

Mark 16:1-8 — The Resurrection Of Jesus

November 22, 2020

Good morning! Today is the last message in the Gospel of Mark. It is message 64. This is the longest series I have preached. For those of you who feel it may be too long, on Friday I had a chance to get together with Pastor Doug Corlew. He pastors Summit EFC in Alta, IA. He is preaching through the Gospel of Luke. I asked him how many messages he has preached in that series. So far he has preached 95. He told me he has a way to go until he is done. For those who think this series was too long, be thankful we chose the shortest Gospel!

While Mark's gospel was a long study, I think you will agree with me that it was a good study. Walking week after week in the footsteps of Jesus and learning the details of how his miracles transpired helped us know Jesus better. Understanding what it meant for Jesus to instantly heal people from leprosy, create food to feed a stadium crowd out of thin air, and turn a raging storm to flat calm with only Jesus' voice gave us a not just greater knowledge of king Jesus but deep love for him from our hearts.

For the last few weeks, as we studied the final events of Jesus' life --- that is Jesus' crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection --- we discovered they are not only the most significant events in the life of Jesus but in world history. They change everything about the purpose of our lives and our hope in times of trouble in this life. Today, we are studying the most exciting, significant event of Jesus in Mark's Gospel and the most miraculous event of Jesus' life --- Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

The closing verses in the Gospel of Mark give us the historical details of Jesus' resurrection. The significance of Jesus' resurrection is not covered in Mark. So we don't miss the importance of resurrection for us, instead of beginning our study with the final verses of Mark's Gospel, I want us to turn to 1 Corinthians 15 where Paul talked about the significance of crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for you and me.

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. 1 Corinthians 15:1–8 (ESV)

What is of first importance in our faith are the facts of Jesus' crucifixion, death, and burial. What is especially important is the fact of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Jesus didn't just appear alive and interact with some people. In his resurrected body he appeared to many people. Jesus didn't just appear alive to one person at a time but he appeared alive to many people, once to more than 500 people at once. Those are facts of the resurrection.

Paul then told us what it means if Christ did not rise from the dead. What would the implications be of the resurrection being fiction instead of fact?

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:13–14 (ESV)

And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. 1 Corinthians 15:17 (ESV)

If Jesus was not raised, there is no Christian faith. Jesus would be nothing more than another person who died on the cross. If Jesus did not rise to life, there would be no resurrection of the dead. There would be no hope for our resurrection of the dead. When we die, we turn to mulch. Our life would be over. Even worse, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, that means he did not pay for sin on the cross so we would still be in our sins. We would still be facing the wrath of God when we die. If Jesus did not rise from the dead, there would be no hope! We would lose everything!

Paul said there is good news. Jesus did rise from the dead, and instead of losing everything, the resurrection changes everything.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 1 Corinthians 15:20–21 (ESV)

Jesus' resurrection is the key to our resurrection. Everyone who confesses his or her sin to Jesus and asks the death of Jesus to pay for his or her sin is born again. The Holy Spirit of God comes into his life and makes him into a new person. In addition, she has the promise of being with God when she dies because her sins are paid. In addition, one day when Christ returns he will raise the saved's bodies from the dead and transform their dead bodies into living, indestructible, non-decayable bodies that cannot get COVID, that cannot get sick and will not die. They will be bodies that will last forever. That is what is offered to us by Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Jesus' resurrection was only the beginning. Through our faith and trust in him, we are not only forgiven of our sin and brought into a relationship with God but our bodies will also one day experience a resurrection just like Jesus' body. Jesus' resurrection body was

designed at the prototype of our resurrection bodies. Those are the amazing resurrection bodies that await us all because Jesus rose from the dead.

Now that we have studied the significance of Jesus' resurrection for you and me, let's read about how it happened as we study the final verses of Mark's Gospel.

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. 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. 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." 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. Mark 16:1–8 (ESV)

As we study these final verses, I am going to continue doing what I have done in previous weeks, that is not limiting myself to these verses. We are going to look at the other Gospels to add a few more details about the way the resurrection morning unfolded. Mark was intentionally short. He tried to make his Gospel short because the Romans liked shorter books. The details from the other Gospels will give us have a more comprehensive understanding of that exciting resurrection morning.

