

TEXT: Mark 16:1-8

TITLE: THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO EASTER

**BIG IDEA:**

**OUR APPROACH TO THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST CANNOT BE ONE OF CASUAL WORSHIP**

**Dealing with the ending** appended to many texts of the Gospel of Mark that I believe was not in the original text – vv. 9-20.

- Deal with it up front since this will be our last message in Gospel of Mark and I do not want to interrupt the impact of today's critical topic
- A lot of complexity dealing with which of the ancient manuscripts to give the most weight to – obviously we do not have in existence any of the **original autographs** (writings) – that would eliminate any controversy; impacts a number of texts – but this is the longest and most significant one in question
- Whatever we conclude, it does not undermine the doctrines of **inspiration** and **sufficiency** of Scripture; must have confidence in the **preservation** of Scripture as well by the providential hand of God – what good is accuracy in the originals if we have no correspondence to them today??
- Both **external** manuscript evidence must be examined and **internal arguments** from the text itself, Context, language used, etc.
- MacArthur Study Bible gives a quick overview of some of these details
  - o **External:** Oldest and most reliable manuscripts (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus ) do not have this ending; majority of manuscripts do have it – were the oldest ones less revered and thus less copied so that they did not wear out as did the others?? Lots of manuscript questions
  - o **Internal:** seems more like a summary from the statements of the other gospels; does not really follow in terms of context; uses some unique language not found in other parts of Mark
- **Why this ending?** People thought that the gospel ended too abruptly – we will address that as we get into the text now – more likely that it would be added rather than removed

**Read vv. 1-8**

**INTRODUCTION:**

Driving through Ellicott City Friday morning, I saw a small group of religious pilgrims following behind a man bearing a wooden cross who was leading them along Main Street. This was the way they had chosen to mark the historic remembrance of Christ's Crucifixion. As I drove by I had no way to tell whether these were genuine believers or simply people caught up in the rites and symbols of religious observance. **Casual Worship**

Too much casual worship taking place today all around the world – worship that is caught up in the externals of rites and symbols rather than in heartfelt repentance of sin and genuine faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives. Are people worshipping the True Jesus or an image that they have created to satisfy their religiosity?

## Implications of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Steven Lawson: (great resource for this text – borrowed extensively)

- Validated the perfection of His sacrifice for our sins; completion of mission of redemption; provided just basis for forgiveness of sins
- Father had accepted His payment in full; propitiation
- Authenticated the claims of Jesus
- Guarantees that God is sovereign over all of men's affairs and of all history
- Jesus had triumphed over death and sin and Satan;
- guarantees there will be a final judgment because God has raised the Judge from the dead; greatest message for every believer and should strike terror into every unbeliever;
- dominated message of early apostles

## OUR APPROACH TO THE REALITY OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST CANNOT BE ONE OF CASUAL WORSHIP

### 4 ASPECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH TOWARDS EASTER:

#### **I. (:1-2) EXPRESSING EASTER DEVOTION – Who is on the Lord's side; Who will serve the King?**

Easter remains one of the top days of the year for people to express their devotion to Jesus Christ. Look at how churches are filled on Easter Sunday. But what is the nature of that devotion?

For many people it is shallow and superficial. There is no sacrifice or cost or commitment involved.

But for those who are born-again, genuine disciples there is a devotion that is both costly and committed.

##### **A. (:1) Costly Devotion (Extraordinary Love)**

*“And when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.”*

Καὶ διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία ἡ [τοῦ] Ἰακώβου καὶ Σαλώμη ἠγόρασαν ἀρώματα ἵνα ἔλθοῦσαι ἀλείψωσιν αὐτόν.

Same 3 faithful women are present; they are going to be able to testify that Jesus died; that he was placed in this specific grave and that the tomb was empty and the linen cloth was left in a wrapped state – but with no body

Remember Joseph had used spices – wrapping the body of Jesus in layers of linen cloth

Here the purpose of spices was not so much for embalming but for expressing devotion;

They purchased the spices Sat. after the sabbath was over and then brought them in the early hours on Sunday morning to the tomb; their expectation was not to find a risen Lord Jesus

##### **B. (:2) Committed Devotion**

*“And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.”*

καὶ λίαν πρῶτ' τῆ μιᾶ τῶν σαββάτων ἔρχονται ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον ἀνατεῖλαντος τοῦ ἡλίου.

