

# He is Risen

*April 5, 2026*

## Lesson Summary

### **Main Passages**

Mark 16:1-8

### **Session Outline**

1. The Tomb (Mark 16:1-2)
2. The Stone (Mark 16:3-4)
3. The Good News (Mark 16:5-8)

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### **Theological Theme**

After His death on the cross, Jesus was raised! The tomb was empty and now, we serve a risen Savior.

### **Call to Action**

Jesus's resurrection changes everything in our lives.



## Leader Guide

# He is Risen

### Introduction

In C.S. Lewis's beloved classic "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" the four Pevensie children (Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy) find themselves on a grand adventure. But first, they find themselves bored in the English countryside, sent to stay with relatives, safe from the dangerous bombings in World War II London.

Their new home would offer much to explore in the great outdoors, but one day, they found themselves driven inside because of the rain. As children often do, they made their own fun and spun up a game of hide-and-go-seek.

Lucy, the youngest Pevensie, seeking a good place to hide, wandered into a spare room with only a wardrobe to hide in. Recognizing a clever hiding spot, she hopped inside amongst fur coats. Expecting to eventually find the back of the wardrobe (the best place to hide and not be seen should one of her siblings open the door), Lucy instead found something completely unexpected. She found herself standing in a snowy forest under a lamppost on the cusp of a grand adventure that would change her life.<sup>1</sup>

Lucy, though a beloved character, is fictional, and her life, though changed, is also a fictional one brought to life only on the pages of a book (and later through the scenes in a movie).

Today in our reading, though, we will read the story of a group of women who visited a very important site expecting one thing but received quite another. After, their lives would change forever. Not only that, these events changed the whole world.

- ❓ When was a time you held expectations that turned out very different than the reality you found?
- ❓ When has God molded a situation in your life into something you didn't expect?

## Session Summary

The Sunday after Jesus was crucified, three of the women who followed Him to the cross (Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome) brought spices to anoint Jesus's body and headed to the tomb at sunrise. Unsure how they would move the large and heavy stone in front of the tomb to reach the body, they arrived at the tomb to find the stone had already been rolled away!

Inside, they found not a dead body, but an angel, who shared the very best news: "You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they put him." (Mark 16:6)

### 1. The Tomb (Mark 16:1-2)

-  What do these verses display about the women's devotion to Jesus?
-  How did they continue to honor Jesus, despite the unexpected end of His life?

Before we dig into these verses, let's recap the events that led up to this early morning at the empty tomb.

Jesus was crucified and died on a Friday. If you remember, the religious officials were rushing things along in hopes that their "Jesus problem" would be taken care of before the Sabbath began (John 19:31), and Jesus did die before this time (sundown, or about 6:00 p.m. on Friday).

Then, following His death on the cross, on the evening of "preparation day" (Mark 15:42, still Friday, the time during which the Jews would make preparations for Sabbath since they were forbidden to work on that day), Joseph of Arimathea received Jesus's "corpse" (15:45) from Pilate, wrapped Him in linen, and laid Him in the rock-cut tomb, rolling a stone in front of the entrance.

Mark noted that "Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph were watching where he was laid" (15:47). They wanted to anoint Jesus's body with spices but had to wait because of Sabbath law.

Chapter 16 opens following the Sabbath. The Sabbath would have ended on Saturday at sundown, but the women needed time to gather spices and venturing to the tomb at night may not have been wise, so they gathered spices and waited until Sunday ("the first day of the week," v. 2).

In the Gospels, Mary Magdalene is depicted as a devoted follower of Jesus after He healed her from seven demons who had plagued her (Luke 8:2). She was from the village of Magdala near the shore of the Sea of Galilee (hence, she was called “Magdalene”).<sup>2</sup>

“Mary the mother of James” (v. 1) was possibly the mother of the disciple James son of Alphaeus (Mark 3:18), and possibly the Mary mentioned at the crucifixion in Mark 15:40 (“Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses”) and later the burial of Jesus in 15:47.<sup>3</sup>

The last woman Mark mentioned in this passage was Salome, the mother of James and John (sons of thunder, sons of Zebedee).

All three witnessed Jesus’s crucifixion (Mark 15:40) and the Gospels record that they were among the first to bear witness to the empty tomb. Scripture shows us that women were active and contributing disciples of Jesus during His earthly ministry and later in the early church (this remains true throughout church history).

- ❓ How did the impact Jesus made in these women’s lives lead them to this point? How has the impact Jesus has made on your life led you to where you are today?

The anointing these women had planned was a way to both honor Jesus and a Jewish custom that helped cover the smell of decay of a dead body in such a warm climate.<sup>4</sup> Spices in hand, these three followers of Jesus headed to the tomb very early on Sunday morning expecting one thing, but they would find quite another.

## 2. The Stone (Mark 16:3-4)

- ❓ What does it further tell us about the women’s devotion that they went to the tomb unsure of how they would access Jesus’s body because of the large stone?
- ❓ The women arrived to find the stone had been rolled away. What emotions might you have felt in this moment? Why?