The other thing we should talk about before we study these verses is the abrupt ending of this letter. This Gospel comes to a screeching halt that leaves everyone wondering what happened. Many of your Bibles have additional verses after verse 8. They are verses 9-20. Most modern Bibles have bracketed words

over these verses that are a type of disclaimer, a product warning label. They say, "Some of the Earliest Manuscripts Do Not Include These Verses." Where did these extra verses come from? Should we trust them? How were they added? When were they added? These are important questions. Let me answer some of them.

First, almost all Bible scholars are in agreement that these extra verses were not originally part of Mark's Gospel. Mark intentionally ended his letter as a cliffhanger. Mark's intent was for people to finish his Gospel and be motivated to ask their friends what happened after Jesus rose from the dead.

Just as we feel the ending is too abrupt and it leaves us wanting to know the rest of the story, there was a copyist in the second century who also felt Mark's ending was too short. The copyist added these extra verses to a manuscript he was copying to give a little more of an explanation of what happened after Easter morning. Thankfully he was not trying to create Scripture that didn't exist but almost everything he wrote in this extra ending are verses taken from other parts of Scripture that already existed.

As newer copies of the Gospel of Mark were made by hand-copying older copies of the Gospel of Mark, the people who hand-copied that second century scribes manuscript included his additional ending. So the most ancient copies of the Gospel of Mark do not have this extra ending but some later copies of the Gospel of Mark that were hand-copied based off that one second century scribe's version with the extra ending continued to include verses 9 to 20. When the King James was written in 1611, that translation was based off of a manuscript that

followed the version from that ancient scribe who used this extra ending. That introduced this extra ending into our English Bibles.

Almost no modern translations recognize Mark's extra ending as appropriate but so those of you coming from the King James don't feel someone was ripping you off by not including verses 9 to 20, the ESV includes these verses with a disclaimer that while these extra verses are old, we know they were added. They aren't original.

Between Christmas and New Year's, I am going to give a message on these verses. I am looking forward to sharing it because I will show you the history behind these verses and why we know they are not part of God's Word. I am also going to show you how we know for sure the rest of our Bible is God's Word. It will be a little different of a message but it will be extremely helpful to understand these verses and where they came from.

As we study the final eight verses of the actual book of Mark, we will study them all under the heading of evidence for the resurrection. First, Mark gives us evidence for the resurrection by the empty tomb. Second, Mark gives us evidence for the resurrection by the testimony of angels. Third, Mark gives us evidence for the resurrection by the testimony of the eyewitnesses who met the risen Christ.

The empty tomb is evidence for the resurrection.

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. Mark 16:1 (ESV)

Mark begins by saying, “When the Sabbath was past.” Many of you know this but for those of you who don’t, the Sabbath was Saturday. When Saturday was over, this is talking about our Sunday.

Our days end at midnight. The Jewish day ended at sundown. As soon as the sun went down Saturday night, the Sabbath day was past. What are reading about took place around 5 a.m. or 6 a.m. Sunday morning. That means we are already 11 to 12 hours into Sunday, which is the third day after Jesus died and was buried.

Luke says what is about to take place took place “On the first day of the week.” By the way, the Jews had no word for the days of the week. We have Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc. They counted their days by numbers. They numbered their days in relation to the Sabbath. They would say on the first day of the week or on the second day of the week. This is why Luke says “on the first day of the week,” which is Sunday for us.

We have women bringing spices to the grave of Jesus. Mark identifies three of them. They were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Salome. We remember these women. They had been around for a while. In Mark 15:41, we met them. They began following Jesus more than two years before, when Jesus was in Galilee. They came with Jesus to Jerusalem. According to Luke, there were other women besides these three even though Mark only named three. They were faithful to Jesus. They stayed with Jesus when he died on the cross. Except for the apostle John, the rest of the apostles were apparently not there. They followed Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus when

they took down the body of Jesus, wrapped him in cloths with spices and buried him in Joseph of Arimathea's new tomb. Even though Nicodemus provided 75 pounds of spices to wrap around Jesus' body to mask the scent of decay, these women would not be outdone. Being the caring and serving women who loved Jesus, they also wanted to bring their own spices to place on top of Jesus' body. This was something they could do to express their love for Jesus. Mark tells us these women bought the spices early that morning when the Sabbath was past. Luke tells us these women prepared spices on Friday night after Jesus' burial.

