

Greetings:

The study that Pastor Pat brings on Sunday mornings is a reflection of the study for that week. It represents a lot of research. Not all of what he has prepared is communicated. In an attempt to continue the learning process, he is making available his study notes to the congregation.

They are edited, but not “book” ready. To the critical eye mistakes can be found. So he asks that you take the material with humility, teach-ability, and charity.

Enjoy and if you should have any questions or corrections, please do not hesitate to email him at pastorpat@waukeshabile.org.

Date: Resurrection Sunday - April 4, 2010

Title: “Why the Church Must Celebrate” - “He has Risen; He is Not Here”

Text: Mark 16:1-8

Theme: The good news is contained in all the pieces of the Story. Jesus Christ provides hope, healing and wholeness to all who are despairing, diseased and dysfunctional.

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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.

Reflecting on His Work and the Storyline of the Bible

Resurrection Sunday – “He is Not Here, for He is Risen”

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Introduction:

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.

“The resurrection is the fulcrum of faith. The resurrection is the axis, the center, the core, the pivot point of faith for a Christian. If there was no resurrection of Jesus, then Christianity is just another ancient religion with its own particular form of spirituality and morality. The truth of Christianity hinges on the resurrection. Either Christ was raised from the dead by the powers of God or not.”¹

The Storyline:

Here is the zenith of God’s Story. It is the summit, the pinnacle, the peak, the apex of God’s promises and pictures. All that would capture our souls and rob from us breathe pale in comparison to this moment in time. Whatever sits in second place limps along in comparison with this crowning moment in the greatest Story ever told. Every thing in the Story is from Him, through Him and for Him. This is it.

The Problem:

We simply forget to remember THE STORY. Every aspect of the Story is intentionally placed and carefully woven into the woof and fabric so that God would receive all the glory and praise. O how wonderful our God is who so wisely and carefully place each of the pieces into the whole.

The Holy Spirit is calling to us from this passage to consider three ideas.

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know God has kept His word and the Savior has fulfilled His mission to redeem His people from their sins.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose to live in His Story.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel the joy of resting in His Story.

My desire today is to capture Mark’s simplicity without us drowning in a sea of information.

Outline:

I. The Jewish day of rest is over and a new day of "work" begins (Mark 16:1).

16:1 "When the Sabbath had passed" is literally "the Sabbath having happened through." Since Jew make the end of the day at sunset, Mark might have implied any time from Saturday night onward. (If Mark meant a Greek sense of time, the verse implied any time after midnight). "They might prepare him" is literally "they might smear him." The women would use the spices to prepare the body for burial. Since the burial of Jesus was hurried to observe the Sabbath, they could not finish the burial preparations. They went to the tomb after the Sabbath to complete the funeral ritual. 16:2 "of the week" is literally "of the sabbaths." Mark used a Semitic saying to indicate the week.²

"This Sabbath is over, and the first day of the week is the first day of a new world." (Matthew Henry on Matthew 16:1).

What I find of interest is the continued tension throughout the Gospels concerning keeping the Sabbath.

¹ "He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there whose hand was withered. ² They were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him. ³ He said to the man with the withered hand, 'Get up and come forward!' ⁴ And He said to them, 'Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?' But they kept silent. ⁵ After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored. ⁶ The Pharisees went out and immediately began conspiring with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him" (Mark 3:1-6).

Some might argue Christ rested in the grave on the Sabbath, but let us not suppose that His rest was not a part of the gospel. Christ is always Lord of the Sabbath.

The great work of redeeming His people and adopting sinners as sons and daughters took place on the Sabbath rest. From faith comes work. The two "activities" are always and forever tied together. One without the other is void of its import.

II. 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 carry's 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.

- III. 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 rolling 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.

- IV. 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 [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”³ 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.

“For they were afraid”: The Greek expression is unusual in style and abrupt in effect, especially if, as is possible, it originally ended the Gospel. *Fear* here (probably *overwhelming awe*) is the pervasive consequence of “alarm” (v. 5) and of “terror and amazement” (v. 8) that resulted in fright and silence (v. 8). In contrast, in Matthew 28:8-10 fear is part of an emotional state that includes joy (v. 8) and is controlled by worship (v. 9) and acceptance of mission (v. 10). Though silent here, in Matthew 28:8 the women run to tell the disciples, as they do in Luke 24:9-11, 22-24. In the longer ending of Mark (vv. 9-20), at v. 9-10, Mary Magdalene goes out “and tells those who had been with him”.⁴

- V. 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 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.

VI. 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.

Yet there is more. Our text begins by noting three women. This is no small feature and must not be overlooked. In a culture that is patriarchal, it will be the women who are given places of significance and prominence. Consider those who came.

A. Mary Magdalene

¹ "Soon afterwards, He began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him, ² and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out" (Luke 8:1, 2).

To understand Mary Magdalene you need only think of the stigma attached to mental illness today. I leave it to you: just how comfortable would you feel around someone whom you knew as a **one-time raving maniac**? Mary's case was worst than most. In small town Palestine she would be a well known figure. She'd be the one locked up in a mental hospital today, behind thick glass and steel doors.

But great forgiveness produces great love, and Mary Magdalene loved her Lord very much.

B. Mary, mother of James

There are six women named Mary in the New Testament. Of this one we know only this: her son wrote the book of James in the New Testament. This Mary is none other than the mother of Jesus. James was Jesus' brother. Salome is Mary's sister.

C. Salome

This name is a bit deceiving, in that we think of Herodias' daughter who danced before Herod (Mark 6:14-29). **There is a redemptive quality to all of this.** This is not the same woman – because this woman is the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee. She is most noted for her attempt to use her influence on Jesus to have her sons sitting at the right and left hand of Christ when he comes in power in his kingdom. The account is in Mark 10:35 and Matthew 20:20.⁵

“Mark leaves us, at the end of the story, with hope, to be sure (along with fear and confusion), but also face to face with profound mystery. The God of Mark's ending works in our world in ways that defy expectation and elude our every attempt at control. And that means Mark's narrative ending does what this whole gospel does: it invites and evokes faith, openness to seeing God's work in the world when our eyes can't show it to us.”⁶

This is who the Holy Spirit places into the Story. Why? because in these women we see ourselves, self-deceived and deeply troubled, yet loving God none-the-less. None included in this moment are there by accident. Each is placed intentionally into the Story so that we might have hope in our despair, healing in our disease and made whole in our dysfunction. This is the gospel, this is good news and this is God. “God is God, and that means despair yields to hope, life emerges from death.”

Shepherding the Sheep: (What's the NEXT STEP?)

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.

¹ http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/easter_women_at_the_tomb_GA.htm

² <http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/Seasonal/EasterVigil/A-EasterVigil-b.html>

³ A.T. Robertson on Mark 16:8.

⁴ Metzger, Bruce M. and Roland E. Murphy, eds. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books*. New Revised Standard Version. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

⁵ http://www.becomingcloser.org/Mark/mark_161-11_women_at_the_tomb.htm

⁶ <http://jointhefeast.blogspot.com/2009/03/april-12-2009-mark-161-8-john-carroll.html>