

Sermon Text Discussion Notes 10/30/2022

Mark 15:40-16:8 – by Taylor Sutton

Overview

As we reach the end of the Gospel of Mark, we are reminded that Mark is writing to a Christian audience. He has the double-burden, as he approaches a description of the resurrection, of keeping his target audience engaged on a topic they undoubtedly know and impressing upon them what they specifically need to be reminded of regarding the details. Because we are also a Christian audience—solely removed by temporal distance, we face the same issues with this text and stand to benefit from considering the details to which Mark draws our attention.

In this text, here is what Mark is driving at: the resurrection of Jesus is a real event in history that has burst upon and interrupted the real world in which we live. While this story is the most susceptible of any in scripture as being denied, downsized, or explained away as a mere legend, Christians have to deal with the reality of the claim. Today, as in the first century, dead people simply do not come back to life.

Mark impresses upon us the incredible importance of this reality in three scenes:

- (1) the women at the cross (Mark 15:40-41);
- (2) Joseph before Pilate (Mark 15:42-47); and
- (3) the women at the tomb (Mark 16:1-8).

Discussion Questions

- 1) In verses 40 and 41, Mark provides details—the names of the women and the fact that they followed Him and ministered to Him. Why are these details important, and what potential questions and objections to the gospel account do these details answer and dispel?
- 2) Verse 43 says that Joseph “took courage” in going to Pilate and asking for Jesus’s body. What was courageous about his act?
- 3) Verses 44-47 provide details to distinguish the truth of the gospel account from the Koran’s description and to ensure we have confidence in the resurrection. What are these details, and how do they provide additional credibility to the claims made? What is the purpose of including verse 47?
- 4) Taylor took a moment to say why his sermon did not discuss verses 16:9-20, explaining those verses were not a part of the earliest copies of Mark’s gospel account. He also discussed how there is a dispute over whether Mark intended his gospel account to end at verse 8 or if there was additional text that was simply lost, admitting that we cannot know for sure. What can we be confident about in the scriptures and details that we do have?
- 5) Why is it so important to hold together the statements in Mark 16:6—“He has risen; He is not here?” What do they communicate about the person and body of Christ?
- 6) What real effects ought the reality of the resurrection have upon our lives, what excites us, stirs us, and occupies our hearts? How are you doing living in light of this reality, and what can you do to reflect on and be impacted by this reality all the more?
- 7) How does the resurrection impact what you talk about with fellow Christians? With non-Christians? How did the message challenge you in this area?
- 8) Our hopes are too small and temporal—the next break, the next vacation, getting past this current busy season or current struggle. What hope does the resurrection provide us, and how should this impact our lives in a tangible, day-to-day way?