**Uniquely Jesus**  August 6, 17

Mark 16, Part Two

**Coffee/Question:**

Think of people you know, including yourself:

How do people decide what is most important? And what difference does it make for a person when they have determined what is most important?

Feedback:

When the apostle Paul wrote the church at Corinth, he reminded those believers of the priority of the gospel of Jesus. He said (1 Corinthians 15), *“For what I received I passed on to you as of* ***first importance****: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...”*

We’ve looked in detail at the things Mark wrote regarding the eyewitnesses - the women - Mary Magdalene, the other Mary and Salome, the soldiers, the unnamed bystanders - who saw Jesus hanging on the cross; who heard his words spoken from the cross; who saw and felt the darkness that came over the land for three hours from noon to 3pm; who saw Jesus breathe his last breath.

Jesus Christ died for the sins of humanity, and he did so as the Scriptures had foretold.

Paul also wrote to the church at Corinth, *“...that he was buried...”*

Mark wrote of Joseph of Arimathea - and told us how he took down the dead body of Jesus off of the cross; wrapped it in linen cloth, placed it in a tomb that had never before been used, and then rolled a large stone in front of the tomb’s opening.

Jesus’ dead body was not left on the cross; nor was it taken down and thrown into the garbage dump.

Jesus the Christ was buried.

Paul also said, *“...that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...”*

Philip Yancey writes, *“The first Christians staked everything on the Resurrection, so much so that the apostle Paul told the Christians at Corinth, ‘And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.’* The Jesus I Never Knew, p.211-212.

Today we are going to begin to unpack the message which the young man in the tomb gave to the women, regarding the startling news of Jesus resurrection.

Again, let me say as I have said these last three weeks, there is remarkable specificity in the details recorded.

**Mark 16:1-8**.

Today we are going to dig deep into verse 5.

At first glance, it might not seem there is much here to learn and to apply.

But as I studied this week, each day I was surprised at what I discovered.

**\* Who was the young man in the tomb?**

The other gospel writers describe those who were at the tomb and who announced the resurrection of Jesus, as being angels.

The Bible tells us that God created two races of personal beings - angels and humans.

Humans have both a physical body and a spirit.

But angels are different.

The book of Hebrews 1 describes angels in this way:

Look at **v.14** - as ministering **spirits** sent to serve those who will inherit salvation.

Look at **v.7** - as **winds** and **flames of fire**.

Angels are spirits.

There is an ethereal quality to them; which is why we can’t typically see an angel.

But God, when he so chooses, enables angels to appear in a form human beings can see.

There are many examples in the Bible of this happening.

- Abraham and his 3 visitors

- Gideon

- Samson’s mom

- Mary, the mother of Jesus

- Daniel in the lion’s den

- Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace

Here in Mark, the angel who appeared to the women, did so as a “young” man.

This detail, that he was “young,” is what you would expect to hear from someone who was there.

Let’s not rush away from this emphasis made by Mark about the angel.

There is an important point of connection.

God himself could have spoken to the women - audibly or in a vision.

Instead, he chose to utilize a number of his angels to do what he could have done. Why?

This is how God works.

And he doesn’t just do so, with his angels.

The story of the Bible reveals that God also involves humans who are in fellowship with him, to work alongside of him; acting on his behalf and at his direction; in the service of others.

And this wasn’t just what God did in the past.

It’s what he still does today.

But God does so, not because he has to; nor because he’s somehow dependent on us.

God is under no obligation to us.

We have no claim on him.

God also has no deficiency in himself that we somehow are able to compensate for.

Think about it - God can speak things into existence.

If he can do that, does he really need us - to speak to someone; to go to someone;

to help someone; to pray for someone?

He can do everything we can and so much better.

So why does he involve us – humans and angels?

What does this say to us about who God is?

Take feedback.

There is a phrase that I hear stated from time to time, that years ago was popular:

*let go and let God.*

There is truth to that statement.

There are times when we need to release something or put something into God’s hands; and then to wait for him to act.

But that statement can also be misapplied.

And if is, it can take a person down a dangerous rabbit hole, of thinking it is all up to God; that if one needs to change, it’s up to God to change that person; or if someone needs to be told of Jesus, God himself will tell them.

We learn from the gospel of Mark, that God has chosen, in addition to his angels, to involve the followers of Jesus’ in what he is doing on the earth.

