



Mark 16

An OCF Bible Study

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You could totally discredit or perhaps even destroy Christianity if you could disprove what one thing? The Resurrection! **Why?** Without the Resurrection, our Savior would still be in the grave just like every other great religious leader who could not conquer death. The Resurrection is the foundation of our faith. We worship a risen, living Savior! All other religions worship dead people. Without the Resurrection, there is no hope beyond the grave, and the Cross is of no practical value. Without the Resurrection, Jesus is just another martyr dying for another cause.

The time from sundown on Friday to just after sunset on Saturday was the Sabbath. Jesus died and was buried on Friday just before sunset. Saturday must have been a dark, empty, and desperate day for the disciples. So full of hope and promise, this man they had been following for three years is now dead and gone. Imagine how depressed and despondent they must have been: *they mourned and wept* (v. 10).

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. Where have we seen these women before (v. 1)? At the cross and burial site (Mark 15:40, 47), and later at the tomb just after Jesus' resurrection (Mark 16:2).

These obscure women proved themselves to be the most devoted followers of Jesus. They were given the privilege of being the first to see the empty grave and to proclaim His resurrection. There's a message/lesson here about devotion. No fanfare surrounded these women. They were simply faithful followers of Jesus, and as a result they were recognized and rewarded. They were memorialized in Scripture for their devotion.

What was their dilemma as they approached the tomb (v. 3)? *Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?* They knew there was a large stone covering the entrance. They had seen Him buried. No question they went expecting to find Jesus in the tomb. Just like the disciples, the women didn't understand.

Matthew 27:65-66 reminds us that there were armed guards stationed around the tomb. All this shows that the stone could not have been rolled away by the women (not strong enough) or by the disciples (even if they were brave enough, they couldn't overcome the armed guards). We also understand that no one else *wanted* to roll away the stone. **Then how did it move?** Matthew 28:2 tells us that it was an angel who rolled it away. Not so that Jesus could come out, but so that others could see in and be convinced that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead.

Who was the young man dressed in a white robe (v. 5)? An angel

What did he tell them (vv. 6-7)? *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.*

Jesus is going ahead into Galilee for what purpose? *There you will see him, just as he told you was the message.* The main object was to see Him: for Jesus to reveal Himself in His glorified body to His people. Jesus had earlier prophesied that his disciples would be scattered and would rejoin Him in Galilee (14:28).

We may find it surprising that Jesus wanted to meet with these men who failed Him so deeply and deserted Him. And the angel makes special mention of Peter. What does that say about Jesus' perspective on Peter? Jesus distinguished Peter because He had special hope, special forgiveness and a special restoration plan for the one who denied Him the most. He loved Peter in spite of what he had done. Never once did the Lord chide Peter for his failure or give up on him as one of His disciples. Instead, Jesus reaffirms His call on Peter to be a fisher of men.

What's the message for us? One of encouragement. Our relationship with God is unconditional. It's grace-based, not performance-based. We don't have to earn His favor: what we do or don't do doesn't sever our relationship with God. We already have His favor 100%.

What emotion did the women experience from this angelic encounter (v. 8)? Fear. Everybody was afraid, even the disciples: *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.* **Why were they afraid?** They didn't understand what was happening. None of His followers understood that Jesus would rise from the dead as He had said multiple times.

Note: Although the followers didn't remember Jesus' prediction about rising from the dead, the Pharisees did: *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"* (Matthew 27:62-64).

Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, as well as the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. How did the disciples respond to the news that Jesus had been seen twice? Disbelief. They didn't say, "Wait a minute, this rings a bell. Didn't He tell us something about rising from the dead?" He had told them several times over the previous three years that He would rise from the dead. **How did Jesus respond to their disbelief (v. 14)?** He rebuked them for their lack of faith and stubborn refusal to believe.

What was the commission that Jesus gave to the eleven (v. 15)? *Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.* This was a command—not a suggestion. The idea of a faith that would go out into all the world wasn't a part of the Jewish thinking of Jesus' day. **What did the disciples do (v. 20)?** They went out and preached everywhere.

Does this command apply to us? We're going out into the world but we're not preachers. What are some ways we can preach the gospel?

Is water baptism is required for salvation (v. 16)? Jesus did not say that *condemnation* belonged to the one who was not baptized, only to the one who does not believe. Condemnation rests on unbelief, not on baptism. Christian baptism in the New Testament is always defined by an outward expression of an inward change brought about by faith in Christ. This verse also regards baptism as such. In the early church baptism normally followed closely after a confession of faith.

If baptism is not essential to salvation, why do we do it? It may not be essential to salvation, but it is absolutely essential to obedience. Jesus set the example of baptism (Matthew 33:13-16). Jesus commanded that believers be baptized (Matthew 28:19). It becomes essential as soon as Jesus commands it.

Why did Jesus leave forty days after the resurrection (v. 19)? So the Holy Spirit could come. Jesus had to ascend so that confidence would be put in the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit, not in the geographical presence of Jesus. The unseen Holy Spirit would have been overshadowed by the visible Jesus.

Where is Jesus now? In heaven, sitting at the right hand of God the Father.

What is the new ministry of Jesus now? Jesus has gone ahead for us to *prepare a place for you (John 14:3); is interceding for us (Romans 8:34); and gives gifts to men (Ephesians 4:8).*

So what do the empty tomb and the resurrection of Jesus Christ mean to you personally? His resurrection means:

- We have assurance of our own resurrection.
- Jesus is alive and has a continuing ministry.
- Christianity and its God are unique and completely different among any and all world religions.
- Our sin debt is fully paid and perfect in the sight of God the Father. Jesus' death on the Cross was the payment for our sins, but the resurrection is the receipt of guarantee: *paid in full.*

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