

"The message of Easter is that God's new world has been unveiled in Jesus Christ and that you're now invited to belong to it."- N. T. Wright.

"Resurrection means that the worst thing is never the last thing."- Frederick Buechner

Mark 9:31 He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." ³² But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DAY MAKES

It is easy to lose faith on Friday if you lose sight of Sunday. We tend to forget what people say when fear blinds us to the truth.

Those you counted on turn out to be the least committed. They shouted when Jesus came into Jerusalem a week before, but became silent when he hung on the cross the next Friday because they lost sight of what he said about Sunday!!

If you can see Sunday, you can flip through the silence of Saturday and have the faith to face your Friday.

Can you still have Faith for Sunday when you're facing Friday? Jesus told the disciples that he would rise.

Why were they surprised that he would rise?

Friday was a set up for Sunday

What a difference a day makes! The misery of the mystery of "WHY" became a reality the day Jesus rose from the dead.

When the body of Jesus was placed in the tomb by Joseph of Arimathea the day He was crucified; that was a dark and terrible day. As the sun went down that night, so did the hopes and dreams of all the Lord's disciples and followers.

You may be unsure about a lot of things but I'm here to tell you today, **“God is not just living in eternity, he is living in your reality!”** Life is getting very real for many! God is saying to you today, he is about to **release a revelation of restoration for you in your current reality!**

Our response in the middle is more important than the reason why we are in the middle:

Between your REALITY and your RESURRECTION, you must **rest** in the confident assurance that Life and death are in the power of HIS tongue!

In spite of your Friday, do not ever think that the silence of God on Saturday is the absence of God because he is working behind the scenes on Saturday to get you to your Sunday.

FAST FORWARD TO Mark 16:

Jesus Has Risen: MARK 16

16 :1 When the Sabbath was over (Sat at 6pm), Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ²Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb³ and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” 1,000 pounds

⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵As 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. ⁷But go, tell his

disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

⁸ Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20.]

⁹ *When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons.* ¹⁰ *She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping.* ¹¹ ***When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.***"

Mark is the only Gospel writer that speaks of that dark, dreary Sabbath that passed between the day Jesus died and the day He rose again from the dead. I am sure it was a long, miserable day for all those who loved and followed Jesus.

It was a day of mourning, despair, abandonment and loneliness. Everyone who forgot what he said walked around like a zombie.

When that awful Saturday dawned, all they could see was the shattered remains of their hopes and dreams. These ladies, along with all the Lord's followers, had placed all their faith and confidence in Jesus.

They believed that He was the Messiah.

They believed that He was the One Who was going to fulfill all the ancient prophecies.

They believed that He was the One Who would be the King of Israel.

They believed that He would establish God's kingdom on the earth. All their hopes for life and eternity were bound up in what they believed about Jesus.

Then, all their hopes and dreams crumbled to the ground as they stood there at the cross and watched Him die. Faith turned to grief and grief to utter hopelessness as they saw His broken body taken down from the cross and placed in that tomb. When that stone was rolled across the door of the grave, it was a ringing statement of finality. That stone said, ***"It's all over, Hope is gone! There is no future! There is no salvation! There is no kingdom! Jesus is dead! It's all over!"***

Many people stop at the tomb where their hope dies

Never let fear decide how your story ends

Don't let fear have the final word.

George Addair states: **"Everything you've ever wanted is sitting on the other side of fear."**

What a difference a day makes!

The first person Jesus appeared to was Mary Magdalene. She never lost hope. That was not her last name. She was Mary from Magdala. She was wealthy the gospels mention her 12x Remember Jesus delivered her from 7 demons.

I. v. 1-3 **A MINISTRY OF LOVE**

- A. v. 1 **Describes Their Desire** – The three women mentioned in these verses observed the long, dark Sabbath day. They rested in their homes as they were commanded by the Law. Just the day before, they had witnessed the death of Jesus.

They watched as His body was placed in a tomb and a stone was rolled over the opening to seal His body inside, **Mark 15:46-47**. As sundown, and the Sabbath began, these women went to their homes to wait.

