

The Day God Changed Our Story

Easter 2024 – The Gospel of Mark Series Conclusion – Mark 16:1-7

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, nor fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold – may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

The oldest complete Bible in existence today resides in the British Museum in Oxford, England. It's called Codex Sinaiticus and dates to 325 AD. If you go to British Museum in Oxford, England and, by some miracle, you were able to flip it's ancient pages and turn to Mark 16:6, you will find these words in the second part of the verse: "you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He is not here. He has risen!" The oldest complete English Bible in existence resides in Biblical Library of Stuttgart, Germany. It is the William Tyndale English Bible and dates to 1526 AD. If you go to the Biblical Library of Stuttgart, Germany and, by some miracle, you were able to flip it's ancient pages and turn to Mark 16:6, you will find these words in the second part of the verse: "you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He is not here. He has risen!" If you take your copy of God's Word and, because of many miracles, you found your way to Mark 16:6, you will also find these words in the second part of the verse: "you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He is not here. He has risen!" Praise God, his story never changes! He has risen from the dead and He is Lord. Christ Jesus lives today!

Friends, I want to tell you this morning, that our story – from dead in our transgressions to alive in Christ Jesus by the power of the resurrection – has changed because His story has not. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. If you search the Scriptures, you'll find on the first pages that the People of the Book longed for their story to change. They longed for God to flip the script and rescue them from their perilous situation. Adam and Eve wanted their story to change when God banished them from the Garden of Eden. Cain wanted his story to change after he killed his brother and God sentenced him to a life of wandering. The Israelites wanted their story to change when they got banished from the Holy Land. Peter wanted his story to change when he denied the Lord three times. And rest of the disciples wanted their story to change when all but one abandoned him on Good Friday. But, People of God, Sunday was coming!

And, church, on this great Sunday, the most important Sunday in the Christian calendar, I'm happy to announce that there is one reason – and only one reason – that our story has changed. It has changed because Jesus, the Nazarene was crucified, laid in a tomb, and on the third day He rose again. You see, before the resurrection, our story was that we were under a curse. But now, because of the resurrection, we are free from the curse of the law, "oh happy condition." Before the resurrection of the Son of God, the story for the people of God featured taking a sacrifice to the temple. But now, because of the resurrection, our story features taking the temple with us because the all-sufficient sacrifice for our sin has risen from the dead. For 2024 years ago, God decided to change our story by doing something completely unexpected and out of the ordinary: He called His one only son to come forth from Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. And in so doing, He didn't put a period on our new story. He put an exclamation mark! So today, on this glorious Resurrection Sunday morning, I want to show you – Christian – how your story changed because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And I also want to show you – non-Christian or not sure if you are a Christian – how your story can change because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. To do that, please turn with me to Mark 16:1-7. You are going to see that Jesus changed our position, proclamation, process, and post-script.

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ² Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³ and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶ "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

When Jesus Rose from The Dead, He:

1. *Changed our Position (1)*

- **We Are Standing on Holy Ground** – (1) One song I know we will sing in glory is this one: "We are standing on holy ground. And I know that there are angels all around. Let us praise Jesus now. We are standing in his presence on holy ground." (2) That song finds its origin in the life of Moses. Before the burning bush, he stood before God with his sandals on as a murderer. But after the burning bush, he stood before God as the One who would lead Israel out of Egypt. (3) God used a burning bush to change Moses position. He uses the resurrection to change ours.
- **Main Idea of the Point:** Our position before God before the resurrection is much like that of Salome (Herod's daughter) and Mary Magdalene (before she met Jesus): dead in our transgressions. Our position before God after the resurrection is much like the 2nd Salome in Mark and the redeemed Mary Magdalene: we are not only made righteous, but we are also living witnesses to the resurrection.

- **Textual Emphasis: Two Salome(s) and Two Versions of Mary Magdalene:** (1) Mark is intentional about comparisons in his Gospel. (2) Look no further than the name Salome. Mark 6: 21-24 features the story of Herod's daughter. Her name was Salome (not the one mentioned here). She was hostile to John the Baptist, wanted him dead, and wanted his head on a platter. She got what she wished. But here a different Salome comes into the picture. And this one, not the other, is a witness to the empty tomb. The Salome before was hostile. But this Salome was made righteous by the work of Jesus and the resurrection. (3) Similarly, when we first meet Mary Magdalene, she's about to be stoned to death for her transgressions. Now she's one of the first witnesses to the greatest miracle of the Bible: the resurrection. Remarkable!
- **App:** We "stand on the promises" and we can "stand in his presence on holy ground" because of the resurrection.