On their way to the tomb, the women discussed amongst themselves how they would get in. The grave had been sealed with a large, heavy stone. They would need someone to roll it away so they could anoint Jesus’s body. Their discourse and intent here tell us a couple of things.

First, they expected to find a dead body, so they apparently didn’t understand that Jesus would rise from the dead (neither did the twelve!).

Second, they may not have realized the tomb was meant to be secured and guarded. Matthew's Gospel records that the chief priests and Pharisees had petitioned Pilate for help securing the tomb, saying, "Sir, we remember that while this deceiver was still alive he said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give orders that the tomb be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come, steal him, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first" (Matthew 27:63). So, Pilate dispatched a guard of soldiers to secure the tomb. They set a seal on the stone covering the tomb, and placed guards there. In the women's discussion, it doesn't seem that they expected the guards to be present when they arrived.

- ❓ What are some obstacles that threaten to distract you from being with Jesus in daily life? How can you overcome those obstacles? Why is it always worth it?

### 3. The Good News (Mark 16:5-8)

- ❓ What did the women find upon entering the tomb?
- ❓ How did the women respond to the report? How are we to respond to the news about Jesus today?

Upon arrival at the tomb, the women looked up and realized that the stone had already been rolled away. The open tomb gave them opportunity to enter and find that Jesus was not there. (The group of women being able to enter the tomb tells us that this was a large family tomb.<sup>5</sup>)

Inside, instead of the crucified, dead, and buried Jesus, they found "a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side" (v. 5). The presence of the angel in the tomb alarmed them (as the presence of angels in Scripture often does).

The angel, though, had a message for them. First, the angel issued a word of reassurance (in the Gospels alone we've heard a similar greeting from the angel who visited Zechariah, John the Baptist's father, in Luke 1:13, the angel who visited Mary to tell her she would become pregnant in Luke 1:30, and the angel who visited the shepherds to tell them the news of Jesus's birth in Luke 2:10).

Then, these women received the best news that has ever been heard:

"You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they put him." —Mark 16:6b

The angel pointed to the empty place where Jesus's body had been put. The incredible had happened! Jesus had defeated death and the grave! He was raised!

Luke's Gospel account records the event this way:

## A Missing Body

The women's desire to anoint Jesus's body though appropriate at another time (14:3–9) was not the proper response for Easter morning disciples. The "young man" seated at the empty tomb said it all: "You're looking for Jesus in the wrong place; God has raised Him from the dead; He's not here!" (author's translation). God had vindicated Jesus. The message for the disciples points to restoration after they had denied and abandoned Jesus.

"So the women were terrified and bowed down to the ground. "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" asked the men. "He is not here, but he has risen! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee, saying, 'It is necessary that the Son of Man be betrayed into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and rise on the third day?'" And they remembered his words." —Luke 24:5-8

Jesus had already told them what would happen, but they hadn't fully understood or expected it. But now the truth was right in front of them. The tomb was empty. He had risen. The angel also gave them a task: Go and tell Peter and the others (Mark 16:7).

This is the message that changes everything. Jesus is alive! We, like the women, are called to go and proclaim the truth to others. This news is not only life changing, it is world changing!



Who do you need to share the good news about Jesus with? How will you seek to do this week?

## Conclusion

Following Jesus's death late Friday afternoon, His body was hastily prepared for burial before the Sabbath began and placed in the tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. Once the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome, all faithful followers of Jesus, gathered spices with the intent to anoint Jesus's body. They headed to the tomb at sunrise on Sunday, expecting to find a dead body to anoint, but what they found instead was quite different.

As the women made their way to Jesus's tomb, they chatted about how they would move the large, heavy stone sealing the entrance, apparently unaware that Pilate had ordered the tomb be secured. When they arrived, though, the stone had been rolled away!

Entering the tomb, they expected to find Jesus's body. Instead, they found an angel in a white robe who delivered the greatest news ever spoken: Though He had been crucified, Jesus had risen. It was just as Jesus Himself foretold. Then the angel tasked them with telling the disciples, including Peter, that Jesus would meet them in Galilee. After Peter's devastating denial of Jesus, this callout wasn't accidental. Jesus was

reminding Peter that he still had a seat at the table. He didn't mess up so badly that Jesus stopped loving him or changed his mind about working in and through him for the establishment of His church. He had grace for Peter and forgiveness. In this celebration of the greatest news that has ever been, don't miss the fact that God has grace and forgiveness for us when we mess up, too.

- ❓ Why is it significant that women were the first to discover the empty tomb? What does this remind us about the unexpected nature of Jesus's kingdom according to the context of that time?
- ❓ How can we encourage one another as those sent to proclaim the good news of Jesus to others?
- ❓ Who will you seek out a gospel conversation with this week? How can you act toward that today?