The women who had come with him from Galilee followed and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. Luke 23:55–56 (ESV)

Which one is correct? I think the answer is both. It makes sense they were preparing spices to put on Jesus' body both Friday and Monday.

And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. Mark 16:2 (ESV)

Mark says these women and their spices were on their way to the tomb very early on Sunday morning just after the sun rose. If we look at the other Gospels, we have slightly different answers for when these women headed to the tomb. Luke says they headed to the tomb, "At early dawn." Matthew says they headed to the tomb, "While it began to dawn." John is the outlier. He says they headed to the tomb, "While it was still dark." Which one is right? Was it while it was still dark when they women headed to the tomb or was it just after dawn at first light? That may not seem important but if we study it for a bit, it provides some important insight on what happened on the resurrection morning. Let me read you what the Gospel of John says and see if we can piece this together.

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. John 20:1 (ESV)

Apparently one of the women, Mary Magdalene, came to the tomb super early, earlier than the others. She came while it was still dark. When the other women arrived, according to the Gospel of Mark, the sun had already risen. What does this tell us? Mary Magdalene arrived earlier than the other women but the Gospel of Matthew tells us she initially left with the other women. This means Mary Magdalene was the track star. She ran to the tomb arriving there before dawn, leaving the other women, who were carrying the spices, in the dust. John tells us what happened when Mary arrived at the tomb just before dawn.

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.” John 20:1–2 (ESV)

Mary arrived but it was still dark. There was enough light for her to see the stone was rolled away from the entrance of the tomb. Being a track star who ran to the tomb, she went back to running. She ran to tell Peter and John what she saw. At this point, what was she going to tell them? It was not that Jesus rose from the dead but that somebody stole the body! The tomb was empty. The stone was rolled away. Jesus was gone. She didn't believe in a resurrection. She was thinking grave robbers. Grave robbery was common in that time. Jesus didn't have anything of value on his person, but he was buried in a rich man's tomb which would make his body a prime target for thieves.

When she ran to tell Peter and John of the empty tomb, she apparently didn't run back the same way she came. She didn't make contact with the other women who were still carrying the spices to the grave.

We return to the story.

And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" Mark 16:3 (ESV)

Some people think the women were mistaken and went to the wrong tomb that morning. That doesn't make sense. These women clearly knew the location of the tomb. The Bible tells us they saw where Joseph and Nicodemus buried Jesus. While they knew the location of the tomb, in their haste to get to Jesus' body that morning, they forgot to bring help so they could roll back the massive stone in front of the tomb. Traditionally, a tomb-covering stone would have been 4-6 feet in diameter and weigh well over a thousand pounds. Multiple strong men were needed to move it. A few women wouldn't have been strong enough to roll it aside.

And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. Mark 16:4 (ESV)

When these women arrived, what did they conclude when they saw the stone rolled away? The same thing as Mary. They thought the body was stolen. Even though Jesus told them multiple times in this Gospel that he would rise from the dead on the third day, nobody expected a resurrection. If they expected a resurrection, why would they have purchased all the spices to anoint the body?

At this point, we should pause and bring in a few more details from another Gospel. While what we are talking about happened early Sunday morning, these women had no idea what happened at the tomb on Saturday.

Saturday was a busy day at the tomb. None of the women had any idea what happened on Saturday. Let's read about it.

...and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last fraud will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can." Matthew 27:60–65 (ESV)

Mary Magdalene was sitting opposite the tomb when Joseph and Nicodemus placed Jesus in it. There was no question they had the right tomb.

Jesus was buried on Friday. These verses tell us what happened the next day, on Saturday. The chief priests and Pharisees went to Pilate and asked for soldiers to guard the tomb. They wanted to make sure a phony resurrection didn't take place and the disciples didn't steal Jesus' body. Pilate let the priests and Pharisees have a group of Roman soldiers. They were to put a guard in front of Jesus' tomb until the third day. Pilate told the priests and the soldiers to make the tomb of Jesus as secure as they possibly could. The Roman soldiers put the Roman seal on the tomb, meaning anyone who broke the seal had to pay with his life. Roman soldiers made things very secure because their lives hung in the balance when it came to doing their jobs. If they failed on guard duty, they would probably lose their lives. There was only one tomb in this graveyard that had Roman soldiers around it making it as secure as they could.

