

Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.<sup>15</sup> And he said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.<sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.<sup>17</sup> And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues;<sup>18</sup> they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover. <sup>19</sup> So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.<sup>20</sup> And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs. ESV Mk. 16:14-20

This morning we are going to complete our study of The Gospel According to Mark and look at a large portion of Scripture. Our emphasis will be on chapter 16:14-20.

We have studied the death burial and resurrection of Christ in various ways at different times and we will overview those texts this morning but in a different context.

Jesus spoke his final words to his disciples before his trial which is chronicled beginning in Mark 14:53. He does not speak directly to any of his followers until after his resurrection. What I would like to do is view the events of his trial, crucifixion and burial from the affect it had on the disciples and then see the significance of Jesus final words before his ascension to the throne.

Jesus disciples had witnesses a mockery and a miscarriage of justice during his trials.

“Leading priests,” “elders” and “ scribes “ were the three groups represented on the Sanhedrin, the ruling religious court of Israel. The full Sanhedrin, with seventy-one members, normally met in the assembly hall in the temple called the Chamber of Hewn Stone, where they sat in a semicircle with the high priest in the center. In this case, many members of the Sanhedrin (twenty-three members were necessary for a quorum) hold a secret night meeting without advance notice in the high priest’s home (14:54), although they are investigating what they will claim is a capital offense.

Such a meeting is illegal on all these counts, although they would no doubt have explained it as only a preliminary inquiry before a real investigation (cf. Lk 22:66). The lack of advance notice could have been excused because it is during a feast and all

necessary officials are in town; but because Jewish law forbade trials on the sabbath, they were probably also forbidden on feast days. The officials who gather seem more concerned with convicting Jesus quickly than with legal technicalities.

Despite the high priest's certainty of Jesus' subversiveness, at least some members of the council, perhaps scribes, follow the virtuous Jewish tradition of diligent cross-examination of witnesses. But once these witnesses had contradicted one another, all understandings of Jewish law unanimously demanded that they be declared false and the case be rejected as contrived; under Jewish law, in a capital case, false witnesses were to be put to death (see Deut 19:16-21 and the Dead Sea Scrolls). Even though Rome had not given the Sanhedrin jurisdiction to execute false witnesses, the Sanhedrin should have at least disciplined them; that the case just goes on demonstrates severe bias among the council members gathered there.

14:57-59. Many Jewish people expected that God would establish a new, purified temple at the time he put down the Romans. Outsiders had naturally misinterpreted Jesus' teaching about a new temple and warning about the old temple's destruction as the threat of a mad, messianic revolutionary. But the witnesses still fail the cross-examination.

14:60-61. At least according to later rabbinic law, the high priest could not legally force Jesus to convict himself out of his own mouth, but the testimony of other witnesses is so far not working; had the later law been in effect in Jesus' day, the priestly aristocracy might choose not to observe it. The high priest finally asks whether Jesus thinks of himself as a Messiah -hence, to the high priest's mind, as a revolutionary.

Tearing clothes was a sign of mourning or repentance, and was required if one heard the sacred name blasphemed. But the high priest must be desperate for a conviction; unless Jesus mentions the sacred Hebrew name of God or summons them to what would be presumed to be idolatry (e.g., by calling himself God, which he does not at this point), he is not technically guilty of blasphemy (certainly not as it came to be

defined by second-century rabbinic teaching but also not by the broader popular sense; cf. 2:5-7). A Jewish court would have been more likely to have pronounced him insane; how could this arrested upstart teacher from Galilee think that he would come in the clouds of heaven?

Under Jewish law, the high priest is not permitted to judge the case alone; he has to solicit the council's vote (if later recorded rules were already in effect, this vote would begin with the youngest and conclude with the high priest). Although they cannot have genuinely believed that Jesus has committed blasphemy according to its technical Jewish definition, they have an important reason to deal with him quickly: he poses a clear threat to the temple establishment (11:15-18), and as a messianic claimant he threatens the whole Roman power structure that they, the Jewish aristocracy, represent.

Unlike public flogging, the behavior represented here—spitting on, blindfolding, striking and taunting a prisoner—was, of course, against Jewish law. While they ridicule Jesus as a false prophet, Peter fulfills Jesus' prophecy concerning him (14:66-72); Jesus thus passes an important test for true prophets (Deut 18:22).

The night trial having been illegal, the officials reconvene somewhere around the first light (about 4:30 a.m.) or dawn (about 5:30 a.m.) to quickly make their conclusion official. Roman officials like Pilate would meet with clients and members of the public from dawn till about noon, so they must have Jesus ready for Pilate very early. Pilate lived in Caesarea but during the Passover stayed in Herod the Great's old palace in Jerusalem; the Roman governor needed to be in Jerusalem to forestall troubles at Passover.

