



Clear Gospel Hope

October 20, 2024

Mark 16:1-8

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16 When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³ And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. ⁶ 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. 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." ⁸ 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.

(Pastor Prays)

For two years, we have listened to the gospel writer, Mark, speaking in clipped sentences. There are no great rhetorical flourishes, no spiritual embellishments; it's just facts. He ended chapter 15 in darkness with just three lonely, brave women that can't let go. They had followed Jesus in his life, and they contributed to his ministry, and then they watched him die. They saw where Jesus was buried, and in chapter 16, they've come to give the last measure of devotion and to do their part to prepare him for the long night of burial.

What a ghoulis scene we have stumbled onto in chapter 16. It is a scene where nothing is as it seems. The stone is not in the way, the man is not dead, and hope is not lost. Christ is not defeated, and his followers are not doomed. Death has not won! What we are about to examine for the next few minutes is a story that has given life to our movement and meaning to our souls. This story has given strength to thousands upon thousands of everyday Christians just like you. And today, I want you to bask in the hope of the resurrection. I want you to rejoice in the love of God that's found in Christ. And I want you to be strengthened by the grace of God in Jesus found at the cross and the empty tomb. By His grace, you're going to make it. By his resurrection, you will see that things are not always as they seem. Today is a day to celebrate, to rejoice, and to have hope.

The Resurrection of Jesus is Our Hope

Let's do a short walk through the passage and then come back and make some applications before we have the Lord's Supper. Join me there in verse one. When the Sabbath was passed, the Sabbath day started Friday at sundown, and it ended Saturday at sundown. It was the Jewish day that was set aside. It was given to God's people from the very beginning, and one day out of seven, it was set aside for rest. It is to be different. **16** *When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.* Those are the three women that had seen him crucified; they watched him die, and they then watched where he was buried. We found that out in chapter 15. Now, when the Sabbath has gone, they can do something. They get spices. Maybe they didn't know Joseph and Nicodemus had already done this. It's strange to me that they are now going three days later in the arid Palestinian heat. Any corpse, any dead body, would have already started to decompose. I'm not sure why they're doing this other than just blind devotion. That's verse one. That's the Sabbath.. ² *And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.* The disciples are gone. It's only the women there, and the stone was very heavy. We find out down in the next few verses it was very large, and they're worried about how they're going to actually get to Jesus, but that doesn't stop them from going there. ³ *And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"* ⁴ *And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large.* Matthew tells us that there was an earthquake, and an angel from

heaven descended down, rolled the stone back, and sat on top of it. Mark just tells us the stone was rolled back. ⁵ *And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.* ⁶ *And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed.* Luke tells us there are two angels. Matthew tells us that those angels their clothing is so white that it's like snow, and their countenance is like lightning. I don't know why Mark doesn't tell us all of this. Mark just says, yeah, it's a young man in some white clothes sitting over there. It's an angel. So when they walk in, he said to them, do not be alarmed. You ought to circle verse 6. There's all kind of doctrine packed into verse six. So the angel says, do not be afraid. Do not be alarmed. So much of the Bible is do not be afraid. And the best thing you can hear today, as a believer in Jesus, is do not be afraid. The angel says to them, do not be alarmed. Look at all the doctrine. *You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.* So think about it now. This should have been the sermon, you have the day changed by God. You have the tomb opened by God. You have Jesus raised by God. Then you have people sent by God. It's all going on right there in verse 6. The angel then gives them the command. It's the same command Jesus will give. ⁷ *But go, tell his disciples and Peter* (you ought to circle that little phrase, and Peter) Thank God for, and Peter. He is the worst backslider in the New Testament, and yet Jesus says to go and tell the disciples and the backslider Peter. ⁸ *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.* You can imagine the emotion, the fear and joy and shock, and hope, the astonishment. They don't know what to say. They didn't talk to a soul because they were afraid. But after that fearsome sight, the gospel begins to spread. What do we do with this passage? What do we do with the resurrection of Jesus? The resurrection of Jesus is our hope. So, what do we do with hope? Let's walk through it. I'll give you a couple of things to consider. Here's the first one. Number one. What does hope do?

Hope gives us a new faith

Mark opens this great chapter with a timestamp, and in so doing, he marks a change for us. Look what he says in verse one. **16** *When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.* The godly women who had watched the crucifixion were leaving their homes in the dark. They had a

mission to perform. J. C. Ryle said that they were driven by the power of strong love for Christ. There is a strange mix of courage, affection, and devotion. It's no accident that the women are the first to the grave. The disciples are sunk in consuming disappointment, and they've gone into hiding like wounded animals. Mark points us to the women. Get it in your mind now: on Friday, Jesus was nailed to the cross and died. Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath. And on this Saturday, Holy Saturday, Jesus rested, dead in the tomb, thereby fulfilling all of the Law of Moses. Remember what Jesus said: I did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. In the text, the three women felt as if they were still under the law. They had to wait until after the Sabbath was over before they could get the necessary supplies to complete the grim task of anointing the corpse of Jesus. It's important to remember the restrictive and legalistic nature of the Sabbath laws. You couldn't do business, you couldn't make visits, you couldn't even cook meals. We forget this, but before Jesus came, trying to live as a child of God meant a strict observance of all the laws of God, which no one could do completely. More than that, the oppressive feel of the law did its intended work. It was a constant reminder that we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God! And we need someone that can take our place and actually fulfill the law for us. And the simple sentence in verse one is a reminder that anything works-based is a different religion. Verse one is legalism, darkness, and hopelessness. But verse two is the resurrection that changes our faith and our day.

