

FPFWC Christian Development



Faithful vs. Faithless

March 2024

Spring Quarter

March 30, 2024

Lesson #5 – The Resurrection: Key to Faith

SCRIPTURE TEXT – Mark 16:1-8

ICE BREAKERS-

1. As believers, what is our personal role in helping to spread the Good News about Jesus Christ?
2. How would you respond to the claim that belief in the bodily resurrection of Jesus is nonessential for Christians?

Key Verse: “He saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.—Mark 16:6

LESSON BACKGROUND –

Lesson Context: Mark, the Man

Tradition tells us that the Gospel of Mark was written by John Mark, an associate of Peter and Paul (see Acts 12:12; 1 Peter 5:13). This man was not an apostle. But he was a close relative of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10), who probably convinced Paul (Saul) to take John Mark on that apostle’s first missionary journey (Acts 12:25). John Mark abandoned the trip before its conclusion (13:13). This put him in disfavor with Paul (15:36–39), although the two later reconciled (2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24). Students propose that Mark’s Gospel account is based on Peter’s firsthand experiences with the person and ministry of Jesus, given the closeness of Mark to Peter in light of Peter calling him “my son” (1 Peter 5:13).

C. Lesson Context: Mark, the Gospel

Although Mark’s Gospel is the shortest of the four, its narrative packs a punch! Students frequently call it “the Gospel of action.” This designation stems from the fact that Mark jumps quickly from scene to scene to chronicle Jesus’ ministry.

The Gospel’s description of the last week of Jesus’ ministry highlights its inclination toward action. Of the nearly 700 verses of the Gospel, 241 of them—more than one-third of the Gospel—recount events from that week (Mark 11:1–16:8). In describing scenes from that week, the Gospel jumps quickly between scenes. Mark tells us how Jesus entered Jerusalem on that Sunday (11:1–11) and taught others regarding righteousness (11:12–25; 12:28–34). On that Thursday, He ate a final meal (14:12–31) before He was arrested (14:43–52) and tried (14:53–65; 15:1–15). Finally, on that Friday, He was crucified and killed at the hands of Roman soldiers (15:16–41).

Friday evening of that week, Joseph of Arimathaea, a member of the Sanhedrin, approached Pontius Pilate to ask for Jesus' body (Mark 15:43). Before granting the request, Pilate wanted confirmation that Jesus was truly dead (15:44–45). There was to be no doubt on the part of Pilate that Jesus was indeed dead. Once Pilate received this verification, Joseph took Jesus' body and prepared it for burial.

To begin the burial proceedings, Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in linen (Mark 15:46a). The Gospels do not indicate whether or not Jesus' body was washed as was customary at this time (example: Acts 9:37). Joseph then placed the body in a rock tomb sealed with a stone (Mark 15:46b). After the burial, two women observed the burial location (15:47). They would return after Sabbath to finish caring for Jesus' body.

Some students believe that the original ending to this Gospel came at Mark 16:8 and that Mark 16:9–20 was a later addition in the decades after Mark wrote. Much of the information in verses 9–20 is reflected in the other Gospels (Matthew 28:19–20; Luke 24:13–43, 50–51; John 20:14–18). In this lesson, we will engage in a *what-if*. What if Mark did end at verse 8? What could that abrupt ending teach us today?

LESSON COMMENTARY

16:1–4. Sabbath was a time of inactivity. When it ended, the two Marys and Salome (cf. 15:40) bought aromatic oils, which were poured on grave wrappings to counteract the odors of decaying flesh. They arrived at the tomb shortly after sunrise on Sunday. Remembering the large stone covering the entrance, they wondered, **Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?** They were not aware of extra precautions taken by the Jewish leaders, including the sealing of the tomb (cf. Mt 27:62–66). They were surprised to see the **extremely large** stone removed and the tomb open.

16:5–8. They saw **a young man ... wearing a white robe**, an angel (cf. Mt 28:2–5) who told them not to be amazed. He knew they were looking for **Jesus the Nazarene**, who had died, but was raised. He pointed to where the body had laid. The women were instructed to go and **tell His disciples and Peter**, words of reassurance for Peter. Although he had denied his Lord, he was forgiven and still considered part of the apostolic band. All the disciples fled, but they were still “His disciples.” Jesus was going into Galilee, where they would see Him (cf. 14:28). The women **fled from the tomb**, and **trembling and astonishment** gripped them. **They said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.** The full ramification of the announcement was not understood.

LESSON NUGGET – Because they forgot His resurrection promises, the women were in sorrow and worrying about the future: “Who will roll away the stone?” When they learned that Jesus was alive, their first response was fear and not faith; but then they became the first heralds of the Resurrection. The angel had a special word for Peter (Mark 16:7) who was no doubt still grieving his sins. The living Christ gives you something to rejoice in, something to talk about, and something to look forward to. He goes before you.

Sources: Moody Bible Commentary, Standard Lesson Commentary, The Word for Today Bible, and The Essential Everyday Bible Commentary