

Mark Core Study #11

Mark 16:1-20 - Jesus is Risen!

LEADER'S PREPARATION

This is your last study of Mark – well done, you've made it! Be sure to wrap up by going over what you have learnt and try to spend less time than usual on the study and a longer time in prayer and socializing. Celebrate with your core, maybe by having a special snack prepared. Also try to spend an extended time praying for each other before you split up for the winter break.

Mark 16 begins with an account of Jesus' resurrection from the dead, as witnessed by Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. The frightened women enter the tomb and see a man who tells them that Jesus is alive and that they should go and tell the disciples and Peter of this. Verses 14-20 (which will be the focus of this study) tell of the unbelief of the disciples at this amazing news, the creation-wide task that Jesus sets before them, the power that will be given to believers, and finally his ascension to heaven.

Your translation may have a note saying that early manuscripts and some ancient witnesses do not have verses 9-20. While it is possible that Mark ends with verse 8, we shouldn't simply dismiss the rest because we cannot be sure that verses 9-20 are not part of the original book of Mark. These verses do not call into question any major biblical themes and thus have been included in Scripture.

As always, try to read a commentary on this passage (the NIV Application Commentary is a good one) after having read through a couple of different translations on your own.

Here are some questions and suggestions to help you dig deeper:

1. Who are the main characters?

There are the women who visit the tomb: Mary Magdalene, out of whom Jesus drove seven demons, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. These women are the ones who watched Jesus die on the cross in Mark 15:40. Although Jesus' body has already been anointed with spices by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea in John 19:38-40, these women show faithfulness and courage by going to the tomb to pay their respects.

There is a young man in a white robe who is described as an angel in Matthew's account of the resurrection (Matthew 28). Jesus, who is no longer dead, appears to Mary Magdalene and then the disciples in different forms. Finally, there are The Eleven who include the twelve apostles appointed in Mark 3:14-19, minus Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus.

2. Compare and contrast the disciples' responses to the message of Mary Magdalene, to the two disciples who saw Jesus in a different form, and Jesus as he rebukes them.

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3. What are the commands that Jesus gives the disciples?

Jesus commands his disciples to go and to preach. They are to tell everyone about the glorious news that Jesus has risen and beaten death. Those who believe are to be baptized.

4. What does Jesus mean by the word 'condemned'?

Those who fail to believe the good news will be judged as guilty of not recognizing the power, love, and authority of Christ.

5. What are the promises that Jesus makes?

He promises that those who believe and are baptized will be saved, and that those who do not believe will be condemned. He also says that signs will accompany those who do believe (these include driving out demons, healing, and speaking in new tongues).

These signs are not definitive symbols of salvation (if they don't accompany your belief, your salvation is not called into question!); rather, they show the Lord's continual love for and protection of those who believe the good news. For example, we are told that those who believe will be protected if they pick up snakes or drink deadly poisons (vs 18). Note that Jesus does not say that they are to go and pick up snakes or drink poison on purpose to prove that they are saved, rather Jesus says that when these things occur the believers will not be harmed. Check out Acts 28:3-5 for one example of how the protection from snakes plays out for the apostle Paul.

6. Is Christ's ascension into heaven (vs 19) significant for us today?

The illustration of Christ sitting at God's right hand is an affirmation of his divinity, his power, and his reign. It is important because it is a reminder that God is in control even as his disciples attempt to carry out his commands on earth. It is also an exciting event as the Father and Son are once again reunited.

NOTE: It might help you to read the parallel passages regarding the resurrection in Matthew 28, Luke 24, and John 20.

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INTRODUCTION

What has God taught you so far this year?

or

How has your understanding of who Jesus is changed as we have studied Mark?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Jesus rebuke the Eleven for? What areas of disbelief do you struggle with?

2. How does Jesus' resurrection from the dead expand our idea of what the 'good news' is?

Now that Jesus is risen, death has been conquered. What was hoped for and hinted at has finally been accomplished. Those who believe in Jesus have been rescued and granted freedom from their brokenness and sin - this really is good news! All that is left to do now is for the disciples to tell creation about this good news.

3. What does Jesus command of the Eleven? What does he promise?

Check out #3-5 in the leader's preparation section for more info.

• **Optional question:**

How are the signs mentioned by Jesus here fulfilled later in Scripture?

In the book of Acts, the spreading of the good news is often accompanied by one or more of the signs mentioned by Jesus in Mark 16. For example, the disciples heal people and drive out demons in Acts 5:15-16 as a part of their ministry and speak in new tongues in Acts 2:3-4, Peter heals a crippled beggar in Acts 3:2-10, and Paul is bitten by a viper but suffers no ill effects in Acts 28:3-5.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

4. Do you think that the instructions and promises that Jesus gave the disciples in vs 15-18 still apply to us today? Why or why not?

5. Do you find comfort in the fact that the Lord was working with the disciples as they preached (vs 19-20) ? Does this cooperation inspire you to do great things for God on campus? What kind of things?