## Prayer of Response

*Thank God for sending Jesus and that His redemptive work on the cross means our sins (past, present, and future) are forgiven. Thank Him for the grace and forgiveness He extends to us when we fail. Ask for His help as you share the good news with others He has placed in your life.*

## Memory Verse

*"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." —Mark 16:6*

## Additional Resources

- *Be Diligent* by Warren Wiersbe
- *The Gospel According to Mark* by James Edwards
- *The Gospel of Mark* by William Lane



# Historical Context of Mark

## Purpose

Mark's Gospel is a narrative about Jesus. Mark identifies his theme in the first verse: "the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." That Jesus is the divine Son of God is the major emphasis of his Gospel. God announced it at Jesus's baptism in 1:11. Demons and unclean spirits recognized and acknowledged it in 3:11 and 5:7. God reaffirmed it at the transfiguration in 9:7. Jesus taught it parabolically in 12:1–12, hinted at it in 13:32, and confessed it directly in 14:61–62. Finally, the Roman centurion confessed it openly and without qualification in 15:39. Thus Mark's purpose was to summon people to repent and respond in faith to the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1:1,15).

## Author

The Gospel of Mark is anonymous. Eusebius, the early church historian, writing in AD 326, preserved the words of Papias, an early church father. Papias quoted "the elder," probably John, as saying that Mark recorded Peter's preaching about the things Jesus said and did, but not in order. Thus Mark was considered the author of this Gospel even in the first century.

## Setting

According to the early church fathers, Mark wrote his Gospel in Rome just before or just after Peter's martyrdom. Further confirmation of the Roman origin of Mark's Gospel is found in Mark 15:21 where Mark noted that Simon, a Cyrenian who carried Jesus's cross, was the father of Alexander and Rufus, men apparently known to the believers in Rome.

Because Mark wrote primarily for Roman Gentiles, he explained Jewish customs, translated Aramaic words and phrases into Greek, used Latin terms rather than their Greek equivalents, and rarely quoted from the OT. Most Bible scholars are convinced that Mark was the earliest Gospel and served as one of the sources for Matthew and Luke.

## Special Features

Mark's Gospel emphasizes actions and deeds. Jesus is on the go—healing, casting out demons, performing miracles, hurrying from place to place, and teaching. In Mark everything happens "immediately." As soon as one episode ends, another begins. The rapid pace slows down when Jesus enters Jerusalem (11:1). Thereafter, events are marked by days, and his final day by hours.

## Extended Commentary

### Mark 16:1-8

16:1–8 Women were the first to know that Jesus was risen (Mt 28:1–8; Lk 24:1–8; Jn 20:1–2). Mary Magdalene’s name heads the list in all four Gospels. The role of women in this account is astonishing since Judaism did not accept the testimony of women as legally valid.

16:1 The Sabbath was over at about 6:00 p.m. on Saturday. This allowed the women to buy more spices that evening. All three women had witnessed Jesus’s crucifixion (15:40), and two of them had witnessed his burial (15:47). They would also be the first witnesses to his resurrection. On Mary the mother of James, see note at 15:40. The Jews anointed bodies to cover the stench of decay.

16:2 The first day of the week was Sunday. Very early in the morning probably indicates when the women left for the tomb, whereas at sunrise indicates when they arrived.

16:3 That the women wondered who would roll away the stone reveals that they did not know that the tomb was sealed or guarded (Mt 27:62–66).

16:4 According to Matthew (Mt 28:2–4) an angel had rolled away the stone.

16:5 The stone was not moved to let Jesus out but to let witnesses enter. That the women entered the tomb confirms it was a large family tomb. The young man dressed in a white robe (Mt 28:3; Ac 1:10; 10:30) was an angel (Mt 28:5; Lk 24:4). Luke mentions two angels (Lk 24:3–4); Mark focuses on the spokesman.

16:6 The words of reassurance (don’t be alarmed) are a standard feature in angelic manifestations (Dn 10:12, 19; Mt 28:5; Lk 1:13, 30; 2:10; Ac 27:24). On three previous occasions in Mark, he was designated Jesus of Nazareth (1:23; 10:47; 14:67). Here the word serves to connect the historical Jesus who was crucified to the one who has risen . . . See the place where they put him recalls 15:47 (cp. Jn 20:6–7) and indicates the shelf inside the tomb on which Jesus’s body was placed.

16:7 Go, tell are the two things that all followers of Jesus are to do. Peter is given special mention only in Mark as an encouragement following his denials of Jesus (14:66–72). The message for the disciples to meet Jesus in Galilee recalls Jesus’s prophecy in 14:28.

16:8 Trembling and astonishment overwhelmed the women, whether from fear or excitement (cp. Mt 28:8). Most likely it was both. The phrase they said nothing to anyone, stated only by Mark, is a strong double negative. It does not imply that they forever kept silent but that they initially refused to speak about their bewildering experience (Mt 28:8; Lk 24:9–10).<sup>6</sup>

## References

1. C. S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1950).
2. Ross H. McLaren, "Mark," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1592.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.