

Transcription of 17ID1958

Mark 16:14

"A Night Like No Other"

August 6, 2017

Let's open our Bibles this morning to Mark 16. Today I'm going to have you moving around a little bit, so let me give you a couple more places to find since we want to cover the evening of the resurrection together - Luke 24 and John 20. We're going to be going there much more, I think, today than we will in Mark. And next week we'll be finishing.

We began this book, by the way, March 6, 2016. I know. We didn't do it quickly, but we're getting towards the end. We have been spending time with Mark going through the resurrection: first the morning time, as the Lord made Himself known to several folks, and then last week the afternoon, as the Lord spent the entire afternoon with two people - a couple on the road to Emmaus, some seven miles away. In fact, notice in Mark here (in verse 13), it says, "And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either." Verse 14, "Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen." And so these words "afterwards."

We move forward tonight to the evening of the resurrection. Mark gives us literally no information other than this one verse, verse 14, and then a couple of verses that we will cover next week. But both Luke and John give us lots of information that we would like to take you through this morning, and we're going to be flipping back and forth. So you can leave Mark behind till next week and head over to Luke 24:33 where we read these words, "So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem," (speaking about that couple that we studied last week) "and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread. Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.'" So we pick up the story in the evening. We were told in Mark last week (and in other places) that the Lord spent not only the entire afternoon, but it was getting late into the afternoon, into the evening, when He had dinner at the house of this couple that had gone home to Emmaus. And then we are told this couple, after realizing it was Jesus, went seven miles back to Jerusalem. So it could have been late in the evening, indeed; well

after sunset, maybe 8:00 or 9:00 in the evening, when this couple comes back to the hiding place where the disciples are - with great excitement. They had left very discouraged. They had heard about the ladies saying they'd seen the angels and a couple, that they'd seen the Lord; and the men had gone and checked it out and came back and said, "Well, there's no body, but there're certainly no angels," and they just kind of said their goodbyes and headed home. But after seeing Jesus, the joy of meeting Him again drove them seven miles back, drove them into the evening. And it wasn't safe to travel at night, certainly, but they did because they had a message to tell. And then Luke picks up the story here - that this couple came back, and they knocked on the door, and they wanted in. And they met with, notice, the eleven as they were sitting together (verse 33). It's kind of a generic term. We know that Thomas wasn't with them, so that would make ten. Mark says the same thing in verse 14. But we read here, "and those who were with them," and we gather, from all that we can from the book of Acts as well, there were probably 120 or more gathered in this room in hiding. The Lord had sent out 70 earlier on (in Luke 10), two by two. But we read in chapter 1 of Acts that there were 120 gathered together in the upper room as Pentecost was drawing near.

So, imagine being part of this first group on this first evening, this Easter evening; and most of the folks that are gathered with you are pretty discouraged. They haven't had time to leave yet. There's a banging at the door. There're two familiar voices, "Let us in." And yet the consensus was that whoever was telling the story was not really clearly seeing the truth. And when Jesus shows up (according to Mark), He spoke to them about their unbelief, about how many folks would it take before they would believe that He was alive. "What will it take for you to believe?" I guess that's a good question for you if you don't believe this morning. What will it take for you before you'll come and really believe the things that God has said? These two even told them of Jesus' appearing to Peter. We don't know how they knew that at all. But we do know that Peter needed to hear from the Lord personally after a weekend of just terrible despair; he'd let the Lord down, he'd spoken promises that he didn't keep. He had told the Lord (back in Matthew 16), "You're not going to have to die," and then when he was told he was going to deny the Lord, he said, "Well, they might, I won't. I'll die first." Well he hadn't. And so the Lord met with him, and Peter quickly learned that in your flesh dwells no good thing.

