

Mark 16 - The Power of the Resurrection

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Chapter 16, verse 1, *"When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome brought spices, so they might go and anoint him. (Meaning the body of Jesus.) 2 And very early on the first day of the week, (And that's of course Sunday) when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb."* (ESV)

Stop there for just a moment. You guys know, we went through this on Good Friday. But for those of you that weren't with us, just to refresh. Jesus died on the cross shortly before the end of the day.

Now, for the Jews, the Sabbath began at sunset on Friday night. Okay? And they really didn't have much time to bury the body of our Lord. And they... The body was taken down from the cross. They quickly wrapped Him in some linen, put a little ointment on. They did these things basically for smell reasons to be completely honest with you. That was the Jewish custom but it was a hurried job. And they did it and put Him in the tomb.

But with every intention... The women had every intention after the Sabbath... Remember, they got to rest on the Sabbath. Can't go there during that day. After the Sabbath, their intention was to go back and finish the anointing process. And that's what they're doing right here. It even tells us who was doing it.

Now the first thing we notice about these women, first thing we notice, as we read through these first couple of verses, is that they are going to the tomb with the expectation of finding a corpse. Okay?

Remember, Jesus had spoken repeatedly about the fact that He would rise from the grave. Nobody seemed to believe it. And these women are going—and these are some of His closest followers—these ladies. And they're going to the tomb with every expectation of finding a dead body. And they are talking along the way.

In fact, verse 3 tells us, *"...they were saying to one another, (Gee, I wonder who's going to) roll (that stone) away... from the entrance of the tomb?"* Big, heavy, huge stone that would cover the mouth 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." Which, of course, is a polite way of saying they were scared out of their brains.

"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, (and) 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."

It says, *"they said nothing"* but of course, that means along the way. When they finally got to the disciples, they told them everything. And Mark, in his typical, short, brief style of writing, leaves out a great deal. He doesn't talk to us here about the fact that John and Peter, actually got up and ran to the tomb. They still were filled with unbelief. But they were like, okay, something happened. They were just going to go check it out.

You guys remember that famous painting of Peter and John, running to the tomb? It's... I love it.



I love seeing it every Easter season because it just shows this... Well, I don't know—cross between doubt, and fear, and expectation, and just question, I

suppose. I assume the guy on the left is Peter, because John was younger than Peter.

In fact, I always love going to John's gospel and being reminded. John doesn't mention himself by name. He just says, the other disciple and Peter went to the tomb. (John 20:3) But he does tell us, but that other disciple being younger out ran Peter and got there first. (John 20:4) See, that's a guy thing. Right? And all the men said, yeah right! Yeah right! If I was going to write a gospel account that was going to survive the ages, I'd put in there that I beat Peter to the tomb.

But John Mark in this gospel account leaves a lot of information out. It's a good thing we have the other gospel accounts to look at all of them. And have a more rounded picture of what took place on that day.

But this first 8 verses of this chapter bring us to the empty tomb. And the proclamation of the angel sitting there in the tomb saying, I know who you're here to find, but He's not here. He's risen. He told you He's going to rise, remember? Sort of a thing.

You think those angels would have been, maybe even chastising. But they didn't. They just said, it's okay. He's risen just like He told you. And He's going to meet you in Galilee.

Now the fact is, He actually appeared to them before they got to Galilee. And it's... And we begin to learn about some of those things. Verse 9, look what it says, ⁹ *[[Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. (And) ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. (And) ¹¹ ...when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.]*

Of course, except for Peter and John, who ran to the tomb to just see what had happened. And we know that Jesus, also appeared to a pair of disciples who were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, which is about a seven mile walk.

Verse 12. Mark gives us a very brief description deal of this. A recording of this saying, *"After these things he appeared in another form (Which is to say, they were kept from recognizing Jesus) to two of them, as they were walking into the country. ¹³ And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them."*

Now, you read Luke's account, and you get a blow by blow of this whole story of Him talking to these two disciples. And even names one of them by name.

