

Throughout the early and later parts of the Church, men have gathered to put into writing, **fundamental beliefs that the Church was built upon** and continues to stand upon (Apostles Creed, Nicene Creed) ... **1Cor15:1-5** ...

- **Christ died for our sins** – His substitutionary death was complete and perfect: He fully took the wrath of God for our sins, which we deserved, and in doing so, He appeased God’s wrath and reconciled us with God ... By His death we stand justified before God ... We are redeemed, forgiven, adopted, and sealed with the promised Holy Spirit
- **Christ was buried** – why do Gospels spend time talking about the burial of Jesus ... Simply for us to understand that **Jesus truly died** ... His body was cared for by some followers – public and private ... His body underwent a typical Jewish burial (v46) – wrapping the body in clothe, while mixing in spices, myrrh, aloes; this helped the body dry out and it reduced the stench of the decomposing body ... **16:1-3** ... They expected to visit a dead man’s grave (Lu24:5)

**Christ was raised and He appeared to others** ... If you look at the accounts of the resurrection, the Gospel writers share some of the same information, and yet also share details that others do not ... One should not conclude the resurrection accounts are false or mere legend ... The differing accounts show that each account is based on eye witnesses, and they share from their perspective of what happened ... It should be noted that each account involves women seeing the empty tomb and having Jesus appear to them ... If the Gospel writers were making up a story, they would not have used women as key witnesses – in the first century, a women’s testimony was not worth anything ... However, here, the resurrection of Jesus is first proclaimed to women, just as the announcement of His birth is proclaimed to shepherds

- A group of women head to the tomb of Jesus early Sunday morning (around the sun rising) ... As they are walking to the tomb, Matthew records a great shaking of the earth (localized to the tomb) ... **The shaking is brought about by an angel descending onto the tomb and rolling away the huge stone (Mat28:2)** ... The soldiers that are guarding the tomb are paralyzed in fear, but regain themselves and head off into the city to report what has happened ... This is assumed, because none of the women report seeing soldiers; if they had, they may have kept their distance
- **When the women reach the tomb**, they see that the large stone has been rolled away – Mark inserts here a divine passive, implying that the stone had been rolled away by God (agrees with Mat28:2) ... When the women enter the tomb, they see that the body of Jesus is missing; instead, there’s an angel (v6-7) ... *“You’re not at the wrong tomb; the Jesus you are seeking has risen, He is not here ... just as He told you”* ... **The angel testifies to the supernatural work that had taken place earlier – the physical body of Jesus was raised to life** ... Not to a life that will again pass away, but to a life that will eternally and physically live ... At some point the women leave, and Mary M returns with Peter and John ... Both of them testify to the same thing that left them astounded – the graveclothes of Jesus were left as they were, undisturbed, as if His body just disappeared (Jo20:6-8)
  - Good question to think about – how did Jesus unwrap Himself? ... His arms would have been bound to His sides; the myrrh and aloes acted as a seal holding the wrapping in place ... The resurrection of Jesus was to an imperishable body, a body that had never been seen or experienced ... **1Cor15:20** ... How it all physically happened, we are not told, but we are promised that one day, in a twinkling of an eye, we will all be changed – those who have passed on and those still living when Jesus returns, will put off our mortal body and put on our immortal body ... A body just like Jesus that will eternally and physically live
- **The resurrection of Jesus is a historical event, a supernatural breakthrough of God** ... The empty tomb shows that the sacrificial death of Jesus has been accepted, and that Jesus has been vindicated and glorified by God ... The grave has been conquered, death has been defeated, sin’s penalty has been paid in full, and sin’s powerful grip upon people has been released and is being released ... **The stone being rolled away was not for Jesus to come out, but for His disciples to go in and to see that He truly was and is the Son of God, Messiah** ... John looked into the tomb and believed when he saw the graveclothes, but no body (He’s risen!) ... **When we look in, what do we see?**

It is widely accepted that Mark ends his gospel at v8 ... And as you read this verse, it's very anti-climatical ... The moment is filled with supernatural occurrences ... The good news has been testified – Jesus has risen; He forgives to the uttermost (notice Jesus specially mentions His disciples who left Him and Peter who denied Him); He awaits to see them again where He first called them to follow Him ... With all of this, the women leave overwhelmed with astonishment ... And silence ... Why were they afraid ... Maybe they thought no one would believe them (Lu24:11-12) ... Is this possibly why you and I don't say anything?

- Mark ends his gospel in such a way that should cause you and I to wrestle with the reality of who Jesus is, what Jesus had done, and how our lives can be changed in light of who He is and what He has accomplished ... If you know Jesus, your life has been forever changed ... The story of Jesus is not over: He continues to save people. He continues to change people ... Brooks, "By stating that the women told no one, Mark challenged his readers to assume the responsibility of telling the good news to everyone" ... Remember, Mark's audience is living in a period when persecution is ramping up against Christians ... But that is not an excuse for them to keep quiet; nor is it an excuse for us to keep quiet ... Rejection and name calling should not stop us from telling people about the One who has come to save them from sin and death – their lives literally depend on it
- Now, how we tell people is vitally important ... We know 1Pe3:15-16 ... But, how often do we skip to the defense part, and bypass the command to regard Christ the Lord as holy ... Regard means to set apart; to decisively honor Christ in our lives – words, actions, thoughts, particularly when dealing with people, and especially those who rub us the wrong way and with whom we disagree ... To honor Christ as Lord means to decisively take on His character – allowing the Holy Spirit to live out the life of Christ through us ... This is the emphasis of the word gentleness – Mat11:29, Gal5:23, Eph4:2, 2Tim2:25 ... Reverence is seen then through our gentleness ... We're not intentionally hindering people from hearing the gospel because of our actions or words ... We're not going to see people as the enemy ... Instead, we are going to see their need for Christ as greater than our own comfort, and strive to present Christ in the best way possible through our simple, gentle words and deeds – through how Christ lives through us
- And what do we dare say? ... What's your story – what has Christ Jesus done in your life? ... How has He saved you? ... You don't need to have a colorful past in order to have a great testimony ... Every testimony is great – you were dead, and God made you alive in Christ Jesus ... You went from death to life ... How is that NOT a great testimony! ... God pursued you and captured you by His grace – you were saved by grace, through faith that He birthed within you ... Who are you going to tell about this supernatural and life-changing thing that has happened?

Maybe there's another reason why you don't share with others about Jesus ... Maybe because you have not yet settled in your own life what you're going to do with Jesus ... You know all about Him, you understand the cross and what it means, you're not opposed to going to church or reading the Bible ... But for you, Jesus remains abstract ... You have not fully embraced the gospel – you know it logically, but you have not experienced it personally ... You have not sat down with Jesus – trusting Him, putting your faith into motion ... Chair illustration

- Mark means for us to understand that acceptance of the resurrection is a matter of faith ... Life with Jesus is a walk of faith ... Even the smallest of faith will do ... He will deepen your faith as you walk with Him, trust Him, see Him, experience Him ... Jo20:30-31 ... Do you believe the gospel ... Do you have life in His name ... Are you willing to "sit down" in faith, owning it and making it real; *I am a follower of Jesus Christ, and He has changed my life forever*