

After You've Been a Big Disappointment

A Study of Mark 16:1-8
(Sunrise Service)

Characteristic of Completeness: Christian Life

Big Idea: Jesus rose again; so should we.

Introduction:

A. Mark 16:1-8 records:

^{ESV} **Mark 16:1** When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. ³ And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. ⁶ And he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you." ⁸ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

B. This Easter morning, I would like to very briefly explore two questions that occur to me from this text.

I. The first question is this: Why tell Peter? Notice what the young man in the tomb—apparently an angel—says to the women in Verse 7:

^{ESV} **Mark 16:7** But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. . .

. . .

Why is Peter singled out? Why does the angel want the women to tell Peter in particular about the resurrected Christ going before them to Galilee?

Verse 2 of our text says that this is . . .

^{ESV} **Mark 16:2** . . . very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen,

So it's Sunday. The previous Thursday Jesus shared a last meal with His disciples. Afterward, they went outside. Under the stars, Jesus said to His disciples, as recorded in Mark 14, beginning in Verse 27,

^{ESV} **Mark 14:27** . . . “You will all fall away, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’”²⁸ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”

Peter defended himself against that notion that he would fall away, saying,

^{ESV} **Mark 14:29** . . . “Even though they all fall away, I will not.”³⁰
And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”

Peter kept arguing with Jesus . . .

^{ESV} **Mark 14:31** . . . he said emphatically, “If I must die with you, I will not deny you.” . . .

But within just a few hours, Peter would eat his words. Jesus was apprehended that night and taken away to be tried and ultimately crucified. Mark 14:50 records,

^{ESV} **Mark 14:50** And they all left him and fled.

Including Peter.

Peter came to the courtyard outside the building where Jesus was being tried. There, Peter added denial to desertion. Mark 14, beginning in Verse 66 records,

^{ESV} **Mark 14:66** And as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came,⁶⁷ and seeing Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, “You also were with the Nazarene, Jesus.”⁶⁸ But he denied it, saying, “I neither know nor understand what you mean.” And he went out into the gateway and the rooster crowed.⁶⁹ And the servant girl saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.”⁷⁰ But again he denied it. And after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.”⁷¹ But he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know this man of whom you speak.”⁷² And immediately the rooster crowed a second time. And Peter remembered how Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

Peter had failed miserably. And that’s why I think the Lord wanted Peter above all others to know of His resurrection. I think the Lord wanted to reassure Peter that, in spite of his desertion, in spite of his denials, He still loved him and He still wanted to use him.

In the first recorded conversation Jesus had with Peter *individually* after the resurrection, Jesus invites Peter to rise again and get back into ministry. John 21 records these commands to rise up:

^{ESV} **John 21:15** . . . “Feed my lambs.” ¹⁶ . . . “Tend my sheep.” ¹⁷ . . . “Feed my sheep.”
¹⁹ . . . “Follow me.”

And that brings us to an important part of the Christian life. Jesus rose again; so should we. As believers in Jesus Christ, our biggest disappointments do not disqualify us from following Him. When we fall down, we can rise again because Jesus rose again.

^{ESV} **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus rose again; so should we.

- II. I mentioned there were two questions I wanted to address. Here’s the second question: Why were the women so afraid? Listen again to Mark 16:8 and note all the terms relating to fear:

^{ESV} **Mark 16:8** And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Put yourself in the sandals of these women. They were Jews. They knew God to be a faithful God, a loving God. But they also knew God as a righteous, holy, and uncompromising judge. At the news of the resurrection of the Son of God, I suspect a number of questions would have occurred to them. How will the Lord respond to being tortured and murdered? Were we not complicit? How will the Lord respond to those of us who deserted Him? How will the Lord respond to those of us who doubted His deity when He died? How will the Lord respond to those of us who failed Him?

They had not yet heard Jesus explain that His death served as a payment for their failures. They had not yet heard Jesus explain that He rose again as a guarantee of salvation for all who believe in Him for eternal life. They had not yet read the New Testament because it had not yet been written. And they were afraid.

I suspect they figured the game of life was up and God was going to tally the score. Bible scholar William Lane writes, “A devout Jew would understand the announcement that the resurrection had begun to signify the end was at hand.”¹

I suspect they experienced the same kind of fear we would experience if suddenly we realized beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is risen and that He’s showing up this morning to settle the score.

After encountering the angel at the empty tomb, as recorded in our text, the first time these women run into Jesus, they fall at His feet.² They’re still afraid. Jesus’ first words to them are

¹ William B. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark, The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, Ned B. Stonehouse, F.F. Bruce, and Gordon Fee, eds., (Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 590.

recorded in Matthew 28:9-10. He says, “You better grovel after what you did! Some lousy followers you turned out to be! You’re fired!”

No. He doesn’t say that. He says,

^{ESV} **Matthew 28:9** . . . “Greetings!” . . .

The Greek word literally means to rejoice or be glad.³ Jesus goes on to say,

^{ESV} **Matthew 28:10** . . . “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

He bids them to rise up and go. They’ve got work to do. He still loves them. He still wants to use them.

And that brings us right back to that important part of the Christian life. Jesus rose again; so should we. As believers in Jesus Christ, our biggest disappointments do not disqualify us from following Him. When we fall, we can rise again because Jesus rose again.

^{ESV} **1 John 1:9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Jesus rose again; so should we.

² According to the chronology of Johnston M Cheney and Stanley Ellisen, *Jesus Christ: The Greatest Life Ever Lived*, (Eugene, OR: Paradise Publishing, 1999), 259.

³ W. Bauer, F.W. Danker, W.F. Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., s.v. “χαίρω,” (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).