When the Sabbath ended, on Saturday at sunset, they emerged from their homes, went into town and purchased “**sweet spices**” to “**anoint**” the body of Jesus. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus had already wrapped the body in linen strips and poured embalming spices on the body. The perfume these women were intending to use would have served the purpose of masking the smells of decomposition.

So, they go out on Saturday night and make their purchases. Their intention is to go to the tomb the next morning and perform one final act of love and service to the Lord Jesus Christ. For them, it was a way to have closure concerning His death.

- B. v. 2 **Describes their Devotion** – In that society, most people arose just before dawn, at around 5:30 AM. It would appear that these women got up earlier than that. They arose from their beds, gathered their spices together and made their way from Bethany, where they lived, to the tomb just outside the city of Jerusalem. It was a 2 mile trip.

Their love and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in this labor of love. They are broken hearted over His death and they are in a hurry to get to Him so that they might minister to Him one final time.

v. 3 Describes their Doubts – As they walked, they kept talking about the stone over the door of the tomb. It must have dawned on them after they purchased their spices that they might have trouble getting to the body of Jesus. After all, the tomb had been sealed by having a large stone rolled over the door.

They are also oblivious to the fact that the Jewish leaders had convinced Pilate that the Lord’s disciples might try and steal the

body of Jesus. The Jews believed the disciples would take the body and claim that Jesus was still alive. So, they asked Pilate to post Roman guards at the tomb and to have the tomb sealed with Pilate's official seal. Pilate did this for the Jews, **Matt. 27:62-66**. Had they known about that, their fear would have been even stronger as they made their way to that tomb.

(**Note**: As these women made their way to the tomb that morning, they were filled with sorrow, grief and fear. They were not going there looking for a living Lord, they were looking for a cold corpse. Do you know what their problem was? ***Their problem was they were still living in Friday!***

2. v. 4-6 **A MESSAGE OF LIFE**

(III. When these ladies arrive at the tomb, their fear is changed to amazement. Mark says, "***when they looked***". As they walked toward the tomb, they did so with their heads bowed and their eyes downcast because of their sorrow and their grief.

As they neared the tomb, they lifted their eyes and saw that the massive stone had been rolled away from the door and that the way into the tomb was wide open.

They did not know that before they arrived that morning, there had been a "***great earthquake***" and that an angel had come to the tomb and removed the stone. They did not know that the earthquake and the appearance of the angel had frightened the Roman guards and that they had fled the scene in fear. **Matt. 28:2-4**

All they see is the tomb opened and they fear the worst. Surely they are afraid that the Lord's enemies have taken His body away. They were probably overcome with new fears that the body of the Lord might be subjected to greater indignities than it had already experienced. Seeing that stone rolled away must have chilled their hearts, so they ran the rest of the way to the tomb to investigate.

When they go into the tomb, they find "***a young man sitting on the right side***". He is clothed in a strange garment. We know

from the other Gospel accounts that this is no ordinary young man. This individual is an angel! This angel begins to speak to the women. He has a message for them. It is a message designed to help them stop living in Friday.

It is a message designed to help them experience the power of Sunday in their lives. Let's look at that message together.

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.

A. v. 6a **A Message Of Peace** – He tells them to **“be not afraid”**. When they saw the angel, they were filled with fear. The word in KJV **“affrighted”** literally means **“to be struck with terror”**.

They see the angel and they are overcome with fear. But he speaks to them and offers them a message of peace. He tells them that there is no need to fear. Things are not as they appear on the surface.

B. v. 6b **A Message Of Power** – He tells them that he knows why they are there. He knows they have come looking for the body of Jesus. He confirms what they already know. Jesus was **“crucified”**. He did die. They were not deceived by what they saw. They really did see Jesus nailed to a cross. They really did see His blood as it flowed from His body. They really did see Him yield up His Spirit. They really did see Him die.

He wants them to know that His cry of **“it is finished!”** did not mean that He was finished! He died, but He did not stay dead! His joyous cry is, **“He is risen!”** The angel wants them to know that the power of death has been swallowed up by the far greater power of life! The angel wants them to know that the empty tomb of the Lord is not a place of despair and defeat. That empty tomb is a place of glory, a place of power and a place of hope.

v. 6c **A Message With Proof** – After telling the women that Jesus had risen from the dead, the angel invited them to look at the place where the body had been. As they looked, we are told what they saw in **John 20:6-7**. They would have seen the cloth strips that had been wrapped around the body, still lying there, undisturbed, as if the body had simply passed right through them. They would have seen the napkin folded and laid to the side. They would have looked upon a scene of absolute calm and order.