And all that happened, all that they said, all that Jesus said, and how they finally recognized Him when He began to break bread in their presence. (Luke 24:13-35)

Verse 14 says, *"Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen."*

And particularly, we're reminded of the hardness of heart of Thomas. Again, Mark doesn't cover it. But we remember that when Jesus first appeared to the twelve minus one. Remember, Judas had committed suicide. Thomas wasn't there. Don't know what he was out doing. But he just wasn't there.

And when he finally gathered back with the disciples, they're just all, can't believe it. And they're telling him, He's alive. Jesus is alive. And he says, yeah? Unless I see Him, and I see the scars... And Thomas is there, like, we watched Him die. And unless I see Him alive, I'm not going to believe it. And you'll remember that a week later, Thomas got his wish.

The Gospel of Mark basically ends this way. Verse 15, *"And he said to them, 'Go into all the world, proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: (And then He goes on to mention signs that would accompany the proclamation of the Gospel. He starts to mention them, and we see a lot of these in the Word) in my name they will cast out demons; (Yeah, we see a lot of that in the Book of Acts) they will speak in (new languages) new tongues;"* Which they have never learned before. Acts shows us that in Acts chapter 2. We read about it in 1 Corinthians.

Verse 18, *"they will pick up serpents with their hands;"* We actually have an instance of Paul being saved from a poisonous snake that bit him. Latched on to his arm and Paul just shook it off into the fire. And the people of that island thought, oh boy, this guy's going to puff up any minute now and just drop dead. And when he didn't for a long time, they decided, oh, he must be a God. And wanted to sacrifice to him. But we see things like this where certain signs and things happened.

He goes on in verse 18, *"...if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them;"* We don't actually see this in the Scripture. But a church historian by the name of Eusebius, actually records the fact that both Barnabas and John, were apparently forced to as a torturous effect, I'm assuming, to drink a deadly poison but it didn't affect them. It didn't. That's interesting.

And it says, "*they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.* " And of course we see a lot of that in the Book of Acts. Let me just say here about these couple of verses here.

It's important to note here that none of these things are given to us in the Scripture, as a dare. Okay? There have been some very misguided people throughout the years who have seen these verses as an inspired list of guarantees, that if I go out and be reckless and stupid, God's going to protect me. And I can hold on to venomous snakes and drink stuff and it's not going to, have any effect on me.

God, wasn't saying, here's your spiritual bulletproof vest, now go out and be reckless. Basically, what is being conveyed here is that when the Gospel goes out, along with those people who take it, there will be supernatural phenomena that follows them because they're taking the Gospel out. It's a very simple sort of a thing. He lists some of these things here, but that's the point of it. When you take the Gospel out, God's going to meet those people in a supernatural sort of a way. And there will be signs and wonders that will accomplish an encouragement of those who believe.

And there's so many Christians today who think, well, there's no such thing as miracles today we know that. You need to go follow some missionaries who are taking the Gospel out into some third world countries. You see, one of the problems with miracles is that we decided we were going to stop going out. We were going to stay home. But we wanted miracles to stay with us. And we want to have some miracles just here in our little room because it makes us feel better. And it makes us feel like, we can go, whoo! And we can walk out of church going, well, that was pretty cool. God was here!

You know what? Miracles were never meant to sit and just tantalize our hearts and excite us for the purpose of being excited. God intended miracles to follow—accompany—the proclamation of the Gospel as it goes out; not stays home. But in our own American sort of weird thinking, we decided we just, we don't really want to be inconvenienced. We're just going to stay home and we're going to make sure those miracles stay here with us. And we started making up stories and doing things that were stupid. And we had to get wild and wacky and it had to get wackier to keep people excited and engaged.

Yeah, you want to see miracles? Take the Gospel out. Go, take it. Take it places where it's never been heard before. And have an expectation that God's just going to follow you. And that if necessary, there's going to be things that are

going to take place, not to, to excite and impress people, but to let them know that the power of God accompanies the proclamation of the Gospel.

That's the point. It's not to make you look good, or me look good, or people to think we're spiritual. It's so people will say, God is really among you. And this is a genuine proclamation of the Gospel. And this is real. This is powerful.

Paul wrote letters to the churches and said, hey, when we came among you, we didn't just come with words, we came with power. There was the power of God's Holy Spirit that was there in your midst. And he reminded them of that.

