

Lives  
May 26, 2019  
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May 15:42-47; 16:1-8

Whether you call it ironic or providential given recent events in our class (and even in our own home,) it's timely that this last chapter of Mark's gospel is about the resurrection of Jesus. Followers of Christ aren't to just study the facts of His resurrection as history; we are to embrace it as our source of hope when faced with the "sting" of death and power as we live the Christian life today!

Paul wrote about this in 1 Thessalonians 4:13–14 (NLT)

*<sup>13</sup> And now, dear brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope. <sup>14</sup> For since we believe that Jesus died and was raised to life again, we also believe that when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died.*

Though death brings grief, the reality of Christ's resurrection allows His followers to have HOPE in our grieving. We have the hope that we will see saved friends and loved ones again, and the hope for our own resurrection one day. As Chuck Swindoll put it, "...by His resurrection, we now have abundant life this side of the grave and eternal life beyond it."<sup>i</sup>

Big Idea: Is Jesus' resurrection a REALITY in my life? Do I live each day like Jesus is alive? Do I think of Jesus not as a historical hero, but as my Living Lord? It's wonderful to have a cross around our necks, but we also need the empty tomb in our minds.

If resurrection power is real in my life:

- I won't just remember Him fondly I will abide with Him daily!
- I won't just revere His memory I will rest in His power.
- For followers of Christ, Easter isn't once a year it's every day!

- Mark 15:42 tells us the sun was setting on the day of Christ's crucifixion.
- It was also the day before Sabbath and a day of preparation for Passover.
- For Jews, burial of a loved one's body had to happen on the day of death.
- Verse 43 introduces a man named Joseph. Other than this incident we know nothing else about Joseph, nor do we know where Arimathea was.
- What we DO know is Joseph had both material means and great courage.
- He was *"a respected member of the council [the Sanhedrin – ruling council of Jewish leaders], who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God..."*<sup>ii</sup> "Matthew 27:57 called him a "disciple" of Jesus, though John 19:38 noted he kept it a secret. John also noted that Joseph was assisted by Nicodemus."<sup>iii</sup>
- Joseph "took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus."
- **Why did he need great courage to make this request?**
- **Any idea why Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead?**
- Pilate called for the centurion who oversaw the crucifixion. The centurion confirmed that Jesus was dead and Pilate granted Joseph's request.

Mark 15:46–47 (NLT)

46 Joseph bought a long sheet of linen cloth. Then he took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped it in the cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone in front of the entrance. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus' body was laid.

- Warren Wiersbe has an interesting theory that Joseph and Nicodemus were already preparing for Jesus' burial before the crucifixion:
  - *"Joseph had to prepare the tomb in a garden near the place where Jesus died. The men also had to obtain a large quantity of spices (John 19:39), and this could not be done when the shops were closed for Passover.*

*And all of this had to be done without the council's knowledge."*

- *"It seems evident that God prepared these two men and directed them in their activities...It is possible that they were hiding in the new tomb when Jesus died. It was a simple matter for Joseph to go to Pilate for permission to take the body, and for Nicodemus to guard the body until the official release was given. Had these men not acted boldly, the body of Jesus might have been disposed of like rubbish."*
- *"It was important that His body be prepared for burial so that the empty graveclothes could be left behind in the tomb (John 20:1–10). Also, the way He was buried fulfilled prophecy (Isa. 53:9). The fact that He was buried is proof that Jesus actually died on the cross, for the Roman officials would not have released the body without proof that Jesus was dead."<sup>iv</sup>*
- Verse 47 reminds us (as Pastor Jeremy did on Mothers' Day) these two women who were dedicated to Jesus watched carefully. The women stayed and kept watch while the men fled to hide.
- The women weren't just watching out of curiosity. They were planning for the care of Jesus' body after the Passover was done.
- 16:2 says, <sup>2</sup> *Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb.* <sup>3</sup> *On the way they were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?"* <sup>4</sup> *But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside."<sup>v</sup>*
- We have those moments when we fret about how WE will solve a big problem (rolling the stone) only to find out that God had taken care of it before we even got to the moment we were anticipating!
- God used an earthquake and an angel to roll back the stone (Mt. 28:2.)
- Verse five says, *"...and entering the tomb..."* These women were not fearful about investigating why that stone had been moved.

- They encountered a “young man,” an angel (Mt. 28:5-8; Lk. 24:1-8.)
- <sup>6</sup> *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.”<sup>vi</sup>*
- The angel answered all their questions before they could ask them! “You’re looking for a dead rabbi, He’s not here! He’s a risen Savior!”
- The angel was there to show them the REALITY of the resurrection.
- Then he gave them their marching orders:
- <sup>7</sup> *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.”*
- Something interesting: “...tell his disciples and Peter...” The angel singled Peter out in a clear indication that Jesus was initiating Peter’s restoration after denying Christ.
- Verse eight: <sup>8</sup> *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.<sup>vii</sup>*
- Their reluctance to share what they saw didn’t last long based on the accounts in the other gospels. These women were the first evangelists to share the good news that Jesus had risen!
- Focus on the words “trembling” and “astonishment” (NKJV – “amazed”.) These words led me to the point of this lesson.
- These women were AMAZED! It begs the question, are you and I truly AMAZED at the reality of the resurrection or do we take it for granted?
- It seems that most of us focus on the cross rather than the empty tomb. Why wouldn’t we when we think of the tremendous suffering Jesus endured in our place to cover our sins?
- Thank God for the cross, but the picture of grace is incomplete without focusing regularly on the resurrection.