Reflects the priority that Christ is first in their lives

2 different time references:

- Started out very early before the sun was up
- Got to tomb just after 6 am when sun was just appearing

Heroic Act:

- Jesus put to death by Roman authorities as a political rebel
- Hated by the Jewish nation

Love – not just tender feelings – but must be expressed in sacrificial giving

What is your motivation for serving the Lord?

To what extreme lengths do you go to express your love?

Otherwise we have left our first love ...

## **II. (:3-4) ENCOUNTERING EASTER DIFFICULTIES**

### **A. (:3) Problem: How Can We Gain Access to Jesus?**

*“And they were saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?’”*

καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς ἑαυτάς· τίς ἀποκυλίσει ἡμῖν τὸν λίθον ἐκ τῆς θύρας τοῦ μνημείου;

### **B. (:4) Solution: God Must Make a Way**

*“And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.”*

καὶ ἀναβλέψασαι θεωροῦσιν ὅτι ἀποκεκύλισται ὁ λίθος· ἦν γὰρ μέγας σφόδρα.

### **Matt. 28:2-3**

- Significance of earthquake – marking something extraordinary that had happened in spiritual realm
- Angel had come and rolled back the stone

## **III. (:5-7) EMBRACING EASTER DISCOVERIES**

Important that all of us come to appreciate these same 3 discoveries:

### **A. (:5) Discovery #1 – Angelic Young Man -- Which Kingdom Reigns?**

*“And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed.”*

Καὶ εἰσελθοῦσαι εἰς τὸ μνημεῖον εἶδον νεανίσκον καθήμενον ἐν τοῖς δεξιοῖς περιβεβλημένον στολὴν λευκὴν, καὶ ἐξεθαμβήθησαν.

Expected to find the Roman soldiers in charge of the tomb – guarding the resting place of the body of Jesus; Instead they find an angelic being –

A couple of the accounts say there were two angels present ... Discrepancy?  
If there were two ... then there certainly was one

**Parunak:** Recall the linen-clad young man who fled in the garden (14:51-52). There, the angelic bodyguard forsook the Lord; here, it returns.

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**Reaction of Amazement and Shock and Awe** – Trace this through the book by way of **review**

**MacArthur: Why does Mark end where he ends?**

Can I help you with that? Let's go back to chapter 1. Chapter 1, Jesus going along by the sea, verse 16, saw Simon and Andrew. You know the story. And He gathers them around Him. They went in to Capernaum, verse 21, "*Immediately on the Sabbath. He entered the synagogue and began to teach.*" What does verse 22 say? They were—what?—amazed, *amazed at His teaching.*

Verse 25, Jesus rebukes a demon. Says, "*Be quiet, come out of him,*" throwing him into convulsions. The unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice, came out of him, verse 27 says—what?—they were all *amazed*. Chapter 2, you know the story, the healing of the paralytic, Jesus forgives his sins, it says in verse 11, "*Pick up your pallet, your bed, and go home. He got up immediately, picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone so that they were all—what?—amazed. They were glorifying God saying, 'We've never seen anything like this before.*

In chapter 4, Jesus is in a storm, verse 37, there's a fierce gale, waves are breaking up over the boat. The boat was filling up with water. Jesus was so weary, He was in the stern asleep. They woke Him and said, "*Teacher, do You not care that we're perishing?*" He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "*Hush, be still,*" the wind died down and it became perfectly calm. "*And He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? How is it that you have faith?'* They became very much afraid. Said to one another, '*Who then is this that even the wind and the sea obey Him?'*"

In chapter 5 verse 14, the story of the demoniac, the people see this amazing healing and in verse 15 they came to Jesus and observed a man who had been demon-possessed sitting down, clothed, you know, he came running out of the tombs naked. Now he's sitting down, clothed, delivered from his demon, or demons that filled up a whole herd of pigs. In his right mind, the man who had the legion, and they became "*frightened,*"...amazement, fear, awe.

Chapter 5 and verse 33, you know this wonderful story of the woman who touched His garment, the woman, verse 33, "*Fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth.*" At the end of the chapter, He takes the hand of the little girl, you remember, and says, "*Talitha kum*" which means, "*Little girl, I say to you, get up.*" This was the girl who had died, daughter of an important man. "*Immediately the girl got up, began to walk, she was 12 years old and immediately they were completely astounded.*"

Chapter 6, another time on the water, this time He walks on the water, 6:51, "*He got into the boat with them, the wind stopped and they were utterly astonished.*" Chapter 9 at the transfiguration of Jesus, verse 6 says, "*They became terrified.*"

Chapter 9 and verse 15, the large crowd, scribes arguing with Him and when the entire crowd saw Him, they were amazed and began running to greet Him. Are you starting to get a picture here?

