

His Last Days, Part 5: The Resurrection

Mark 16:1 ESV (Pg. 498) 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.

- I. The Disciples of Jesus were in shock. Judas had betrayed Jesus. Peter had denied him 3 times. He and the others were now in hiding for fear that they were next. After brutally executing Jesus, the disciples feared that the Chief Priests would have them crucified as well, exterminating forever their band of believers.
 - A. Never has there been a group of people more disappointed. They had pinned all of their hopes on Jesus, They just knew he was the Messiah; the long-awaited heir to David’s throne! How could he now be gone?
 1. He taught with such authority! He worked miracles like no one had ever seen before! The blind saw, the lame walked, the deaf heard, the mute spoke and the dead were raised! He demons obeyed him, cowering in fear.
 2. Peter had once confessed that Jesus was the Messiah before all the rest and Jesus commended him for it, saying that he had recognized this, not by his own intuition, but by revelation from the Heavenly Father¹.
 - B. That same day Jesus told them that they were going to Jerusalem where he would be put on trial, abused and even crucified². Even though he added that he would rise from the dead, they thought he was speaking metaphorically, and even being a little bit morose. But he repeated this prediction two more times³.
 1. They drew no hope from that now. They had seen him accused. They saw him mocked and abused. To satisfy the Jews, the Romans had him crucified quickly, after a series of rushed trials, almost as an afterthought.
 2. Even more, they saw him suffer and eventually die, They heard his loud cries from the cross. They saw a centurion thrust his spear under his ribs and into his heart, ending all hope that he would come down from the cross.
 - C. No, this was **certainly** the end. They hoped now to slip away quietly, stay under the radar, and hopefully avoid a rendezvous with their own crosses.
- II. But three of the women, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and another follower of Christ’s named Salome, still came to the tomb to embalm Jesus’ body; they had been prohibited to do it the day before, since it was the Sabbath Day.
 - A. But these sweet ladies, determined to serve their Lord one last time, were a little perplexed as they approached the garden tomb. They were concerned that they would not even have access to the Lord’s body to prepare it for burial.
 1. They knew that Joseph from Arimathea, a wealthy follower of Jesus, had requested that Pilate release the body to him to be buried in a new tomb he

- had recently dug out for himself. They had helped him quickly wrap the body and place it in the tomb before the Sabbath began on Friday night.
2. When they were finished, Joseph had a massive stone rolled in front of the entrance, to protect the body from being disturbed.
- B. But the Jewish rulers had gone to Pilate as well. They had heard that Jesus had claimed that he would rise from the dead, and this rumor (as they believed it to be) gave them cause for concern.
1. “What if his followers try and steal the body to perpetuate some kind of hoax? they asked. “We must stop that from happening!”
 2. So Pilate had the tomb officially sealed, and even had a guard posted at the tomb around the clock. If anyone tried any funny business, they would pay!
- C. So these women approach, carrying the spices and oils they would need to anoint the Lord’s remains, they fretfully ask one another, **“Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”**
1. They certainly couldn’t roll it away! It was too heavy! If the stone were to be removed, it would have to be done by someone much stronger than they.
 2. But besides the stone, what about the soldiers? How could they convince a detachment of Roman warriors to defy orders and let them do what they must do for Jesus? Their situation was likely hopeless, but in faith, they made their way to the place where Jesus had been buried.
- D. And so they must face the fact that they are out of options, because even if they exert every last bit of it, their strength will contribute nothing to change their situation. If they are to be helped, that help will come from somewhere else.
- III. But approaching the tomb, something strange happened that took their breath away. **Mark 16:4 ESV And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large.** The large rock covering the opening was now off to the side, lying flat. The mouth of the tomb was wide open. They were shocked!
- A. Furthermore, the Roman seal had been broken, and there were no soldiers to be found anywhere. Something strange had certainly taken place that morning!
1. Later, they would discover that there had been an earthquake, that angels had appeared and flicked the stone away like a mosquito! The soldiers had trembled with fear and had even fainted dead away!
 2. When those soldiers eventually went back into the city, the Jewish rulers concocted a story to keep them from getting in trouble with their Roman overlords and to prevent people from knowing what they had seen, but how can you keep a story like this from spreading? It’s impossible.
- B. Their hearts racing, the women approach the wide-open tomb and cautiously peer in. **Mark 16:5 ESV And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.** The young man was an angel, a messenger straight from Heaven; and what a message he had!
1. **Mark 16:6 ESV 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.**
 2. If they needed evidence, the angel says, “Come see the place where he lay!” There were no riddles to be unlocked! There was no special access to be granted. The announcement was clear. “He’s alive! Come and see!”