He will not do, what he asks us to do.

Paul in his first letter, said to the church at Corinth: *“We are co-workers in God’s service...”* 1 Corinthians 3:9.

He wrote of this again in his second letter, describing himself and his ministry team,

as being *“God’s co-workers...”* 2 Corinthians 6:1

How Mark described this partnership in **16:19-20** really resonates with me.

- after his resurrection, Jesus returned to the Father’s home

- his disciples went everywhere and announced the good news.

And what did Jesus do?????

- Jesus worked with his disciples, confirming his word.

The town of Sooke has a great volunteer culture.

But we who follow Jesus are so much more than volunteers.

We are **co-workers** with Jesus.

My dream for this church is that everyone who is a part of it will find a place to use their natural and spiritual giftings, understanding that as they do so, they are partnering, not just with others, though that in itself is a great blessing; but with Jesus himself.

In the kid’s ministry.

in the youth ministry.

In the senior’s ministry.

In life group ministry.

In the worship ministry.

In the kitchen ministry.

In Big House Breakfast ministry.

In Grace Gardens ministry

In the care of this building ministry

In our global missions’ ministry.

In our connecting events ministry.

There is no greater privilege, given to us who follow Jesus, than to serve with him in his cause. He doesn’t just guide our lives; he doesn’t just inspire us with ideas; he doesn’t just give us grace to do what we do.

We get to work alongside of Jesus.

Jesus himself modeled this for us in his public ministry.

Look at what he said in **John 5:19-23**.

- the Son can do nothing by himself

- the Son does what he sees his Father doing

- because the Father loves the Son he shows the Son what he is doing

- the ministry of the Father and the Son is a ministry that gives life to dead people

We learn from how Jesus partnered with his Father, how we are to partner with him.

-> apart from him we can do nothing to bring life to a spiritually dead person

-> we are to watch for what Jesus is doing around us - in our family; in our neighborhood;

in our community; in our province; in our nation; in this world.

Jesus is active locally; nationally and globally.

-> when he shows us what he is doing, it is so that we can join him.

-> this invitation to serve with Jesus is love motivated. This is why Jesus involves us!

Do you better see, why then, we intentionally want to avoid talking of a ministry as being ‘ours,’ in a possessive sense?

Everything that happens here.... is what we get to do... with Jesus and for him as he builds his church in Sooke.

**\* The young man’s clothes.**

Mark described the young man as wearing, not just a robe, but a *“white”* robe.

This detail is what you would expect to hear from someone who was there.

Luke’s gospel described the angels, who were present at the tomb, as wearing clothes that *“gleamed like lightning.”* 24:4

There is a brilliance about angels.

I think this is one of the reasons the women were alarmed.

But why are angels’ brilliant?

There are a number of reasons.

Let me share with you just one.

When Moses spent forty days in the presence of God on Mount Sinai, Exodus 34:29 says, *“...his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD.”*

The radiance that came off of Moses was such that it caused the rest of the nation to be *“afraid to come near him.”*

Being in God’s presence tangibly impacted Moses.

I think one of the reasons angels are brilliant, and gleam like lightning is because they see the face of God, who, as 1 Timothy 6:16 says, *“lives in unapproachable light.”*

There is a point of connection here.

While we can experience being in the presence of God; we don’t normally see his glory with our physical eyes, as Moses did; and radiate light as Moses’ did.

But Jesus, who lives in us, and whose presence is with us, nonetheless, does make an observable difference in us.

Paul described this difference to the church at Philippi - Philippians 2:12-16a.

The lives of Jesus’ people *“shine...like the stars in the sky.”*

What causes this shining?

Let’s carefully note what the passage says.

*- we are to work out our salvation because...*

 *...God works in us*

*- we are to avoid grumbling or arguing in order to become blameless and pure, because...*

 *...we are children of God who live in a warped and crooked generation*

Our distinctiveness as followers of Jesus, is seen in our identity; in our relationships; in our morality; in how we love and what we love.

We live like Paul told the Philippians, not to earn our salvation, but to work it out…as an expression of gratitude; to say yes to God and to embrace and pursue after what he says is good, because the power of sin is broken and resurrection power now operates in us.

This is what shines out of us.

We can live like this because of Jesus and what he did for us.

This is the new life he gives to all who trust in him.

What an incredible Savior!!!!!

**The Blessing**

Ephesians 2:8-9