**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

Sermon

*The Good News According to Mark,*

*An Apostle of Jesus Christ*

*365 Day Disciple ~ Mark 16:5 -8*

*The Empty Tomb and the Great Commission*

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

October 14th In the Year of Our Lord 2018

(Unless otherwise noted, CSB17 - Christian Standard Bible 2017 quoted)

Rising from the dead and walking from the tomb created the best way to commission people to go all over the world. People took note and went forward. Their empowering experience was passed to others and has lasted to this day. We are in the 2018th year of our Lord who rose from being dead and walked from a tomb. Jesus then showed Himself to others who in turn spent the rest of their lives witnessing what they saw and what happened to them, the eternal change in their lives.

We were not there to see Jesus die on the Cross or witness the stone that had been rolled away. We did not witness Jesus during His resurrection ministry or receive the great commission during that time. However, we have received the same spiritual power as those that were there. It is just that we need to realize the full potential of what we have received from God. We, too, are empowered just the same as those that met Jesus on the Road to Emmaus.

You have most likely heard the story of the eagle egg that fell from the nest to the ground and happened to land in a turkey’s nest. The eagle grew-up with the turkeys gobbling on the ground subject to all the predators on the ground. One day, two eagles from on high saw the adolescent eagle gobbling along the ground with all the other turkeys. One eagle from on high decided to tell the little eagle gobbling that he could fly and soar to the heavens, that he was born to soar and not be stuck on the ground. The other eagle from on high said, “No, do not tell him who he really is. If he learns who he really is, we will have to compete with him for fish and space in the sky.” The more caring eagle said that there was enough room in the sky and plenty of fish. (You could say that he witnessed to the adolescent eagle.) So, the adolescent eagle chose to spread his wings with which he was created, and he soared to new heights.

Most people are stuck gobbling along the ground. They never spread their wings, their spiritual wings, to become the person God intended them to be. We are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). This means that we are designed with the compacity to have a relationship with God that is unique to humans and not animals. Like the eagle that came from the heavens, God comes to us and gives us an opportunity to listen to Him. God has revealed Himself through what He has made (Romans 1:18ff). In our time, we have His Word, the Bible.

The four Gospels relate the account of the **empty tomb**. We can piece together the events from these four accounts. There are variations regarding the reports of one or two men dressed in white radiant clothes or angels greeting the women and speaking to them. We also gather that Jesus saw the women; He specifically named Mary Magdalene with whom He spoke. She thought He might be a gardener until He spoke to her. She recognized His voice (John 20:14ff). Other women are also named: Mary the mother of James, Salome and Joanna. There were other women with them but not named. Angels or Beings described as men spoke to the women in the other Gospels telling them Jesus had risen like He said he would, and that He would appear in Galilee. The women are told to go and tell the others. The women went and told Peter and others who did not believe. In John, Peter and other disciples entered the tomb and saw that Jesus was not there.

After the empty tomb discovery, the disciples are instructed to meet Jesus in Galilee. Which they did.

As part of the empty tomb account in Matthew, an earthquake accompanied the appearance of two angels. Matthew also has the account of the soldiers reporting to the chief priest who paid the soldiers to say that while they were sleeping the disciples stole the body of Jesus.

Luke chronicles the two as “Road to Emmaus” witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection ministry. There are other accounts in Luke, and in John, where Jesus visits the disciples. These other accounts chronicle the well-known “Doubting Thomas” dialogue. Then there is the meeting in Galilee. (Note: The Sea of Tiberius, Lake Gennesaret and Galilee are all the same place called by different names).

At Galilee, Jesus gives the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19; John 20:19 ff; Luke 24:47. Publishers continue to print the longer ending to Mark because of tradition. So, there is a great commission statement in Mark 16:15.

**Mark 16:5-8**

5 When they entered the tomb,

they saw a young man dressed in a white robe

sitting on the right side; they were alarmed.

6 "Don't be alarmed," he told them.