- IV. But there was more to be said. **Mark 16:7 ESV** “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.”
- A. He wouldn’t just be a ghost, a rumor, a legend, or a myth! He would show himself to be alive to more than 500 people before his ascension⁴. Luke tells us in Acts that he would do so “with many convincing proofs”⁵.
1. The disciples would see the Lord! They would touch him and share meals with him. Thomas would place his finger in the nail prints, and his hand in the scar on his side where he was pieced⁶. How their hearts would rejoice!
 2. Did you notice that he specifically said to let **Peter** know he was coming to him? Peter was humbled by his failure, but he would have his heart lifted; hearing words of reconciliation and restoration from the mouth of the Lord.
 - a) It is a wonderful thing when you have blown it to hear words of acceptance, forgiveness and restoration. It is something that not nearly enough people experience. We tend to hide away in our guilt and shame.
 - b) But Jesus never lets one of his lambs wander away to bear their shame. On the contrary, he is the Good Shepherd⁷ that leaves the 99 secure and healthy sheep to go find that one lost one⁸.
 - c) In Peter’s darkest, lowest moment, Jesus was saying, “Hold on, Peter! I’m coming for you. You belong to me, and I never lose one of mine⁹!”
- B. The disciples would soon understand those three predictions Jesus had made to them before his crucifixion. They would know what Jesus meant when he said he would rise again! And they would never be the same because of it.
1. All of them but John would die martyr’s deaths.
 - a) Peter was crucified upside-down. Andrew was also crucified, dying only after he had preached to his murderers for 2 days from his cross. James was thrown from a pinnacle of the temple, and having survived, was beaten to death with a club.
 - b) Matthew was run through with a sword as a missionary in Ethiopia. Thomas was speared in India. Nathanael was flogged to death. Paul was beheaded by Nero. They tried to boil John in oil, but God protected him miraculously, so they wound up exiling for a few years. He was the only one of the 12 that died peacefully. He was 93 or 94 at the time.
 2. They all died because they would not recant their testimony of a risen Lord. Seeing your friend murdered, and then eating with him 3 days later can have an affect on you! A bona fide resurrection will change you forever!
- C. But it wasn’t just seeing Jesus Christ alive that changed them, it was what his resurrection **meant**! How could they fear if Jesus’ rising proved sin could be forgiven and righteousness granted¹⁰? If the threats of the devil were emptied of their power because all authority was vested in Jesus¹¹; if the power of death really was vanquished, and Jesus guaranteed to all who repent and believe eternal life; if you really believe these things, what must you fear?
- D. **Hebrews 2:14 ESV** Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death **he might destroy the one who has the power of death**, that is, the devil, **15** and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

- V. This is the meaning of the Resurrection. Freedom from the fear of that which seems inevitable. Freedom from the fear of things that are out of our control.
- A. All of us will come to a point in life where we realize there is too much sin for us to ever make restitution for; that there is too much heartache to ever find comfort in ourselves; that there are too many things out of our control -our health, relationships, finances, etc. All of us will come to a point in our lives where we realize that disaster has come of everything we've trusted in and so we cry out, **"Who will roll away the stone for us?"**
 - B. If you haven't reached that point yet, you're too young, too self-righteous, or too deceived. But take my word that the day is coming when you will find your supply of strength has run dry and is no help for what is ahead of you.
 1. And I'm not just talking about dealing with "bad days" at work or school, job or family-related stress, and the mere problems of life that we all experience.
 2. I'm talking about the **big questions**. What is my life all about? Am I truly loved? Can I ever be forgiven? Can my broken heart be mended? Can I stop doing the things that are destroying me? Does anything really matter? What happens to me when this life is over? Will I cease to exist, or be judged?
 - C. Any rational person pondering these questions will throw their hands up in the air and cry, **Ecclesiastes 1:2b CSB "Absolute futility! Everything is futile!"**
 1. We realize that we are spiritually dead, literally zombies! So we try to amass stuff and achieve status; or we stare at screens all day so that we can try to medicate our gnawing desperation. We trade playthings for purpose, and try to convince ourselves that things really aren't that bad for us. We may even try to convince ourselves that the end will never come for us.
 2. But by the grace of God, we sometimes experience moments of clarity. Seeing things as they really are, from the depths of our broken souls we cry, **"Who will roll away the stone for us?"**
 - D. But the good news of the gospel is that God didn't roll the stone away so that a handful of women could get to Jesus, but so that Jesus could get out for the blessing and salvation of the whole world; and that includes you!
 1. The same God that raised Jesus from the dead can remove anything that is keeping you from Jesus if you only believe!
 - a) Your sin is no match for him. The Bible tells us that he will remove it as far as the east is from the west¹².
 - b) Your stumbling is no obstacle to the Most High! The Bible says he lifts us up from the muddy pit of destruction and sets our feet upon a rock¹³.
 - c) The devil is no threat to God's plans. The Bible says that Jesus came, lived, was crucified, raised and ascended to destroy all the devil's work¹⁴.
 2. He rolls away the stone, and invites to "come see the place where he lay". In other words, he will give you evidence of his resurrection as he breaks the power sin and death in you makes you new. **Romans 8:11 ESV If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.**
- VI. There is a great story in Luke's gospel that takes place the day of the resurrection that illustrates this very well and I would like to close by reading it to you...

