DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE

TEXT SUMMARY

Our text, Mark 16:9-20, does not appear in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts of Mark's gospel. Mark's writing apparently ends at v. 8, and no one knows why (Intentional? Interrupted? Lost? No one knows.) But our text, the gospel's "long ending," has been recognized as part of Scripture for many centuries. It provides a thumb-nail sketch of several of Jesus' post-Resurrection appearances, including a restatement of Jesus' final instructions (the "Great Commission").

INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

What more do we learn about Jesus' post-resurrection appearances from these other accounts in the other gospels?

1. Luke's account of Jesus' encounter with the two disciples trudging from Jerusalem Sunday night and Jesus' rebuke of the unbelief of the Eleven, who refused to believe not only Mary's report but also the report of the two disciples who had walked with Jesus (Luke 24).
2. John's accounts of Jesus' appearances to Mary Magdalene and to the disciples (John 20)
3. Matthew's account of the Great Commission (Matt 28).

DISCUSSION (INTERPRETATION):

Two of the controversies associated with this text are

- Jesus' statement that "whoever believes and is baptized will be saved" (v. 16)
- Jesus' reference to "signs" that will accompany the proclamation of the Good News (v. 17-18)

How can we **use Scripture to interpret Scripture** to address these controversies?

SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

We have not finished reflecting on Scripture until we begin to employ first-person pronouns. Here we begin to consider how we must respond to what God has said in His Word.

1. **In this text, we see how grief can have a warping effect on our faith.** In their grief, Jesus' disciples not only refuse to believe Mary Magdalene, they also refuse to believe the two disciples who walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. When Jesus appears to the Eleven, he doesn't comfort them; he rebukes them "for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen." (v. 14).
    - What is the crucial difference between disbelief and unbelief?
    - Have you ever experienced a time when your doubt began to harden into unbelief?
    - How can you ensure that your doubts don't harden into skepticism and hardness of heart?

2. **Even though Jesus was often frustrated at the failure of his men to believe, he still chose them and commissioned them to monumental task of carrying the Good News to the nations.**
    - What failures in your life discourages you from taking risks to serve God boldly?
    - What are some unhealthy ways to deal with failure?
    - What are some healthy ways to deal with failure?
    - How have you dealt with your failures in the past?
    - How would you like to deal with your failures going forward?