The last 2 verses of the chapter say, *"19 So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.]]"*

That's what we were talking about. And that basically comes to the end of Mark's account. But again very abbreviated. The other Gospels give so much more detail.

In fact, in Luke's account you we get the whole picture of the road to Emmaus and all that went along with that. And we find out that when those two disciples came back to Jerusalem, that they were like, Jesus is alive! We saw him! And they said, we know, and He's appeared to Peter. Now that's interesting. They tell them, yeah, He met with Peter.

Do you know that we don't have any details of that meeting? We know that Jesus had a personal appearance to Peter. But we don't have any insight into what took place in that meeting. And I think that was probably because it was intended to be private. Because, Peter is the one who, after his braggadocios, claims of, even if I have to go to my death with you tonight, I will! And Jesus said, no, you're actually all going to desert Me. And Peter, for you, it's a little bit worse. You're going to deny that you even know Me three times. And Peter's like, no way! Well, yes way, he did. He was broken because of it.

And I think there was a real need for Jesus to meet personally with Peter. Because, failure has a way of making us feel like we're done. And I don't know what happened in that meeting, but I can just guess that Jesus sat down with Peter and just said, it's okay, I'm alive, buddy, and you're not done. Would you love to have been a fly on the wall, though, in that meeting?

There are, not here in Mark, but many other references of the appearances that Jesus gave to other people. Paul actually writes about some of Jesus' post resurrection appearances in his first letter to the Corinthians. Let me show you this on the screen. It goes like this,

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (ESV)

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to..., (Peter) then to the twelve. (minus one obviously) Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. (And) Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared to me.

So Paul gives us this list. And oh, by the way, this James here that is mentioned in the last part of this is not the disciple James, the brother of John. This is actually James, the half-brother of Jesus, son of Mary and Joseph. They had other... They had children, and brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters to Jesus. But James was a man who didn't believe. He didn't believe that Jesus was who He claimed to be. He didn't believe He was the Messiah.

There are times in the Gospels that tell us, that during His public ministry, Jesus's family came... They thought He was out of His mind. And they came to take control of Him; take Him home. The brothers of Jesus did not believe.

We know of two of them who came to faith. James, who went on to write the letter that we call, James toward the end of the New Testament. And the other one was Jude, who wrote a very short letter as well. But they were both earthly brothers of Jesus. You'll remember... Oh, and by the way, James went on to become the leader of the church in Jerusalem.

You'll remember as we shared that video here right after worship, that it ended with that passage from Peter. And I want to put it back up on the screen so you can see it again.

1 Peter 1:3 (ESV)

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.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, he has caused us (very important) to be born again (He caused us to be born again to what?) to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." And it's that living hope that I want to talk about, just for a moment here if I could with you this morning.

Hope is an amazing thing, is it not? I mean, boy, the Bible says, *"hope deferred makes the heart sick."* (Proverbs 13:12) In other words, when you have no hope, you really have nothing to live for. It's called being hopeless. And when we're hopeless, I mean, that's frankly, when people often take their lives because they feel they have no reason to live. There's no hope.

And I get why people become hopeless in the world in which we live. Believe me, I get it. And if your hope is in this world, which is very transitory. And here today and potentially gone tomorrow, I get why people come to the end of their hope. And feel like, man, there's nothing else to live for.

Now, as believers in Christ, the Bible makes it very clear, particularly from this passage, that we have been born again into a living hope. Not just... He doesn't just call it a hope. He calls it, a living hope. But then he begins to talk about what that hope is predicated upon. And he talks about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. And that is the power that is behind our hope.

Let me just say something very, and I want to make this very clear. If there is nothing that is behind—if there is no power inherent in your hope—then it's not real hope. It's just wishful thinking, I suppose. Or dumb luck that you're wishing or hoping in. I mean, I can say to you: I hope you have a good day; I hope your car starts tomorrow; I hope the weather is nice for your upcoming wedding; I hope your trip to China goes well; I hope, I hope, I hope. But I have nothing to do. I have nothing to say about those things to really... I mean, I can't change the weather; I can't make your trip go well. I'm just passing along a, nicety.

