

Mark 16:1-8

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- [0 : 0 0] It comes from Mark's Gospel, and there should be a text of that Gospel in front of you in the pew rack. I encourage you to pull it out and turn to Mark 16.
- There are actually going to be a couple of things in the sermon today that will require your attention to the actual text, and so I hope that you'll have it open before you. Mark 16, verses 1-8.
- When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Salome, brought 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 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.
- [1 : 1 5] 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.
- This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. On this Easter Sunday, the most surprising observation to be made from the close of Mark's Gospel, certainly in contrast to the other Gospels, and also according to the earliest manuscripts available to us, is this.
- It's the omission of any Easter appearance by Jesus. In all the other Gospels, the reader sees Jesus on Easter.
- Here we have the announcement of it, and an anticipation for it, but not the appearance. It looks strange and surprising close to Mark's glorious Gospel.
- [2 : 4 3] I think of Matthew's Gospel. There are these dual appearances, one to the women and the other to the disciples. Luke's Gospel, even on Easter Day, he has that three-fold panel of Easter appearances.
- John's Gospel has multiple appearances of Jesus after his crucifixion.
- Most noteworthy, the appearance even eight days later to Thomas, who hadn't seen him first time around. But when you come to Mark's Gospel, the most surprising thing to be said on Easter is Jesus is not here.
- Not that he is merely risen, but that you, the reader, don't encounter the risen Christ. Now, from very early on, this lack of closure has brought many to feel a need for correction.
- And so take a look at the text. I think the version in the Purach today actually gives you an indication that there is two verses that have been added, which is a little bit of a shorter reading, yet longer than verse 8 as the close.

[4 : 14] And then there's another reading that goes all the way from verses 9 through 20. And both of those readings come from early manuscripts in the Greek, but the earliest of which would be the late 7th century.

Most of them in the 8th century. The 9th century A.D. The earliest of manuscripts don't have verses 9 and 10 as an ending, which certainly would have corrected the idea of women going away and saying nothing.

You can see why those would have been added. Or verses 9 to 20, which would amend the notion that while we were to anticipate a resurrection of Jesus, the disciples indeed actually did see Him.

The longer readings of Mark's ending are additions, 7th, 8th, 9th century, at least according to the manuscripts we have, to bring closure to what was most obviously an abrupt ending to the original.

There are four supreme early Greek manuscripts of the New Testament that scholars look at in regard to the Gospels.

[5 : 48] Think of the New Testament as scattered documents which have been found about 5,400 different manuscripts through the centuries. The earliest of which is the Codex Vaticanus, because it's kept in the Vatican by the symbol B, which dates to, get this, 340 A.D.

That is an old manuscript. I mean, you and I, if we were in the privileged position, we could go there and see it today, 340 A.D., very near these events.

That manuscript closes at verse 8. The Codex Sinaiticus, which is housed in about four different libraries, different parts of it, the most prominent being the British Library, also a 4th century document, closes at verse 8.

So when you're reading Mark's Gospel, the surprising assertion made in the introduction that there is not an Easter appearance of Jesus in the original, stands.

This is the way Mark intended his Gospel to end. And so on his own terms, we should try to understand it and understand him and what it means for us.

[7 : 21] This morning, before breakfast, four observations from the way Mark closes. And one big takeaway. First observation, as Mark was concluding his Gospel, he wants the reader to know that there was no expectation for an Easter appearance.

No expectation. You have it this morning. The readers of Mark's Gospel had it. But on that day, no expectation for it.

Look at verses 1-3. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome, they bring spices. Why? For a party? For a celebration? For a reunion with the risen Christ?

No. So that they might go and anoint him. That is his dead body. In fact, their dear friend was dead.

And the other observation you can see by verse 3 is they have no expectation for a resurrection. Their question is who will roll away the stone for us.

[8 : 33] Now the reader of Mark is surprised because in chapter 8, Jesus had said, I'm going to die and rise again. In chapter 9, I'm going to die and rise again.

Chapter 10, I'm going to die and rise again. And so the reader says, weren't you listening? No expectation for it. But remember one of the great themes of Mark's Gospel.

Listen to Him. Early on at His baptism, the heavens opened. Are you willing to listen to Him? That is Jesus. Or the transfiguration in chapter 9.

Are you willing to listen to Him? And that theme is reverberating into the mind, even of the reader, hopefully even here this morning. The women were not listening.

By that I mean not expecting a resurrection. What will be said of us? Second observation, not only that there's no expectation for it, but there's an alarming announcement of it.

[9 : 42] Look at verses 4 through 6. 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.

