1:3, 8-9](#). How is it possible for us to believe in Jesus and even love him today even though we cannot see him in the flesh? Have some in the group tell their story of how they came to faith.

**Start Praying**

Take time to simply thank and praise God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

**Start Doing.**

What is something in the Word that God has been telling you to do lately? Share what that is with someone, and then DO IT!