- A. **Luke 24:13 ESV** That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, **14** and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. **15** While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. **16** But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. **17** And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. **18** Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” **19** And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, **20** and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. **21** But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. **22** Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, **23** and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. **24** Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”
1. When they say, “But we had hoped he was the one...” they are speaking the language of those who need someone to roll away their stone.
 2. These guys knew what it was like to have big questions, a stone stood between them and their heart’s desire. They had no hope now. But watch what Jesus does...
- B. **Luke 24:25 ESV** And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. **28** So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, **29** but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. **30** When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. **31** And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.
1. Their problem was no different than ours. Any sin that plagues us is simply a variant of the chief sin: unbelief. Jesus points this out when he says that they are foolish and “slow of heart to believe”.
 2. So mercifully, he gives them a basis for belief; the entire Old Testament! He explains to them how Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses parting the Red Sea, David and Goliath, Jonah and the Big Fish - it was ALL pointing to him!
 3. But that’s not all he did. He depicted for them what had just happened in Jerusalem by taking bread, breaking it and sharing it. Their eyes were opened and they remembered that it was he was the Bread of Life¹⁵ that gave his body to nourish the world.
- C. **Luke 24:32 ESV** They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”

33 And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, **34** saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” **35** Then they told what had happened on the road, and how ***he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.***

1. So two men who had no hope, no future, no strength to fix their situation. They needed someone to roll away the stone for them.
2. So Jesus gives them the Word so that they might believe. Then Jesus gives them himself both in fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread. And Luke tells us that “he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.”

VII. Who needs a stone rolled away this morning? Let me save you a lot of time and energy by telling you that you don't have the strength to move it on your own. But if you will “look up” and trust Jesus, leaving the work to him, you will find that he will not only move stones, but mountains, to clear his path to you!

- A. But don't deceive yourself! You can't hype yourself up to see stones rolled away. You can only repent of trying it your own way, and place your trust in Jesus to be your only answer. He'll never agree to be your “Plan B”!
- B. What is your stone this morning? Do you need forgiveness? Freedom? Peace? Strength? It's all found in the same place. ***“he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.”***

1. The bread is his body, broken for you. Paul said, “For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”
 - a) Can today be the day that you place your trust in the Lord? Can you look to his broken body and find the healing you're looking for there? Jesus has been raised up for you and if you'll just look, you'll live¹⁶.
 - b) If you would like to talk to me about how to place your trust in Jesus, or how to be sure you're a Christian, or if you want to make a new start to a cold faith, I would love to talk to you after the service!
2. “In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.”
 - a) Is your sin a black stain upon your soul this morning? The blood of Jesus can make the foulest sinner clean if you only believe!
 - b) He said this cup is a new covenant between you and God. This one is not based on your goodness, but on his. Anyone who asks can drink this cup of unfiltered mercy and be made new!

¹ Matthew 16:13-20

² Matthew 16:21

³ Matthew 17:22, 20:17-19

⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:6

⁵ Acts 1:3 CSB

⁶ John 20:25-28

⁷ John 10:14

⁸ Luke 15:3-7

⁹ See Luke 22:31-32 for Jesus' promise to purse and restore Peter after his fall.

¹⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:21

¹¹ 1 John 3:8

¹² Psalm 103:12

¹³ Psalm 40:2

¹⁴ 1 John 3:8

¹⁵ John 6:35

¹⁶ See Numbers 21:6-9 and compare John 3:14-15