15:2-4. Claiming to be the Jewish king, the Messiah, would lead to a charge of sedition and treason against the emperor. The only offense for which the Jewish leaders could automatically execute any transgressor was profanation of the temple; to them, Jesus' act in the temple had at least approached that, but the leaders know that his claim to messiahship would threaten Pilate more. Pilate had not been particularly cooperative

When Pilate asked his deliberately insulting questions in 15: vs 9 and 12, he must have known that it made Jesus' death certain. To ask the chief priests to acknowledge Jesus as king and to expect them to beg for his release was absurd. He must have been trying to taunt them for the difficulty that they had put him in. It had the obvious result: Barabbas was to be freed and Jesus crucified (the death that Barabbas would have faced, if Jesus had not undergone instead). Crucifixion was a cruel and lingering death reserved for slaves and rebels and it had already been used freely in Palestine. The more the crowd was asked for reasons, the more they shouted and refused to give any. Pilate, the moral coward, gave way to avoid the riot that seemed on the point of starting (15; cf. Mt. 27:24). But Mark has made his point: only an unjust Roman official would put to death a harmless religious teacher, and even Pilate would have known that the charges were false. Politics, not religion, was to be the deciding factor, as often today in time of persecution.

Jesus' followers see and hear all of this and most are afraid and run for their lives once he is dead and removed from the cross. He is then buried. Doubt, despair and disobedience have set the tone for the disciples.

Mark does not play on our emotions when he describes the crucifixion, as modern accounts might do. He simply records the facts, for that is enough to move us.

A group of faithful women had watched the crucifixion from a distance, those who had supported Jesus and the Twelve with money and food and loving care (41). If it is said, intended as criticism, that the church today is largely made up of women, the answer is that they have never been lacking, even in the time of Jesus. If Jesus had his band of men as apostles, he also had his faithful band of women followers, of whom we have some names here. Two of them witnessed the hurried temporary burial of Jesus before the Sabbath began. No pious Jew would leave the body of an executed man exposed after sundown, particularly if the next day was a Sabbath.

God had, as he always has, the right man for the moment. He was Joseph, influential

enough to ask for the body (normally, the property of the Roman government in such cases), and rich enough to own a rock-cut tomb to use for the temporary burial (46). As customary, a great stone was slidden down a groove in the rock to protect the body from animals or tomb-robbers. The fact that the two Marys saw where Jesus was buried meant that there could have been no mistake when they returned when the Sabbath was over. Two 'witnesses' had seen the place, and they were women. For those who live in countries where a woman's witness is not accepted in court as being of equal value to that of a man, this is a liberating thought. Mark accepted them as such.

But Jesus rises from the grave and this begins to move us to the close of the gospel account.

The first words of our risen Lord to his followers were not, "Go and preach"—these were His last words, and before He gives this final commission, Jesus says, and does, certain things in order to get His followers back on track and to finally connect the dots that they had failed to do all along. Before Jesus gives His final commission, He helps His followers to overcome three prevailing obstacles to evangelism; He helps them to overcome discouragement, doubt, and disobedience.

We begin with discouragement, something that each of the disciples and friends of Jesus would have shared in common. In order for us to have some appreciation for the discouragement felt by His followers we need to imagine what it was like for them in the time in between Jesus' crucifixion and the morning of His resurrection. Their leader had been executed, and their own lives were now in danger. What hope did they have of carrying out the mission of Jesus?

There was discouragement surrounding the prospect of continuing the mission, and there was, of course, great discouragement in losing a beloved Friend. John's gospel describes how Mary Magdalene stood outside the empty tomb weeping. Not only was Mary grieving the death of a dear Friend but she imagined that the empty tomb meant that Jesus' body had been taken away. Mary was not thinking about any Resurrection;

she had come to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with spices (Mk16:1). It was bad enough that her Friend had been executed, but now, even her efforts to anoint Jesus' body had been frustrated. Mary's discouragement soon gives way to despair, and she weeps . . . But then Jesus appears, and greets her (Jn. 20:15-17).

15 Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.<sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, Mary. She turned and said to him in Aramaic, Rabboni! (which means Teacher).<sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

Mary's faith had waned; hope had given way to discouragement and despair, but that all changed the day she was greeted by the Resurrected Jesus even though at first she was not believed. The witness of a woman was considered unreliable, as both Josephus and the rabbis attest. Given this view and the fact that Judaism was not expecting an individual resurrection of the Messiah, it is not surprising that the disciples do not believe Mary Magdalene.

