

## RESURRECTION SUNDAY – “HE IS NOT HERE, FOR HE IS RISEN”

### “WHY THE CHURCH MUST CELEBRATE”

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*Reflecting on His Work and the Storyline of the Bible*

Read: Mark 16:1-8

Prayer:

*Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ overcame death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life: Grant that we, who celebrate with joy the day of the Lord's resurrection, may be raised from the death of sin by your life-giving Spirit; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the same Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen. <http://www.bcponline.org/>*

Resurrection . . . one word and everything changes. In this one word, hope is reinstated. There can be no doubt as to the overwhelming sense of bewilderment and confusion present at the empty, EMPTY tomb. There is absolutely no way of explaining it away or dismissing it as the outcome of some radical fringe. Without each element within the Story, its “Good News” is sterile. It is the resurrection, HIS RESURRECTION that punctuates the atonement with an exclamation point. Let us consider some salient features from Mark’s narrative.

First, the Jewish day of rest is over and a new day of “work” begins (Mark 16:1). From faith comes work. The two “activities” are always and forever tied together. One without the other is void of its import.

Second, despite significant confusion and fear, those who love Him continue to follow Him (vv. 1a-3). This is what enduring faith looks like. It stands fast in the face of significant adversity. It bears up and carries on. Those mentioned were willing to face the insult and alienation offered by those who rejected Him. It must be remembered that His death is perceived as the outcome of a failed coup. Jesus Christ came as the King, thus the inscription (Mark 15:26, “THE KING OF THE JEWS”). He would overthrow all kingdoms that stood in conflict with His. Those who joined Him were part of His rebellion. From all perspectives, His attempt to establish His kingdom, His reign, failed. Why one would risk aligning themselves with a failed attempt is really beyond human reason. Yet here we see those who loved Him coming to anoint His body for the grave.

Third, there is no reason to believe that anything had changed from His death on the cross until now (vv. 3, 4). Those who came wondered how they would roll away the stone from the entrance of the tomb since it was extremely large. The words “extremely large” speak to the impossibility of those who came to roll it out of the way. They were not in any way mentally processing the thought of bodily, physical resurrection. And if they were, they were not applying it to this moment. They came fully expecting His body to remain still in the grave.

Fourth, they were met by an empty tomb and a divine messenger (vv. 4, 5). The combination of the two caused them to be amazed (vv. 5, 6, 8). The word “amazed” speaks of someone who is “out of sorts.” It appears only Mark uses this word (Mark 9:15; **14:33** [Jesus in the Garden]; 16:5, 6

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[the noun is used only in Acts 3:11]). It speaks of being emotionally, spiritually, physically disheveled. It has the idea of being overwhelmed in every way. Verse eight continues to unpack their disheveled experience. "Clearly and naturally their emotions were mixed. They said nothing to any one. This excitement was too great for ordinary conversation. Hushed to silence their feet had wings as they flew on; for they were afraid (imperfect tense). The continued fear explains their continued silence" (A.T. Robertson on Mark 16:8). They "quaked with fear" and "were displaced of mind." Although here it is used in a negative way, there is something majestic and mysterious about this moment that should leave us emotionally and physically "unkempt". We must not allow our knowledge of this moment to make us placid and indifferent.

Fifth, it is very clear that God's Story did not end at the crucifixion. Not only does it contain, "He is risen; He is not here" but it also contains "go, tell". The gospel is more than what happened in this moment. It is preceded by a significant and necessary prelude and is followed by an enormous postlude. The historical fact of His death and burial is affirmed by the divine messenger; still there is more. "He has risen; He is not here," O my, what wonder and joy is contained in such a simple declaration. "He has risen" - He is not dead; "He is not here" - He is elsewhere waiting for you in fulfillment of past promises and pictures. Everything will slowly come into focus and you will see and believe.

Sixth, the gospel is good news for everyone who has ever failed (v. 7). O my friends, how thankful I am for, "But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.'" Remember, His disciples would sleep while He agonized in the Garden (Mark 14:32-42). Remember, "They would all leave Him and flee" (Mark 14:50). Remember, it is Peter whose betrayal sits in dark contrast to his professed faithfulness (Mark 14:66-72). And it is Peter who would weep bitterly at his flagrant failure (Mark 14:72). Yet Jesus calls out with warm and embracing tones. For all those who betrayed Him He says, "I am waiting for you." Even in writing this there is deep emotion of soul and spirit. God calls us to call out and invite all those who have failed Him. This is a day of great repentance and confession. It is a day marked by wholeness, hope and healing. He cries out to all who are weary and heavy laden, "Come to Me, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30). O the kindness and mercy of God. O what joy is ours as we see the waiting and welcoming Christ. All of His promises He will keep ("there you will see Him, just as He told you"). O friend, may we not doubt the goodness and grace of God.

Where does this leave us? Why must the Church celebrate? Let us not continue to hold onto our hurt and anger. Let us lay aside our fear and trembling and let us flee to the cross. Let us embrace His resurrection. Today all that He is calls out to you and says, "Come to Me, and I will give you rest." Do we not have just cause to celebrate and then to go and tell? O may today be that day for you, when you come to Him and find your rest in Him both now and in the life to come.

Waukesha Bible Church is a family of families seeking to live in the Storyline of the Bible. She is determined by design to have a God-centered, Christ-exalting worship; a Word-centered teaching focused on personal discipleship through intentional and systematic instruction; a Global-impacting mission that resolves to be a church planting church; and a Grace-based fellowship where disciples are invited to live under a reigning grace characterized by a Gospel-driven sanctification that celebrates a divine monergism to the Christian life.