

Series: **Gospel of Mark**
Today's Title: **"Resurrection of Jesus"**

April 4, 2021 – *Mark 15:42-16:8* (Also: *Matthew 27:57-28:15*; *Luke 23:50-24:12*; *John 19:38-20:9*)

Easter Sunday 2021

Objective: To help people know the reality, power and promise of the empty tomb.

Turn to Mark 15:42-16:8

Easter is the Christian remembrance and celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus is the climax of salvation history as the victory over sin and death is accomplished.

- The price for sin has been paid by Jesus' substitutionary death.
- No other sacrifices are needed - the final sacrifice for sin has been offered and accepted by God.
- The way to God has been opened wide - for all people - to come to God with confidence through faith in Jesus.
- The resurrection of Jesus paves the way for our own future resurrection!!

Paul tells us (1 Cor. 15) if the resurrection isn't true - or if you remove the resurrection, you gut the essence - the foundational truth of Christianity.

Without the resurrection, Christianity is nothing!

All four Gospel writers give accounts of the resurrection - because it is the culmination of Jesus' ministry - of His incarnation. He was born, so He could die - and be raised to

life - defeating sin and death - offering His life to all who believe in Him.

The primary point of the Gospel accounts is this: The empty tomb. On this fact all 4 Gospel writers agree.

They all record the eyewitness accounts of those who saw the empty tomb and/or the resurrected Jesus.

Even the enemies of Jesus agreed that His tomb was empty.

The fact that we (The Christian Church) meet on Sunday is evidence of the reality and transformative power of the resurrection.

Prior to the resurrection of Jesus, the day of worship was Saturday - the Jewish sabbath.

After His resurrection, believers in Christ - who were almost all Jewish and adhered to sabbath worship - ***changed***...and began worshiping on the 1st day of the week - Sunday - calling it “The Lord’s day” (Acts 20:7; Rev. 1:10).

Today, we will finish our series in the Gospel of Mark.

This is sermon #54 (started: 2/23/20) - and we have walked through each verse of this Gospel - learning about Jesus - what He taught - what He claimed - what He did.

Mark started the Gospel with a clear statement of the identity of Jesus:

Mark 1:1 - “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”

Everything Mark records confirms this claim.

Today - we will look at the burial of Jesus - and His resurrection.

Next week, I will begin a new series I'm calling, "The Original" - a study of **Acts 1-12**.

This series follows chronologically after Mark - after the resurrection - as the Church is born.

I believe there is a great deal of confusion in our world today about the Christian Church.

People wonder why there are so many different kinds of churches - different practices - and different forms of worship - from chanting to Rock & Roll concerts with light shows and fog machines.

As we go through the first ½ of Acts - I hope we will see the Church in its 'original form' - it's original focus and passion. I hope this will help us - at this church - to be true to the original intent and purpose of the Church that Jesus commissioned to reach the world with the Gospel.

Before we get into our text this morning, I want to take a few minutes and talk about the ending of Mark - which I won't be preaching on.

The Postscript 16:9-20

If you look in your Bible at **vs. 9** (16:9-20), you'll notice that it is bracketed - or set apart from the rest of the text in some way.

That's because these verses are not believed to be part of Mark's writing.

This is called a '*variant*'.

Mark's Gospel moves quickly - it doesn't spend much time in each event - but moves quickly to the next event.

"Immediately" is a key word in Mark.

The ending of the Gospel is like the rest of it - abrupt - sudden - fast.

And for some reason, in the early centuries of Church history, Mark's Gospel got longer - gaining additional verses in chapter 16 (vs. 9-20).

Why?

Difficult to know.

Probably, because Mark's ending is so abrupt - and the other Gospels give some additional post-resurrection details - some scribes thought it would be '*helpful*' to give Mark a helping hand.

The earliest manuscripts we have all end with vs. 8.

The early Church Fathers who quote from Mark only quote up to vs. 8.

There is nothing heretical - or contradictory in these verses. The verse about picking up snakes and drinking deadly poison is a bit odd/weird (vs. 18).

But I don't want you to be discouraged in some way - or distrustful of the Bible you have in your lap / device.

You can have absolute confidence in the Bible you are reading. Our English translations are excellent - and you can trust them because this section is included. Our Bibles are very transparent - very open with these variants.

They are listed in our translations - either in the margin / as a footnote - or when it's this lengthy, included in the text, but bracketed or set apart in some way from the rest of the text.

Due to the nearly 25,000 manuscripts, we have discovered over the centuries, using the science of textual criticism, we can have the highest confidence that our English translations are extremely accurate to the original text.

A secret believer in Jesus goes public. *15:42-43*

I wonder how many people are living each day of their life with a secret.

Alice Cooper's 'secret' life

Rock-n-Roll Heavy Metal front-man Alice Cooper always had a flair for the dramatic. He pioneered the art of 'Shock Rock' which included wild music matched by their makeup, and on-stage behavior.

