

The Suffering Servant: Risen for You

Mark 16:1-8

We've been treated to some excellent music this morning but most of us weren't aware or considering the acoustics of the room we find ourselves in. When the piano is played sound waves go out from the piano and begin to bounce off the walls and the ceiling. This is called reverberation.

If the acoustics are right that sound will bounce off the walls and reverberate for several seconds or even longer until it grows softer. The time it takes a sound wave to go from being initially introduced into a room and for the reverberation to reduce in volume 60 decibels is called the reverberation time and it's an important factor in how music sounds in concert halls and music venues. The most reverberant space in the world is a Scottish Oil Tank that used to hold 5.6 million gallons of shipping oil. I listened to a sound clip of someone firing a blank pistol and the reverberations continued for quite some time.

Reverberation is different from an echo. An echo is when the sound bounces off the wall once and then dissipates without hitting another wall and being heard. But a reverberation will continue to bounce around and influence the hearing of the audience members, which can often be an amazing experience if you are listening to a symphony or a magnificent choir.

I want you to think of the resurrection this morning as a reverberation. Something happened around 2000 years ago that is still having dramatic and powerful effects on us today. But with the resurrection there's no limit on the reverberation time and the effects won't decay or fade away. The resurrection is the climax of world history and we're here this morning to celebrate the effects on us today. So, open your Bibles to Mark 16:1-8 this morning and we're going to see **5 reverberations of the resurrection that shape our lives today.**

1. Confidence (vv. 1-4)

As is always the case when studying the Gospels, we are jumping into the middle of a story with our study this morning. Look at 16:1. Jesus was crucified on Friday afternoon and 15:42-47 told us that Joseph of Arimathea asked for His body and placed it in a family grave just before sundown on Friday. It was at sundown on Friday that the Sabbath officially began and no work was to be done. The Sabbath

would have passed on Saturday evening at sundown and so verse 1 takes place on Saturday night. These women go out to buy spices to place on the body of Jesus in the tomb. Apparently, there wasn't time to do this on Friday night because they had to make sure to get his body in the tomb before sundown.

Why spices? They were not to preserve the body but to help alleviate the stench of decay. Clearly these women were not expecting a resurrection at all. It wouldn't make sense to go to the tomb at night as it would be very difficult to see, so they wait until Sunday morning. Look at verse 2. There was light enough to ensure they were at the right tomb, but as they are heading there a concern about their task becomes a topic of conversation. Look at verse 3.

Clearly this stone was big enough for 3 women to be unable to move it. But as they approach the tomb they see that it has already been moved. Look at verse 4. Now, at this point they aren't expecting anything unusual. They would just have thought that someone else beat them to the punch and had already entered the cave.

In the first four verses of this account nothing unusual has happened. But what we do have are details of this account that help us to believe this whole thing is historically accurate and that it really happened. Let me just remind you that these women haven't been mentioned at all in the Gospel of Mark but here we see them mentioned 3 times in short succession. In 15:40 they see Jesus on the cross. In 15:47 they see where Jesus was buried. And here they make their way to the tomb on Sunday morning. Let me also remind you that during this time the testimony of women was not given nearly the weight of a man's testimony. So, if this account of the resurrection is a later addition, fabricated by the disciples, why would they speak of these women as the first ones to the tomb? They wouldn't.

There have been all sorts of theories over the years to try to explain away the Gospel accounts of the resurrection and to try and keep Jesus in the grave. But none of those attempted explanations can do justice to the historical truthfulness of what we find in the gospels and the rest of the NT. Why the attempts to undo the biblical witness to the resurrection? Because if the resurrection falls, so does the rest of our faith. Even the Apostle Paul pointed this out in 1 Corinthians 15:17-19. But if the resurrection stands and this account is true, then everything about our hopes, dreams, desires, actions, joys, and eternal destinies changes.

But there's no middle ground here. Either Jesus rose from the dead or he didn't. The most confusing and inconsistent lifestyle is one which verbally affirms the resurrection but then doesn't live like its true. If you really believe Jesus never rose from the dead, have the integrity to live like it. But if you say you believe Jesus started breathing on that Sunday morning 2000 years ago and walked out of that tomb, have some integrity and live like it. And you can live like it because of our second reverberation.

2. Victory (vv. 5-6)

One author said that the stone was not rolled away so Jesus could get out but so the women could get in. And that's exactly what they do. Look at verse 5. Keep in mind that Jesus was most likely buried in a family tomb which would have been a cave like system carved out of the rock on a hillside. The cave would have had multiple chambers and several shelves where bodies would have been kept. So, they enter the cave expecting to find the body of Jesus where they had seen it placed on Friday but something very different awaits them.

This young man is clearly an angel, dressed in white like Jesus became at the Transfiguration. Now, I don't know if you find graveyards creepy on their own, but entering a cave system early in the morning expecting to find a body and instead finding an angel sitting there would bring no small amount of emotional distress to me. That's exactly what happens to these women. The Angel responds in verse 6.

It's very common to be alarmed in the presence of angels or by the work of God as the women do here. But it's also common for God to assure His people that there's no need for alarm as the angel does here. But let's pay careful attention to the news the angel shares with them and notice how these reverberates victory down through the centuries to us.

