

Mark 16:1-8 – “He has been raised; He is not here”

1. A Startling Discovery

On Saturday, 7th March, A man went out to fish on the Spanish Fork River, Utah, around noon...

He noticed a car upside-down in the water.

Rescuers arrived and tipped the four-door car onto its side.

They found an 18month old girl strapped in her car seat, alive.

Sadly, rescuers also found the dead body of her 25 year old mother in the driver’s seat.

A resident nearby told authorities that he had heard a loud crash the night before, around 10.30pm

They stepped outside to check, but saw nothing unusual, police said.

If that sound was the car going into the river, then the baby was trapped in the car for about 14 hours.

The baby in the rear passenger side, was not submerged during the ordeal.

In fact, her warm clothing helped, and being suspended above the water aided her survival.

Can you imagine being one of those rescuers?

Can you imagine reaching the car, upside in the river,

You fear for the worst, and can’t even hope for the best – the water is too cold.

The chances of survival are slim to non-existent.

The damage to the car – brutal.

And yet, in the midst of the carnage, in the midst of the tragedy,

Imagine the shock, imagine the joy, imagine the urgency when that baby’s voice was heard.

2. The Semi-organised Plan (vv. 1-3)

So it was on the on this day, 5th April, in the year 33 A.D,
That a group of women went, not to a watery grave, but to an earthen one.
This death was not unseen, and unheard, like the tragic death of the mother in the car.
This death was seen by all, and heard by all - Eye-witnesses recording the events.

And so can you imagine what this small group of women must have been thinking.
Can you imagine what this small group of women must've been feeling,
as they came to reverently deal with the body of a loved one.

However, this was no orderly, planned well in advance, funeral.
This was hap-hazard in organisation.
The timing of the visit is driven by urgency, not careful consideration.
The women have waited for the Sabbath rest to finish,
And so they leave at the crack of dawn on the Sunday. v. 1
The women haven't even figured out one vital part to their plan – gaining access to the body.
v. 2 – they ask each other – “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance?”

They may well not be able to get to the body at all,
But desperate times calls for desperate measures – so they go, seeking to anoint the body,
Just as Lazarus had been anointed upon his death, not so long ago.

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome are the complete opposite.
They didn't think their friend, their teacher, their Messiah was going to die.
It was beyond their worst nightmare realised in one shocking moment.

3. The Startling Discovery (vv. 4-5)

And yet, something beyond their wildest dreams happened. << v. 4 >>

The stone being moved, in and of itself, would have raised multiple questions

- Have grave-robbers managed to access the grave?
- Did the Roman soldiers move the stone, in order to steal the body?
- Did Jesus' enemies in the Jewish leadership seek to defile his remains
 - to leave him unclean and defiled, unburied?

But before these questions are answered, something even more amazing happens. << v. 5 >>

The woman rightly are "amazed", literally "amazed out of themselves"

As general rule of thumb – tombs are for dead people.

And generally, we don't want to associate dead people with young people –that's not a good mix.

Yet, here, they find, a living, young man, dressed in white.

And the description of this young man gives us a clue to the meaning of these events.

For, three days ago, another young man, dressed in a linen cloth, ran off from the messiah.

Three days ago, that young man was caught hold of, and ran off naked. (14:51-52)

Three days ago, there was only shame, and humiliation, and desertion.

In stark contrast, this young man is clothed in the tomb,

This young man doesn't run off, but rather, sits in the antechamber, the foyer of the tomb.

This young man, evidently a messenger from God, delivers a ground-breaking message.

4. The Striking Absence (vv. 5-8)

The words that the young man speaks echo through history.

The speech of the young man, speaks of three earth-shattering moments.

First, an event in the past,
Second, an event in the present,
and third a verification. << v. 8 >>

The event in the past – “He has been raised”

Raised, not rescued, then resuscitated,
not revived, then re-awakened.

Mark specifically uses two pieces of language to verify Jesus’ resurrection.

First, Mark refers to Jesus as “the crucified one” – and here, specifically,

The verb used demonstrates that Jesus was crucified, but has remained in that state,
Jesus is the one who remained crucified, from initial execution, past final expiration.
Jesus is the remained the crucified one.

But second, the word used for “raised” – it is the verb used to describe a past completed action.

Jesus remained in the crucified state until that state was ruptured, until that state was rent apart.

There was a decisive event on that third day, when Jesus was raised.

And that resurrection was not a self-resurrection,

Not some kind of magician’s party trick to fool the masses.

That resurrection was the very work of God.

Jesus ‘had has been raised’.

And therefore, the present state of Jesus – is not here.

Jesus is not to be found among the dead, nor found in the underworld of the dead.

Jesus is not here in this tomb, sealed off from the living.

And therefore, the verification can be made – see with your own eyes.

Look in the tomb itself, the word of this young man can be validated by examination.

In stark contrast, the reason for there being no body found is made clear from the start.

The body is not to be found, because Jesus has been raised.

5. The Spectacular Significance

And yet, if Paul is right, if the body is not found, if the eye-witnesses did see,
More, if the apostles and many witnesses eyeballed this one who 'remained crucified'
Then 5 spectacularly significant facts flow on from this event.

a. The Vindication of the Innocent

First, there is vindication.

Every Psalm, where David cries out about the persecution of God's king.
Every time we recall the cry – "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
God answers – I did not forsake, I did not leave, I did not turn my back.
God answers – I raised my innocent messiah – so that he conquered death itself.

b. The Exultation of the Servant

Second, as Isaiah prophesied,

God did allot his suffering servant a portion with the great.
God did give his suffering servant the spoils of the strong,
Even more, God gave his suffering servant the light of the resurrection.

c. The Coming of the Son of Man

Third, as Daniel predicted the coming of the Son of Man,

And as Jesus predicted that after three days he would rise, having rebuilt the temple,
So that prediction has become reality, that prediction has become history.
The Son of Man now rules in heaven, at God's right hand, and we rejoice!

d. The Kingdom Come in Power

Fourth, What does that mean for the Son of Man to have come?

It means that the kingdom of God has broken into this world.

It means that Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrected life.

It means that all who stand in Christ, have now already been raised spiritually in Christ.

It means that we died with him, and have been raised with him.

e. The beginning of the gospel

Finally, Jesus' resurrection means that great news of Jesus has begun.

The dawning of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the ingathering of his people,

It means that as the great news of Jesus is proclaimed throughout the world,

It means that "He has been raised. He is not here" is pronounced throughout history.

And so I say to you – "Christ is risen" – "He is risen indeed!" Let's pray.