

DISCUSS

We are at the end of our reading of Mark’s gospel, the climactic Resurrection scene. Some of your Bibles include more details about Jesus appearing to several disciples after his resurrection, a short concluding section. But scholars agree that verses 9–20 were not part of Mark’s original manuscript. We will focus on verses 1–8 as we wrap up this series.

[Note: For further background on why verses 9–20 are disputed, see Go Deeper Section 1 at the end of the session.]

Read Mark 16:1–8 again.

Who visits Jesus’s tomb?

At the end of chapter 15, right after the pagan Roman centurion confessed that Jesus was the Son of God, we’re told that the only followers of Jesus who stayed with him until the end were these women. They witnessed where his body was laid, and here we see them returning.

In what ways have you felt invisible?

This scene at the garden tomb is the first time some of the women get a mention in the book of Mark. They’re the silent followers. We know they were at the cross, watching everything (15:40–41), but they are silent in the text.

We’ve discussed the centrality of following Jesus on this journey of discipleship. But in a society obsessed with power and platform and importance, it can be easy to judge the success of our Christian life along those same lines.

But the women at the tomb argue differently. What matters is faithfulness, not power or prestige or popularity. This way of discipleship is the same regardless of who you are.

Popular Christianity, whether online or in the media or in your church small group, can focus on worldly benefits. The famous get attention. The do-gooders are praised.

Have you ever felt lost among all the “celebrity” Christians?

Horizontal lines for writing.

What convinced you that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God?

How do you express your faith on a daily basis? What habits and values do you live out?

Jesus openly admitted that following him would not be an easy endeavor. How have you found that to be true?

How would you answer the question, "Is following Jesus worth it?"

LAST WORD

Mark wraps up his gospel by telling us that the women scattered from the empty tomb and kept their mouths shut because they were afraid. Throughout the story, even Jesus's closest friends responded to his power and mission in fear. So, Mark's asking us what we're going to do. Be silent and afraid? Or be confident in the knowledge that we serve the God-Man Jesus who paid the price for our redemption?

The choice is yours to make, and only you can decide. **Take a few minutes here at the end of this study and discuss what God might be asking you to do as a next step, both individually and as a group.**

Maybe it's simply getting right with Jesus like Peter needed to. Maybe it's willingly forsaking the distractions keeping you from following Jesus wholeheartedly. Maybe it's engaging with someone else who needs to know the gospel. Maybe it's embracing the truth of Jesus for the first time yourself. Maybe it's taking up Francis's challenge to go back and read the book of Mark again, for yourself and then be willing to evaluate your life in light of what the Gospel of Mark teaches.

Whatever it is, take a minute and write it down. And then spend time with Jesus in prayer. This whole study is pointless if we don't walk away changed by God's Word. The Christ has come. He died. He rose again.

So, what are you going to do now?

What have you been taught about the short and long endings to Mark?

Does the history of the biblical text interest you, intimidate you, bore you?

Why do scholars care about such things, and how does it affect everyday readers?