"You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.

He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they put him.

7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter,

'He is going ahead of you to Galilee;

you will see him there just as he told you.'"

8 They went out and ran from the tomb,

because trembling and astonishment overwhelmed them.

And they said nothing to anyone, since they were afraid.

ADDED TEXT

The Gospel ends here. Throughout history, many scholars observe that this is an abrupt ending. Hence, at some point, well-intended scribes added an ending to Mark that has been carried through time.

Additional verses (9-20, *printed below*) are not in the oldest and/or best manuscripts but are in many Bibles today.

The oldest and best manuscripts (Fourth century IV) we have are called Sinaiticus and Vaticanus which do not contain these verses.

If you leave these verses from the text, there isn’t one item omitted from the Gospel witness. Bible publishers know the facts involving these manuscripts and should not print verses 9 and following. This is a self-inflicted wound in Christian publishing. There is enough evidence ~~to~~ not to print this section.

Verses 9-15 of Mark are consistent with other verses in the Gospels. The deviation comes in verse 16.

9 Early on the first day of the week, after he had risen,

he appeared first to Mary Magdalene,

out of whom he had driven seven demons.

10 She went and reported to those who had been with him,

as they were mourning and weeping.

11 Yet, when they heard that he was alive

and had been seen by her, they did not believe it.

12 After this, he appeared in a different form to two of them walking on their way into the country.

13 And they went and reported it to the rest,

who did not believe them either.

14 Later he appeared to the Eleven themselves

as they were reclining at the table.

He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart,

because they did not believe those who saw him after he had risen.

**They should have believed because Jesus had told them.**

**Matthew 22:29** Jesus answered them, "You are mistaken, because you don't know the Scriptures or the power of God.

**Luke 24:46** He also said to them, "This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day,

**John 2:22** So when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the statement Jesus had made.

**Mark 9:10** They kept this word to themselves, questioning what "rising from the dead" meant.

**Luke 24:26** Wasn't it necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

**1 Corinthians 15:4** that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

**Psalm 16:10** For you will not abandon me to Sheol; you will not allow your faithful one to see decay.

**Matthew 16:21** From then on Jesus began to point out to his disciples that it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, be killed, and be raised the third day.

**Matthew 16:22** Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, "Oh no, Lord! This will never happen to you!"

**Mark 9:9** As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one what they had seen until the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

**Mark 9:31** For he was teaching his disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after he is killed, he will rise three days later."

**Mark 16 (continued)**

15 Then he said to them,

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

**16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved,**

**but whoever does not believe will be condemned.**

The first part of this verse lends to some people receiving a mandatory order to water-baptize to be saved. However, this would contradict Ephesians 2:8 (*For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift--***2:9** *not from works, so that no one can boast*.)

Scripture does not contradict Scripture. To be clear, this context is water-baptism compared to **spiritual-baptism**. Spiritual baptism is mandatory for salvation. Paul declares in Romans 8:9

You, however, are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to him.

**Romans 8:11** And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, then he who raised Christ from the dead will also bring your mortal bodies to life through his Spirit who lives in you.

**Galatians 4:6** And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!"

**1John 4:13** This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit.

**Ezekiel 36:27** I will place my Spirit within you and cause you to follow my statutes and carefully observe my ordinances.

**Romans 8:2** because the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

The practice of water-baptism is to show oneness with God. This means that a person and God are one. It is correct to say that water-baptism is a sign and symbol that declares spiritual-baptism which is a function by God. We see this in Ezekiel 36:27, “I will place my Spirit with you.” God does not say that you can place His Spirit in you. God is the one doing the implanting. Man surrenders to God for this to happen. Man surrenders to God’s Holy Spirit conviction then man is acceptable to house God’s Spirit. The statement of two beings joining together is made in water-baptism. To be clear, the act itself does not join people with God. The saving connection to God is by one means and that is spiritual. Man cannot control the spiritual. What we do see over the centuries is man controlling water-baptism which is temporal. Water-baptism has been a political issue and has been used to keep whole populations under control.