His most shocking reality may be that he is a self-described "prodigal son."

Cooper grew up in a strictly religious house, and both his father and grandfather preached the gospel as Evangelical pastors.

After living for decades as a typical hard-drinking rock star, Cooper had a change of heart.

The rock star finally saw the light, and for the past several years, he has lived as a devout Born-again Christian.

Cooper hasn't quit rocking, though, and he hasn't completely abandoned his onstage antics, but now he views himself more as an actor playing a character when onstage.

(<https://listverse.com/2017/02/08/top-10-celebrities-who-lived-double-lives/>)

Do you know any people are fearful of letting others know they have faith in Jesus - they believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins?

Are you one of those people...a secret believer in Jesus?

Read 15:42-43

Jesus has just died.

John tells us (19:31-37) to hasten their death, the Roman executioners broke the legs of the 2 criminals who were crucified on either side of Jesus.

They didn't break Jesus' legs - because He was already dead.

Instead, just to be sure, they pierce His side with a spear and blood and water flow out of the wound.

Both of these things fulfilled prophecy (John 19:36-37).

Joseph of Arimathea was "a respected member of the Council" - the Sanhedrin - the group that had condemned Jesus to death and forced Pilate to crucify Him!

Luke tells us that Joseph “had not consented to their decision and action” (23:50). We don’t know if he was present during the illegal trials - or found out later what they had done - we simply know he didn’t agree with them.

We also know he was a secret disciple of Jesus (John 19:38) - secret because he feared the Jews - no doubt a reference to the other members of the Sanhedrin.

“took courage” - I love this.

Here was a secret disciple of Jesus.

He would likely lose everything if he made his belief in Jesus public.

But there comes a point in the life of every believer - every follower of Christ - every Christian - where you can’t be secret any longer.

You know - and your conscience is screaming at you - that you must take a stand.

No matter the cost - you can’t keep quiet any longer!

This is what is happening with Joseph.

We know he was a man of power - influence - wealth.

He gains access to Pilate - and asks Pilate for the body of Jesus.

Read vs. 44-47

Joseph gives Jesus a royal burial. *15:44-47*

Pilate is surprised that Jesus was already dead.

Crucifixions often lasted a few days - but Jesus was dead in about 6 hours.

Pilate summons the centurion to find out if Jesus was truly dead.

Roman soldiers - especially those on execution duty - knew very well when someone was dead.

The centurion confirms Jesus' death - and Pilate grants Joseph the corpse.

This word here - at the end of vs. 45 - is the word for a carcass or a corpse.

Greek word = *ptoma*

Normal Greek word for body = *soma*

Jesus is dead.

He has not fainted...He has not gone into some sort of coma.

He is dead.

Now that he has secured Jesus' body, Joseph now buys "a linen shroud". This would have been expensive and would be a sign of honor for Jesus in His burial.

Jews did not embalm a body - they would simply wrap it and use various aromatic spices to cover the smell of it decomposing.

He goes to the crucifixion site - and either he or his servants take the body off the cross.

▪ *The disciples are nowhere to be found.*

- *The women who ministered to Jesus were not requesting the body - maybe that wasn't allowed - maybe they didn't have anywhere to put it.*

If nobody claimed the body of a crucified criminal the Romans would just throw it into the garbage heap - *gehenna* - and it would burn with the smoldering garbage outside the city walls - or they would leave it on the cross and allow it to rot.

John tells us that another member of the Sanhedrin - Nicodemus - arrives to help Joseph with the body. He's also a secret follower of Jesus.

Nicodemus brings about 75 pounds of spices - a mix of myrrh and aloe (John 19:38-42).

Both **Luke** and **John** tell us this was a new, unused tomb.

Matthew tells us that Joseph had this tomb made for himself (27:60). This was a very expensive gift he gives Jesus.

It was almost Sabbath (sundown - around 6 p.m.), so they have to hurry in wrapping the body with the shroud and putting the spices inside the wrapping.

Tombs like this would have multiple 'shelves' carved out of the rock where bodies would be placed.

Most of these tombs were for families - and used for multiple generations.

A body would be placed on one of the shelves - and after it had decomposed and the only thing left were bones - they would collect the bones - place them in a box (called an ossuary) to be stored, and the shelf could be reused for another family member.

vs. 46 - A large, round stone - probably around 3-4' in diameter - was used to seal the tomb - to prevent wild animals from getting to the body - and to prevent grave robbers from stealing anything of value buried with the corpse.

The stone would sit in a channel - and the channel would have an incline to it - which would make the tomb easy to seal, but it would take the strength of many men to roll the stone up the incline to gain access into the tomb.

The women who followed Jesus and ministered to Him - supported Him financially - watched Joseph and Nicodemus prepare the body and place it in the tomb - and they saw the stone rolled into place, sealing the entrance.

Everything about the burial of Jesus was according to the plan of God - fulfilling O.T. prophecies.