The women had no idea about the soldier securing the tomb, sealing it and guarding it. If they knew about this, they wouldn't have wasted their time gathering and bringing spices.

Some time Saturday through the night into early Sunday morning we have a powerful group of Roman soldiers guarding the tomb. Something else happened early Sunday morning. It happened before the women arrived and even before Mary Magdalene, our track star, arrived.

And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. Matthew 28:2 (ESV)

This earthquake had occurred in the early morning hours, possibly between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. I think it must have been an impressive sight to have an angel showing up in the middle of the night and singlehandedly rolling back a stone that was more than a thousand pounds and sitting on it. I am sure the Roman soldiers were impressed and suddenly realized someone far stronger than any of them was in their presence. His arrival was enough to shake the earth with an earthquake. It was not just this angel's strength that impressed the soldiers.

His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. Matthew 28:3–4 (ESV)

This angel was impressive. He was bright as a bolt of lightning in the pitch darkness of the night. His clothing was white as snow. The hardened, courageous, fearless Roman soldiers began shaking like a schoolgirl before a speaking part in a school play. These men were trembling in fear, then they became like dead men. What does that mean? They were so scared they fainted.

The last think they remembered was seeing the earthshaking angel bright as lightning toss aside a stone more than a thousand pounds and then stare them straight in the eye. No wonder they fainted! That would terrify anyone!

Incidentally, while we are on this subject, why did the angel roll away the stone? Was it to let Jesus out of the grave? No! He could walk through walls. It was to let the women into the grave so they could see the tomb was empty.

At some point, still in the darkness of the night, the soldiers awoke from their fainting spell. They came to their senses. They began quickly talking to one another about the angel, the earthquake, the bright light and their terrifying fear, and they decided to run for their lives.

When the women arrived at dawn and just before dawn, the Roman soldiers were long gone and the empty tomb was unguarded. The women had no idea this happened an hour or two before their arrival. Where did the soldiers go? They didn't go to Pilate. They went to the Jewish leaders of the Sanhedrin. They were working for the Jewish leaders. They told the Jewish leaders what happened with the earthquake, the angel, the rolling back of the stone, the fear, and their fainting. Let's see what happened.

While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day. Matthew 28:11–15 (ESV)

Now the Jewish leaders had a problem. They were trying to prevent a fake resurrection because they thought the disciples would steal Jesus' body. Now

they had a real resurrection. What were they going to do about it? Were they going to believe Jesus? Were they going to admit their wrong? Of course not! They needed to come up with a lie to tell the public. They told the soldiers to tell everyone the disciples came by night and stole the body.

That lie may have been the best they could create but it makes no sense. If the tomb was guarded by a large detachment of Roman soldiers, how would less than a dozen untrained fishermen overpower them and steal the body? Romans soldiers guarded things with their lives. Allowing a few fishermen to overpower them would lead to execution. In addition, they made the tomb as secure as they could. Why would the disciples, who were so fearful they abandoned Jesus at the cross, become courageous enough to steal Jesus' body from trained Roman soldiers?

Of course, the religious leaders bribed the soldiers to tell their lie. In addition, they promised to take care of Pilate so he would not execute them. After all, they had Pilate wrapped around their little finger. They manipulated him into executing Jesus, certainly they could manipulate him to keep these Roman soldiers alive so they could spread their lie. The soldiers took the bribe and were still circulating the lie that the disciples stole Jesus' body 25 years after after the fact when Matthew wrote his Gospel.

Let's get back to Mark.

Since there were no more soldiers at the tomb, the ladies walked right into the tomb and met angels who gave evidence of the resurrection.

The angels were evidence of the resurrection.

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. Mark 16:5 (ESV)

Mark tells us there was one young man in the tomb. Luke tells us there were two men in the tomb.

While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. Luke 24:4 (ESV)

The Gospel of John also says there was two men in the tomb but John says they were not men but angels, one sitting where Jesus' head would have laid and the other where his feet would have been.