Chapter 9 verse 32, when Jesus was teaching that the Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, they will kill Him and when He's been killed, He will rise three days later. They didn't understand this statement and they were afraid to ask Him. Fear and awe and amazement.

Chapter 10 verse 24, "*The disciples were amazed at His words.*" Chapter 10 verse 32, "*They were on the road going to Jerusalem, Jesus was walking on ahead of them. And they were amazed and those who followed were fearful.*" Chapter 11 verse 18, "*The chief priests and the scribes heard this and began seeking how to destroy Him. They were afraid of Him for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching.*" And it's mounting, chapter 12 verse 17, when He said, "*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's, they were amazed at Him.*"

And one of the most amazing things of all was His encounter with Pilate, chapter 15. Pilate, verse 4, questioning Him, Jesus makes no further answer. Pilate was amazed.

And then you come to chapter 16, the women arrive at the tomb. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Salome, they come and in verse 4, "*Looking up they saw the stone had been rolled away although it was extremely large. Entering the tomb they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe and they were amazed.*"

In ten of those passages the same verb was used, *phobeo*, they were amazed. In five of them, a cognate of that verb was used and elsewhere synonyms were used. And then you come to 16:8 and they went out and fled, *for trembling and astonishment had gripped them and they were silent and they were afraid.*

I can't think of a better ending, can you? **The amazing Jesus.** It ends as it began, with amazement over the Lord Jesus Christ. And when you stop where you should stop in Mark, you step back in awe of the amazing Jesus. Every lesson, every miracle, every stunning answer that He gave, every insight, every righteous word, every righteous act fill you with stunning amazement. **Amazing, you should be speechless, like Mark, like the woman at the amazing Jesus.**

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## **B. (:6) Discovery #2 – Empty Tomb -- Life Has Triumphed Over Death**

*“And he said to them,  
‘Do not be amazed;  
you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified.  
He has risen; He is not here;  
behold, here is the place where they laid Him.’”*

ὁ δὲ λέγει αὐταῖς· μὴ ἐκθαμβεῖσθε· Ἰησοῦν ζητεῖτε τὸν Ναζαρηνὸν τὸν ἐσταυρωμένον· ἠγέρθη, οὐκ ἔστιν ὧδε· ἴδε ὁ τόπος ὅπου ἔθηκαν αὐτόν.

**James Edwards:** the response of the angel can be taken as a mild rebuke. The women, intent on their funereal errand, are preoccupied with death. They endeavor with their spices and anxieties to bring some kind of closure, however inadequate, to a tragic drama. But all their preparations leave them unprepared for the reality the encounter; what they intend to be a terminal visit is but a commencement. The Jesus they are “looking for” enshrined in a safe place cannot be found. The visit to the tomb is vintage Markan irony: the living are consumed with death, but the Crucified One is consumed with life.

**Sproul:** “*He has been raised*” – passive verb

**John 20:3** – records what the women saw in the empty tomb – the linen wrappings were still lying there and the facecloth not lying with the linen wrappings but separate – Jesus took it off and rolled it up and set it on the side

**Lawson:** All other religious leaders have died and their bodies remain in their graves –  
**Uniqueness of Jesus Christ**

### **C. (:7) Discovery #3 – Post Resurrection Appearance of Jesus – the Living Lord Continues to Lead His Disciples**

*“But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He said to you.’”*

ἀλλ’ ὑπάγετε εἰπατε τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ Πέτρῳ ὅτι προάγει ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν· ἐκεῖ αὐτὸν ὄψεσθε, καθὼς εἶπεν ὑμῖν.

**Lawson:** Significance of going to Galilee – where Jesus had called the disciples; done most of his miracles; his teachings; Matt. Great Commission given here  
We have been given the same message and charge

Claims of Jesus always fulfilled in explicit detail – “*just as He said to you*”

Significance of **eyewitness accounts** throughout the record of the Crucifixion and Burial and Resurrection of Christ

1 Cor. 15 records many post resurrection appearances of Jesus

## **IV. (:8) ECHOING EASTER AWE AND AMAZEMENT AND SHOCK AND BEWILDERMENT**

### **A. Awe and Amazement Should Impact Our Actions --**

*“And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them;”*

Καὶ ἐξεληθοῦσαι ἔφυγον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου, εἶχεν γὰρ αὐτὰς τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις·

"*trembling*," usually linked in OT with "*fear*."

What has taken place here?

