

## Mark 16 • The Miracle & the Message

### Introduction

Every single person that has had an encounter with Christ from the very first to this present time all have in common two things: the miracle and the message. It's the miracle of the salvation experience which replays the resurrection experience, and the imparting of the message of what that experience has done, and can do, for those who believe. At some point everyone has to take what they've heard and encountered, and act on it in faith. The events recorded in the wake of Christ's resurrection play themselves out in our own life as we become witnesses of our own personal encounter with Christ and communicate what such an encounter can do for others. It's a cycle that begins and ends with faith which is sustained by the sharing of one's faith.

<sup>1</sup>When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him. <sup>2</sup>Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. <sup>3</sup>They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" <sup>4</sup>Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.

<sup>5</sup>Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. <sup>6</sup>And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him. <sup>7</sup>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.'"

<sup>8</sup>They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

### [Read v.1-8]

**Q: Based on what Jesus had repeatedly told them before His death, what might be surprising about the women's actions?**

A: They obviously did not believe Christ's promise – His Word – that He would rise again after death.

**Q: The only difficulty they express is, "Who will roll away the stone?" How might this be an ironic expression of something spiritual?**

A: It seems symbolic of what is about to happen to cure their unbelief in Christ's Word, of the stone that needs to be rolled away from their own heart in order to properly believe Christ.

**Q: But what is indicated by the angel which reveals that the women, from a spiritual point of view, were starting out from the right place?**

A: "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified". They were looking for the crucified Christ.

**Q: Why is it important that the angel specifically stated, "He has risen"?**

A: To establish that the body of Jesus was not, as some would later assert, merely removed. In no uncertain terms it's stated that Christ is "crucified" and "risen". This is the foundation of the Gospel.

**Q: Why was it important for the women to be invited in to inspect the tomb?**

A: It was not only necessary to establish their witness that the physical body of Christ was absent, but to begin establishing the greater spiritual meaning that Christ had overcome the grave, and therefore was not among the dead, but the living.

**Q: What is the greater spiritual meaning in the fact that these things were first revealed to women?**

A: It is fitting because by a woman – Eve, came the first sin which warranted death for everyone else to follow. Now to women comes first the good news that sin and death can be overcome.

**Q: What is the greater spiritual meaning behind Christ going ahead of them to Galilee?**

A: The way forward has always been prepared in advance by Christ not just in terms of His earthly ministry, but in the lives of all Believers.

**Point:** When we pursue Christ, we're actually following the path He's prepared for us beforehand.

[Continued on the next page.]

**Q: So what is the application of the basic message of the miracle of the resurrection?**

A: It can be summarized as, “Come and see!” and “Go and tell!” It’s an act of faith followed by sharing one’s faith.

**Application:** How does this “unexpected miracle” actually mirror our own salvation experience? How does this speak to how we should communicate the Gospel?

**[Read v.9-14]**

**Q: What appears to be the common reaction identified in all three situations here?**

A: Unbelief. In spite of witnesses to the contrary, even “the eleven” don’t appear to be swayed from their disbelief until they have a personal encounter with the risen Christ.

- “...they refused to believe it.” (v.11)
- “...they did not believe them either.” (v.13)
- “...He reproached them for their unbelief...” (v.14)
- “...they had not believed...” (v.14)

**Point:** If the Gospels were fictionalized accounts, why would they initially report that even the apostles doubted at first?

**Q: What might be the greater spiritual lesson at work here?**

A: When it comes to Christ, it’s a matter and test of faith.

**Point:** They were a “mourning and weeping” church instead of a witnessing church because they didn’t believe their Master was alive. The miracle of the resurrection is intended to motivate God’s people for witness and service. When they don’t really believe, they’re rendered ineffective.

**[Read v.15-18]**

**Q: What is the priority mandated by Christ as recorded at the end of each Gospel?**

A: To “preach the gospel”.

**Point:** We need to beware of those who advocate preaching something less than the whole Gospel, or who replace it with something else.

**Q: What do the angel, Mary, and the two men listed above all have in common?**

A: They all relayed the same Gospel, that Jesus is risen from the dead.

**Q: What is the emphasis in v.16? Is this a mandate for baptism?**

A: The emphasis is not on baptism but on believing. Water baptism is a public declaration which comes **AFTER** one believes.

**Point:** If water baptism is essential to salvation, then nobody in the Old Testament was saved, contrary to the assertion of Hebrews 11 that the Old Testament saints were saved by faith.

**Q: What comes AFTER the preaching of the Gospel?**

A: Signs.

<sup>9</sup>Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. <sup>10</sup>She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. <sup>11</sup>When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.

<sup>12</sup>After that, He appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking along on their way to the country. <sup>13</sup>They went away and reported it to the others, but they did not believe them either.

<sup>14</sup>Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at the table; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.

<sup>15</sup>And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. <sup>16</sup>He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. <sup>17</sup>These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; <sup>18</sup>they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

**Point:** *The more important thing is always the message. The signs and miracles of Christ and His disciples always confirmed the greater message accompanying them, unlike false workers who emphasize signs to the exclusion of God's Word.*

**Application:** *What's wrong with the assertion that Christianity needs to be "updated" for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? What is the "unlimited mandate" to which we're called? If God provides signs and miracles, what is their greater purpose?*

<sup>19</sup>So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup>And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the signs that followed.]

**[Read v.19-20]**

**Q: When Christ ascended to Heaven, did He cease working on our behalf on earth?**

A: No. Among other things, Christ is described as assuming the roles of High Priest and Advocate on our behalf.

*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

*Hebrews 4:14-16*

*My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*

*1 John 2:1-2*

**Point:** *The theme of the Gospel of Mark emphasizes Christ the Servant. The heavenly roles of High Priest and Advocate indicate an even greater servanthood taking place.*

**Q: How is the theme of Christ the Servant summarized in the very last verse?**

A: Although He ascended into Heaven, "the Lord worked with them". He continues as a Servant.

**Q: And what is the primary purpose of Christ Jesus the Servant?**

A: To confirm the Word.

## **Overall Application**

**Q: *What did the angel do?***

A: He confirmed the Word.

**Q: *What did the angel encourage the women to do?***

A: To confirm the Word.

**Q: *What was the primary difficulty everyone had to overcome?***

A: Unbelief where the testimony of His Word was concerned.

**Q: *What was Christ's mandate to His disciples?***

A: To preach the Word.

**Q: *What is the unchanging ministry which Christ still directs from Heaven through every generation of Believer?***

A: Confirmation of His Word.

**Q: *What is the application for us in terms of how we prove the authenticity of our faith in Christ?***

A: The degree to which we believe, adhere to, and preach His Word.

### **Mark 16 • The Miracle & the Message, Page 4 of 4**