

He has Risen!

Mark 16:1-8 - NCBC, April 12, 2020

Main Point: **Jesus' resurrection calls for your personal response.**

- How do you approach the empty tomb? (1-3)
 - From a place of humility (1)
 - From a place of darkness (2)
 - From a place of weakness (3)
- How do you understand the empty tomb? (4-7)
 - Jesus' resurrection is supernatural grace (4-5)
 - Jesus' resurrection is historical truth (6)
 - Jesus' resurrection is transformational mercy (7)
- How do you respond to the empty tomb? (8)
 - How are you responding to God's power? (8a)
 - How are you responding to God's commands (8b)

Application: **Go share the good news that Jesus lives!**

Opening Announcements:

- **Remember to visit myncbc.org** and follow our NCBC Facebook page to stay informed on all ministry/event updates during this season of sheltering. Special Facebook groups are also available for Rooted Students/Children's Ministry/Women's Bible Study/etc.

<<Christ the Lord is Risen Today!>>



Good morning church! Jesus lives! He is risen!! Yes, He is risen indeed!!

Jesus is not dead. Jesus is alive and this morning we quiet our hearts to gather around His word. We come to renew our hope in His resurrection. The tomb is empty – and God is worthy of worship from our thankful hearts.

Our Scripture today comes from **chapter 16 of Mark's gospel**. So please open your Bibles and prepare to read from the last chapter of the gospel written by Peter's good friend and ministry partner, John Mark.¹

Certainly Easter 2020 is different from every other Easter weekend we've celebrated before. As we continue to shelter-in-place, we are all confronted this morning with the stark reality of loss. The church's Easter morning singing just isn't the same when we worship from home, the Easter lilies don't smell as pretty, today's meals and family times are going to be very different from what Mom

¹ Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, 39; 1 Peter 5:13;
<https://www.gotquestions.org/John-Mark-in-the-Bible.html>

would have planned, and much of the joyful celebration of this day now feels strangely muted.

These are real disappointments, and certainly we are all looking forward to when we can gather again in person to worship Jesus together. The silent isolation we experience today shouts loudly that this world is not our home, and the fullest celebration of Jesus' resurrection is still future for all of us!²

Yet overwhelming our disappointments today are many good reasons to truly rejoice! For Jesus is alive, death has been emptied of its power, and sin has been forgiven!! The Spirit of the Living Christ Himself dwells inside every born-again believer today – fueling our joy and thanksgiving as we open our Bibles to **Mark 16** to celebrate His victory over the grave!

So let's read God's Word together now. Please follow along as I read from **Mark chapter 16, verses 1-8**, from the English Standard Version:

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.

This is God's Word.

Let's Pray Together.

Whenever you start reading in the middle of a book, it is helpful to know the flow of the argument that has led up to what you're about to read. Understanding a text's context is very important for understanding a text's meaning.

However, sometimes we get lazy in our approach to those Scriptures most familiar to us. After all, many of us have heard the resurrection of Jesus preached every Easter since we were children!

And certainly it's a wonderful gift to be close friends with certain passages of Scripture! But sometimes familiarity can unintentionally blind us to the author's intentions.

So before we dive into the glories of **chapter 16** this morning, I want to lead you on a jet tour through **the Gospel according to Mark**.

² Psalm 16:11
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Written by John Mark, whom we call Mark, probably only 20+ years after Jesus' death,³ Mark states his purpose for writing very clearly in the opening verse:

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Mark wants his readers to know that Jesus the Nazarene⁴ is truly the Messiah, the very Son of God.

He structures his gospel account in three sections where he builds this argument to prove Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.



For example, Mark immediately opens his gospel with the baptism of Jesus where a heavenly voice testifies, *You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased.*⁵

This man is God's very own Son... how will you the reader respond? The next 7 chapters are full of miracles and signs that prove Jesus is God. In fact,



Twice demons cry out that Jesus is the Son of God, the Son of the Most High God.⁶

³ "Evangelical scholars have suggested dates for the writing of Mark's gospel ranging from A.D. 50 to 70. A date before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70 is required by the comment of Jesus in 13:2." John MacArthur Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Mark's gospel.

⁴ A phrase used commonly throughout Mark: 1:9; 24; 14:67; 16:6.