**James Edwards:** In one verse Mark includes a battery of seven negative responses on their part. These terms scarcely depict reverential awe at a *mysterium tremendum*. V. 8 clearly implies a response of fear that inhibits faith. The flight of the women is narrated in the same tense of the same verb (GK. *ephygon*) as the flight of the disciples in 14:50. “Trembling” (Gk. *tromos*) and “bewilderment” (Gk. *ekstasis*) occur only once and twice respectively in Mark and are expressions of consternation. The failure of the women to speak contravenes the command of the angel, and the final reference to “*fear*” repeats a word that occurs a dozen times in Mark, in ten of which it is clearly negative. It is clear that Mark does not intend v. 8 to imply reverence or faith on the part of the women, but **fear and flight**.

Tone of faith and gladness and excitement and joy still need to mature;  
We are seeing the reality of our pervading sinfulness – even once we have been reborn and given a new nature. We are not yet glorified in our relationship with Jesus; we have responses that are not fully redeemed; there is some tension so that we do not fully obey the commands of the angel – which are commands of perfection

### **B. Awe and Amazement Should Govern Our Speech – Rendered Speechless**

*“and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”*

*καὶ οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπαν· ἐφοβοῦντο γάρ.*

Too much on the side of fear and trembling here ... but still there are the legitimate germs of awe and astonishment and amazement and bewilderment ... but over the next hours and days, their faith will mature

They will not end up paralyzed by fear – but will aggressively carry out the Great Commission; They will not remain speechless but will have their tongues emboldened and unleashed to proclaim the glorious gospel message

**Lawson:** **What about the abrupt ending??** Matches the **abrupt beginning** where there is no buildup; no genealogy given; no record of the birth of Christ; He just appears on the scene very abruptly; this style has **unique impact** – so it is with the ending

Mark wants to close this gospel in a way that is consistent with how He has presented the glory and power of Jesus throughout his account – always triggering a response of **Shock and Awe**.

### **(:9-20) CONCLUSION:**

This is the right ending to the Gospel of Mark – Shock and Awe and Astonishment and some Bewilderment – yet a maturing faith that goes beyond the reaction of the women here to a joy and excitement and settled faith where our worship is impactful – not casual  
Motivated to fulfill the Great Commission of **Matt. 28**

### **What amazes Jesus? Unbelief -- Mark 6:6**

**Lawson:** Come today and gaze on the empty tomb and behold what these women saw – respond in faith.

The Resurrection of Jesus is true and real and unique in history – validates and confirms and authenticates that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the only Savior of Sinners

**Mark Dever:** No one who ever encounters the living Christ will ever respond with **casual worship**.

**Lawson:** If you are involved with **casual worship**, then God is not there. Always a sense of Awe and Amazement and Astonishment and Shock and some Bewilderment ...

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### DEVOTIONAL QUESTIONS:

- 1) How many implications of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ can you list?
- 2) What details are supplied by the other Gospel accounts that are missing in Mark's account?
- 3) How would Peter have received this message that the Lord has been raised from the dead and will appear to the disciples in Galilee?
- 4) Is this ending some form of rebuke for these three women responding in fear and trembling?

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### QUOTES FOR REFLECTION:

**Parunak:** Should vv.9-20 be treated as Scripture? [He takes the alternative view that we should accept the longer ending]

1. Chiastic Inclusio between **1:1-28** and **16:9-19** Message: They are to carry on for him, as his representatives. His death, resurrection, and ascension is not the end--it is the beginning.
2. This passage is one of the most significant points of deviation between the traditional Greek text of the NT, which is reflected in the vast majority of the mss, and the version used in almost all modern translations, which draws heavily on Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. These latter mss omit the text from this point on, though they both leave space for it!
  - a) But note that without it, there is no resolution to the problem of the failed disciples, and no foundation for the ongoing work of the church.
  - b) It not only dominates the mss evidence, but has also been in liturgical use in the Eastern churches for as far back as we can trace.
  - c) The close correspondence with ch. 1 shows that it is a fitting ending to the gospel.