But this couple from Emmaus came back late in the evening, interrupted the folks that were gathered, and notice (in Luke 24:36) that, as they were telling their

story, as they were testifying to what God had done with them, Jesus kind of just pops into the room. And I guess His words would be easily understood. "Peace, calm down." It's hard to calm down when you think you've seen a ghost. "But they were terrified," verse 37, "and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet." So the Lord starts by saying to them, "I know what you're thinking, and you're wrong. Why are you so slow to believe?" And they had trouble. So the Lord says, "Come and touch Me. Come and hold Me." And Jesus invited them to examine His hands and His feet where the crucifixion marks were. David had written (in 1000 B.C.), there in Psalm 22:16, that He would have His hands and His feet pierced. In fact, if you read Revelation 5 - about that gathering of the church in glory - you find the only manmade thing that you're going to find in heaven are the marks on Jesus' body, because He'll still bear them there that day. And they will look upon Him whom they've pierced (Zechariah 12:10). But also, when we gather in heaven, we're going to see those scars in the body of the Lord. And so blessed is the Lamb who was slain, and John said he saw one who had been slain (Revelation 5:6). Saw the marks. And Jesus calls these disciples, on this first Easter evening, to come and to examine the scars - that He had a bodily resurrection. It wasn't just spiritual. He was raised bodily. They didn't recognize Him right away, but He was raised bodily. When John is about 90, he writes those three little epistles towards the back of your Bible (also the book of Revelation). But in 1 John 1, he starts off by saying to the third generation of would-be Christians, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life," that's what we want you to know. We want you to know the Lord who is alive. And he spoke about having handled the Lord sixty years earlier. "Come and touch Me. Come and hold Me."

Verse 41, "But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb," and I'm sure that the Bible doesn't record Him saying, "No, no. Food!" No. Anyway. (Laughing) "And He took it and ate in their presence." So they're kind of perplexed. On the one hand, they're so excited. On the other hand, they don't know what to think. They'd seen the Lord die. This is too good to be true. It's kind of like Jacob when he heard his son Joseph, that he thought had been dead for so long, it said that he just became like a stone, he couldn't believe

what he heard (Genesis 45:26). And it kind of just paused them in their tracks. Unbelief will do that. You really don't know what to think. And so Jesus looks at these incredulous faces with infinite patience, and He goes, "Give Me something to eat." But how does that help you? He just came through the walls, and the doors were locked. How can you just pass through the walls? Paul will write to the Corinthians (in 1 Corinthians 15) about this new resurrection body and how it relates to the old, but it's not the same; it's created for eternity. So, regardless of what aspects of your body, especially the new body, are similar to the old, they are very much different in the sense that they're not designed for a while. They're not affected by sin. They're not corrupt. They're incorruptible. John wrote (in that 1 John letter again, in chapter 3:2), "It doesn't yet appear what we shall be, but when He appears, we will know Him as we're known. We'll be like Him." So we'll get a new body, but it's designed to apparently travel fast and get where you want. Who knows what that's all going to look like? I'm sure I'm going to have hair though. I'm pretty sure of that. (Laughing) I'll be very disappointed if that doesn't work out. I would be disappointed. So we don't really know the attachment between the two, but the Lord said, "Here, handle Me and feel Me. Let Me eat something." And there was a functionality, if you will, that He hoped would help them to overcome their incredible wonder as to what was going on.

Well, from that moment, when they finally, "All right, He's alive we think," John and Luke both give to us back and forth kind of the coverage of what is happening. So I'll flip back and forth to John, and you can stay at Luke if you want, and I can read you out of John, or you can watch with me. I'm in John 20:20. Well, verse 19 says He gathered, and He said "Peace" and all. Verse 20, "When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." So they begin to relax. There's some joy. The claims that Jesus had made were obviously dependable to them. "We can rely upon Him. He is alive." That makes everything true that He claimed and what He said. And He's delivered on His Word. And then Luke tells us (in verse 44 of Luke 24), "Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." As they got over the shock of the Lord being alive (and I'm sure that Mary Magdalene and others said, "Told you so" - I would have), Jesus then gives to them a study that I think would have made their mouths drop open. But the study focuses upon His coming, His death and His resurrection. And, as such, it might very well have been in line with what He taught the couple on

