

“HE HAS RISEN!”

Mark 16:1-20

Key Verse: 16:6

“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.”

We began Mark’s gospel study last May. Now we are on the last chapter, the finale. Good Jesus died a horrible death on the cross. He cried out, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”** Jesus died. The Roman centurion who witnessed his death declared, **“Surely this man was the Son of God!”** This is the correct declaration that the author has faithfully presented to us. However, if Jesus’ life had simply ended in his horrifying death, it would be the most tragic story ever told. There is one more chapter, one more message, that turns the darkness into light, the sorrow into joy, the depression into hope, the fear into peace, the doubt into faith, and the defeat into victory. This is the message that saves us all. This is the message that the whole world must hear and believe to be saved. This is the message that we must believe and deliver to others. May our gracious Lord give us this good news in our deep hearts and souls.

I. The message that changed the world (1-8)

After his death, Jesus was buried by a prominent Council member named Joseph of Arimathea. Jesus’ body was wrapped in linen cloth, and placed in a tomb cut out of rock with a large stone rolled against the entrance. Jesus’ body lay in the tomb on the Sabbath, that is, Saturday. Verse 1 tells us, **“When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body.”** These women were there when Jesus died on the cross and when Jesus was buried. Now they wanted to anoint Jesus’ dead body. Consider how much they loved Jesus. They opened their purses and bought spices to anoint Jesus’ bruised, broken and blood-stained body. Women like these are truly beautiful. They had nothing to gain by doing this one last act of love for dead Jesus. They had nothing to gain, but God had a great reward for them.

Look at verses 2-3. **“Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, ‘Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?’”** They could not move the massive tombstone and no strong men had come along to help them. Look at

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verses 4-5. **“But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.”** Seeing the stone removed, they instinctively went into the tomb. Their intention was to anoint Jesus’ dead body with spices. But a young man in a white robe alarmed them. We know from other accounts that this was an angel, but they did not yet realize this.

Look at verse 6. **“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.”** The young man in white knew why they had come: to find the body of Jesus. The messenger knew that Jesus had been crucified. Then he gave them the most wonderful words of all: **“He has risen!” “He has risen!”** It meant, “Jesus Christ is no longer dead. He rose from the dead! He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!” Life has been answered. Jesus Christ wins! This is far greater than any sports victory or military victory. This is the greatest news the world has ever heard: Jesus Christ triumphed over the grave! Jesus Christ lives!

What does **“He has risen!”** mean for the human race? **(1) The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that our sins have indeed been forgiven.** Jesus gave his life as a ransom for many. Jesus made a new covenant in his blood for the forgiveness of our sins. But if Jesus had died and remained in the grave, we would have no convincing proof that what Jesus claimed is true. Listen to what Paul says in his masterful chapter on the resurrection, 1Corinthians 15: “And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins” (1 Corinthians 15:14-17). Since Jesus Christ rose from the dead, we have the promise and assurance that our sins are indeed forgiven by his blood.

(2) The resurrection of Jesus Christ means that we have a living hope in the kingdom of God. Before Jesus rose from the dead, death remained our last enemy and we had no guarantees of what is to come after we die. But through Jesus Christ we now have the promise and assurance of eternal life in Jesus Christ. Since Jesus conquered death, we who are in him, can conquer death and plunge into life eternal with Jesus Christ our Lord. All other hopes in this world are either dead hopes or dying hopes. For example, if our hope is in family, that is a dying

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hope since all the people we put our hope in are getting older and will die some day. The same is true for hope in money or fame or pleasure or career or achievements or friends. These things all fade and perish with time. Listen to Apostle Peter. He wrote in 1Peter 1:3-4 of the living hope: **“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you...”** Those who have a living hope live meaningful and victorious lives in Christ. On the other hand, apart from the hope and victory that are in Jesus, life is empty, vain and a chasing after the wind. It is one limitation and frightful dead end after another.

This was the good news which the women received at the empty tomb. Also, it was the good news which they were told to go and tell the others. Look at verse 7: **“But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”** Though Peter had failed, Jesus did not give up on him. Jesus promised to go ahead of him to meet him again.

Notice something more. It wasn't something new which they had never heard. Jesus had told them already. The problem was that they weren't listening well. It seemed too good to be true. The angel said, **“He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”** Though they had abandoned Jesus, he had not given up on them. He would meet them again in Galilee. There they would see him, just as he told them. When did he tell them? He told them right after predicting their desertion, **“You will all fall away....But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee”** (14:28). Remember that after Peter's confession of faith, Jesus began to predict his own suffering, rejection, killing and after three days, rising again (8:31). Several more times Jesus' foretold his suffering, death and resurrection. Jesus' death was not a mistake. It was part of God's plan for world salvation.

Here we learn the importance of listening carefully to Jesus' words and not just the parts we like. One day his words will be very relevant and significant to our situation. Heaven and earth will pass away, but Jesus' words will never pass away. Peter wrote, quoting Isaiah, **“All people are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.’ And this is the word that was preached to you.”** (1Pe 1:24-25; Isa 40:6-8).