It was not the kind of scene they would have witnessed had people taken or moved the body. The message from that empty tomb is that Jesus is alive! For 2,025 years skeptics have tried to prove that the resurrection did not take place. They have concocted every kind of wild theory imaginable to account for the empty tomb. Every theory they had was dashed to pieces by the testimony of that empty grave!

If the Jews had the body, they would have produced it when the disciples started preaching the resurrection. If the disciples had taken the body, they would not have died for a lie. That missing body has always been impossible for the skeptics to overcome. His body was missing because He was alive! Jesus walked out of that tomb that morning in eternal victory over death and the grave!

3.. v. 7-8 **A MISSION OF LIBERATION**

A. v. 7 **A Command** – The angel sends them away from the tomb to carry the message to the disciples of the Lord. Those men were filled with fear and they were in hiding, **John 20:19**, but God wants them to know that Jesus is alive. There is no need to fear! There is joy. There is hope. Even Peter, the one who had so recently denied the Lord, is singled out. The Lord wants Peter to know that he is loved too.

Those three women came to that tomb that morning worried about rolling away one stone from a tomb. They didn't know it, but God was about to use them to roll countless stones away

from the hearts of millions. They were the first to spread the good news of that empty tomb!

- B. v. 8 **A Change** – They came to that tomb with sorrow in their hearts and they leave it a different way. The Bible says they “**were amazed**”. That phrase refers to a “**displacement of the mind**”. What they had seen and what they had heard at the empty tomb literally “**blew their minds**”. It was almost more than they could comprehend.

That phrase has the idea of “**being overcome with awe of a religious nature**”. In other words, what they encountered at the empty tomb was not what they expected as they traveled there. But, what they encountered changed their lives and replaced their sorrow with an overwhelming sense of the power of God. They knew that they were now a part of a great miracle and they ran to tell others about their risen Lord!

- C. **The Consequences** – Mark tells us that they did not talk about what they had seen and heard with anyone along the way. We know from the other Gospel writers that they did run to find the disciples and tell them, **Matt. 28:8; John 20:1**. This news affected the disciples too. Many of them ran to the tomb. We are told that John looked in and saw the evidence and that he believed, **John 20:8**. Later that day, Jesus would appear to more of the disciples.

The message of these women caused even more stones to be rolled away. Because of their testimony, many were brought out of the darkness and gloom of Friday into the wonder and glory of Sunday!

⁹ When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons.

She could never outgive him or out pay him. I could never repay him. HE not only created you but cleansed you from the mess you made.

Have you ever wondered why he appeared to Mary Magdalene? He had his choice of religious dignitaries.

Vs 10-11

. ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. ¹¹ When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

She told them the very same thing that Jesus told them would happen!!

“It is so easy to quote Gods promises until we face a life’s circumstance that contradicts them” Steven Furtick

You may be suffering right now bearing your own cross, but do you see resurrection in your future.

Faith for the future is found when you focus on the face of the father. The place where your faith is focused....is the place you will not find death and decay but destiny.

The tomb was borrowed because it was not permanent.

Your Friday is not forever!!
Fear does not have the final word.

She faced Friday with him and was there on Sunday to see him. Tells me she never abandoned him. She was committed, even when it looked like he was dead. She didn’t look at the circumstances, but she clung to his word as hope for the future.

We should never live from Fridays but from Sundays
We should never run from our disappointments but run through them.

Faith has the ability to face Friday because I have already seen Sunday.

What is good about good Friday? I know what comes next!!!

We must stop trying to be through religion what we have already become through resurrection.

Christianity now is about wearing on the outside the image of God you already bear on the inside.

Lamentations 3:28-30 The Message

²⁸⁻³⁰ "When life is heavy and hard to take, go off by yourself. Enter the silence. Bow in prayer. Don't ask questions: Wait for hope to appear. Don't run from trouble. Take it full-face.

The "worst" is never the worst." HE IS RISEN!!