⁵ Mark 1:11

⁶ Mark 3:11, 5:7

But most people do not believe that Jesus is the Messiah, because He doesn't fit their expectations of what the Christ should be. So in the middle of Mark's gospel, in **chapters 8-10**, Jesus directly asks His disciples,

*Who do you say that I am?*⁷



And Peter answers, You are the Christ!⁸
It sounds like the right answer doesn't it?

But when Jesus proceeds to teach that He must suffer, and be killed, and rise again after three days⁹ Peter rebukes Jesus ... only to earn a very strong rebuke in return.¹⁰ You see, Mark's gospel makes it clear that even though Jesus plainly and repeatedly told the disciples that God's Son was going to be killed and rise again,¹¹ the disciples didn't understand. They could not grasp a suffering Savior!! They couldn't understand how Jesus could come to earth *not to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many.*¹²

⁷ Mark 8:27-30

⁸ Mark 8:29

⁹ Mark 8:31; c.f. 9:9-10, 31; 10:33-34; 14:8, 28

¹⁰ Mark 8:33

So in the middle of teaching about His upcoming death and resurrection, Jesus takes Peter, James, and John up a mountain,



Where He is transfigured before them in glory and a heavenly voice again testifies,

*This is my beloved Son. Listen to Him.*¹³ Again Mark confronts us readers... will we accept a Savior who is a crucified suffering servant?

Finally **chapters 11-16** record Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem that culminates in His death on a cross and resurrection three days later. Interestingly,

¹¹ Mark 8:31; c.f. 9:9-10, 31; 10:33-34; 14:8, 28

¹² Mark 10:45

¹³ Mark 9:7



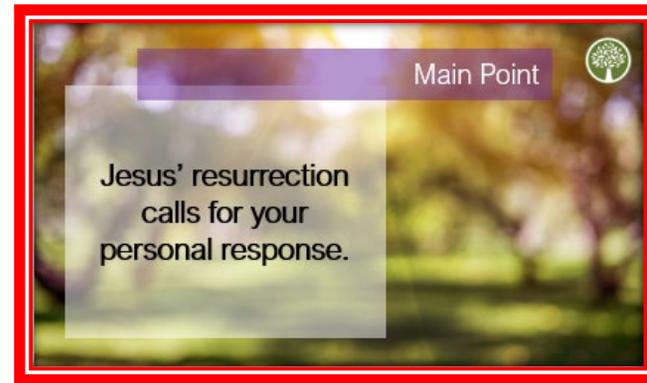
It is a Roman centurion, a Gentile, who is the first person to recognize that this crucified suffering servant is truly the Son of God. For as Jesus died, the soldier cries out,

*Truly this man was the Son of God!*¹⁴

Mark's gospel then abruptly and surprisingly ends with the Scripture we read this morning. While our English Bibles contain an extended ending after **verse 8**, you'll notice there's a footnote in your Bible that indicates **verses 9-20** are not part of the earliest manuscripts, and therefore we believe Mark actually ended this Gospel account abruptly in **verse 8**....with all the disciples in hiding, and the women running away telling no one about what they had just learned about Jesus' resurrection.

This original ending of Mark's gospel leaves us hanging...all to awaken our own personal response. You see, Mark wrote his gospel record so that you, the reader would be put into a place of necessary decision. Who do you believe Jesus really is? And here at the very end of Mark's account,

¹⁴ Mark 15:39
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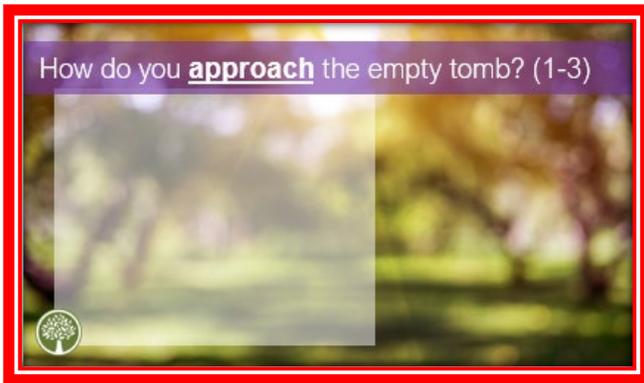


Jesus' resurrection calls for your personal response.

Will you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, or will you reject Jesus and flee from Him overwhelmed by how different He truly is from my own expectations?

