

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 29TH–30TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

RISEN (MARK 16:1–8)

Chapter 16 opens on a Sunday morning when some of the women who saw Jesus crucified and buried returned to the tomb (vs. 1–2).

- They brought spices and other supplies to properly anoint His body, since it would have been hastily entombed right before the Sabbath.
- If their purpose was to prepare Jesus' body for proper burial, they had no thought of the resurrection.

Their only motivation would have been love. The same can be said for Joseph of Arimathea (16:43) and Nicodemus (John 19:39).

- It's safe to say that they weren't expecting to see a resurrection.
- These women had watched Jesus die a very painful, violent, and barbaric death.
- The hope they had placed in Him as the Messiah was probably dwindling and almost gone.

HOPELESSNESS – “NO EXPECTATION OF FUTURE IMPROVEMENT OR SUCCESS.”

- “My situation will never get better.”
- “I feel like giving up.”
- “It's too late now.”
- Hopelessness and despair are the two most deadly mindsets because they don't assess a situation in light of God's promises, power, and goodness.

“WHO WILL ROLL AWAY THE STONE...?” (V. 3)

The stone that sealed the entrance to the tomb likely weighed over two tons and would have required three or four men to move it.

- Matthew tells us that the tomb was “sealed,” meaning that a cord was stretched over the rock and fastened on either end with a sealing compound.
- These women weren't moving the stone.

“THE STONE...HAD BEEN ROLLED AWAY.” (V. 4)

The impossible obstacle of the two-ton rock sealed in place had been miraculously moved.

- What would you do in that situation?
- These women apparently felt like they needed to check to see if Jesus' body was still in the tomb.
- When they entered the tomb, they didn't find a body. Instead, they discovered something else miraculous.

“DON'T BE ALARMED...HE HAS RISEN!” (VS. 5–6)

The last time we read of a “young man” in Mark's Gospel, we read of a naked young man fleeing in terror to show the shame of human failure.

- Now we read of a *young man dressed* in a white robe who bears witness to the reality that Jesus is alive! All the hopelessness and shame caused by our failures and “screw-ups” has been covered by the victory of His resurrection.

“BUT GO, TELL HIS DISCIPLES AND PETER...” (VS. 7–8)

Why is Peter's name emphasized?

- Peter's failure had probably convinced him that he had forfeited the right to be Jesus' disciple. The message of the angel at the empty tomb says otherwise.
- The women are told that Jesus would be waiting for His disciples back home in Galilee, and the women leave trembling and astonished.

APPEARANCES (MARK 16:9–13)

DOES MARK'S GOSPEL END WITH VERSE 8?

The earliest complete copies of Mark in Greek end with verse 8, and so do about 100 other ancient manuscripts of Mark translated into other languages.

- The church fathers Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Cyprian, and Cyril of Jerusalem show no awareness of verses 9–20; Eusebius (4th Century) states that Mark ends with verse 8.
- In a few other manuscripts there are two other endings: one is shorter and one has additions.
- About 1/3 of the vocabulary is totally different from the rest of the Gospel of Mark, and there is an awkward grammatical transition between Mark 16:8 and 16:9.
- Most contemporary scholars reject these verses as original and authored by Mark.

IF MARK DIDN'T WRITE IT, WHO DID?

Verses 9–20 were possibly added later by scribes who had access to Matthew's and Luke's Gospel accounts.

- Perhaps they believed the original ending was lost and wanted to provide a more satisfactory conclusion to the narrative.
- Not an issue of inspiration, but rather transmission (only this passage and John 7:53–8:11).

HOWEVER...

Many early Christian writers do refer to this passage in their writings.

- This shows that some early Christians knew about this passage in the Gospel of Mark and did accept it as genuine.
- It was quoted by Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and others and seen as a reliable account of what happened after Jesus' resurrection.

HOW SHOULD WE VIEW VERSES 9–20?

Rightly interpreted, there is nothing doctrinally problematic in the longer ending of Mark's Gospel.

- Even if Mark didn't write it (and it was written later by scribes who borrowed from the accounts of other Gospel writers), the passage is theologically sound and consistent with the rest of Scripture.
- This passage is best viewed through the reality of verses 1–8: the resurrection of Jesus is the core of the Christian faith.
- We must interpret it through the rest of Scripture. It's unwise to build a doctrine or practice solely on these verses.
- Read it with humility, awareness, and open hands, and let it minister to and edify you. We can recognize the questions without letting them shake our faith.

APPEARING TO MARY MAGDALENE (VS. 9–11)

Mary Magdalene was a disciple of Jesus from whom Jesus had cast out seven demons.