The State-Church had people believing that they had the power to remove original sin from infants through water-baptism. Hence, if the baby died then they would be saved. This is done today in many churches by ‘sprinkling’ an infant along with the family promising to raise the child in the Church. Think of the power church officials have over people who they manipulated into thinking that parents needed them to water-baptize their babies to keep them from going to hell in the event of their death.

The Bible does not prohibit anyone from water-baptizing another person. Jesus gives the great commission to the disciples.

Even if you take the first part of the verse at face value it is not repeated in the second part of the verse. The second part does not repeat the need for baptism to be saved. However, “whoever believes” is the main point. Baptism is a sign for the Believer. So, whoever believes will *want* to be water-baptized. There is no way that God would refuse a person entrance into His heaven because he prayed the prayer of salvation from his heart in the middle of the desert where there is no water and then God says, “Well, you were sincere, but you have not been water-baptized; so, you are going to hell. I know you are in the middle of the desert, but that is too bad, too sad. Rules are rules.”

**2Timothy 1:9** He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.

**Acts16:31** They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved you and your household."

**Romans 4:16** This is why the promise is by faith, so that it may be according to grace, to guarantee it to all the descendants not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of Abraham's faith. He is the father of us all.

**Galatians 2:16** and yet because we know that a person is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we ourselves have believed in Christ Jesus. This was so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no human being will be justified.

**Titus 3:5** he saved us not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

**Luke 7:50** And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

**Mark 16 (continued)**

17 And these signs will accompany those who believe:

In my name they will drive out demons;

they will speak in new tongues;

18 they will pick up snakes;

if they should drink anything deadly, it will not harm them;

they will lay hands on the sick, and they will get well."

19 So the Lord Jesus, after speaking to them,

was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

20 And they went out and preached everywhere,

while the Lord worked with them

and confirmed the word by the accompanying signs.

It is known that Paul was bitten by a snake. However, Paul did not seek to handle a snake or put a snake to the test. Paul did not purposefully drink deadly liquids to prove he was saved.

Deuteronomy 6:16 (NAU) "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.

Psalm 78:18 (NAU) And in their heart they put God to the test By asking food according to their desire.

Matthew 4:7 (NAU) Jesus said to him, "On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

Luke 4:12 (NAU) And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

Acts 15:10 (NAU) "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?

To Whom was the Great Commission Given?

Carrying out the Great Commission includes performing water-baptisms. God takes care of Spiritual-baptisms.

In Luke 24:31, the two witnesses that were on the road to Emmaus came and told the disciples that they had seen Jesus. It is noted that others were with the disciples. It is also recorded here that Jesus gives those present the great commission. This commissioning is not exclusive to the disciples. Jesus commands them to start in Jerusalem and go to all the nations to spread to Gospel. It is clear that Jesus intended all who heard His voice to go forward. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus also commands the Gospel to be witnessed to the nations. There needs to be a lot of people involved to reach all the nations. Here in Matthew, baptism is directed to be accomplished in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Obviously, others baptized besides the 11 disciples. Philip baptized the Ethiopian in Acts 8. Philip was one of the table servers chosen in Acts 6.

It is our tradition that pastors, or a servant dedicated by the Church, perform baptism. However, it is perfectly fine if an average everyday Believer from the congregation performs baptisms.

**What we walk away with...**

We, too, are empowered by the empty tomb, the resurrection.

We, too, have a personal witness just like those that witnessed Jesus during the resurrection.

We, too, need to realize our full potential in the life that God has established for us.

We have one opportunity in that we have one life, and time is passing by us daily. We need to be guarded in how we spend our time and with whom we spend it.

One thing is for sure, in the Great Commissioning by Jesus, He promised His followers that He would be with them.

**Matthew 28: 18-20**

18 Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

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 everything I have commanded you. **And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

**AMEN**