Listen friend... Mark ends His gospel with a cliff hanger... so that we the readers would respond in faith, and finish the rest of the account in our own life! Mark's record was just the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God...and the resurrection of Jesus from the grave demands that we each personally respond.

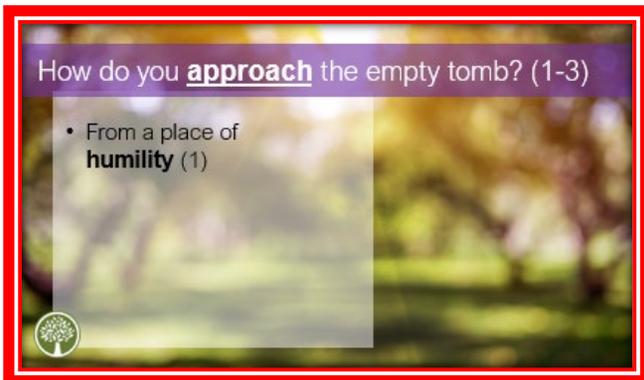
So in **verses 1-3**, let's begin by asking,



How do you approach the empty tomb?

In **verse 1** we meet 3 women approaching the tomb. Mark first introduced us to these same 3 women back in **chapter 15 verse 40**, where we met Mary Magdalene, Mary (the mother of James the less), and Salome (the mother of James and John) witnessing Jesus' death on the cross from a distance.

Now these women¹⁵ are approaching the empty tomb,



From a place of humility.

As women, they understood their lesser rank in the male-dominated culture. These women had no status or merit that gave them a right to approach the gravesite.

They simply loved Jesus! They were among the many women who had followed Jesus the last three years.¹⁶ Now they only wanted to anoint Jesus' dead body with some of the perfumes they had purchased on Saturday evening, after the Sabbath concluded at 6pm.

You see, Jews did not embalm their dead like the Egyptians. So as a humble act of love and devotion to Jesus, these 36 hours after his death they wanted to offset the stench of his decomposing body by pouring liquid perfume on the corpse.

So please understand... these women were not expecting a resurrection. They just wanted to anoint the body of their dead teacher as one last act of love. In more ways than one, they were approaching the tomb,



From a place of darkness.

¹⁵ We know from Luke 24:10 that Joanna was also with them
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¹⁶ Mark 15:41

Yes, **verse 2** makes it clear that they started their approach to the tomb very early – likely referring to the literal darkness that is present between 3 and 6am. And by the time they arrived at the tomb, dawn had broke on this new Sunday and the sun had risen.¹⁷

But I believe these women were approaching the tomb with more than just physical darkness. Their beloved Jesus was dead! They had seen him die! They had held Jesus' mother as she wept. They had seen the disciples flee and hide. All that Jesus had said and done over the last 3 years...now he was dead...was this the way it would end?

Theirs was a darkness of grief! And their spiritual understanding was dark. They couldn't recall any of Jesus' repeated promises about his resurrection on the third day. Those teachings were the farthest thing from their minds in this crisis.

In their poor and humble condition of despair and suffocating grief... these women came near the tomb.

Verse 3 reveals what they kept saying to each other as they traveled,

Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?

The two Mary's had watched Joseph of Arimathea roll a large stone over the tomb's entrance on Friday

¹⁷ John 20:1 makes it clear that Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb first while it was still dark. So most likely, the women all arrive at the tomb around dawn. They would have left home while it was still dark, and got to
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evening.¹⁸ But in their haste, they hadn't even thought about how they were going to get access to Jesus' body.

You see, they knew they were approaching the tomb,



From a place of weakness.

These women weren't strong enough to move that large stone. And they seem to be completely unaware that a Roman guard had officially sealed the tomb shut and posted a guard over it on Saturday.¹⁹

So dear friends, how do you approach the empty tomb? The women came humbly, out of love, yet without full understanding or faith...they simply drew near without having all their questions answered, bringing nothing but humility, darkness, weakness, and some simple perfumes with which they thought might hide the stench of death.

Mark intends for his account to produce a personal response in each of us... so can I encourage you this

the tomb shortly after sunrise.