- John 20:11–18 gives us a touching account of the risen Jesus appearing to Mary in her heartache.
- Having been traumatized by seeing Jesus brutally crucified, she apparently believed someone had stolen His body.
- Brokenhearted and hopeless, she wept.

- When the risen Jesus speaks Mary's name, the entire scene is changed from heartbreak and despair to joy and hope.
- To those who are heartbroken and hurting, there is a coming day of restoration.
- Mary takes her joyful report of having seen the risen Christ to the others, who apparently don't believe her.

APPEARING TO TWO ON THE ROAD (VS. 12–13)

We're then told of Jesus appearing to two unnamed disciples, who are also described in Luke's Gospel on their journey to a place called Emmaus.

- As they walked together, Luke tells us they “were talking with each other about all these things that had happened” (Lk. 24:14, ESV).
- It had been quite an eventful week in Jerusalem!
- Amidst their confusion and despair, Luke tells us that “Jesus Himself came near,” and even though the resurrected Jesus stood in front of them, they didn't recognize Him at first.
- Jesus is walking, talking, and listening to two disciples who didn't even know it was Him until their eyes were opened! Unfortunately, at first, their testimony was rejected as well.

COMMISSIONED (MARK 16:14–20)

APPEARING TO THE DISCIPLES (V. 14)

We're told in John's Gospel that the disciples of Jesus were gathered behind locked doors because of fear. But Jesus appeared in their midst in His perfected, resurrected body (that still bore the marks of His redemptive love on His hands and side).

- Here we're told that Jesus scolds His disciples for their hardness of heart and unbelief.

GO AND PREACH (V. 15)

Just as Jesus had been sent by the Father to earth for a very important mission, so now Jesus sends His disciples on the same mission.

- They will be His “sent ones” (apostles/representatives) who go into all the world proclaiming the good news of Jesus to all creation. This is a commissioning that will require of them their very lives.

BELIEF AND BAPTISM (V. 16)

The apostolic message is belief in Christ followed by the expected response of baptism.

- The verse has two parts: 1) “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved,” and 2) “...but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”
- What condemns a person according to the verse?
- Notice the second part isn't “...whoever does not believe or is not baptized will be condemned.”

MIRACULOUS SIGNS (VS. 17–18)

As the gospel message goes out into all the world, Jesus promises His disciples divine power and protection (Jesus never intended drinking poison or handling snakes to be a specific test or measure of faith).

- The book of Acts is full of accounts of the supernatural work of God accompanying the apostles as they spread the gospel.

THE ASCENSION (V. 19)

Jesus was taken up into Heaven and seated at the right hand of God.

- His physical body left this earth so that the Holy Spirit could be poured out and we could receive God's presence into our lives now.
- Our confidence now is not in the geographical presence of Jesus on earth, but rather in the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES (V. 20)

The disciples of Jesus went out and did what Jesus told them to do.

- As they did, the “Lord worked with them.” We can't do what only God can do; we can only do what we can do and are told to do.
- We're called to go out and proclaim, preach, witness, and testify boldly of Christ. If we will just obey, we'll see God show up and work.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH THE TRUTH OF JESUS?

- Mark's account of Jesus' life, ministry, teaching, death, and resurrection wasn't given to us simply so we would have an intellectual or historical understanding of Jesus.
- The truth and gift of Jesus Christ has been given to all people by God, and it requires a response from every person on earth.

BELIEVE.

- Faith: Believe in your heart that Jesus is the Son of God who died for your sins and that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 10:9b).
- Repentance: Turn from your sins and self-reliance and towards God (Acts 3:19).
- Confession: Acknowledge with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord (Rom. 10:9a)

“GO...”

- This is a message for ALL nations, people groups, ethnicities, and social classes. No one group or race holds exclusive rights to the truth of Jesus.
- The Church now has the responsibility to go into all the world and take this message to every nation. This is why missions matters!
- We all have a role to play in this commission.

HAVING GONE/AS YOU GO

- As we go out into our world, our faith is not to be private, personalized, or even discrete but a public allegiance to Jesus that is obvious everywhere we go and to everyone we meet.
- Our faith is never to be kept in cliques or lifestyle enclaves. Jesus' followers are to be friends of sinners and to the “least of these” (Mt. 25:40).

“PREACH...”

- Boldly speak the name and truth of Jesus.
- Witness through our lives and testimony.
- Serve, give, and sacrifice for the mission of God (taking up our cross).
- If your life is a sermon, what is the main message and point?
- To others who are watching/listening to you preach it, what is it mainly about?

OBEY AND EXPECT.

- The early followers of Jesus obeyed Him and went to the nations and preached the gospel.
- As they did, there were signs, miracles, and demonstrations of God's power at work in their midst.
- As we obey, we are to expect God's power and presence to show up. Are we obeying?