

Mark 16:14–21 - Resurrection Power for Everyone

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[0 : 0 0] Right. Yeah, we're coming through. Amazing. Fantastic. So, yeah, so we'll start by reading the text.

! So, can you please turn to Mark 16 and find verses 14 to 20? Right. 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. And he said to them, go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe. In my name, they will cast out demons. They will speak in new tongues. 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. 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. And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs. Let's pray. Thank you, Father, for your word. As it has been prayed already today, we know that you are good, and your word is more than worth our time to study and to come to grips with, so that we can worship you better, so that we can know you better. We can be emboldened in our faith, and encouraged by your goodness to us. And we pray that you may speak to us today through your word, and that you may continue as this time goes on to encourage me to speak boldly, that in such a way that brings you honour, gives you the praise, and glory that you deserve, so that we may leave this place all the more equipped to serve and to love you and those around us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. So I'm just going to grab my bottle.

Right. So, yeah, good morning. My name's Joseph. I think I know almost all of you here. There's a few visitors here, and you're very welcome. But yeah, so we've been studying through the Book of Mark, and here we are.

But following the reading of today's text, today's teaching is going to be slightly different from usual. We don't usually have stewards give out the elements of communion when we practice it in our services.

However, I'm sure you will understand why we are doing this slightly differently today. As the stewards come round now with the snakes and the poison drink, feel free to partake when you feel at the right time. No, no, I'm joking. That was a joke. Just to reassure you, there will be no snakes nor poison today or ever in our services. Yes, Simon gives me the nod. I hadn't checked that with Simon. So actually, he might have had a long-term plan going here. But no, that is not happening. So you can face this way and not turn around and be concerned about what might be happening behind you. But as we dig into today's text, I guess the question is, what then is the purpose of this passage? And what hope is found amongst these much debated words? Last week, we heard about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, in which we can respond in rejoicing, declaring, where, O grave, is your sting? Where, O death, is your victory? Where is death's victory? It was swallowed up and Jesus is the victor. Jesus is alive.

[4 : 58] So what now? Well, if I was to sum up what I think was the main thrust of today's text, I would say, the God of the impossible works with all who believe in him for his glory, their everlasting peace, joy, and witness. So today marks the final message on the book of Mark, since the teaching was shared amongst us younger men over three years ago. Well, when it started, I was younger. I definitely had less gray hair. In fact, thanks to the Calvary Southampton YouTube channel. No, no, hold on. We can find out where it all started. All right. So it started in 13th of February 2022. And John Malunga shared with us last week. And as part of his message, he briefly discussed the validity of verses 9 to 20 that we find ourselves in today in the 16th chapter of Mark. And it's true that these verses don't appear in the earliest manuscripts.

However, whether or not these verses are canonical scripture or not, I still strongly think that they were written with a purpose in mind. So as we wrap up our teaching series on Mark today, I want to start by considering what makes a good ending. For example, in media, as we springboard to help us consider why we think today's ending is helpful, valid, and encouraging to us today.

So Simon already mentioned the idea of Christmas movies starting to be played. But let's think about other movies, other movies and their endings, and why they might be considered to be good endings. So some movies have mysterious endings, like at the end of 2010's Inception, as the spinning top continues to spin as the screen cuts to black. And so we're left thinking, oh, has he returned to reality or is he still in a dream? Some good endings that have plot twists. So like in the sixth sense, we all know that Dr. Malcolm Crow had been dead the entire film. Or at the end of the Jason Bourne trilogy, when David Webb is informed, we didn't choose you, you chose us. Holding myself back from trying to do that accent. Everyone would love to speak like that actor, but unfortunately I'm not there.

Also, endings can be emotionally powerful, as in Mario Puzo's The Godfather, when the door closes on the newly consolidated Don Michael Corleone, as his wife Kay watches from the outside, helplessly thinking, who have I married and what life have I bought into? Or even more arguably famous, Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship, just before the credits roll on the 1942 classic Casablanca. And here we find ourselves at the very end of our journey of preaching through the Gospel of Mark. Though you might argue that this ending is any one or more of the three categories I've mentioned, mysterious, a plot twist, or emotionally powerful, it most definitely fits into a rarely seen category in film or media. An ending debated to be even written by the author.

A controversial ending indeed. Now, we do see this sort of controversy in modern filming. Most notably, the ending of the mysterious and atmospheric sci-fi movie, The Blade Runner, the original 1982 version. In this film, the director was forced to change the ending by the studio to make it more commercially accessible. The original director's cut ending of The Blade Runner left the protagonist's future uncertain, strongly hinting that Deckard himself was a replicant.