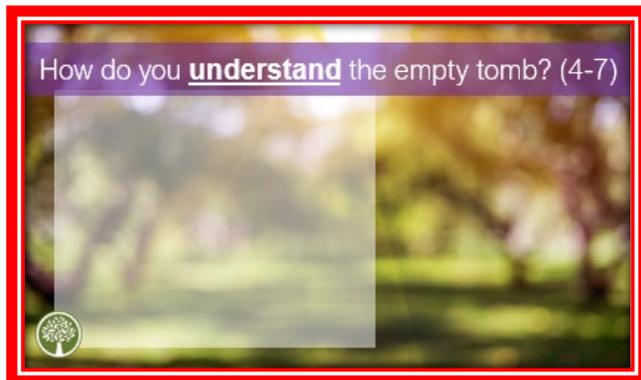
¹⁸ Mark 15:46-47

¹⁹ Matthew 27:62-66

morning? No matter who you are, no matter how you've failed, no matter how weak you are, or what questions you have, or whatever you don't yet know ... Jesus is inviting you to come, draw near to His empty tomb.

As He provided for these women, He will provide for you as well, as you desire to meet Him at the empty tomb!

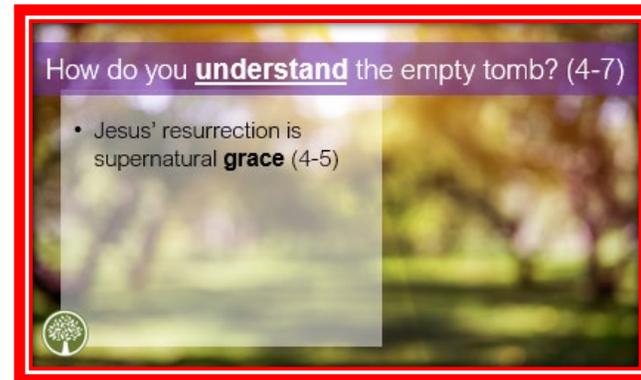
Now **verses 4-7** cause us to ask,



How do you understand the empty tomb? (4-7)

As we draw near to Jesus' tomb to celebrate His resurrection this morning, Mark is our tour guide, making sure that we properly interpret everything we encounter at the empty tomb.

First Mark makes in very clear in **verses 4 and 5** that,



Jesus' resurrection is supernatural grace!

Jesus' resurrection is the work of God. This is not the work of men. Mark presents 3 ascending proofs for God's supernatural grace at work in Jesus' resurrection.

First, in **verse 4** the women see from a distance that the stone – and the text emphasizes this was a very large stone – had been rolled away from the tomb's entrance – likely thrown off its track and lying face down in the yard. **Matthew 28** tells us that an angel and an earthquake supernaturally opened the tomb – not to let Jesus out but to let the witnesses in!²⁰

So dear friend... is there any large obstacle standing in the way of new life in Jesus? God is able to open the strongest graves by His life-giving grace! Repent and believe on Jesus this morning that you may be saved!!

Second, when the women actually enter the outer chamber of this large family tomb in **verse 5**, they encounter an angel! A supernatural messenger of God's grace! Sitting – that's the position of authority, on the

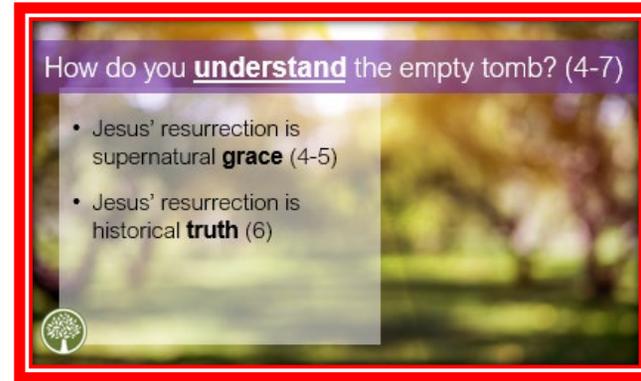
²⁰ Matthew 28:2-4

right side – that’s the side of favor, dressed in a white robe – that’s the clothing of heaven! Talk about God’s grace! He greets these women with an angel – in fact other Gospel accounts tell us there were two angels in the tomb,²¹ but Mark only focuses on the one who speaks to the women.

And by the way, the fact that this angel speaks to the women in **verse 6**, and delivers a message of grace to comfort their fear and commission their response... is the third amazing expression of supernatural grace.