the way to Emmaus last week. He walked with them and (Luke 24:24), "Must not the Lord have died? Isn't that what the plan was?" And you remember that He took them through, " 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe,' " and He took them through the Scriptures. So it could very well be the same study that He had taught them. But here's the deal - God's Word always brings life, doesn't it, and light. And if that's the same study, I'm sure that the couple from Emmaus would have said, "Hey, wait till you hear this next part! We've heard this already, earlier." So, He took them through and notice, "the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all these things must be fulfilled." They must be, verse 44. And so He can go through the Law of Moses, He can point to the Passover lamb, He can point to the promise to Abraham, He can take them to Psalm 22 and take them through the Hallel psalms ("This is the day that the LORD has made"), and then He can take them to Isaiah 53. Wherever He might have taken them, it was all of those things, notice, "concerning Him," end of verse 44. He talked to them about His coming and why. He gave them a Bible study that would have, I think, changed their lives. It certainly would have changed ours.

But, as we read here in verse 45 of Luke 24, it says that Jesus "opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures." John will add (and we will look at it in a moment), "He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit' " (John 20:22). And so, putting those two thoughts together as we understand very clearly, there's really no way to understand God's Word unless the Holy Spirit would teach us. Paul said, "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). When you got saved and God's Spirit moved into you, the Bible started to make sense. You were able to read it and go, "Oh, that makes sense now." I tried reading a Gideon Bible one time at a hotel when I was 18 years old. I couldn't get it. "Man, this is confusing." And yet, when I got saved, oh, I couldn't get enough of it. And so, up to now, the disciples had been pretty confused. They had never seen in the Scriptures that the Messiah would suffer. They'd been taught all of their lives that He would just rule. And yet Jesus takes them through the Scriptures, and light comes on as His Spirit comes in. And what a day when you see the Lord clearly through His Word!

Well, both Luke and John give us the commission of the disciples because God's plan was not just to save but then to send the church out to reach a world that needed to hear about Him. And so the work that Jesus began, you and I are now called to continue. And you find that here early on in the book of Luke and the

book of John, as well. John writes in chapter 20:21 these words, "So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you!' " Second time. " 'As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.' " So Jesus now says to the disciples, "I'm going to send you." You see, that's ultimately the goal of God's plan for the church and for your life. You are sent to the world to bring the good news of a risen Savior. That's your job, that's your calling, that's the dynamic duty of the church - is that we are to take the gospel to the world. So Jesus blesses them again. He lays out His plan for them. He tells them that they were going to continue the work that He began. He's going to equip them as He was equipped. "I'm going to send you like My Father sent Me." And in the sending of the disciples is this pouring out of the Holy Spirit - both within and upon their lives. Look, the church now had a message to share. It's a complete message - the Messiah has come, the Messiah has died, the Messiah has risen, and if you believe in Him, you can be forgiven and find life. You listen to Jesus' words to these men and women in this upper room on Easter Sunday evening, and you say, "How did they ever expect to reach a world in their generation, let alone in ours? And how could they accomplish what Jesus could not?" I mean, 500 people gathered during that time after His resurrection - where were the thousands? They didn't come. And yet Jesus said (in John 14:12), " 'If you believe in Me and the works that I've done, you will do also, and you'll do greater works than I've done. I'm going to go to My Father.' " And Jesus was in one place at one time by His Spirit, but now He would fill the hearts of thousands and tens of thousands, and they would all be out there ministering and reaching out. And that was God's plan. Pour out Your Spirit upon the church, and then send the church out. And so Jesus said (in John 20:21) to them, " 'I'm going to send you like My Father sent Me.' "

Second of all, He breathes on them to receive the Holy Spirit. He is not going to just send them, He is going enable them. The work is a spiritual one. And so Jesus breathes on them. The word "breathe" is the exact same word (in a Hebrew word) that you find in Genesis 2:7 as the LORD breathed life into Adam, and he became a living soul. This is, indeed, the report of the new birth - the first ones, if you will. This Easter evening on a Sunday you find these men and women born again, born of the Spirit. I suspect that Nicodemus was with them that night, and as they received the Holy Spirit and they were born again, Luke (24:45) says they were able to understand the Scriptures. God opened their eyes. Things began to make sense. And Jesus, as He had been empowered for His ministry, they were going to

be sent out in that same kind of power. You remember when the Lord began His earthly ministry - that He came to be baptized, and the Spirit of God descended from heaven like a dove, and it remained upon Him. And John said, "I wouldn't have known Him except they said to me, 'Upon whom the Spirit will descend and stay, He's the One that will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and I testify to you He's the Son of God' " (John 1:33-34). So Jesus began His earthly ministry anointed with God's Spirit. And now the church, born again, will be sent out again - filled with the Spirit of God. So they are not only sent but they are enabled.

