

Mark 15:40 – 6:20
The Risen Lord

Introduction

1. In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul defines the Gospel as having four main elements (READ 1 Corinthians 15:1-8):
 - a. Jesus Christ died for our sins
 - b. He was buried
 - c. He was raised
 - d. He appeared to hundreds
2. Last week we witnessed the first of these four elements, the crucifixion of Jesus
3. Today, as we finish our study of the Gospel of Mark we witness the remaining three: the burial, resurrection and post-resurrection appearances of Jesus

A. The Burial of the Lord (READ Mark 15:40-47)

1. We often focus on the death and resurrection of Jesus, and fail to appreciate the uniqueness and importance of His burial
2. There are four important facts regarding the burial of Jesus recorded by Mark that we must not overlook:
 - a. The first is the fact that He was even buried:
 - 1) Normally when someone was crucified under Roman rule they lost all rights to property and were denied an honorable burial (it was a final act of humiliation):
 - 2) In most parts of the Roman empire bodies were normally left on the crosses to rot and become food for scavengers—a popular phrase was that they would serve as “**food for crows**” and become “**an ugly meal for birds of prey and grim scraps for dogs**”
 - 3) It appears there were exceptions granted in Israel were Jews were permitted to remove and bury the bodies of family members in accordance with the OT Law requiring burial before sunset to avoid defiling the land
 - 4) Historical data suggests, however, that exceptions were never granted for those accused of treason, as was Jesus
 - 5) So, the fact that Jesus was even buried is remarkable
 - b. The second important fact regarding the burial of Jesus is who buried Him:
 - 1) Normally, it was family members who would bury the dead
 - 2) However, in Jesus’ case, it was two unlikely individuals:
 - a) One was a man named Joseph of Arimathea and he is mentioned by all four of the Gospels (REREAD Mark 15:42-43)
 - He was a member of the Sanhedrin, the very group that falsely accused Jesus and condemned Him to death
 - According to Matthew he was a rich man (Matthew 27:57)
 - According to Luke he was “**a good and righteous man**”, that “**he had not consented to their [Sanhedrin] plan and action**” and as Mark also wrote, He “**was waiting for the kingdom of God**” (Luke 23:51)

- Finally, John mentions that he was a “**disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews**” (John 19:38)
 - This might be why Mark says that Joseph had to “**gather up courage**” (43) before he went before Pilate to ask for the body of Jesus
- b) The second man, who is only mentioned by John, was Nicodemus (John 19:39):
- He was also a member of the Sanhedrin
 - He was the one who approached Jesus at night in John 3
 - He brought the myrrh and aloes to prepared Jesus’ body for burial
- c. The third important fact regarding the burial of Jesus is that there were eye witnesses:
- 1) While John’s account of the crucifixion indicates that His disciples might have watched from a distance, there is no indication that any of them witnessed His burial
 - 2) However, Mark tells us there were some who did and it was a group of women (REREAD 39-41)
 - a) Included in this group were some well-known women: Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee
 - b) If we look down at verse 47 we learn that the two Marys were actually there watching the burial (REREAD 47)
 - Matthew adds that they were right at the entrance to the tomb (Matt 27:61)
 - Luke adds that they actually “**saw the tomb and how His body was laid**” (Luke 19:55)
- d. A fourth and final fact to mention is that the tomb was sealed (REREAD 46)—According to Matthew, the Jewish religious leaders then went and made the tomb secure, added a Roman seal and set Roman guards in front of it to prevent anyone from stealing the body (Matthew 27:61-66)
3. These four facts regarding the burial of Jesus establish it’s historicity and it’s importance, most notably because it sets the stage for the resurrection and the empty tomb

B. The resurrection of the Lord (READ Mark 16:1-8)
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1. It’s clear from the Gospel accounts that no one really expected Jesus to rise from the dead and we see that here with the women who visit the tomb on Sunday morning:
 - a. They came to anoint His body with spices (normal Jewish practice to deal with the odor from decomposition)
 - b. They expected the tomb to still be sealed
2. What they didn’t expect to find was an empty tomb and a couple of angels:
 - a. When they arrived, they find the stone had been rolled away and the guards had left their post out of fear (per Matthew there was a earthquake and angel that rolled the stone away)
 - b. As they entered the tomb they find an angel sitting to the right of where the body of Jesus had been laid (Matthew says there was another angel at the other end)
 - c. The angel actually has two important functions here:
 - 1) The first is to simply explain what has happened:
 - a) At this point, all you have is an empty tomb and a missing body