[9 : 21] Whereas the studio-mandated theatrical ending added a voiceover narration, leading to a happy ending, where Deckard and Rachel drive off into the beautiful, sunny landscape.

Suffice it to say, it is true there is much debate and discussion over the reliability of today's verses. Whether, you know, whether they should be in the Bible or not at all.

However, whichever view you come to about these verses, they do appear in a large number of later manuscripts. And to echo John last week, none of the content of these verses contradict or add anything new to elsewhere in Scripture. Therefore, they are valid texts to study and gain insight of God from.

Now, it's different from a studio-mandated ending, as it still holds true to the essence and meaning of the ending of the Gospel, as confirmed in many other areas of Scripture.

In fact, almost everything written in this section can be found to quote or reference other Scriptures directly. Even the bit about the snakes is mentioned, as we find a viper fasten on Paul's hand in Acts 28 and not harm him.

- [10 : 36] The only part of today's text which isn't directly referenced or alluded to in other Scriptures is the bit about drinking deadly poison. Nonetheless, whether the text today is Scripture itself or simply quoting other Scriptures, I will also be quoting a lot of other undebated Scriptures.

Therefore, I can guarantee you won't feel starved of the Bible today. However, it appears to me that the ending was written with a particular clear purpose that it wants to make for its readers.

Now, this is not uncommon in Scripture, most notably in the Gospel account of John, that was written specifically that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in his name.

And as a Gospel account, the Gospel of Mark's purpose isn't that distinct from the Gospel of John. Therefore, as we explore the text, we will be bringing out what it is saying about the Lord Jesus Christ and how this can impact and strengthen us today in the light of his victory, his resurrection, conquering the power of sin and death, so that we can have life in his name.

Last week, John identified a theme in this longer ending of Mark as unbelief. And I agree that this is clearly the case.

- [12 : 06] Therefore, as these verses all extend from Jesus being raised from the dead, each of the main points that I'm coming up with share the same heading, do you believe in the resurrected Jesus?

And then implications from that. So, returning to today's passage, Mark 16, verse 14. 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.

So my first point, do you believe in the resurrected Jesus, the Son of God who was raised? Now, this text today begins with the word afterwards.

So just a brief, you know, recap of last week's message with John. He, they, Jesus just appeared to two of them. So we get in this text, but it's likely that it was the same encounter documented in Luke 24.

On the road to Emmaus, these two disciples then went to tell the rest of the disciples that they had seen the risen Christ.

- [13 : 23] But clearly, they did not believe them. Now, last week, John expertly reminded us of the power, joy and impact of not only Jesus's death, but even more so his resurrection.

Now, if I was to sum up the three main inferences and or implications and impact that I gleaned from the study last week, I would say these three come up on the board.

Firstly, the resurrection, it proves that Jesus is who he claimed to be. The implication is that he is the Son of God.

Secondly, the impact, it proves that Jesus is still alive today. Therefore, we can have a personal relationship with him. And thirdly, it proves that no one is beyond his power.

And therefore, we will also be resurrected. Yet, just as the disciples struggled with unbelief, we can also identify with the challenges that they had with faith, as we desire to have assurance of things hoped for and conviction of things not seen.

- [14 : 44] Now, Lee Strobel, the author of the well-known book, The Case for Christ, speaks of the four E's as evidence of the resurrection.

He speaks of the execution of Jesus. So, multiple extra biblical sources prove that Jesus was crucified, including specific details that don't allow for the opportunity to be explained away as a fictional tale.

Secondly, he refers to the empty tomb, the second E. Jesus' body could not be produced. First, the early documented excuses to explain away the resurrection did not do so by providing the body, but instead claims that the disciples stole the body.

In other words, even the enemies of the faith conceded that the tomb was empty. Thirdly, the eyewitnesses.

Now, multiple people agreed and gave very similar testimony to the events of the resurrection, like I said, even outside of the Bible itself.

[16 : 03] Fourthly, the early accounts. The Gospels were written and circulated whilst the witnesses were still alive. And in 1 Corinthians 15, in the text I'll be reading a bit of later, where it begins, now I'll remind you of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he's reminding them of something that he's already told them.

And we already know that the date of that letter wasn't that long after Jesus' resurrection. So, he must have told them probably within months the message he's referring to, that he's told them, was within months of when the actual resurrection happened.

So, you know, there's many early accounts of the resurrection. Other compelling evidence is the transformation of the disciples, their willing martyrdom for not denying the resurrection, and the unique circumstances of the event.