Is that what we're talking about when we talk about the living hope that we have in Christ? Is Peter passing along a nicety? Is it just dumb luck? Gee, I really hope things go well. We've been born into this roll of the dice. No, no, no, no, no. It's got to be something more than that. And it is something more than that.

But what tells you that your hope is founded in something real, is if there's power behind it. Or if it if there is an inherent power in that hope. Does that make sense? I hope that it does. Hope must be founded in power. My hope better be in the power of the Word of God. Right? That's why Paul wrote to the Romans. Let me show you this. Romans chapter 15,

Romans 15:13 (ESV)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

What is he saying here in this passage? I want God to fill you with hope. I want God to fill you with joy. But let me... I want you to know this. It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that hope is going to be realized in your life. It's not simply because, gee, I really hope you have a good day. I really hope you're, you'll have some joy. I really... No, there's something underlying it. Okay.

Now, the reason I'm making this point is because I want to clarify something for you and I about this hope that we've been born into. And the hope that we have for life and for life after death. All right. And it all centers around a prayer that Paul spoke over the believers in Ephesus. And I'm going to show it to you here in a couple of slides. First of all he says to them,

Ephesians 1:17-21 (NIV84)

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us.

I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious father, may give you (first of all) the Spirit of wisdom and revelation so that you may know him better." That's the first part of his prayer, I want God to be able to reveal Himself to you, so that you'll know Him. Right?

Then he goes on to say, *"I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened* (which means to be opened, obviously) *in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you,* (And then he describes that hope and what it's predicated upon) *the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,* (And by

the way, the saints are us. We are the saints) *and his incomparably* (Look at this guys. Here we go) *great power for us who believe.*"

Remember there's got to be power behind what you hope for, or it's no hope at all. Okay, look what he goes on to say,

Ephesians 1:17-21 (continued...)

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, and power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the age to come.

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, and power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the age to come.

Not only does Paul to say here in this passage, I pray for you guys a lot that you would have hope, and I want you to know, that hope is founded—predicated—upon the power of God working in your life.

By the way, he calls it your inheritance. Then he describes that power. Because you and I, are like, power shmower. What are we talking about here? Right? You can say it all day long. You have power. There's power. What are we talking about? What kind of power?

See, that's what he explains here: The power is like the working of His strength, which He exerted when He raised Jesus from the dead. That is the power, that is behind the hope that you and I have inherited in Jesus Christ. Okay?

Here is the point, we tend to look at the Resurrection of Jesus as a past historical event. And that's pretty much all it is to us. And we read about it in the Bible, and we go, well, that's cool. Two thousand years ago, God exerted this power. I sure wish He'd do it today. But 2,000 years ago, God exerted this power and in the exertion of that power, He raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Sweet! What does that mean to me? See, that's what that video was asking. Right?

When we played that video, what does the Resurrection mean to you today? Is it just a past historical event? Is it something you read about 2,000 years ago and

really can't relate to in any way? Or is there a reality that affects your life? Is there a truth that is there in the Resurrection of Christ, where you can say, yes.

Not only did God exert the power to raise Jesus from the dead, whereby death has been conquered in the sense that we no longer fear death. We know that death is now just walking through a door, as it were, into the very presence of God. Literally, the sting of death has been removed.

But is that all it is? Is it just something for the sweet by-and-by? Or is there an ever present reality to the power that raised Jesus from the dead? That's what Paul is saying. There is a present reality.

He says, in fact, I constantly pray for you guys that you would know this ever present reality. I pray for you constantly that, first of all, you would know God better, and second of all, that you would understand the inheritance that you have. How rich you are in Jesus. And the power, he says, oh, the power. I wish that you would know the power that you have as Christians. He says, what...

And then he anticipates their question. What power? I'll tell you what. It's the same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead that conquered the grave. That's yours. And we're all going, really? And we just don't get it.

I got to tell you, I was watching this video on YouTube the other day. And it was... I think it was like a phone video or something. But somebody's literally videoing this other guy who's sharing the Gospel with these tribal people. I don't know where they lived. I didn't hang on the video that long.

