

Amazing Love!

Houses of Light Church • April 20, 2025 • Pastor Netz Gomez & Ilse Marquez

Focus: Mark 16:1-3

Opening questions:

- Have you ever hoped and believed in something only to be totally disappointed?
- Do you know what it's like to pray and ask God to show up a certain way only for it to seem like He wasn't even listening?
- Do you know what this day is all about? Why do we celebrate resurrection Sunday? Is this just tradition or is there something real happening here?

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" **Mark 16:1-3**

Context:

A man who could change everything came into the world. He's doing everything we hope a leader would do: healing the sick, looking out for the broken, including the marginalized, championing women, and teaching a way of life founded on love and humility. He's amazing! Everything we hoped a leader would be! He marches into the capitol of the nation, not to wage war, but to bring peace, and everything seems like it is finally going in our favor — finally, someone will confront the powers that have oppressed us and make all the wrong things right. But a few days later, he's not overthrowing the empire in power, he's standing trial before them, silently facing all kinds of false accusations. The religious leaders, afraid to lose their relevance, teamed up with the empire and decide to sentence this man to death for threatening the status quo. He doesn't fight back, he doesn't say anything, but he faces his sentence with dignity and courage though it is the most brutal death anyone could ever face. For those who have been following him, this feels like the end. Another leader failed, another hope disappointed, another wasted effort to finally be free.

How would you feel if you were among them? Could you keep the faith? Would you question everything He ever said? Would you think you wasted your life following Him?

His followers scatter, no one seems interested in keeping the movement alive, whether it's for shame, fear, or the crushing weight of disappointment. But the women, who loved Him, who felt safe and seen by Him, they want to honor Him in His death. They set out to go where everyone else was afraid to be seen: the grave where their slain leader was laid.

This is where we pick up the story, they don't even know who will roll away the stone, but they don't care, they just want to see Him again: Jesus, the man who looked them in the eyes and set them free, the one they put their hope in — how could they go back to regular life after meeting Him?

The question: Who will roll away the stone?

Jesus' death was an undeniable reality. His followers were filled with fear and in hiding — even though 12 men had followed Jesus faithfully for 3 years, none of them volunteered to go with the women to move the stone. Even so, they were determined to honor and anoint Jesus even in the grave. We see their determination in John's telling of the story, where Mary, thinking she was talking to a gardener says this: "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." (**John 20:15**)

The impossible happens:

And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. **Mark 16:4-8**

- When they arrive at the tomb they realize their great problem was already resolved — the giant stone had been rolled away. They were also informed by a young man that Jesus wasn't going to be found in the grave — He's ALIVE!
- They were terrified, trembling at this news — in shock! It all seemed too good to be true, and that is probably our response today too: we prefer to doubt and fear things we don't understand, leaning more naturally towards skepticism than faith when things don't make sense.
- Think about it: how would you respond if you discovered the One you put your hope in was actually alive? The One you thought left you and let you down was actually more victorious than you could ever imagine?
- Because here's the thing, Jesus tried to prepare them for this moment. He told His followers He would die and resurrect multiple times:
 - *They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him. **Mark 9:30-32***
 - *From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man." **Matthew 16:21-23***
 - *...But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. **Luke 9:43-45***
- **If you were in Jesus' shoes, what would you think about your friends giving in to fear and doubt after you warned them about what was coming?** Would you be disappointed? Frustrated? Annoyed? How would you treat them the next time you saw them?
 - How do you think God responds to your failure, or the moments when you receive consequences for the very things He asked you not to do? Is he gloating? Does He just give up on you?

Jesus appears after His resurrection

*And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." **Mark 16:6-7***

- Of all the ways to announce His resurrection, He chose to show the women first. Today, that's not such a big deal, but back then, a woman's testimony was considered unreliable. You wouldn't ask a woman to be your key witness for a trial because society taught you that women were emotional and unhelpful at providing the facts, but for the first people to see Him to be women, and for Him to ask them to tell His male followers that He was back was the ultimate evidence that this had to be true!
- He singles out Peter: at this point, Peter had gone into hiding. He had failed epically: after saying he would fight for Jesus and stay with Him no matter what, he not only denied Him three times, but he decided to go back to his past life as if he had never met Jesus. Surely if Jesus came back, Peter would be too ashamed to show his face, so Jesus calls him out by name: "Go tell the disciples and PETER...." — Even though he removed himself from the story, Jesus wasn't done with Him.

*Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. **Mark 16:9-10***

- The fact she was the first, a woman and one that had been possessed is so significant! This tells us about Jesus' heart — He doesn't despise anyone and whatever passed history you're carrying does not disqualify you from receiving redemption and hope in Him.
- No one is past the point of no return in Him.

Even Peter and the disciples.. Jesus isn't done with them:

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on the right

side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” Now none of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead. When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” **John 21:4-15**

- Jesus shows up, and the disciples are right back where they started: in a boat not catching anything (this is what they were doing when they met Him 3 years prior) — He doesn’t scold them, but actually helps them in the same way He did when they met, and then He has this seemingly intense conversation with Peter.
 - After denying Him 3 times, Peter gets the chance to declare His love for Him 3 times. There are no hard feelings, no long lectures about why he couldn’t stand firm, just restoration and a prophecy that Peter would in fact make it to the end!

This is the amazing love of Jesus at the resurrection. He shows up to bring:

- Peace in the midst of fear (John 20:19) — when the disciples locked themselves in a room to figure things out
- Peace in the midst of chaos and a firm calling in spite of failure (John 20:20-21) — when He showed them His wounds and confirmed that it really was Him, and then He goes on to tell them He’s going to send them out!
- Peace in the midst of doubts and unbelief (John 20:26-27) — when Thomas couldn’t believe until physically seeing Him, He still showed up.

His resurrection power is not just for that one moment in history, but when we surrender our lives to Him, we become part of this redemption story:

“This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ...Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” **Acts 2:32-39**

This is the invitation for each of us today: join the story and receive the miraculous work Jesus did for each of us! He defeated the power of sin and death on the cross, not just so we would avoid hell but so we would have life in abundance in Him! His amazing love meets each one of us even in our failures and disappointments. Do you want to surrender your life to Him today?

Announcements:

1. **Do you want to get baptized?** We invite you to attend our preparation class on Thursday, April 24 at 7:00 PM online. Baptisms will take place during the service on April 27. Please register at www.housesoflight.org.
2. **Thank you, Volunteers!** We want to recognize everyone who serves with such heart each week: from those who greet us at the entrance, assist with parking, operate cameras and lights, to those who care for and teach our children. Thank you for all you do!