

Lesson 23: Mark 15:42-47 – 16:20

Our last lesson began with Peter denying that he knew Jesus three times, just as Jesus had predicted. Jesus was turned over to Pilate and charged with treason. As a gesture of good will during the holy days that celebrate Passover, Pilate offered to release one prisoner from prison. A crowd filled with supporters of the Sanhedrin demanded that a man accused of murder, Barabas, should be released and not Jesus the “King of the Jews.” The punishment was crucifixion. And so, the familiar narrative goes on; Jesus was mocked and persecuted before he was put to death. As he was dying, he began to recite Psalm 22; a passionate and prophetic Psalm. A Gentile, a Centurian declared that “Truly this man was the Son of God!” The women who had followed Jesus during his ministry stood off at a distance.

1. Read Mark 15:42-47 and footnotes. Share your footnotes with your group.

a. What do we know about Joseph of Arimathea?

b. The Gospel of Matthew adds another detail to the narrative. Read Matt 27:62-65 here.

Matt 27:62-65 ⁶²The next day, the one following the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate ⁶³and said, “Sir, we remember that this impostor while still alive said, ‘After three days I will be raised up.’ ⁶⁴Give orders, then, that the grave be secured until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal him and say to the people, ‘He has been raised from the dead.’ This last imposture would be worse than the first.” ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, “The guard is yours; go secure it as best you can.”

What does Matthew say was done to secure the burial place of Jesus and why?

2. Read Mark 16:1-8 and footnotes. Share your footnotes with your group.

a. For what purpose were the women returning to the burial site of Jesus?

b. **Read Mark 8:31-33 here:** He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer greatly and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and rise after three days. ³²He spoke this openly. Then Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³At this he turned around and, looking at his disciples, rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.”

Reflection: Even after seeing healings, exorcisms, and other miracles, did these faithful women (and men) really understand who Jesus was and what his fate was to be?

c. **Read Luke 24:2-8 here:** They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³but when they went in, they didn’t find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴**They didn’t know what to make of this.** Suddenly, two men were standing beside them in gleaming bright clothing. ⁵The women were frightened and bowed their faces toward the ground, but the men said to them, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶He isn’t here, but has been raised. Remember what he told you while he was still in Galilee, ⁷that the Human One must be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and on the third day rise again.” ⁸Then they remembered his words. ⁹**When they returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the eleven and all the others.**

***Compare Luke’s Gospel above with Mark 16:1-8. How are they similar?**

d. How is the reaction of the women different in Mark 16 when compared to Luke 24 above?

e. Why might the women not reveal what they had seen at Jesus’ empty tomb?

3. Read Mark 16:9-11 and footnotes. Share your footnotes with the group.

a. Reflection: Why do you think Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene?

b. Read 1 Kings 17:17-24, 2 Kings 13:21, and John 11:38-44 here:

1 Kings 17:17-24 Some time later, the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. ¹⁸ She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?" ¹⁹ "Give me your son," Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. ²⁰ Then he cried out to the LORD, "LORD my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" ²¹ Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the LORD, "LORD my God, let this boy's life return to him!" ²² The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. ²³ Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!" ²⁴ Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth."

2 Kings 13:21 Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet.

John 11:39-44. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." ⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" ⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father,⁴² I thank you for hearing me. ⁴² I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." ⁴³ And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice,⁴⁴ "Lazarus, come out!" ⁴⁴ The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

3c. Reflection: How does knowing that God can raise the dead to life affect our understanding of God and His power?

4. Read Mark 16:12-13 and compare it to Luke's account in Luke 24:13-25.

What details does Luke bring to this post-resurrection narrative?

5. Read Mark 16:14-18.

a. Why does the risen Jesus rebuke the Apostles?

b. Compare Mark 16:14-18 to Matthew 28: 16-20 here: The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. ¹⁷ **When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted.** ¹⁸ Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

c. What blessings does the LORD say are given to those who believe Jesus in Mark 16:16-18?

d. Often referred to as the *Great Commission*, after the resurrection, Jesus calls his followers to share their faith with the world. How can you share your faith with others this week?