Remember the story when Paul is preaching in Acts 20:7. Paul is preaching, and he goes long-winded. Do you guys think I sometimes go long? Paul was long-winded, and a young man named Eutychus is sitting in the window. The candles are lit up there. It gets real warm. He's overcome, his eyes get real heavy, and he falls out of the window. You remember the story. That happened on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day. In 1 Corinthians chapter 16, Paul tells the church to make sure you take up the offering and, when you do, to do it on the first day of the week when the church gathers. In Revelation Chapter 1, John says, I was in the spirit on the Lord's Day.

You see, ours is not a religion, and if you keep the law, then you will be saved. Ours is a faith in Jesus, that he kept the law and that he will save us. On Friday, when Jesus died on the cross and said, it is finished, the law was fulfilled and then punctuated by Jesus spending the Sabbath in the grave. Now it's Sunday, the first day of the week is the Lord's day, and every Sunday we

celebrate legalism being shattered by grace, it's a new day. These three women were getting ready to experience their very first new day. A new day not of restriction but of grace. That is why we worship on Sunday because we all have died in sin. But God made us alive together with Christ and raised us up with him. By grace, you have been saved. By God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. We don't live keeping the rules to earn God's love; we live lives of obedience because of God's love. Every other religion includes legalism, a man reaching to please God. Christianity is God's love and grace to man through Jesus Christ. The resurrection is hope, and hope gives us a new faith.

Hope gives us a new confidence

In verses 2-3, as the three women walked to the graveside of Jesus, they realized they've got a problem. ²*And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.* ³*And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"* The stone was an obstacle, and this obstacle was an opportunity for God to show his greatness. God used what they were worried about to display his own glory. ⁴*And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large.* That stone was rolled away not so Jesus could get out but for those women to see in. It was for those women to see the power of God in the resurrection because the power of God in raising Jesus from the dead is the same power it took to raise you from being dead in sin. We see God's power. It takes the obstacle of that stone and made an opportunity for us to see glory. What does this power mean? It changes how you see the sin of your past. It changes how you see a loss of a spouse or a bad diagnosis. We now view each painful event through the prism of the resurrection of Jesus. John Newton, who wrote the hymn Amazing Grace, before that, he was a blasphemer African slave trader. He spent his entire life working on slave ships as a captain of a slave ship sailing the middle passage between West Africa and Charleston, SC. He was a terrible man committing unspeakable atrocities. God radically saved him, converted him, and called him. It took a life that was so bad that he was an obstacle to the gospel, and God made him a picture of God's Amazing Grace. Here's what the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus does. It

takes your life that has been an obstacle to God's plan and, through Christ, makes your life an opportunity for God's grace. Hope gives us a new faith. Hope gives us a new confidence.

Hope turns panic into praise

Let me show you where I get that in verses 4-6. Listen to the story unfold. ⁴*And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large.* ⁵*And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.* ⁶*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.* Twice in verses 5 and 6, Mark tells us they were alarmed, stunned, amazed, and scared out of their minds. Even verse 8 says they were panic-stricken.

You'll notice what the Angel says in verse 6: don't be afraid; everything is as it should be. In light of the resurrection, panic becomes praise. In verse 6, the Angel gives us a few doctrinal truths. The Angel gives us three things that should turn our panic into praise. The first one is how he calls Jesus, *Jesus of Nazareth*. Jesus means YHWH will save. That was the name given to Jesus because he came to save his people, me and you, from our sins.

John Newton, as he died, said these two great truths. I am a great sinner, and Jesus is a great savior. The second truth is where Mark writes *who was crucified*. Jesus is our substitute. Today, we celebrate the resurrection of Christ and let us always do so in the shadow of the cross. There on the cross, Jesus took every ounce of punishment and anger and judgment of God on our behalf; he is our substitute. The cross is where the judgment of God and the love of God meet. The judgment is absorbed by Jesus as he says it is finished. And the love is given and displayed to us at the resurrection. And the third thing is, *He is risen, he is not here*. In spite of everything you have been through in life, the resurrection of Jesus gives a deep hope that promises to carry you through. We are running out of time, but I'd like to make one last point about resurrection and hope. Number four.

Hope gives us a new message

Verse 7 might be my favorite verse in this whole passage. It's because of the wonderful love of God packed into the last little phrase: *go tell his disciples **and Peter***. Peter, the head disciple

that denied Jesus. He even knew Jesus during his most painful hour. Imagine being Peter. Some of you are him. Peter was going to do something and be something and he completely wrecked it by denying Jesus. But Jesus didn't deny him. The resurrected Jesus called for him. And on the heels of Peter's defeat, Jesus restores, Jesus forgives, Jesus strengthens, and Jesus makes it right. I thank God that the angel said go and tell his disciples and Peter. As we get to the end of the book of Mark, I want you to have hope. The crucifixion and resurrection give us that hope. That hope gives us a new faith. Hope gives us a new confidence. Hope gives us a new praise. And hope gives us a new message. Christian brothers and sisters, celebrate hope today. You can have that hope by grace through faith in Jesus.

(Pastor prays)