### **Brian Borgman: The Uniqueness of the Resurrection**

Our country has become increasingly pluralistic in terms of religious landscape; Pluralism is a suspicion against anything that calls itself "The" Truth; claims that either nothing is true or everything is equally true; both axioms are self refuting; By virtue of the resurrection the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely Unique and has the exclusive claim to truth

## Steven Lawson: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ

bold and courageous preaching of the apostles – they had seen the risen Christ

**Aside on vv.9-20** – not authentic; not included in the original manuscripts

### 1) The Extraordinary Love (vs. 1) – that these women have for the Lord Jesus

Undying allegiance; even though they suppose Him to be dead;

Descriptive qualifiers of Mary M. would not have been reserved for vs. 9 if Mark had read this section ... that is the first time that this particular extra author has brought up her name;

You would never save the qualifier for the end;

A sacrificial love; costly purchase; grace of God has liberated them from such great sin; he who has been forgiven much loves much; experiencing the joy of salvation;

A week earlier his living body had been anointed;

Expression of undying love; not enough to have tender thoughts about Jesus; they must express their love in sacrificial giving

This was a heroic act as well; visiting the grave of such a one – crucified by Roman authorities; despised by the nation

### 2) Note the Early Arrival on Sunday at daylight (vs. 2)

“very early” -- A time before 6 am

Sun just came up – after 6 am

Started out at their homes while it was still dark; as they arrived at the grave the sun was just coming up; both time designations are true

How eager and ready they are; not dragging their feet; don't have to be prompted

Not doing it at the end of the day if they have some extra time;

### 3) Emboldened Faith (vs. 3)

Knew the tomb had been sealed shut with a large stone; saw Joseph roll the stone in place;

Obstacle did not stop them from coming;

Positive; expectant; outreaching; were not falling back on excuses; there's a lot to be said for just showing up and not just waiting for ideal circumstances

Instead of attitude: “It can't be God's will because there is still that stone in front of the tomb”

It is our tendency to worry about things that never happen;

God has already rolled the stone away; Phil. 4 – no need for anxiety

### [Introduction to Part 2

No book ever had a more dramatic ending than Mark's Gospel;

Astonished faces of these women, in the grip of fear and trembling;

Entire record of Mark has been one of astonishment and amazement at the display of His power and glory of Christ in some way; Shock and Awe; nobody every yawning when they interacted with Jesus]

### 4) Entrance Opened (vs. 4)

They saw a sight they were not prepared to see; they now look up -- they previously were

**looking down** – due to darkness

Sense that God is going before them and preparing the way;

**Matt. 28:2-3** – give the insight here – 2 powerful things happened to remove the stone

- a severe earthquake sent by God; something extraordinary happening in spiritual realm

- (cf. other examples) – punctuates the enormous reality of what had just taken place
- angel of the Lord rolled it away – not so Jesus could get out but so the observers could get in

### 5) Empty Tomb (vs 5)

White robe – heavenly origin

They were dumbfounded; overwhelmed; stunned; very strong compound word; in the grip of wonder and awe

### 6) Emphatic Message (:6-7)

Glorious announcement of the Resurrection of Christ from the dead;

I know why you are here;

**John 20:3ff** – we find out what was found in the inner chamber

Why is Peter singled out? He had denied the Lord 3 times; needed to be restored; needed to retake his position of leadership

### 7) Exciting Ending (vs. 8)

- Women are overwhelmed just as we should be
- Women are energized
- Women are running
- Women are testifying

These women were traumatized; they were thoroughly scared; ecstasy of mind – ecstatic; they were out of their minds; besides themselves

They had seen all of this with their own eyes

They were in shock; could not even process this; much less communicate this to others

**MacArthur:** Why is it here? Well it's here for the obvious reason that this just seems too abrupt—it seems too abrupt. What drove the addition is the very, very brief almost shocking, stunning end of Mark's carefully crafted history of the Lord Jesus Christ. The language is frankly dramatic, very dramatic, trembling, astonishment, speechlessness, fear, or awe. The women are in some kind of a state of terrified bewilderment, gripped by the **wondrous reality** of the resurrection. They know He's alive, they were there, the tomb is empty, the angels declared it. They are speechless and frankly so is Mark. . .

Our translation is based on ancient Greek manuscripts. The originals, the autographs, the original autographs themselves do not exist, the very early copies do. When you get to those early copies, this isn't there...this isn't there. It doesn't appear in the oldest manuscripts, Sinaiticus, and Vaticanus, other of the oldest do not have it. Fourth century, Eusebius and Jerome wrote that almost Greek manuscripts, almost all in the fourth century ended with verse 8. Second century, Justin Martyr and Tatian, however, show knowledge of other endings. And even Irenaeus shows knowledge of other endings starting to float around. Irenaeus quotes 16:19 which is in this spurious section.

So this ending came into existence very early, although there was anything but uniform acceptance of it, it starts to show up. In fact, several such endings start to show up as people try to help Mark a little bit with his abrupt ending. There are medieval manuscripts that included it and such were the manuscripts from the medieval period used by English translators before earlier manuscripts were found and that's why you find it in some of the translations in English and other languages.

