

## **He is Alive! Mark 16:1-8**

Thank you to the **Nazarene Kids Eyewitness News** for that wonderful report on the resurrection of Jesus. I am glad that is a news source we can trust – no fake news there!

So much evidence to show that Jesus was alive. No matter what the High Priest had to throw back at the panel, it always came back to the same conclusion: the only possible answer is that Jesus is alive!

Let's turn to Mark's account of what happened that first Easter morning. Mark's source of information for his Gospel is the Apostle Peter, certainly a reliable source.

### **We are reading from Mark 16:1-8.**

We have been walking with the disciples as they followed Jesus, and we arrived in Jerusalem last week with great fanfare as the people hoped Jesus would be the kind of Messiah they wanted – a political rebel. Instead, Jesus came as the king of peace.

Jesus spent the week in Jerusalem preparing the disciples for what would happen at Passover. It all started normal, with Jesus hosting the Passover meal with his disciples. During the meal he changed the wording of the ceremony for the night, but the disciples did not think too much about that at the time. After the meal, Jesus went out to the Garden to pray, and then things fell apart, at least as far as the disciples were concerned.

Judas came leading a band of men who arrested Jesus and took him off to the Jewish leaders. Though John and Peter stayed close enough to see Jesus, Peter stumbled and denied knowing Jesus three times. Just as disconcerting was the fact that when they caught a glimpse of Jesus he looked like he had been beaten.

Then Jesus was taken to Pilate, the Roman ruler, and the people insisted that Jesus be crucified. The disciples were aghast. Who would want to kill Jesus? Pilate tries to appease the crowd by beating Jesus, but they want more blood. Finally, Pilate washes his hands and turns Jesus over to be crucified.

There on a hill outside the city Jesus is crucified with two thieves. It is Friday. Jesus dies quickly, but to be sure he is dead a spear is thrust into his side. Convinced that Jesus is dead, the Roman soldiers allow friends to take Jesus from the cross and bury him in a nearby tomb.

Jesus lay in that tomb until Sabbath was over. Sabbath is Saturday, and no work could be done on that day. Sabbath ended at sundown Saturday, allowing the women who followed Jesus time to shop for some spices to anoint Jesus' body. This was the way to show love and respect for the dead.

Early Sunday morning, before the sun had started to peak over the Judean hills, women who followed Jesus made their way to the tomb. On the way they realized they had forgotten an

important detail – the tomb was sealed with a huge stone. How would they ever move that stone?

Imagine how they felt the moment they realized they had missed this little detail. Heartbreak on heartbreak. They were devastated and traumatized by what they saw happen to Jesus – yes, they were there to the bitter end. Now they would be denied access to pay their last respects. If they were not weeping before they certainly were at this point.

But for some reason they pressed on. When they arrived at the tomb, Mark says, they looked up and saw the stone had been rolled away. They looked up – beyond their grief and pain and sorrow, they looked up, and they were surprised, pleasantly, that someone had rolled the huge stone away for them.

With bravery birthed from love, they entered the darkness of that tomb. Yet it was not dark. There sat a young man in the tomb, and he glowed with a supernatural light. Now they were frightened. They did not expect to see anyone there. They only expected to see the body of Jesus.

Speaking of the body of Jesus, it was gone!

And then the young man spoke:

**“Do not be alarmed! You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. Tell the disciples and Peter, “He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you!”**

How would you respond if you were in the place of those women?

1. An angel is talking to you.
2. The body of Jesus is missing.
3. The angel says Jesus is alive.
4. You are told to go tell the other disciples that the tomb is empty.
5. And tell them Jesus wants to meet you in Galilee.

Well, we are told the women trembled and they were bewildered. Sounds like natural reactions to me. Mark has been leading us to this point throughout his whole narrative – Jesus conquers death, and salvation is now available to all who put their faith in a living Jesus.

This is the Gospel. Remember, Mark’s narrative starts with the words, “The beginning of the good news (Gospel) about Jesus Christ, the Son of God...” (Mark 1:1). Now we have come to the end of the narrative, but not the end of the story. Mark does not say, as we might expect, “The End”. He does not close his Gospel off at all, but ends on this note:

**“The women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone because they were afraid.”**

They fled from the tomb. That sounds quite genuine. Have you noticed scripture does not gloss over the humanness of the people it tells about? If this were myth or fable, we likely would not have the women looking so – weak and vulnerable. We would want to show them as strong disciples who never feared...

But this is real time reporting. The women were frightened and they fled the tomb. Where did they go? Well, they were told to tell the disciples the good news that Jesus was alive, and that he would see them again in Galilee.

And that is what they do. The last part of verse 8 is best interpreted this way. They said nothing to anyone else because they were on a mission. They were told to tell the disciples – and Peter – what the angel said: “Jesus is alive!”

We know from the other Gospels that after the disciples are told about the empty tomb and the angel that Peter and John run to the tomb to check it out for themselves. We are also told that Mary Magdalene returns to the tomb and there she encounters the risen Lord – the first person to see him alive. Then Jesus will appear to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and finally will come to the disciples who are hiding in the city. There could be no doubt about it now – Jesus was alive!

And this fact changed the course of human history. The disheartened band of followers now had hope, and purpose and joy. Their beloved master could not be destroyed by death – he is alive! And the mission of the disciples is the same mission we have today – let everyone know that Jesus is very much alive and well today. He is our Saviour!

Jesus is not just an historical person of interest. He is not a fabricated myth. He is the living Saviour who provided salvation through his death and gave us life through his resurrection. We are alive spiritually today because Jesus is alive, and lives within us through the Holy Spirit.

If you have never met the living Jesus, you just have to. It will change everything for you, for the good. The Apostle Paul would write, “If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old is gone. The new is here.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

This resurrection Sunday we celebrate the new life Jesus brings to those who put their faith in him for salvation. You will hear in just a few minutes four testimonies of how the living, resurrected Jesus has changed the lives of these new believers.

Today we celebrate that Jesus is alive – not just two thousand years ago when he walked out of the tomb, but today, right now. He wants us to get to know Him, to walk with Him, to experience the new life he offers us. If you have never met Jesus – never asked him to forgive your sin and come into your life – what better day than Easter Sunday? Why not start a new life with Jesus today? It will be a decision you will never regret.