

Chapter 16

Bible Concept: How does Mark's Gospel End?

When you open your Bible to Mark chapter 16, you will notice there is a shorter ending and a longer ending. Some Bibles might even have other ways of expressing the different ways the Gospel might have ended. Scholars have different opinions for why some ancient manuscripts end Mark at verse 8, and why others have a longer or shorter ending beyond verse 8.

Some scholars believe that the Gospel really ended at verse 8 and that a different person added the rest later because he or she was uncomfortable not knowing what happened after the women found the empty tomb. Some scholars believe that Mark really wrote one of the two alternative endings. Yet others believe that the original ending Mark wrote was lost and that another author wrote a new ending trying to remember what Mark had written.

Whatever the truth is, we will never know. Despite not knowing how the author intended the Gospel to end, the impact of the resurrection is definitely the most important and central act of this chapter. What is truly amazing is that this story, regardless of how it continues, focuses on women. In Jesus' day women were not considered worthy of being a witness. They could not testify at a court trial. Yet God chooses them to carry forth the message that Jesus is alive.

Even after his resurrection, Jesus continues to turn upside down long-held beliefs and presumptions and traditions, all for the sake of God's love and forgiveness.

Chapter 16 Verse 8 reads:

The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, saying nothing to anyone because they were too frightened to talk.

New Living Translation (NLT)

So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Reflect on that statement for a moment.

How do you think you would have reacted if you were the first to discover Jesus was risen from the dead?

Definition

The tomb of Jesus was not like graves of today. Today we bury our dead in the ground, they are placed in a coffin which is sealed in a concrete vault and placed in the ground approximately 6 feet deep. Jesus' tomb was typical of his day, it was carved into the side of a hill. It was big enough to walk into and several people could have been buried in the same tomb. The bodies were laid on a bed like shelf, specially prepared with oils and spices, and wrapped in cloth strips. A large stone covered the doorway. Several men would be needed to move this stone.

Memory

Verse

Focus Story: Jesus is alive, 16:1-8

What is your first memory of Easter?

When did the women discover the empty tomb?

Who told them that Jesus was risen?

Whom are the women to tell and what are they to tell them?

The impact of the resurrection is still powerful today. Each day we awake we know we have been fully forgiven and given God's Spirit to live this day for God.

Talk as a family about how Easter has impacted your life.

What are ways you share forgiveness with one another?

What are ways you help other people, as God sent his Son into the world to teach us to help other people?

Is there anything in your life that you are so very afraid of, that you think cannot be overcome?

How does the resurrection of Jesus teach us that with God's help we can overcome anything?

*praying
together*



Praying together as a family is a special time. Light a candle to remember God is present in your midst as you pray. You have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection. Make the sign of the cross on each other's foreheads and say: "You are a child of God. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Pray together: Light of our tomorrow, grant us the faith to believe in your resurrection, even though we cannot physically see you. Bless our family that we may be faithful in loving one another. Amen

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

What is the most important thing you learned this year by reading through the Gospel of Mark, one chapter at a time. Ask God to always help you to read his Word and to study the Bible.

Conclude your time by saying the Lord's Prayer.