

Mark 16:9-18
Feilding Baptist
20th April 2025

Welcome to worship with Feilding Baptist Church, on this high point of the church year, Easter Day.

The magnificence of the raising of Jesus, is also like the opening of a flower bud, into colour and blossom, and sometimes fragrance.

Luke 24:1-12 (NIV - UK)

Jesus has risen

1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 "The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again."' 8 Then they remembered his words.

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12 Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

Death has been swallowed up in victory!

Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?

Christ is risen!

He is risen, indeed!

Christ is risen!

He is risen, indeed!

Christ is risen!

He is risen, indeed!

Father, we thank you for this very special day, the high point on our church calendar. Thank you for all that you achieved in the raising of Jesus. Holy Spirit please excite us in the new life, this fresh beginning, that this brings for us. Please help us to appreciate afresh the significance of the resurrection of Jesus. Amen.

Come, let us worship the Risen King!

[Message - Mark 16:9-16 - Believe](#)

We too are called to believe that Jesus is alive!

My in-laws who live on a farm the other side of Whanganui, had a broken ranch slider door last year. Instead of replacing like for like, went for double glazed, stacker type doors, that provide wonderful indoor outdoor flow, perfect for days like yesterday. Of course they could have gone for bi fold doors, the new name for what we would have called concertina doors in the old days. You know, those doors that fold back on themselves.

Mark's gospel is like a set of those bi fold or concertina doors! When they're open, you only see a small piece of door. Matthew, Luke, and John give us so many more details, but Mark, is straight to the point. And then onto the next thing. The road to Emmaus that we watched before in three minutes and 19 seconds, this is 23 verses in Luke. But in Mark it is just two! Very compact. We need Matthew, Luke, and John for the extra details.

So as we look at the last few verses in Mark, let's think out of the box, or the small door. These verses are about believing in Jesus. Well, actually, they're about not believing in Jesus. Which follows Mark's line of thinking from the previous chapter when Jesus is on the cross. At the cross people were hurling abuse at Jesus. They were saying

NASB

Mark 15:32 "Let this Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, so that we may see and believe!" Those who were crucified with Him were also insulting Him.

We might shake our heads at these bystanders, or people who are passing, who are being so disrespectful and rude. But what is more shocking, is the revelation, that the ridicule that is being shouted at Jesus, is by the chief priests and teachers of the law. It is them who would not believe! Despite all the evidence they cannot and will not believe.

And we might think, well, that's at the cross, two days later when Jesus rises from the dead, they will believe then. But remember what Luke records; Jesus said;

Luke 16:31 NRSV

31 He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'

Which was exactly the case, exactly right, true! And to our surprise, it was not just the chief priests and teachers of the law who struggled to believe. Even those closest to Jesus found it unbelievable that He had risen. They hadn't lined up the evidence. It was concertinaed. Here's what Mark says, let's read;

Mark 16:9-20 NIV

9 When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. 10 She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. 11 When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

12 Afterwards Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. 13 These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.

14 Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

15 He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 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 with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on people who are ill, and they will get well.'

Seven times we have the (Greek) words for believe. But five times these are about not believing. Those who Jesus appeared to, believe, but others won't take their word for it. Seeing is definitely believing. Mary as a woman wasn't believed by the disciples (v11). Then, Jesus met with two men, verses 12 & 13, the two from the road to Emmaus. But the disciples didn't believe them either.

So Jesus appeared to the disciples as they were eating (v14). Note what He does, rebukes them for the lack of faith, belief, and for their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him.

But we must be clear, what was their unbelief?

It wasn't belief in Jesus, they knew Jesus, they had seen Jesus. They were grieving for the loss of Jesus. Their unbelief was that Jesus was alive.

Which is the challenge for us, two thousand years later. What will it take for us to believe? Not in the historical Jesus. Not in the dead on the cross Jesus. But in the living Jesus! Will we believe?

We didn't have the privilege of seeing Jesus, will we believe those who did? Will we stubbornly refuse, or accept that Jesus did rise from the grave, that in fact Jesus is alive?

Well, if we open the concertinas of our minds and consider, we do have the words from Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. We should consider the Old Testament prophecies. These combined provide a lot of evidence. And then consider the miracles and all sorts of changed lives since, right up to now, that more than suggest, that Jesus is very much alive!

Jesus wants this message that He is alive, to get out. Jesus wants people to know that He is alive. This is what we're to take from v15 [go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation](#).

What is this gospel that we are to preach to all of creation?

This is exciting! This is what we've been banging on about for the last couple of years. The gospel is firstly about Jesus! And Jesus becoming King, and claiming back from evil that which has been taken, and damaged, bringing life, not death.

Some say that the gospel is just about Jesus dying for our sin. But that's not the full picture. That's also a concertina door. When we narrow 'the gospel' to be only about the forgiveness of sin, which brings about transformation for sure, it reduces the gospel to be about us!

The gospel is bigger than this. Jesus becoming King affects all of creation. The risen Jesus brings transformation, renewal, rectification. God wants things not to be as they are, but how they were intended to be in the first place.

In regards to creation, God doesn't want to see important wetlands drained that now contribute to pollution and flooding. Does God want the world's rainforests cut down which leads to global warming, and the extinction of flora and fauna.

And in our lives, God doesn't want selfishness to ruin our lives and relationships.

This is the Eastery thing, that Jesus did die, but Jesus rose again, and is alive today. By rising again, Jesus broke the power that Satan and evil had over us. Death can no longer hold us. We have been set free! Through the grace of God, the undeserved favour of God, we can be set free, so that we can live beyond the challenges of sin and evil that we experience in this age. We can truly live.

Easter is a tragedy, of an innocent man being killed. But it is also a victory, of Jesus, for us, and all of creation. It is not the end, but the beginning. The beginning of God's re-creation.

Will you believe in Jesus who is alive? Will you truly live? Or, v16, the chilling verse, will you be condemned, as those we've heard about over the last few weeks; the foolish bridesmaids, the lazy servant, or the disrespectful dinner guest.

Or will you believe? As Romans 10:9 (NIV - UK) says;

[9 if you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.](#)

Mark says that baptism is essential, [whoever believes and is baptised will be saved](#). Baptism isn't out of sync with this verse. Just open the concertina doors a little. Baptism is about a declaration of faith. It's not the water of baptism that is essential, but the public declaration of faith, make that belief, in the risen and alive Jesus. That's what baptism is, a declaration. So Romans is right, and Mark is right.

Here in this passage, we've looked at the disciples' response to Mary's testimony. And to that of the two men. What will our response be? We too are called to believe that Jesus is alive! What do you need to do next? Take a moment to talk to God.

Gracious Lord, we have heard this morning the response to Mary's news after being at the tomb. We've heard the response to the two men on the road to Emmaus. Please give us faith to stay with the story, to hold open our minds, hearts and lives to whatever you now want to do. Amen.

Leading on from here, from Easter Day, how will we live? This is living now is a song that reminds us of the life God offers.

[Benediction](#)

Praise be to God,
who rescues us from the power of darkness;
who redeems us, and sets us free!

Praise be to Christ Jesus, the first born of all creation,
through whom all things were made,
in heaven and on the earth.

Praise be to the Spirit of God,
whose presence sustains us,
and whose breath renews all creation.

Behold! I am making all things new!
Come, O God, and make your home among us.
Pour out your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Yes Lord! We pray, Amen.