For example, women being the first witnesses during a time when the women testimony wasn't valued. Again, to repeat the truth from last week, Jesus was raised from the dead and is still alive today.

Therefore, as we come to an end of our study through Mark today, let us consider, do I truly believe in the Son of God who was raised? So, we're going to return to the Mark text, verses 15 and 16.

[17 : 33] And he said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

My second point, do you believe in the resurrected Jesus, the Son of God who saves? Well, it says, to quote this verse, go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel.

Well, don't mind if I do this morning, all right? So, I don't apologize for this, but this is the perfect opportunity to talk about the Gospel. And I also don't apologize for doing it in the way I alluded to earlier, by quoting Scripture, a lot of Scripture.

But to keep coherence and flow, I won't be listing all the references each time as I go through what I'm about to say. But I would encourage you to search these Scriptures out this week to reinforce your understanding of the one story of the Bible and the mission that God is on, the truth that Jesus saves.

Also, I hasten to say it won't be exhaustive of all the events and benefits of the Gospel, but it's definitely a thorough starting point. So, let's consider this.

[18 : 56] So, now, now I remind you, brothers and sisters, of the Gospel which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. None is righteous. No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God.

All have turned aside. No one does good. Not even one. Now, the wages of sin is death. But God showed His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures. He was buried, He was raised, and on the third day, He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, and then He appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time.

Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Yet the free gift of God is not only Himself, but His eternal life in Christ Jesus.

[20 : 06] Now, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. Not only that, but everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Furthermore, we will also be saved by Him from the wrath to come.

I repeat, there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Therefore, in the light of God's mercy, let us praise the Lord that neither death nor life nor angels nor rulers nor things present nor things to come nor powers nor height nor depth nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I encourage us all to look to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, for who, for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

[21 : 41] and we know that the Son of God has come so that we may know Him who is true, the Son, Jesus Christ.

He is the true God and eternal life. now, here ends the end, here's the end of those scripture references and I know it's in some way loaded but like I said, I encourage everyone to seek that out.

I mean, if you read any of the scripture, it tells the same message that Jesus saves, Jesus loves and He's on a rescue mission for all mankind and so you don't have to go far to not read those words but I'd strongly encourage you to continue to study through those things and yeah, so I won't try to re-explain each verse as I don't feel it needs further exposition right now but I would encourage you to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Therefore, as we come to an end of our study through Mark today, let us consider do I believe in the Son of God who saves? Verses 17 to 18 in 16th chapter of Mark and these signs will accompany those who believe.

In my name they will cast out demons, they will speak in new tongues, 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.

[23 : 30] Third point, do you believe in the resurrected Jesus, the Son of God who is able to do impossible things? Though these verses specifically talk about signs that will accompany believers, I think that is right to talk about the God who will do the signs or accompany us with them and these signs are less about promoting the followers than promoting the one who does them so I feel it fitting to remember Jesus as the Son of God who does impossible things so during this last Sermon of Mark I think it's also a great opportunity to scroll through the impossible things, many of the impossible things that we've heard that Jesus has done in the book of Mark to get us to this stage.

So again, a quick scroll through the things that we've heard over the last three years. So in the first chapter of Mark Jesus resists temptation from Satan.

Jesus teaches with authority. He silenced evil spirits. He then cleansed those with evil spirits. He healed many with various diseases and then he cleansed those with leprosy.

All in the first chapter. In Mark 2 he heals a paralytic. In Mark 3 he healed a man with a withered hand. In Mark 3 he calmed a raging storm.

In Mark 5 he healed a man with a demon. Then he healed a woman with a discharge of blood. And then he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead.

[25 : 19] In Mark 6 he fed over 5,000 people at one time. He then walked on water and then he healed some more sick. In Mark 7 he healed a deaf man.

In Mark 8 he fed another 4,000 people. And then he healed a blind man. Mark 9 he was transfigured to the image of his heavenly body. And then he healed a boy with an unclean spirit.

And then Mark 10 he healed blind Bartimaeus. And then in Mark 11 he cursed a fig tree. I don't know about you but I'm not doing any of those things anytime soon.

All these things are impossible for man but possible for God possible for Jesus. After chapter 11 he starts talking about Jesus' trial death and resurrection which obviously where he does the most impossible thing of all and raises himself from the dead.

And all that to say the things referred to in today's text are not impossible for God. God is able proven time and time again throughout all our studies on the gospel of Mark.

[26 : 36] He does impossible things. Now as already explained all the signs but the poisoned drink have already happened as evidence in the scriptures at least once.

And I'm sure that by God's grace and for his glory believers across the ages have survived many of these sorts of challenges including the deadly poison.