The apostle Paul wrote:

1 Corinthians 15:14 (NLT) <sup>14</sup> *And if Christ has not been raised, then all our preaching is useless, and your faith is useless. 1 Corinthians 15:19 (NLT) <sup>19</sup> And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.*

But in verses 51,52,54,55 (NLT) Paul focuses on the REALITY of resurrection:

*<sup>51</sup> But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! <sup>52</sup> It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed.*

*[Verse 54] <sup>54</sup> Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory. <sup>55</sup> O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"*

The Life Application Study Bible speaks to the importance of the resurrection:

*"The Resurrection is vitally important for many reasons: (1) Jesus kept his promise to rise from the dead, so we can believe he will keep all his other promises. (2) The Resurrection ensures that the ruler of God's eternal kingdom will be the living Christ, not just an idea, hope, or dream. (3) Christ's resurrection gives us the assurance that we also will be resurrected. (4) The power of God that brought Christ's body back from the dead is available to us to bring our morally and spiritually dead selves back to life so that we can change and grow (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). (5) The Resurrection provides the substance of the church's witness to the world. We do not merely tell lessons from the life of a good teacher; we proclaim the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ."<sup>viii</sup>*

- You and I can live in RESURRECTION POWER every day.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:19–20 (NLT)

<sup>19</sup> I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power <sup>20</sup> that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms.

- As Paul said, the same "mighty power" that raised Jesus from the dead overcomes sin in our lives and enables us to live the abundant life Jesus spoke about in John 10:10.

- Paul also stated in Philippians 3:10 a wonderful goal for every believer: <sup>10</sup> *that I may know him and the power of his resurrection*<sup>ix</sup>
- Henry and Melvin Blackaby in their book *Experiencing the Resurrection* wrote: *“So many Christians are missing out on abundant life in Christ because they haven’t understood how the resurrection completes the cross. The resurrection is the key that unlocks the door, the validation code giving us access to what Christ accomplished on the cross. And it will profoundly transform your life.”*<sup>x</sup>
- Chris Tomlin wrote a song called “Resurrection Power.” He commented about it’s meaning to Billboard Magazine: *“It...reminds us of the foundation of our faith, which is that you've been made alive... Scripture says we're brought from death to life by...the resurrecting power of God. That's an addiction-breaking power, a marriage-saving power.”*
- The resurrection isn’t just a historical event; it’s the source of power for every follower of Christ!

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- It’s wonderful to have a cross around our necks, but we also need the empty tomb in our minds.
- Is Jesus’ resurrection a REALITY in my life?
- As I pondered that question I thought of an old hymn:

*Stanza 1:*

*I serve a risen Saviour; He's in the world today.  
I know that He is living, whatever men may say.  
I see His hand of mercy, I hear His voice of cheer,  
And just the time I need Him He's always near.*

*Chorus:*

*He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!  
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.  
He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart!  
You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart.*<sup>xi</sup>

- Do I live each day like Jesus is alive?

- Do I think of Jesus not as a historical hero, but as my Living Lord?
- Do I share the AMAZING news of resurrection with everyone I can?
- If resurrection power is real in my life:
  - I won't just remember Him fondly I will abide with Him daily!
  - I won't just revere His memory I will rest in His power.
  - For followers of Christ, Easter isn't once a year it's every day!

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<sup>i</sup> Swindoll, Charles R.. Insights on Mark (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary Book 2) (p. 396). Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

<sup>ii</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 15:43). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>iii</sup> Explore the Bible © 2019 LifeWay. Christian Resources, Nashville, TN 37234.

<sup>iv</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 166). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>v</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Mk 16:2–4). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>vi</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Mk 16:6–7). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>vii</sup> *ibid*

<sup>viii</sup> Tyndale. Life Application Study Bible NKJV (LASB: Full Size) (Kindle Locations 163133-163136). Tyndale House Publishers. Kindle Edition.

<sup>ix</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Php 3:10). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>x</sup> [https://waterbrookmultnomah.com/pdf/Experiencing\\_the\\_Resurrection-Henry\\_and\\_Melvin\\_Blackaby\\_Chapter1.pdf](https://waterbrookmultnomah.com/pdf/Experiencing_the_Resurrection-Henry_and_Melvin_Blackaby_Chapter1.pdf)

<sup>xi</sup> "He Lives" - Music and lyrics by Alfred H. Ackley, 1887 – 1960  
<https://www.greatchristianhymns.com/he-lives.html>