2. *Changed our Proclamation (5-6)*

- **Corny and Creative Church Signs:** (1) I love church signs. But I have noticed in my life that they are either (a) corny or (b) creative, not anywhere in between. They contain corny proclamations like: "sin burn is prevented by son screen." Or creative proclamations like: "things not needed in heaven: A clock. A doc. A lock. A gloc. And H&R Block."
- **Main Idea of the Point:** There are three messengers in the Gospel of Mark. One was before the resurrection. Two are after. Before the resurrection, the messenger announced what God was about to do. After the resurrection, the messengers announced what God has done.
- **Textual Emphasis: Messengers (Couriers) in the Gospel of Mark:** (1) Before the Resurrection – John the Baptist/What God Was About to Do. He opens the book announcing what God was about to do: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mk 1:7-8). (2) After the Resurrection: (a) The Young Man Dressed in a White Robe/What God Has Done - 6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him (Mk 16:60 (b) Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome – The angelic messenger told them to "go and tell." (3) The messengers from an *inclusio* (writing bookends with similar themes) to the book that tells the readers what they are to go and tell: Jesus performed miracles, but that's not all. He healed the sick, but that's not all. He was crucified and buried, but that's not all. He rose from the dead, and that changes everything.
- **App:** John the Baptist had the baton. Then the Angelic Witness. Then Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. Now we hold that baton. We are entrusted with the good news of the Gospel.

3. *Changed our Process (7a)*

- **What We Learn About Secrets Over Our Lives:** (1) When we are young and someone asks us if we can keep a secret, our response is "yes, oh tell me. Yes. Yes. Yes." (2) When we get on in years, we recognize through experience that the only way two people can keep a secret is if one of them is dead.
- **Main Idea of Point:** One of the most splendid aspects of the resurrection is how the script changed concerning what secrets we are allowed to tell.
- **Textual Emphasis: The Secrets of the Gospel of Mark:** (1) Before the resurrection, we see Jesus say things like "tell no one" "keep this a secret." Mark 1:44 is one such example. When he healed a man of leprosy, he told him "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing." Unfortunately, the man didn't obey. Thus, before the resurrection Jesus commanded secrecy and proclamation was disobedience. (3) But after the resurrection, something interesting occurs in this passage. The angelic messenger tells the women: ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'" Now, because of the resurrection, the command is to proclaim, and secrecy is disobedience.
- **App:** Our culture tells us private Christianity is the best kind of Christianity. Keep it to yourself. But the Gospel is this: the command is now to proclaim because of the resurrection and secrecy is now disobedience. Praise the Lord.

4. *Changed our Post-Script (7b)*

- **Elementary School Post-Script** – (1) In High School English class, we officially learned that a post-script comes at the end of the letter, after the signature and is introduced by: P.S. (2) In Elementary School, we learned this practically we wrote a little note to Cynthia sitting right next to us that said: "I'm glad you were on my kickball team a recess. P.S., do you want to be my girlfriend?"
- **Main Idea of the Point:** Before the resurrection, Peter's post-script was first to follow and first to flee. After the resurrection, Peter's script was a new and more perfect edition, corrected and amended by its author. And it said: Peter, do you love me? P.S., if you do, feed my sheep.
- **Textual Emphasis: Peter Before and After the Resurrection:** (1) On Thursday and Friday of Holy Week, Peter's script reads horribly. (a) He's sound asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus told him to keep watch and pray. "Couldn't you keep watch for just one hour," the Lord said to him (Mk 14:37). (b) After Jesus is arrested, Peter follows. Not up close and personal, but at a distance (Mk 14:54). (c) When Peter is confronted by a servant girl at Caiaphas' house (where Jesus was held), he not only denied it. He cursed and swore that he didn't know Jesus (Mk 14:71). (2) But after the resurrection, the Angelic Messenger gives the women a directive: "Go and tell his disciples... and Peter." (3) The Resurrection changed Peter's script. Ours also.
- **App:** When we get to heaven and ask Peter how in the world he made it, he won't answer: "Because I." He will answer "Because He." For the resurrection of Jesus Christ changed our script. Now and forevermore.