And men I'm not just simply referring to how your family is still alive after you cook dinner or if when you serve someone instant coffee and they're not immediately unwell.

That's not the type of poison that this text is talking about. It may also be worth knowing that the word will in our text never appears in the original Greek.

And the Greek only contains the future tense versions of the verbs. Why does that matter? Well we don't have future tense versions of verbs like they do in the Greek.

[27 : 39] So we have the word will. But the problem with the word will is that we might be tempted to think that means all believers at all times. That will, that definitive nature of the word will.

But rather we should read this text to mean some believers at some times. And I stated a couple minutes ago, it's also Jesus, the Son of God, who does these impossible things.

The same God that raised himself from the grave and saved sinners is also more than able to sustain those whom he chooses from any number of challenges, illnesses, or persecutions.

However, a wrong interpretation of these verses would be to test God by putting ourselves in these dangerous situations on purpose. Just as Jesus did not test his father as he was tempted by the evil one in the wilderness, we should also follow in the footsteps of Christ with our own lives by not putting God to the test.

God. Therefore, as we come to an end of our study through Mark today, let us consider, do I believe in the Son of God who is able to do impossible things?

[28 : 56] Verse 19 in the 16th chapter of Mark. 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.

My fourth point, do you believe in the resurrected Jesus, the Son of God who is exalted as King? In Philippians 2 verse 9 to 11, it says, God has highly exalted him, Jesus, and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Similarly, in 1 Timothy, we heard not that long ago in chapter 6, it says, he, thrown to Jesus, is the blessed and only sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see, to him be honour and eternal dominion.

And then at the very end of this Bible, in Revelation, it says, on his, thrown to Jesus, on his robe, on his thigh, he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

Again, to quote that, 1 Corinthians bit, it says, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?

[30 : 41] Jesus conquered death. He conquered the grave and he is now king. He is coming back to rule and reign and by his grace and through faith in him, you will be with him as he comes to reign in his kingdom.

He is the risen king. We are not looking for the kingdom as Joseph in last week's message, but we have entered into his kingdom if in fact we have been born again, born of the spirit.

So we also, by having faith in him, we have pledged allegiance to him and seek to follow and obey him as he leads.

Therefore, as we come to an end of our study through Mark today, let us consider, do I believe in the son of God who is exalted as king? Verse 20, to come towards the end of the passage.

And they went out and preached everywhere while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs. My fifth and final point, do you believe in the resurrected Jesus, the son of God who is still with us?

[32 : 08] The God who came is still with us today. In Hebrews 13 it says, it's quoting God, I will never leave you nor forsake you.

So we can confidently say the Lord is my helper. I will not fear what can man do to me. Isaiah 7 says, therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel. Emmanuel means God with us and that is who our Saviour and Lord is.

He is God with us and that was not a temporary thing as in just the incarnation as we consider at Christmas. But it's an eternal reality and truth as he has rose from the grave.

And in this text it says that he is accompanying them with the signs. I feel it highly appropriate to finish today remembering that the one who came is still with us today.

[33 : 16] Working in us both to will and to work for his good pleasure. The message of the gospel isn't that he came and died and simply paid for us and therefore now we have to try really hard to keep him happy.

But in fact the message of the gospel says that he died and rose from the grave and is still alive and is still with us today accompanying us as we go. this is especially relevant to remember thanks to the last words of that gospel of Mark and as we enter our sermon series on the first advent of Jesus in the run up to Christmas that this time we particularly remember his coming in the flesh that God who came as a baby is now king yet still with us today.

Bless the Lord that he is still with us. We desperately need him and he is abundantly present. He also dwells within us by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

So following our thoughts today of whether we believe these things we should also be inspired to share these things if indeed as evidence that we believe these things.

So if indeed we have been crucified with Christ if it is no longer us who lives but Christ who lives through and in us then therefore as we end our study through Mark today let us consider do you believe in the Son of God who though went to be with his Father in Heaven never truly left and is still with us today.

[35 : 24] Let's pray. thank you Father that you never truly left us. Through your Son you are with us today empowering us today through your resurrection to live for you to have life in your name.

encourage our hearts to believe in the things that you are the things that you are doing how a faith not just to be something that we agree to but may it be something that we boldly act in.

As we consider your first advent at this time of Christmas may this last message and mark embolden us to tell people of it.

If indeed we believe in it then surely it's not just true for us but it's true for everyone and they need to know it.

They need to hear it and they need to believe it. Thank you for saving us from emptiness from separation from sin from death from wrath and into the glorious hope that will never fade because you rose from the grave.

[37 : 12] In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.