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In April of 1983, 32 years ago, my life was shaken by my father’s sudden death by heart attack. He was 47 years old. I was 18 and graduating from high school. That event made me wonder about the meaning of my life. Outwardly my life was fine. I was healthy and a good student and basically a nice guy. But there was also a dark side of me, driven by lust, vanity and pride that was growing stronger and taking control of my life in expressions of lewdness, foul mouth, condescension and pettiness. On the one hand, I loved the world and its desires—sinful cravings, eyes full of lust, and boasting of achievements and possessions (1Jn 2:15-17). On the other hand, I longed to know the truth and to live for righteousness. This tension between God and the world became all the more real in every Bible study. One year after my dad died, I attended an Easter Bible conference. I heard the truth of 1 Peter 1:3-4, about the living hope that can never perish, spoil or fade away. I accepted Paul’s logical defense of the resurrection. I realized: “There is no hope in this world, because everything in this world dies. The only living hope is Jesus Christ, because he rose from the dead.” The resurrection of Jesus Christ gave me new life, hope, joy, purpose and meaning. What about you? Do you believe Jesus died for your sins and rose from the dead to give you hope and new life? Romans 10:9 says, **“If you declare with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”** Jesus Christ has risen!

II. The message to go and tell the world (9-20)

Notice the note in your Bible before verse 9. It says in brackets: [The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9-20.] For the gospel to end at verse 8 is however an odd place to end. In fact, we know that the gospel of Jesus Christ does not end there. The gospel of Jesus Christ changed world history through those who believed and went and told others. Verses 9-20 are actually an excellent though brief summary of the gospels and the book of Acts as to what happened after Jesus rose from the dead.

If you read the resurrection accounts of Matthew, Luke and John, you will get a more complete account of risen Jesus’ appearances to Mary Magdalene, to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and to the disciples of Jesus. The disciples were slow to believe the resurrection, even though several people testified to it. Finally, the risen Jesus himself appeared to the Eleven, as they were eating. Jesus rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. It is man’s lack of faith and stubborn refusal which often blocks the work of God.

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Now look at verse 15. The Risen Jesus said to his stubborn, unbelieving disciples, **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”** To these stubborn, unbelieving men Jesus gave the world mission command. He did not say, “When you become fully convinced that I’ve conquered sin and death and am truly alive, then go tell the world.” Also, Jesus did not give them an option. It is not called, “The World Mission Option.” It’s called, “The World Mission Command.” Jesus commanded them, **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”** What were they to do? Jesus said, **“Go!”** Whom was Jesus sending? The ones with money? No, they had no money. The ones with vast knowledge? No, they were largely uneducated; their knowledge was Jesus’ words and their pattern was Jesus’ life. Jesus was sending anyone who would obey his word, **“Go!”** The Lord Jesus gives one promise: he will work with those who obey his commands.

Where were they to go? Jesus said, **“Into all the world.”** All the world includes the people near and far, people like us and people unlike us, people who speak our language and people who don’t. Jesus died not for the Jewish people only, but for all the world. His blood is able to cleanse all sin. His kingdom is for all who believe to inherit. The good news is for all people, whether born a Christian, Muslim, Hindu or Jew, black or white, man or woman, old or young, educated or not, rich or poor, neighbors and strangers. Is there anyone Jesus’ blood cannot save? Is there anyone who doesn’t need this living hope? Is there anyone beyond the reach of this good news?

What are we to do as we go to all people? Jesus said, **“Go into all the world and preach the gospel.”** To preach the gospel means to tell the world the good news that Jesus died for our sins and rose again from the dead. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, people should know by your words and by your actions, by your love and by your prayers. You should stand out by your holy and humble life. Jesus promised his powerful presence over demons and diseases to be with his people. The Risen Jesus ascended to heaven and sat at the right hand of God. One day Jesus will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. Meanwhile, Jesus is working through his people, his word and his Holy Spirit to save those who believe.

Why is it so necessary and serious to go and preach the gospel to all people in the world? See verse 16. **“Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”** Apostle John declared the same

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truth in John 3:18, **“Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”** The gospel of Jesus Christ is absolute. It applies to all people of all time in all places. It is not true for some but not for others. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved. Whoever does not believe will be condemned. This is not politically correct in our pluralistic world.

Then why must we believe in Jesus Christ. Why can’t I just take it or leave it according to my own convenience and personal preference? Galatians 2:21 explains: **“I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”** Jesus’ death was not optional. It was essential for our salvation. In Acts 4:12 Peter declared, **“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”** Paul wrote in 1Timothy 2:5-6, **“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.”** Jesus himself declared in John 14:6, **“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”**

Only Jesus Christ died for our sins and was resurrected. Whoever believes in Jesus and accepts him as Savior and Lord will be saved. John 3:16 boldly promises, **“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”** This is the good news for all peoples of all nations, tribes and languages. This is the good news given to us to believe and be saved. And it is the good news for us to share with a desperate and dying world. He has risen! May this good news give us all hope and victory and make us joyful believers in and sharers of the good news of Jesus Christ. Amen.