You must have this understanding of the empty tomb. Jesus’ resurrection was the work of God Himself. It was supernatural. There was no slight of hand or conspiracy. There was no merit or qualifications required from us. Jesus’ resurrection is accomplished by Divine grace alone.

Now of course, these women were alarmed with shock, fear, and awe as they encountered such unexpected grace early Sunday morning. So the angel’s words in **verse 6** make sure we understand that,



Jesus’ resurrection is historical truth.

The angel immediately reassures the women – *Do not be alarmed.*²² Don’t be afraid... yes, our God of resurrection is all powerful, but He is gracious. Dear weak child of darkness... fear not. And then notice what the angel says next,

You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.

God knows why they came to the tomb, and He wants them to know they haven’t made a mistake. This is the very tomb that once held the man named Jesus. The real historical person who was from Nazareth. The one who was crucified this past Friday! Yes, you women are in the right place...so don’t misunderstand the emptiness:

He has risen!

Literally, He has been raised up. By God! You see the Jewish and Roman leaders did not dispute that the tomb was empty. They just made up lies about his body being

²¹ Luke 24:3-4 and John 20:12; two was the number necessary for a valid witness (Deuteronomy 17:6)

²² This is a typical assurance given in angelic manifestations (Daniel 10:12, 19; Matthew 28:5; Luke 1:13, 30; 2:10; Acts 27:24)

stolen by the disciples.²³ So listen carefully to this heavenly messenger:

Jesus has been raised from the dead! I can almost picture the angel waving his arms in a sweeping gesture,

He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

In other words, Jesus' resurrection is a bodily resurrection. It's not just His spirit that lives. His physical body, the one that used to be lying right here in the tomb, the one that used to be encased with all of these empty grave clothes,²⁴ that body is no longer here, because Jesus' body has been raised by God. Jesus lives again!

Friends, people have been trying to explain away Jesus' resurrection for the last 2,000 years. But how do you understand it? Jesus' resurrection is the supernatural work of God Himself, it is historical truth, and then in **verse 7**,



²³ Matthew 28:11-15

²⁴ John 20:5

²⁵ Mark 9:9

Jesus' resurrection is transformational mercy. The resurrection of Jesus has the power to transform your entire life! Consider the mercy 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.

I imagine that these women's eyes and mouths are wide open by the end of **verse 6**. The angel's command must have startled them: Off with you! Go on now! Jesus' resurrection has a purpose...all of **verse 6** is the basis for action in **verse 7**. Go and tell this good news!

Now back in **chapter 9** Jesus had told his disciples not to tell anyone that He was the Son of God until *after* He rose from the dead.²⁵ In fact, Mark's gospel is full of Jesus telling people to stay quiet about who He really is²⁶... until now. But now... Jesus lives forever! Sin and death have been defeated! The Lamb of God has finished the substitutionary sacrifice and made atonement for the sins of the world!²⁷

And what a message of mercy these women are given:

Tell His disciples and Peter – all those men who have failed the Lord, and are in hiding right now! Especially tell Peter – the one who denied Jesus three times²⁸ – let

²⁶ Mark 1:44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:30; 9:9

²⁷ John 1:29; c.f. Isaiah 53:4-12; Matthew 1:21; Romans 5:8; 1 Peter 2:24

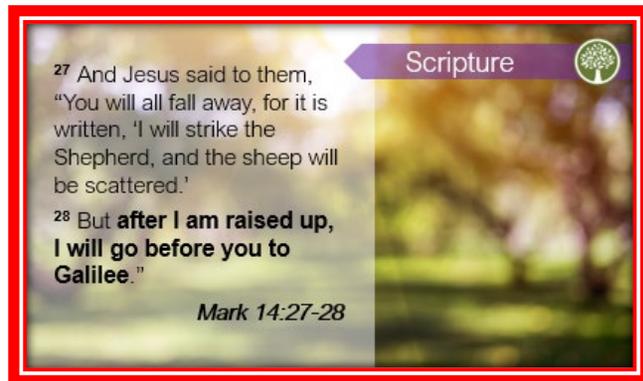
²⁸ Mark 14:32-42, 66-72

them all know that Jesus wants to meet up with them all in Galilee – back in their home territory.

