

RTS Women's Study: The Gospel of Mark

#34: Mark 16:1-8: The Resurrection of Jesus

Intro: Gandalf the White

Excursus: Why Are Verses 9-20 in Brackets?

I. Pessimism about the Resurrection (v.1-3)

A. The Women Were Not Expecting the Resurrection

- They were going to anoint the body—a standard practice for Jewish burial. You don't anoint someone you think will rise!
- They wondered how the stone would be rolled away—which means they assumed the tomb would be undisturbed
- We know from other accounts that the disciples were also not expecting the resurrection but were hiding in the upper room

B. Why Does This Matter?

- It reminds us of the hopelessness of a dead messiah
 - Jesus' followers did not try to salvage the movement or "look at the bright side"
 - We need to see the depth of their despair: a dead savior was no savior at all
- It reminds us that the evidence for the resurrection must have been overwhelming
 - How do you turn around a movement that's lost all hope?
 - Remember, Jesus' followers were not looking for the resurrection, eager to cling to any shred of evidence

****Key Point:** How do we explain how the earliest Christians switched directions so dramatically and came to believe Jesus was alive? Historically, we have to explain how the Christian movement survived after the death of Jesus.

II. Proof of the Resurrection (v.4-6)

A. The Empty Tomb

- It's a fundamental fact that the tomb was empty
 - The women (and the disciples) found the tomb empty
 - Earliest Christian testimony (1 Cor 15) declare the tomb empty
- So how do we explain the empty tomb?
 - Could the disciples have stolen the body?
 - Could Jesus have just "swooned" on the cross and not really died?

B. The Angelic Testimony

- The young man in white is clearly an angel
- The angel rolled back the stone (not so Jesus could get out but so the women could get in!)

C. The Resurrection Appearances

- Mark does not include the appearances in his gospel but the angel tells us they will happen: “There you will see him, just as he told you.”
 - The other Gospels tell that Jesus made several appearances to the disciples
 - 1 Cor 15 tells us that Jesus appeared to 500 people at one time
- How do people try to explain these resurrection appearances?
 - Is everyone lying?
 - Group hallucinations?

****Key Point:** There is tremendous evidence for the truth of the resurrection!

III. Proclamation of the Resurrection (v.7-8)

A. The Women are commanded to “Go, tell”

- While they initially fled in fear, we know they later told the disciples what they had seen
- ****The women were the first eyewitnesses and first proclaimers of the resurrection! Give the role of women in the ancient world, this is evidence of an authentic story**
- Key question: Why do you think the angel specifically mentions Peter?

B. The Proclamation of the Resurrection Changed the World

- From here on out, the core Christian message was that Jesus was alive
- The fact that Jesus was alive was the basis for the Great Commission and the entire missionary enterprise
- ****If Jesus is alive then our sins are forgiven and he’s victorious over death**

****Key Application:** Are *you*, like these women, proclaiming the truth of the resurrection?

Discussion Groups

1. Ever wondered how *you* would have responded to the death of Jesus? Take some time to honestly reflect on what it would have been like to be a disciple of Jesus and learn of his death.
2. There is a lot of historical evidence for the resurrection. Which piece of evidence stood out to you? Which piece of evidence would be compelling to our current culture?
3. While we should proclaim the resurrection boldly, sometimes we don’t. Why do you think we hesitate sharing about the resurrection? What keeps us from sharing more confidently?