

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER 30TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

HE IS RISEN (MARK 16:1–8) FINISHING THE WORK OF BURIAL

The Sabbath started at 6 pm on Friday evening and concluded at 6 pm on Saturday evening. Because of the time Jesus died on Friday, Joseph had to quickly prepare Jesus' body to be buried. Now that the Sabbath was completed, the women were free to go and buy spices to anoint the body of Jesus early the next morning (Sunday).

THE WOMEN

Mark tells us that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome were going to do the anointing. With the heightened tensions concerning Jesus' death, these women displayed amazing courage and strength of character to go to the tomb.

- **Women were an important part of Jesus' work and continue to be to this day.**

THE EMPTY TOMB

Early on Sunday morning, the women made their way to the tomb, wondering how they would get in since the large stone had been rolled against the entrance. But when they arrived, the stone was rolled away!

- **The stone wasn't removed to let Jesus out but to allow witnesses to enter! Nothing would keep Jesus in the tomb.**

CONFIRMATION

If there were any doubts, the testimony of the angel settled them: Jesus is risen from the dead! The angel (Mark focuses on the angel who speaks) reassures them, then confirms Jesus' death by crucifixion and His resurrection.

- **Christianity rises or falls on the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ** (1 Corinthians 15:13–14, 17).

RESTORATION

The angel gave the women a message to tell the disciples **and Peter** that Jesus was going ahead to meet them in Galilee (Mark 14:28). The specific mention of Peter would have encouraged Peter that Jesus still loved him and had plans for him, despite Peter's denial.

- **No matter our past or present, if we repent, Jesus forgives our sin and restores us.**

GO AND TELL

The commission given to the women is the call to all Christians to go and tell the good news. Their response is a common response: astonishment and trembling. At least initially, the women kept the news to themselves. The other Gospels tell us the women fulfilled their call to tell the disciples (Matthew 28:8; Luke 24:9).

- **We joyfully share the good news with all.**

THE ENDING (MARK 16:9–20) DOES MARK'S GOSPEL END WITH VERSE 8?

The earliest complete copies of Mark in Greek end with verse 8, as do about 100 other ancient manuscripts 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 shorter and one with 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.

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 that 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 events 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 let Scripture interpret Scripture. It's unwise to build a doctrine or practice solely on vs. 9–20.
- Read it with humility, letting it minister to and edify you—we can recognize the questions without letting them shake our faith.

APPEARANCES (MARK 16:9–14) EYEWITNESSES

The first person recorded here who saw the resurrected Jesus was Mary Magdalene. Jesus had done much in her life, and she was a faithful follower of Him. The disciples' unbelief in response to Mary's report could have been from skepticism or grief.

- **Extreme emotional events can affect how we, and others, view people and life.**

THE EMMAUS WITNESSES

The next recorded witnesses were the two disciples Jesus met on the road to Emmaus in Luke 24:13–35. The two witnesses went and told the disciples what they had seen, and just like Mary, were rejected.

- **Just because we know the truth doesn't mean people will respond with joy. Rejection is part of the Christian life.**

THE SIN OF UNBELIEF

Thomas gets the moniker "doubting" because he said he wouldn't believe until he could actually put his hands on Jesus. Yet, the disciples were initially guilty of the same unbelief. Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief.

- In John 20:29, Jesus told Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."
Jesus was talking about you if you believe.

GO AND TELL (MARK 16:15–20)

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Jesus commissions His disciples (and us) to go and preach the gospel everywhere to everyone.

That's our responsibility.

- Too many of us believe that taking the gospel to the world is the work of pastors and missionaries. Jesus commissioned all of us to make Him known. **If not us, who? If not now, when?**

THE RESULTS BELONG TO JESUS

None of us can change a heart. Only Jesus can do that. The sign of a changed heart is belief in the gospel followed by baptism. Every Believer is a demonstration that Jesus is mighty to save. But there will be those who choose to stay in their rebellion who will be condemned.

- **We are to obediently preach the gospel, trusting that Jesus is at work as we do so.**

PROMISES, NOT COMMANDS

There are some who take vs. 17–18 as commands to be obeyed. When we take the gospel to people, especially in foreign countries, many of us have a level of fear. We fear demonic opposition, language barriers, foreign critters, bad food and water, and sickness without medicine to heal. **Jesus promises His presence as we overcome each of these by His power.**

HE HASN'T LEFT US

After commissioning His disciples, Jesus ascends to Heaven and now sits on His throne as the reigning King of Kings and Lord of Lords. All power is His for His glory and our good, as demonstrated by the disciples taking the gospel to the world, which we celebrate even today.

- **We stand on the shoulders of the disciples as we continue to proclaim the gospel to all.**

THE RESURRECTION CHANGES EVERYTHING

- The resurrection inaugurates the Kingdom of God as we live in the power of the Spirit.
- Both men and women are called to be witnesses to the reality of the empty tomb.
- **Without the resurrection, Jesus is just another criminal executed by the Roman government, not our Lord and Savior.**
- **Jesus rose to give us hope of a new life.**

THE RISK AND REWARD

- Our call from Jesus is to go and make disciples as we share the good news of the gospel with all people.
- Not everyone will joyfully hear our message. Some will reject it, maybe even violently.
- **Our sin doesn't condemn us; unbelief does. As long as we have breath, we can repent.**
- By the power of the Spirit, we overcome barriers that might keep us from going to those far from God.
- We join in the long line of faithful followers of Jesus who were unafraid to make Him known. Others will stand on our shoulders.
- **The most important quality of a disciple is faithfulness. As we obey, God works miracles.**