Isaiah 53:9

“And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death...”

There is no doubt...the historical record is clear...Jesus was crucified, and He died.

His corpse was given to Joseph of Arimathea who along with the help of Nicodemus quickly prepared Jesus' body for burial and placed His corpse into a new tomb and they sealed the entrance with a large stone.

What we learn from the other Gospels is that the Jewish leaders get permission from Pilate to seal the tomb and place guards at the tomb to prevent anyone from stealing the body.

Matthew tells us (27:62-66) they did this because of Jesus' claims that He would rise from the dead after 3 days - and this would prevent His disciples from stealing the body and claiming He was resurrected.

The resurrection of Jesus. 16:1-8

“When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint Him.

2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.

3 And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”

Notice - they were not expecting an empty tomb - a resurrected Jesus.

They didn't believe what Jesus had told them numerous times - that He would rise from the dead.

They were expecting to find a corpse - and they planned to do a more elaborate job of anointing the body and placing spices in the burial cloths.

At first light - they're on their way to the tomb.

They know where it is - they watched Joseph and Nicodemus quickly prepare the body for burial and place it in the tomb.

On the way there, they realize a problem...how will they move the stone and gain access to the body?

4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back -- it was very large.

5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.

6 And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.

When they arrive - they immediately see the stone has been "rolled back", so they enter the tomb.

But instead of a corpse - there is a "young man" (angel) sitting there!

Not what you would expect!!

vs. 5 - "they were alarmed"

This is an understandable response.

The body of Jesus isn't here - and there's this "young man" sitting here!

He tells them "don't be alarmed".

You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen;

He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.

Put yourself in their place.

This is not easy to digest - to take in.

It's confusing.

They were grieving - probably weeping on the way to the tomb - they are full of sorrow - and now the body is gone - and this guy tells us not to be alarmed!

Jesus has risen?

What?

How?

What do you mean?

Where is He?

Do you struggle believing that Jesus is risen?

That the tomb is empty?

Oh...the disciples probably stole the body.

No... there were Roman guards posted to guard the tomb.

Oh...Jesus was probably unconscious - and He walked out of the tomb.

No... He was dead.

There was a huge stone...would take at least 2 or 3 men to move.

There was a guard posted.

Oh... the women went to the wrong tomb.

No... they knew where the tomb was. Not a common tomb.

The answer is the obvious answer the text gives us - the angel's statement stands as fact.

“He has risen; He is not here.”

The angel then gives a command:

7 But go, tell His disciples and Peter that He is going before you to Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.”

“go” - leave here - there is not body to anoint - no body to apply spices to.

“go, tell His disciples and Peter”

I love how Peter is singled out.

Why?

Because he needed to be encouraged - loved - brought near. It's only been 36 hours (less?) since he denied Jesus 3x.

Make sure Peter knows - make sure you find Peter.

Sometimes we Christians keep our distance from those who are living apart from Christ - living in a way that rejects Christ. Maybe we should be more intentional about drawing close to them - bringing them close to us.

8 And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”

5 verbs in this one sentence!

“went out”

“fled” - escape / flee

“seized”

“said”

“afraid” - to terrify / frighten - afraid of the unknown

They're in shock.

On their way back...they didn't talk - “they said nothing to anyone”

An abrupt ending? Yes!

But it's exactly what you would expect from Mark.

Afraid - Amazed - Astonished - Mark has hit on these common responses to Jesus in all 16 chapters!

1:27 - people in a synagogue were “amazed” when Jesus commands an evil spirit.

2:12 - people were “amazed” when Jesus healed a paralyzed man.

4:41 - the disciples were “filled with great fear” when Jesus calmed a storm and the sea.

5:20 - people “marveled” when Jesus cast out many demons from a man.

5:32 - a woman suffering from chronic bleeding and touched Jesus' garment to be healed - came “in fear and trembling” before Him.

6:50 - the disciples are in a boat - and see Jesus walking on the water - “and were terrified”.

Do you get the point?

When you're around Jesus - when Jesus reveals who He is - the response is people are: amazed / filled with fear / marveled / trembling / terrified.

Because when you encounter God and the power of God - that is the only response sinners can have!

Mark's ending in vs. 8 makes perfect sense.

Apply it...

The question is: What is your response to the empty tomb?

What is your response to the resurrection?

What does it matter?

Why difference does this make in my life?

It makes all the difference in the world!

If Jesus is who He claimed to be - God incarnate - The only Savior - "No one can come to the Father except through Me."

If He is God...the only Savior - it makes all the difference!

Your response to Him is the most important response in your entire life.

Your response to Jesus - to the empty tomb - will either save you - or condemn you.

No middle ground - no other options.

2 choices: A or B - 1 or 2 - Believe in Jesus or Reject Jesus.

Acts 16:31

"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved..."

Do you believe? Are you saved by the One who rose from the dead...whose tomb is empty?

Closing prayer