Here we have a challenge. Were these angels in the tomb or men in the tomb? Were there one of them or two of them? Let's see if we can think this through.

Let's begin with their identity. Were they men or angels? The answer is they were angels who looked like men. Luke tells us these men were dressed in dazzling apparel. Dazzling in Greek means flashes like bolts of lighting. These guys were human strobe lights. They looked just like the angel that rolled back to tombstone.

The second question is how many of them were there? Mark talks about one. John and Luke talk about two. Matthew tells us about one that did the talking. The answer is to understand the way authors wrote at this time, especially in the Gospel of Mark, which was intended to be short and to the point. The writing conventions of the day didn't mean you needed to include all the characters in a scene. You needed to include the important characters of the scene, such as those who had speaking parts. Mark, whose Gospel was very

short, would have followed this economic style of writing. We saw this earlier in the Gospel. For example, in Mark, we talked about the Gadarene demoniac who came out of the tombs to meet Jesus on the opposite side of the Sea of Galilee. Mark only talked about one demon-possessed man on that day. Matthew tells us there were actually two demon-possessed men but one played a more prominent role than the other. He stayed in the region of the Gerasenes and pre-evangelized the region for Jesus so when Jesus later returned many came to Christ because of this man's story. In a similar fashion, there were two angels in the tomb, but Mark — in his short and tight style — only told about one of them, the one who did the speaking and played the most important part in the story. It was the one who told the women Jesus rose from the dead.

How did the women respond to the news of Jesus' resurrection? It says they were amazed. I won't give you the Greek word behind it but I will tell you these women were terrified at the sight of the angels in Jesus' tomb as they were flashing like bolts of lightning in front of them. Luke says the women were so terrified, they hit the ground face first.

And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground... Luke 24:5 (ESV)

You know these ladies were completely freaked. They thought they were going to anoint a dead body. Instead they found an empty tomb with angels flashing like lightning telling them Jesus was alive. We need to give these women credit. The Roman soldiers fainted at the sight of one angel. These women fell on their faces but at least they maintained consciousness at the sight of two angels.

They didn't faint, unlike the tough men. Look what the one angel said to the women.

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." Mark 16:6 (ESV)

Here is the first time anybody received the the good news. The reason the grave was open, the reason Jesus' body was not in the grave was not because Jesus' body was stolen. It was because Jesus rose from the grave. Jesus is alive! Luke tells us what else the angels said to the woman.

...the men said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" Luke 24:5 (ESV)

"Jesus is alive. Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus is not here. The grave is empty. Jesus is gone. You are looking in the wrong place. Jesus is not a dead man. He is alive and risen from the dead. He is a living man." This is great news!

That brings us to our final evidence of the resurrection.

The witnesses were evidence of the resurrection.

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." 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. Mark 16:7-8 (ESV)

We have the women in shock on the ground in front of the angels because the angels were bright as a bolt of lightning. Remember that Mark doesn't call them angels but other Gospels do.

The angels told the women to get up and get going. "Tell people the good news. Tell the disciples that Jesus is alive. Tell Peter Jesus is alive."

The angels also told the women to tell his disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee. He would meet them there. By the way, this was exactly what Jesus told

them while he was still alive. "After I rise from the dead, head to Galilee. That is where I will meet you."

"But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." Mark 14:28 (ESV)

Here is where it gets interesting. At first, did these women tell the other apostles? No. Do they tell the other apostles to head to Galilee? No. At first, did anybody head to Galilee? Absolutely not! These women were so dumbfounded and in such shock, at first, they didn't tell anybody! Before we tell you how that changed, let's finish up Mary Magdalene's story.

The other women left dumbfounded and this is what happened.

So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples went back to their homes. John 20:3–10 (ESV)

John was the good runner. He outran Peter. Peter was out of shape. He was huffing and puffing but he went into the tomb first when he arrived. John went in second. It says Peter and John saw and believed. What did they believe? They didn't believe the resurrection. They believed Mary Magdalene's story that the body was gone. They simply left and went back to their homes.

Peter, John, and Mary Magdalene now all knew the tomb was empty but they didn't believe Jesus rose from the dead.