The angel's words make sure that they identify the body they are seeking with the one who has been the main subject of this Gospel. He calls him Jesus of Nazareth. This is how the blind man in Mark 10:47 identifies Jesus and what the servant girl around the fire calls Jesus in 14:67. Clearly this was a common way of identifying the man we've been learning about. He also points out that the one you are looking for is the one who has been crucified.

The crucifixion was the ultimate act of dehumanization and degradation against an individual. Those who were crucified were outcasts of society and had essentially been erased from memory. Jesus Himself on the cross, felt forsaken by God. Those who were crucified were defeated.

But death and shame were not the final words spoken concerning Jesus of Nazareth. In Greek this is one word, He is risen. With one word everything has changed. Death has been defeated and the victory has been won. Listen to how Paul put this in 1 Corinthians 15:56-57. Death has come because of sin, but victory has come through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And it's because of this victory that we receive grace.

3. Grace (v. 7a)

Of course, when Jesus was arrested this led to the scattering of the disciples and the denial of Peter. They had abandoned Him in the hour of his need. I can't imagine the guilt, fear, and heartache they felt on Friday and Saturday. But the angel has a specific command for these women. Their first order of business is to take the good news of victory over death to the disciples and specifically to Peter.

Think about this for a second. Jesus died to pay the penalty for Peter's denial in the courtyard of the high priest. Peter deserved the wrath of God for his sin, but Jesus took that punishment on Himself on the cross and paid for Peter's sin. The resurrection is the confirmation of God that He has accepted the sacrifice of Jesus and that sin and death have been defeated. Listen to how Paul puts this in Romans 4:20-25. He's speaking of the way Abraham was saved by faith in the OT.

Notice in particular verse 25. Jesus was delivered up to death for our trespasses, our sins put him there. But we are justified, we are declared righteous, we are forgiven of our sins because he was raised from the dead. The resurrection is God's Word of grace to sinners. It's our confidence that because Christ has life and victory over death that we do as well.

What is the instrument of our justification? In other words, how do we receive it? By faith in Him who raised Jesus from the dead according to Romans 4:24. All of this is true because we can trust the promises of God.

4. Confirmation (v. 7b)

Look at what the Angel tells them at the end of verse 7. The grace that will come through the resurrection has already been promised to the disciples and to Peter. Jesus has predicted all of this to them. On the night of the Passover, Thursday, Jesus said this to His disciples on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane. Mark 14:27-28. Of course, the disciples didn't believe Him and Peter even argued with Him.

But this isn't the only time Jesus has predicted his death and resurrection in Mark. Right after Peter rightly proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah in 8:29 Jesus began making his death and resurrection clear. Listen to 8:31-32a. After the transfiguration he told Peter, James and John to keep quiet about it until after his resurrection. Listen to 9:9. On their journey to Jerusalem he kept teaching them about what was to happen. Listen to 9:30-32.

And finally, on the way to Jerusalem he predicts his death and resurrection a third time in 10:32-34. So, after Jesus rose from the dead the angel wanted to remind these women and the disciples that Jesus had predicted these very things. Why? To build their confidence and trust in Him. But this doesn't only build their confidence in these specific predictions. It confirms and authenticates everything else he taught. If Jesus predicted his death and resurrection, then surely we can trust him in every other area of his teaching. All of this leads to our final reverberation.

5. Amazement (v. 8)

Notice how the women respond to this in verse 8. Now, you can read in your bulletin about the ending of Mark and verses 9-20, but I'm convinced that Mark intended his Gospel account to end here in verse 8. It seems like a strange way to end an account of Jesus and His resurrection. It seems like a lot is unfinished. I think there are two reasons Mark ends this way.

First, when you read this you are left with the sense that the women need to go out and speak of what they have seen. It almost appears that they don't, and you are left longing for them to tell the disciples and ultimately others. Of course, we know this happens, but I think Mark wants us, as the readers, to respond with the desire to tell others about what we have just read of Jesus in this entire Gospel.

But the second, and more significant reason Mark ended this way is to emphasize the amazement and awe we should feel next to the reality of the resurrection. Throughout Scripture the presence of the Divine creates an immediate sense of awe, fear, and astonishment. People do not rush into the presence of God casually and flippantly. Most of the time they flee from the presence of God in fear and awe.

Let me just mention a couple of these moments we have already seen in Mark. In Mark 4 when Jesus speaks and calms the storm on the Sea of Galilee the disciples are afraid, asking, what sort of man is this? In Mark 5 when the people come out of their towns and find the demon possessed man clothed and in his right mind sitting with Jesus they are so fearful they ask Jesus to leave. Later in Mark 5 the woman who has been bleeding for 12 years touches Jesus's clothes and is instantly healed. When Jesus turns to find her she is so overcome with awe and fear that she collapses at his feet. Mark is filled with responses of wonder and awe to the working and presence of God.

But we in our very modern age almost smirk at these responses. We have been shaped by a culture that views the universe as a scientific system where we can understand and analyze every detail. Think of how much of our language reflects a view of humans that we are simply complex machines. We just aren't used to thinking of the supernatural invading our world and so a response of awe and wonder seems strange, foreign, and a little bit backwards even. That was fine for people before the industrial revolution, but now we think we know better.

One of Mark's goals in this account is to leave us with a sense of mystery and awe in the presence of what God has done in the death and resurrection of Jesus. This sense of awe and wonder at God's power and work cannot be forced and manufactured. It doesn't come from dim lights or fog machines. It comes from asking questions like the hymn writer Charles Wesley did.

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain-
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?