And then Jesus gives them authority. He says to this first group of men and women, " 'If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.' " Now, the word "forgive" means to conceal. It's the Greek word for to hide. The word "retain" is a word that means to lay hold upon or to not let go, and by definition, even in the verse itself, to not forgive. You remember when those good friends of that fellow who had palsy brought him to Jesus, and the house was so crowded that they climbed up on the roof, and they tore up the roof tiles, and they let this man with palsy - laying on a bed, kind of swinging - down right in front of Jesus, as He's preaching to a whole houseful of people? (Mark 2, Luke 5) And, in regard to what we're called to do, that's exactly the ministry God is giving to His disciples. It's exactly the ministry that God has given to us. Jesus said to this man on the swinging bed, "Your sins are forgiven," and the Pharisees went nuts. You remember? "Only God can forgive sin" is what they said. And Jesus said, "So that you might know that I forgive sin," He said to this man, "Now get up and walk." And He proved that He could do the one that you can't see by doing what they could see, and this lame man got out of his bed and walked away. So you and I are called to that. Only God forgives sins. Jesus is the only way, and He provides forgiveness. So we're called to go preach the gospel, to tell others about Jesus. We can say to people with certainty: if you confess your sins to Jesus and turn to Him, He will forgive you. We can say it with confidence. If you decide to go it alone and reject Jesus' death, you will find yourself one day in hell. There will be judgment to face. We can say it with certainty. Can I forgive sins? No. But I can tell you how your sins can be forgiven, and I can warn you how your sins will never be forgiven. And Jesus gives that authority to the church - that we are to go out as the Lord had done and proclaim the forgiveness of sins or the lack of it, depending upon what your decision has been. Now I grew up in the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church has taught (for generations) that this verse gave the authority to man to forgive the sins of others or to decide that it wasn't appropriate to forgive depending on whether you were really sorry or

not. It is a beating of the Scriptures. It isn't supported anywhere. The church is given authority to preach Jesus and to say, "Here're the consequences. If you have Him, you have life. If you look to Him, your sins are forgiven. If you won't, you're going to die in your sins." I remember hearing of a lady years ago whose family called a priest to give her absolution as she lay dying, and she said to the priest, "Could you show me your hands? The One who forgives me has nail prints in them." And that's right. That's exactly what we preach. Jesus never gave you the authority to forgive someone's sins against God. But He did give you the authority to tell them what God has promised to do. And that's really what this calling is, right? It is the Lord commissioning and then giving authority to these men and these women to be able to say to people, "Here's the consequence of God's sacrifice, both in terms of salvation and in terms of judgment." And that's the message that we have.

In fact, Luke goes on in chapter 24:45, "And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ (the Messiah) to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission (or forgiveness) of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' " That's your message. Here's the absolute necessity. There's the imperative. It was necessary for Christ to die so that there was a message. And it was necessary for Christ to rise so that we have a hope - that Christ would die and then rise on the third day. And notice in verse 47 it says, "This is what you preach. This is the good news that you pass along. You can preach repentance and forgiveness." And, by the way, the word "forgiveness" there is the same word as in John 20:23 about whoever you forgive (or conceal), if you will. Without the cross and without the resurrection, there's no forgiveness, there's no hope. Repentance brings forgiveness; and from hungering and thirsting to being filled. But it's all tied to this resurrection. Right? Jesus dies, and He's risen so that we might then have a message to preach. So, "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). That's a promise of the work of God. And on this Easter evening Jesus, in taking these disciples, called them, commissioned them, gave them power, enabled them, gave them a message, an authority to go out and preach. You have the same thing. In fact, verse 48 says, " 'And you are witnesses of these things.' " These first disciples were firsthand witnesses. They were the ones who came first. Jesus said, there at the end of Matthew 28, " 'All power has been given to Me in heaven and earth. So you go, therefore, and preach to all nations. I have all power. I'm