Church – this a beautiful message of forgiveness and restoration to ministry! Yes Peter and all the other disciples failed Jesus. All the disciples were in hiding.²⁹ But Jesus' resurrection empowers life-changing mercy! Not only has death been conquered by Jesus' resurrection, but sin has been forgiven!!

The resurrection of Jesus has the power to make all things new in your life! Believe on Jesus, confess your sins, and you will be forgiven!³⁰

Back in **chapter 14 verse 28**,



Jesus had clearly instructed his disciples,

After I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.

Galilee. Their home. The place where most of Jesus' followers were. Likely the place where **1 Corinthians 15**

²⁹ Mark 14:50

³⁰ Romans 10:9-10

verse 6 says Jesus appeared to more than 500 brethren at once after His resurrection.

So the angel says, *There, in Galilee, you will see Jesus, just as He told you.*

Loved ones, God never lies. You can trust His promises. Whatever He has said, He will do. Although everything seems to be falling apart in the darkness around you... God always keeps His Word!³¹

Jesus is our living Shepherd... and He goes before us. So follow Him. Listen to Him. Trust His Words.

And whenever you fail Him, hear afresh the mercy of **verse 7**:



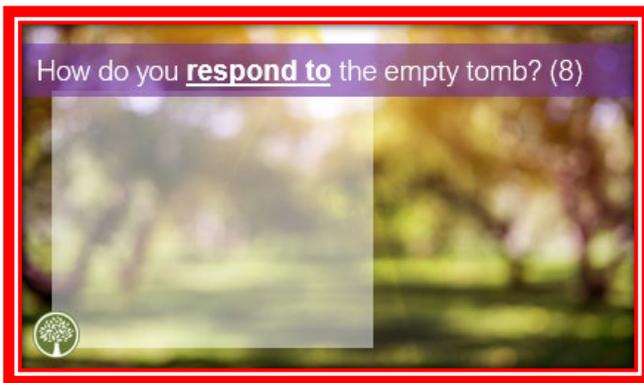
Because the resurrection of Jesus mercifully makes all things new. Sin is defeated. Shame is conquered. Mercy claims the victory! Our salvation is secured!³²

³¹ Psalm 16:8-11

³² 1 Corinthians 15:17-18; Romans 4:25, 10:9-10

Is this how you understand the empty tomb? Church, our rescue from sin, and selfishness, and shame, and despair is all possible because Jesus died in our place to pay for our sin penalty, and then He was raised up by God 3 days later to secure our eternal life forever with Him!

So all that is left to ask now is the question of **verse 8**:



How do you respond to the empty tomb?

Verse 8 is Mark's pointed cliff hanger. It's the extraordinary way he chooses to end his gospel record...

And the women went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

The angel said, Go and tell! But Mark leaves us to believe that they told no one. Paralyzed and overwhelmed by their encounter with God's power.

So let me ask you,

³³ Romans 1:4
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How are you responding to God's power?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is a glorious manifestation of the power of God!³³ Fear, trembling, and astonishment are all natural expressions for people who see the power of our living God!³⁴

So maybe it's better to ask,



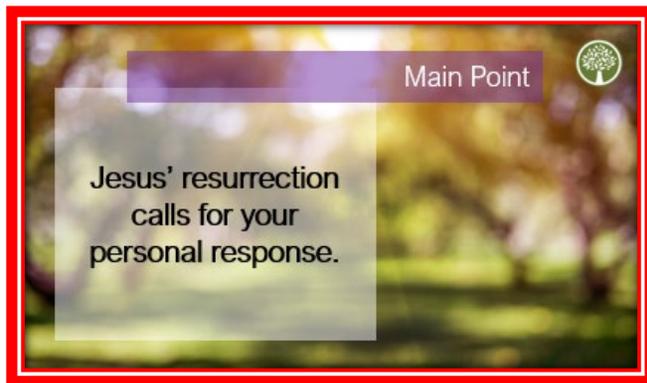
How are you responding to God's commands?

Mark's gospel record is chock full of testimonies of God's miraculous power. His gospel proves beyond a shadow

³⁴ Mark 2:12; 4:41; 5:14, 33; 9:6, 32; 10:32

of a doubt that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the very Son of God! And yet Mark ends with stark reminder that all Christ's followers will fail.

The disciples are in hiding. The women who are entrusted to tell the apostles about the resurrection are fleeing, saying nothing to anyone! And this book comes to an end.