- b) What would you think? Someone stole the body!!
 - c) In fact, according to John's account that's exactly what Mary Magdalene thought and she even begged for the body to be returned
 - d) But, the angel reveals the truth: Jesus wasn't missing; He's been raised! (REREAD 6)
- 2) The angel's second function is to remind them that Jesus said He would meet them in Galilee after His resurrection:
- a) In Mark 14:28 Jesus told His disciples, "**But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you to Galilee**"
 - b) Here, the angle reminds them of that promise (REREAD 7)
3. I don't have to stress with you the importance of Christ's resurrection, because you know that had Jesus not risen from the dead our faith would be useless and we would have no hope ourselves (READ 1 Corinthians 15: 12-22)
4. It is precisely because Jesus rose from the dead that we believe we will too:
- a. Jesus said, "**I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believe in me, though he die, yet shall he live**" (John 11:25)
 - b. Paul wrote in Romans 6:5 that since we have been baptized into Christ and "**united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection**"
 - c. He wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:14 that we know that "**He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus**"
 - d. So, that is our hope and it's all because Jesus rose from the dead

C. The post-resurrection appearances of the Lord (Mark 16:9-14)

1. Before we move on, you may notice some comments or notes in your version of the Bible regarding verses 9-20:
 - a. Most respectable Bible scholars believe that Mark's gospel ended at v. 8 and that the remaining verses were added at a later date
 - b. This is mainly because the earliest manuscripts or copies of Mark do not contain these verses; they only appear in later copies
 - c. That these verses were not a part of Mark's gospel originally appears to be backed up by the lack of references to them by the earliest Church Fathers
 - d. In addition, the literary style, structure, grammar, etc. are significantly different than the rest of the gospel
 - e. It is generally thought that these verses were added because of the abrupt, unexpected ending of Mark's gospel
2. With that said, most of what is recorded in these verses matches what is found in the other Gospels, so there is no real harm in including it in our study:
 - a. Jesus first appeared to Mary Magdalen—but no one believed her (READ 9-11)
 - b. He then appeared to two others—but no one believed them either (READ 12-13):
 - 1) According to Luke one of the individuals was a man named Cleopas (Luke 16:18)
 - 2) He and another disciple were on the road traveling when Jesus appeared to them and "**beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them all the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures**" (Luke 16:27)

- 3) Initially Luke says they were prevented from recognizing Jesus, but by the end of their trip their eyes were opened and they realized it was Jesus
 - c. He then appeared to the eleven while they were eating, and according to Mark He rebuked them for not believing the reports of Mary and the others (READ 14)
 - d. This is just a few of the appearances made by Jesus after His resurrection--The Scriptures record a total of at least 10 appearances that spanned a total of 40 days and according to Paul included over 500 people
3. Obviously, these appearances serve as eye witness proof to the resurrection, and in fact Paul uses them in that way by claiming that most of the people that had witnessed Jesus's appearances were still around when he wrote his letters to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:6)

D. Conclusion (READ Mark 16:15-20)

1. It's fitting that Mark's gospel concludes with a commission by the Lord
 - a. This matches what we find at the end of Matthew 28:19-20 with the Great Commission and the beginning of Acts where Jesus reminds them of that mission before He ascends into heaven (Acts 1:4-8)
 - b. I think that we often forget that Jesus expects us to be His witnesses, to declare the Gospel to the world around us
 - c. We get so caught up in this life that we forget the primary reason Jesus leaves us after we get saved—to make disciples
2. It's also only fitting that Mark's gospel ends with the ascension of Jesus:
 - a. Mark began his gospel with the two-fold purpose of revealing Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God
 - b. His Gospel ends (either by his hand or an editor) with Jesus returning to His heavenly home and proper place at the right hand of God