No expectation for it, but a stunning and alarming announcement of it. He is risen. In other words, the resurrection of Jesus, according to the young man in the tomb, who is not identified for us, is the result of the resurrection of Jesus.

The stone has been rolled. Interpretation? What is the interpretation of the event? Yet, He has risen just as He said.

The announcement of Easter falling for the first time on the ears of these women who had no expectation for it.

[11 : 00] The young man moves to not only announce resurrection as the interpretation of the empty tomb, but He then calls upon the women to give instruction to the disciples that they should anticipate seeing Him for themselves.

So He says in verse 7, 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.

Again, the emphasis that Mark is moving toward in the reader is listening to the words of Jesus. Trusting the words of Jesus.

Are we listening to the word of Jesus that we have been reading throughout the Gospel of Mark? Go there just as He told you.

No expectation for it. An alarming announcement of it. Instructions given that the disciples should anticipate it. And the fourth observation, their strange reaction to it.

[12 : 26] Look at verse 8. What a strange reaction to Easter Sunday.

Fear. You probably didn't feel that this morning, did you? And silence. We've replaced all those things, of course.

But this is the first reaction to Easter. Fear and silence. I want to talk about this in regard to what the takeaway is for us today.

Imagine for a moment that the resurrection of Jesus as given to us by the announcement of the young man at the tomb is true.

What would it mean? Christians often misunderstand what the resurrection means. We fly under the idea that the resurrection proves His deity.

[13 : 41] Now, of course, we believe that Jesus is the Son of God. But the resurrection doesn't prove that He's God. You don't need to be raised from the dead to be God.

What the resurrection would prove, if true, is that there is a man, a righteous man, who had no need to succumb to the penalty for death.

In other words, it actually says something about His humanity and about His life that it was absolutely, pristinely, perfect, in the eyes of God.

So that in His death, there was nothing in it that was accounted to His own sin, which therefore means it must have been a death by way of substitution for others, and that death itself has no hold on Him.

Why? Because He is the righteous man who never needs to be under the condemnation of God. What would it mean then, if Easter is true, that there was a man, a God-man, Jesus of Nazareth, who was fully righteous, and who of His own obedience, is completely capable of standing forever in the presence of God, it would mean that there is one in the world who has all authority over every other human being.

[15 : 28] all authority given unto this one. For clearly you and me, we will one day go to the ground in death as the just recompense for our own inability to live righteously in the sight of God.

It would mean that here is one who has all authority. That when He said in Mark chapter 2, I have authority to forgive sins, He meant it.

Are you listening? It would mean that as He went to the cross, He did so as a substitution for sin, your sin, and mine.

Are we listening? That the resurrection itself means that He is alive, not merely in spirit, but in body, and that He is ascended, and that He is at the right hand of the Father, that He has received the kingdom, and He has received all authority.

If those thoughts at any level were dawning on the women, no wonder there was fear.

[17 : 01] This one, the one they knew, all authority in heaven and on earth. And so, in John's gospel, he closes.

They are afraid. Think of the way John uses fear. The demons are afraid of Jesus in the gospel because of what He might do to them.

The religious leaders are said to be afraid of Jesus in John's gospel because of what He might take away from them. The crowds, I think of Mark 5 where the displacement of the demons into the herd of pigs, pigs, and the pigs go off the edge.

The crowd is said to be afraid of Jesus because of the losses they might expect from Him. And the disciples are spoken of as being afraid of Jesus.

Why? In Mark 4, because of what it might mean to be with Him. They were in the boat on that day when He calmed the seas and it said they had great fear.

[18 : 28] Fear! Because here was one who they knew they could not dwell with without some mediating measure of grace in their life.

And so Mark's gospel closes. And the reader must wrestle with it without any need for correction.

Mark wants you to move from fear to faith that you might follow.

Fear is always contrasted in Mark with genuine faith. And faith is given that you might follow. And so we close today on Easter Sunday without an actual appearance of Jesus in the text.

Merely the announcement of it. Do you trust Mark's words? Do you envision standing with these ancient manuscripts in your hand that go all the way back to 340 A.D.

[19 : 59] that have been long ago written down that He indeed is risen and as such has all authority and I rest in it and I move from fear toward Him to faith in Him and a following after Him.

May that be yours. Not for having seen Him today but for having read of Him and believed.

Our Heavenly Father we thank You for this great day and we ask that we would trust Your Word and we would see Jesus in all His glory here as one who is risen who has all authority who can be trusted with everything in our life even our soul we give it to You in His name Amen Amen