In other words, Mark clearly wants us to understand that **Jesus' resurrection calls for your personal response.** How will you respond to the realities of Jesus' resurrection?

Loved ones, we are weak. We all fail and fall short. But on this Easter Morning let me remind you that the resurrection of our Lord and Savior has ushered in the Holy Spirit's arrival!³⁵ Now church – rejoice in this truth – now, the Spirit of the Living Christ is with us – in us – to empower our response of faith and obedience to God's commands!

So if you have repented of your sins and trusted in the finished work of Jesus' substitutionary death and resurrection for your relationship with God, His Spirit is now with you, empowering you to,



Go share the good news that Jesus lives!

Join with Peter and the other disciples – yes they had much failure and weakness – but once they received God's Spirit at Pentecost, they were bold and faithful witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus Christ!

Christian – we have received Christ's Spirit that we might go and share the good news of Resurrection with this dark and sinful world! So go and share the gospel of Jesus' resurrection life by how you walk, and live, and relate with others in the midst of this present crisis. Share the good news that Jesus is alive by how you talk, and smile, and seek to do good to others around you in these days.

Your life and your lips were created to proclaim the news that Jesus is alive!! Our Savior lives!! Death and the

³⁵ John 17:7

power of sin has been conquered, and our Lord Jesus is the eternal victor!



By the power of God's Spirit, we can celebrate and glory this morning in the reality that Jesus has risen – yes, He has risen indeed!

John Mark recorded this gospel so that we would know that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ – the very Son of God. And knowing of His victory over death, that we would live in His resurrection power.

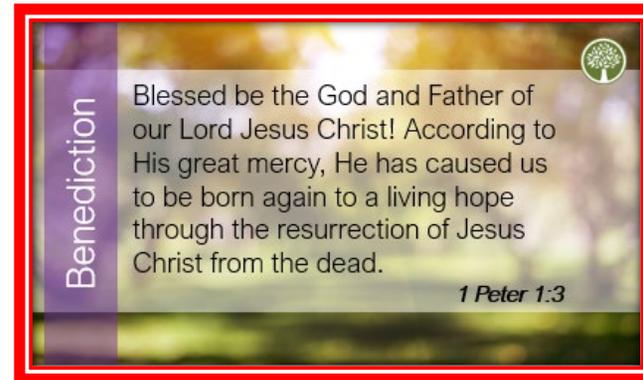
May we each personally respond to Jesus' resurrection with faith, love, and Spirit-powered obedience to all His commands.

Let's pray.

<<Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery>>

Sermon Stretcher Highlight – for children, parents, etc.

Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!
According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to
a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
1 Peter 1:3*

Recommended Resources on He has Risen!:

- Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34; 14:28
- John 2:19; 5:21-23, 25-29; 10:17-18; 17:7
- Acts 17:31
- Romans 1:2-5; 4:25; 6:4-5; 10:9-13
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-58
- Colossians 1:18
- 1 Peter 1:3-5; 3:21-22
- Revelation 1:18

- <https://www.desiringgod.org/topics/the-resurrection-of-christ>
- <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/81-20/profound-implications-of-the-resurrection>
- <https://bibleproject.com/explore/mark/>

- *Easter Uncut*, Carl Laferton
- *Finally Alive*, John Piper
- *The Gospel According to God*, John MacArthur

Growing Deeper: Life Group Discussion Questions

1. Do you believe Jesus of Nazareth died, was buried, was raised again the third day, and ascended to heaven? Why or why not?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 15:17-28. What is the connection between Jesus' resurrection and your own salvation?
3. Read Romans 10:9-13. Does believing that Jesus rose from the dead necessarily mean that one is saved? Does Satan believe that Jesus rose from the dead? What does it truly mean to believe that Jesus is Lord of your life? How does the resurrection prove Jesus' lordship over all things (C.f. Colossians 1:18)?
4. Read Matthew 27:55-56, John 19:25-27, and Luke 23:55-56, 24:10. Where were the other 10 apostles when Jesus was crucified and buried? (c.f. Mark 14:50) Why is it so significant that Jesus' resurrection is first revealed to these women?
5. Review Mark 16:6-7. What is your favorite phrase in these two verses? Explain and discuss together.
6. Review Mark 16:8. Why did John Mark end his gospel this way? How will you respond to Mark's testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the very son of God?