Discouragement is a debilitating force. When discouragement prevails, followers of Jesus will not be on mission.

As individual Christians, and as a church, if we are easily discouraged, we will be an ineffective witness for the gospel. For if our unbelieving friends see us in a constant state of frustration, if they regularly see in us discouragement and discontent, how will they ever believe us when we tell them that the Christian Gospel is 'good news'?

As we go and share the gospel, there must be an outflow of our love for the Savior in our attitude and words. Our love for the Risen Christ must be evident; we are not just giving the facts of the Gospel we are bringing glory to God through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

The second obstacle to sharing one's faith in Christ is doubt. Basic sales principles apply here: just as it is difficult to sell a product that you do not believe in, it is difficult

Mark 14:53-16:20 New Covenant Baptist Fellowship Pastor Joseph Krygier April 26, 2009  
to convince others of their need to follow the Risen Christ if you yourself are not convinced of the need to follow Him.

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John's gospel records for us the words of a man we have come to know as 'Doubting Thomas'. Speaking to the other disciples, Thomas declared, "Unless I shall see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side I will not believe" (Jn. 20:25).

Thankfully, Jesus also appears to Thomas, inviting him to touch His hands and side. Thomas responds to this encounter with the Risen Christ, saying to Him, "My Lord and my God!" (Jn. 20:28). Thomas is able to overcome his doubt thanks to a face-to-face encounter with Jesus. What about us? Short of Jesus returning to us in physical form, how are we to overcome our doubts?

We overcome our doubts by studying the Bible. John tells us that it was for this reason that the gospels were written; John writes, "these have been written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn. 20:31).

For some, discouragement is a barrier for Christian witness; for others it is doubt that hinders and still for others, it is disobedience that keeps us from heeding the commission of Christ.

Without doubt, Peter's lowest moment followed shortly after his promise to Jesus to never deny Him (Mk. 14:31). Peter did deny Jesus—three times—just as Jesus had predicted. We need to bear in mind Peter's propensity for doing the opposite of what Jesus required as we reflect on this Resurrection account in Mark 16. Because, unless we bear in mind Peter's recent betrayal we will miss the full impact of what the angel says to the women who had come to anoint Jesus' body. What we assume to be an angel, described as a "young man" wearing "a white robe" (Mk. 16:5), says to the women, "Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they had laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter" (Mk. 16:6, 7).

Why the special mention of Peter? Why not just say, 'Go tell the disciples'? Surely, this is just like our Lord to single out the person most in need of His grace and mercy. Peter wept following his denial of Jesus (Mk. 14:72). He felt terrible. The guilt from his disobedience was weighing heavy on him. Jesus knew this, and so Peter is singled out as a special beneficiary of the Resurrection, "go, tell His disciples and Peter."

There remains a mandate for every Christian; we are commanded to "go into all the world and preach the gospel" (Mk. 16:15) because this is who we are, salt and light to the world of sinful men. So long as we allow discouragement, doubt, and disobedience to hinder who and what we are, we will remain immature and not be living in the fullness, in the present, of what we already are and shall be completely in the day of the consummation.

We get discouraged, doubtful and disobey because I am not wanting to do what I should because of who I am and because I am not trusting in the promises of Christ to be what I am. It is a quenching of the Spirit, which for a true believer, must end in repentance as the Father disciplines those whom He loves and because we are led by the Spirit to obedience as he is transforming us as Christ's mission keepers.

So, how do we cultivate being a great commission people after it began with the Apostolic era?

We do so by realizing Christ's mission is rooted in who he is not what we do.

The purpose of Scripture is: To Glorify God and Scriptures priority is the revelation of Jesus Christ

Missions purpose is to glorify God through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

It occurs by the WORD OF GOD and by Christ being revealed in His people

The message of the Gospel is rooted in the character (attributes) of God. We must present an accurate message or we pervert the character of God.

"God is worthy to be known and proclaimed for who He is and that fact is an important part of the missionary motive and message" - Tom Wells



What drives us to the “mission field”?

A need will not keep you on the mission field. People will rebuke you and repel you.

What keeps a missionary going? What is the primary purpose of God’s mission?

Meeting needs?

Without a proper view of God and His mission you will lose optimism and heart

CAN GOD’S MISSION EVER FAIL? HAS CHRIST STOPPED BEING REVEALED, NOT NECESSARILY “ACCEPTED” BUT BEING REVEALED TO THE WORLD?

