

JUST JESUS: A Journey Through Mark
PART 75 - MArk 16:9-16

Can We Trust the Bible When Manuscripts Disagree?

READ: Mark 16:8–11 AND 1 Corinthians 15:3–8

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) Most biblical scholars believe Mark 16:9–20 was added sometime after Mark originally wrote his Gospel. Why do you think learning about differences between ancient biblical manuscripts can sometimes make Christians uncomfortable? How might examining those differences actually strengthen our confidence in Scripture?

2) In 1 Corinthians 15:3–8, Paul describes the death, burial, resurrection, and eyewitness appearances of Jesus. How does this independent testimony help us evaluate the longer ending of Mark? Why is it important to distinguish between questions about a particular manuscript and questions about the truth of the Resurrection?

3) Pastor G said: "But we don't have to be afraid of difficult questions about the Bible! We can follow the evidence wherever it leads and still stand confidently on what God's Word establishes!" How can we develop a faith that welcomes honest questions rather than fears them? What would you say to someone who discovers a difficult biblical question and begins doubting their faith?

4) Have you ever encountered something in Scripture that challenged what you previously believed or understood? How did you respond, and what did that experience teach you about studying God's Word?

From Doubt to Faith: Encountering the Risen Jesus

READ: Mark 16:9–14 AND Luke 24:13–35

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) Mary Magdalene announced that Jesus was alive, yet the disciples initially struggled to believe her. The two disciples traveling to Emmaus also failed to recognize Jesus walking beside them. What do these accounts reveal about the disciples' expectations and their struggle to understand what God had accomplished?

2) On the road to Emmaus, Jesus explained the Scriptures before the disciples finally recognized Him. What does this encounter teach us about the relationship between understanding God's Word and recognizing His work in our lives?

3) Pastor G said: "Think about that! The first skeptics of the Resurrection were Jesus' own disciples! These were the men who had heard Jesus repeatedly predict His death AND resurrection!" Why do you think even people who have personally witnessed God's faithfulness can struggle to believe His promises when circumstances become overwhelming?

4) Think about a time when disappointment, grief, or unanswered prayer made it difficult for you to recognize what God might be doing. What helped you move forward in faith, even before you understood the situation?

And Peter! When Failure Isn't the End of the Story

READ: Mark 16:7 AND John 21:15–19

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) The angel specifically instructed the women to tell the disciples "and Peter" that Jesus was going ahead of them into Galilee. Considering Peter's three denials of Jesus, why might those two additional words have been especially meaningful to him?

2) In John 21, Jesus asks Peter three times whether he loves Him, and each time Jesus commissions Peter to care for His sheep. What does this encounter reveal about the difference between simply being forgiven and being restored to a place of meaningful service?

3) Pastor G said: "Peter's failure was NOT the end of his story, and therefore none of my failures need to be the end of my story. None of your failures need to be the end of your story!" Why is it sometimes easier to believe God can forgive someone else than to believe He can fully restore us after our own failures?

4) Is there a past mistake, disappointment, or personal failure that has caused you to question whether God can still use you? How might Jesus' treatment of Peter change the way you understand your own future and calling?

The Mission Continues: Grace, Faith, and Obedience

READ: Mark 16:15–16 AND Matthew 28:18–20

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1) Jesus entrusted the mission of making disciples to followers who had recently abandoned Him, denied Him, and struggled to believe in His resurrection. What does His decision to commission these imperfect people teach us about the relationship between God's grace and our usefulness in His kingdom?

2) Mark 16:16 connects belief and baptism, while other passages such as Acts 10:44–48 show people receiving the Holy Spirit before water baptism. How would you explain the difference between salvation by grace through faith and baptism as an important act of obedience to Jesus?

3) Pastor G said: "Because Peter and the other disciples told somebody, who told somebody, who told somebody, who told somebody! Generation after generation! Nation after nation! Language after language! The Gospel kept moving until eventually it reached US!" Who were some of the people God used to bring the Gospel into your life? How does remembering their influence change the way you think about your responsibility to share Jesus with others?

4) The same mission Jesus entrusted to His first disciples continues through His followers today. Who is one person in your life who needs to hear about the hope, forgiveness, and new life available through Jesus? What practical step could you take this week to help that person encounter Him?