While I don't have the time to cover it now, John tells us that after Peter and John left, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene. That is a story for another

day. Let's go back to the original women, the first to hear the good news but who were too shocked to tell anyone. Let's see what happened to them.

Do you know what they needed? They needed a little help. They couldn't figure out how to explain to the disciples that Jesus was alive. They hadn't met him. They had an encounter with angels, but who would believe the women about that? They needed help. They needed help to speak and help to believe. Jesus is so kind and gracious. He showed up on the spot to help them believe he is alive and help them share the good news that he is alive.

So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Matthew 28:8-9 (ESV)

As they were leaving in confusion and fear, Jesus showed up in his resurrection body. How is that for encouragement? All they could do was fall on their faces, hold his feet and worship him.

Jesus didn't just help these women believe the good news and share the good news by personally showing up in their presence, but that night, when the apostles were gathered behind locked doors for fear of the Jews and refused to believe the crazy news from these women that Jesus was alive, guess what Jesus did? He showed up in Jerusalem to the apostles!

Two of Jesus disciples were walking down the Emmaus road. They also heard the news of the women that Jesus was alive and refused to believe. Guess what Jesus did again? He showed up and walked with them. He helped them believe what seemed impossible and too good to be true. Jesus is alive. One week later the disciples again gathered behind locked doors with the women, and all but the apostle Thomas believed Jesus was alive because everyone had met

him. Can you guess what Jesus did again? He showed up to help Thomas believe what seemed too good to be true. Jesus is alive.

Eventually, the women and the disciples didn't just believe Jesus was alive but they followed the instructions Jesus gave and went to Galilee. There, Jesus appeared alive to many others. This is probably where Jesus appeared alive to more than 500 at one time. This is where Jesus cooked fish for his disciples and ate fish with his disciples.

How can we apply this to our lives?

Mark ended his Gospel by telling us Jesus did exactly what he claimed he would do in Mark 8:32, 9:31, 10:34 and many other places in this Gospel. Jesus would rise to new life. The Gospel of Mark ends with wonder and amazement. Jesus' resurrection is true, but it seems too good to believe.

1. There is abundant evidence for the resurrection.

Mark wants us to know there is abundant evidence for the resurrection. Nobody had an answer for the empty tomb. Where did the body of Jesus go? Why did the Roman soldiers run away? Why couldn't anybody produce Jesus' body. In addition, there is the testimony of the angels, but most compelling of all are the testimony of eyewitnesses. Jesus appeared to hundreds of different people and to hundreds of people at once. What do you do with hundreds of people who claimed to meet the risen Jesus at different places and times?

2. Like the women at the empty tomb, God wants us to go and tell others that Jesus rose from the dead! Jesus is alive today! He offers to forgive us, save us, and make us into new people.

Just as the women at the empty tomb were commissioned by the angels to tell the world the good news that Jesus is alive, we are also commissioned by Jesus to tell the world the good news of Jesus' resurrection. The resurrection changes everything. It sets the Christian faith apart from all other faiths. It is proof that Jesus is the only way. It is proof that no matter what we face, we have hope. Jesus is alive! He rose from the dead and by our faith and trust in him, we can be forgiven from our sins and rise from the dead just like he did!

3. While it is our job to tell the good news that Jesus rose from the dead, it is God's job to convince people that the news of Jesus' resurrection is true by changing their lives.

A consistent pattern after the resurrection is those following Jesus were to tell others the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Jesus is the one who convinced people he is alive. Jesus is still the one who convinces people the resurrection is true, not us. This is incredibly liberating. Most of us feel like the women who were told about Jesus' resurrection by angels at the empty tomb. Just like they were, we are afraid to tell anyone because we know people will think we are nuts. People will think we have lost it. Thankfully, we do not share this good news on our own. We tell people the good news of Jesus' resurrection, but it is Jesus himself, or the Holy Spirit, that changes people's hearts and convinces them Jesus is alive and the good news of the resurrection is true.

This week, as we reach people with Jesus, let us tell our friends and family at Thanksgiving the good news that Jesus is alive, but let us allow Jesus

and the Holy Spirit to play their roles in our friends and family's lives and convince them Jesus is alive and the good news of his resurrection is true.

Thank you for joining me in our study of the Gospel of Mark. Jesus is alive!



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