It is part of the revelation of Jesus Christ in and through the believer that allows this to occur. We live according to what we believe We do not meet needs just for the sake of meeting needs. The world even in sin can do that and sometimes does better than Christians

History is HIS-STORY. God’s mission throughout human history is to bring a people to himself for His glory His glory and it can only be done through the revelation of Jesus Christ who is the priority of Scripture

1 Cor.1:18 For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Regardless of how it is viewed it is the revelation of Jesus Christ

Whether the hearing of the gospel is life changing or not Christ is revealed according to God’s mission. What men see as foolishness is God’s wisdom and He does what He pleases. This is why it is not first about meeting needs but about glorifying God through the preaching of the Gospel.

Wisdom is an attribute of God and it is perfect regardless of what men say or understand. But meeting needs is valid because it expresses the mercy of God

How do you reconcile years of work of meeting needs for the needy and then a “natural disaster” wipes out everything that was built to help the needy?

You must understand the Sovereignty of God in all things according to the wisdom of

"All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, But He does according to His will in the host of heaven And among the inhabitants of earth; And no one can ward off His hand Or say to Him, 'What have You done?' Dan.4:35

Even the final destruction of all things by fire culminates in the revelation of Jesus Christ as a wrathful judge to the condemned and as the final and fulfilled hope for those who are Christ's by God's grace.

2 Pet3:7 But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

2:Pet3:13 But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Both results are rooted in the attribute of God's patience. God is patient with a world of sinners until His appointed time to save whom He will ends and He is patient with us to allow us to grow more in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

William Carey was the first to see God's mission in India, at least as far as we know and since the 18th century. A Brahman asked him, "Why did not your God let my father's hear this message? William Carey responded, "At one time it pleased God to keep the Gospel from India. God has His reasons for doing so." From a human point of view, Christians have continually failed in reaching the world with the Gospel.

From God's point of view everything is just as it should be in His-Story or He is not a Sovereign God. It is a matter of both. Those around the throne will represent the world at large. Our failure and human sin CANNOT ever deter the mission of God.

Rev.5:13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

God is worthy of being known for who He is and He is known through the revelation of Jesus Christ

Heb.1:1 ¶ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 ¶ having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

God is faithful to His mission.

To bring glory to himself every promise of judgment will be kept.

To bring glory to Himself every promise to His people will be kept.

To bring glory to Himself He is faithful to His own first goal of having a people to worship Him. This should motivate mission as nothing else can,

The end is in God's purpose and decree from eternity not in what we have or have not done We are a means God uses He has not done His part and "now it is up to us."

Salvation is the work of God.

"Good evangelism is directing people's attention to the truth and value of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. Worship is the gathering of God's people to celebrate the truth and value of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit. Therefore it may well be that for many, many unbelievers the decisive, culminating witness to the truth of Christ will come when they sit in the midst of people whose intensity and authenticity of worship draws them irresistibly into the banquet hall of God's salvation. " John Piper  
EVANGELISM IS NOT AN EVENT.....It is expressing the gladness of God.

When all the programs and seminars and meetings have come and gone, the greatest means of compelling people to come into the kingdom of Christ will remain your personal witness to the truth and greatness of Jesus and how you are satisfied in Him. YOU are the salt of the earth. YOU are the light of the world.

Pray everyday that God would give you good opportunities and power to commend Christ. And pray that he will be preparing others to be open. (Romans 10:1)

Portray Christ by the way you love others and by the humble integrity of your work. (Matthew 5:16)

Pursue those who are willing to talk and who have questions. (2 Corinthians 5:11)

Plead with those for whom God gives you a special affection and longing. (Acts 26:29)

Remember: you are a means for God to be glorified through the revelation of Jesus Christ. He does the saving work.

But it does not stop there. Preach and make disciples, baptize and continue teaching.

Whenever and however possible, a solid follow-up is necessary. These days with all the technology we have there should not be any excuses for not doing this.

New believers need to be taught more of Christ and be given the assurances that help them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ. Yes, the Holy Spirit is the primary agent here but we have the responsibility to be the means by which some of this is done, it is part of the great commission. New converts need to be brought into fellowship. They are not meant to go it alone.

Organized evangelism without follow-up is folly. There will always be exceptions but it is the norm of New Testament teaching.

A Scriptural reference to biblical discipleship is found in Colossians 1:6-10: "...All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God."

Examples of biblical discipleship abound in the Bible. Almost all of the disciples participated in this style of discipleship, and it is what caused the growth of the Christian faith following Jesus' departure. If you study the New Testament, you will find that all of the disciples lost their lives professing their faith, and trying to encourage and build up others by directing them to the person of Christ and not to themselves as teachers, helpers or guides. It was done unto the praise of His glorious grace.