But he's explaining, just Jesus Christ to these people and what happened. And how, He was put to death. And they're all standing around this guy and they're listening. And they're animated.

And as he's telling about Jesus, like, yeah... And then the betrayal and then they arrested Him, and this and that. And they crucified Him. They're all, ah man. And it was just really cool. And then they got to the point in his telling about the Resurrection and how He conquered death.

And they're just like (Pastor Paul makes a face of incredibility) And they just went bananas. And they started hooping and hollering and lifting each other off the ground. And they were carrying each other around. Woo hoo! Woo hoo! And they were... And it says, the guy said on there, that they celebrated for two and a half hours.

(Pastor Paul feigns a very proper stance) Well, it's just not very civilized. I mean, we in America, we would never do something that uncivilized, of course. No, they like, got it! They understood the implications. It wasn't just that Jesus died. It's that His death was for you. And that death not only caused a forgiveness of sins to take place, which gives you that promise of eternal life. But that power of the resurrection is yours. It's your inheritance to have now!

And what that means, in practical terms you guys, is that wherever you need power in your life, God has provided it. And yet we Christians seem to walk around like some of the most defeated people on the face of the earth. I mean, I see Christians, oh, pastor, pray for me. And we are just this group of people... I wonder sometimes why people don't want to come to Christ when they look at us. You're like, where's the victory? Right? Where's the power? Where's the joy? Well...

You have received an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade. And it's not just, it's not just for the one day, someday, sweet by-and-by. He has given you power to have victory in your life, today. And that means in your marriage, in your home, with your children, wherever the battle is ensuing.

And I look across here and I know there are many battles that are going on in the lives of Christians. Listen, we need to get ahold of this. I mean, we need to get a hold of this by faith. We need to begin to believe by faith, that we have power, in Jesus Christ, through the inheritance that is ours by faith. We need to believe there is power and stop letting the devil kick us to the curb every single time he gets the whim to do so. And begin to stand up and say, there's power.

And it's not power in you and me. I mean, it ultimately does come to you and me. But it's predicated upon Him and what He has done. And when we begin to get a hold of this, we can start echoing things, not in just a, I say it because I memorized it. But because I really believe it.

And I start saying things like, I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength. In other words, is my power. And we don't just quote it because it's one of those nice things to put on the refrigerator. We quote it because we really believe it. He has in... I've received an inheritance from Him of power.

Paul says, I pray for you that you might know that power. Why do we not know that power? Why do many Christians simply not know that power? It's because we haven't needed it. Let me tell you something. Every so often, I meet a Christian who goes through an extremely difficult season of their lives. And I mean the stuff that just rocks you to your core. And everything that they ever

depended upon in this life, all those supports are kicked away. And they got nothing. They got nothing but Jesus to rely on. You know what they find? They find power. Power they didn't even have a clue about beforehand. Because everything in their life was set up in such a way as to never ever really need to go to that power.

We do that as Christians sometimes. We talk, we talk, we talk about the power of God. And we make sure we never ever have to use it. But you know what? There's coming a day in all of our lives when every single support structure will be kicked away. And we'll have nothing. We will have nothing to depend on in this world to bring joy, strength, happiness, purpose. And we will have only God. It's going to be me... It's going to be you and God, me and God, and that's it. And what's going to happen on that day?

We better start getting acquainted with that power today. Right? Let's not wait. Let's not wait. Because that's like waiting until the battle to, arm yourself. It's like the battle is raging, where's my gun? Where is it? I know I put it somewhere. And the bullets are flying. And you're like, where's my gun? You can't do that. Let's start doing it now.

Let's start realizing what the power is now. And let's start walking in it. Let's start believing that He has power to transform our lives, to transform our marriages, to transform our homes. Let's begin to really believe that God is going to make a difference in our lives. Let's put faith on the line. Let's put God on the line.

Do you understand that He doesn't mind that? You and I, get bugged when people press us to come up with, something. God has made all kinds of wonderful promises and He doesn't mind you saying, Lord, I'm going to hold you to that one. He doesn't mind at all. Because there's plenty of power to go around. And He wants you and I, to be intimately acquainted with it.