sending you. I'm sending you." What an assignment to a small group of people to reach the world for Jesus. And yet they did. In the next thirty years, you will read that the gospel came to all of the world. Today we live in a generation where there is TV and satellites and radios and computers and social media, and we're losing ground. They had sandals and sailboats. And we have so much at our disposal. It is the calling of God that we reach the world. And yet every year the number of people in the world that haven't heard the gospel continues to grow. We're not making progress; we're falling behind. And yet that's God's calling.

Jesus never calls us to serve Him without also providing the capacity to accomplish the work. When the Lord said to that fellow in the synagogue with the withered hand, "Stretch forth your hand," He enabled him to do so, or he couldn't have been able to (Matthew 12, Mark 3, Luke 6). When He said to Peter (who'd been fishing all night), "Try the other side of the boat," it is only the act of obedience on Peter's part that brought him the blessing that God intended (John 21). You read that here in verse 48. You are to be - the word "witness" is the Greek word "*martus*," which is the word for martyr. And we always interpret martyr as someone who has died for their belief. But the word "martyr" in the Bible is someone who lives for their belief, displays it so well that it is impossible to miss. I think we have redefined witnessing these days as throwing a tract out of the window of a moving car or putting two bumper stickers on our car. We're really witnesses now! But the witness that the Lord is interested in is the one that lives it out. There's a big difference between a sales pitch and a product demonstration. A lot of people are making sales pitches. You have people knocking on your door with sales pitches. But to live the life that God has given you, it's much more than words; it's a life that's been changed. It has fruit. There're the gifts of the Spirit. It is a demonstration of a life that has been changed. There're a lot of people that want to reform and improve, but they're trapped in sin. This is programmatically free of all of those things. It is a meeting with God who gives you His Spirit because you've turned to Jesus who died and rose, and you're saved. It is the promise of God to do a work that only He can do.

In fact, in verse 49 here of Luke 24, the Lord says to these men and women, "Behold" (or take a look, notice carefully, which is really what the word behold means, look with care) "I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." So not only is the Lord giving them a message to preach and sending them and enabling them and giving them authority, He's breathed on them His Spirit so they might

understand the Scriptures; but then He says to them, "I want you to wait here, not until the Holy Spirit comes to live within you" (that happened), "but till the Holy Spirit comes upon you. You need power to reach a world that is lost." You need power to go preach (verse 47), to go preach that the Christ died, and He rose on the third day so that people's lives could be changed. You need power. Don't go out until you receive power. And so that really is the call of the Lord to this early church, these first believers. "Wait here. You're going to get power." When did they get power? Well, forty days from this day, Jesus will ascend into heaven. In the book of Acts, you can start there as Luke writes his second letter to his buddy and picks up the story. Ten days after the Lord ascended comes Pentecost, penta-(fifty). And, as they were gathered in the upper room, you remember that the Holy Spirit was poured out upon their lives. Different than within. The Holy Spirit is with you until you're saved, He's in you when you're saved, and He comes upon you to fill you with His power. And that's what the Lord told these men and women. "You stay here. Here's your job, here's your message, here's your enabling, here's your authority, here's what you preach. But wait here until you have power." And then He would send them forth to be witnesses, martyrs, if you will, for His name's sake.

So Easter Sunday evening ends with a born again group of men and women who now have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them. Their understanding of the Bible is opened. They have been given a commission. They have good news to share. They have a world to reach. They have the authority to say to people, "Here's how you can be forgiven, and here's what God will honor, and this is what God will not honor." And to send them out. But the final word from the Lord is, "Wait here. Wait here. Wait fifty days until you receive power." They didn't know it was going to be fifty days, but they would wait for His power. I am truly convinced that the church needs God's Spirit upon our lives - if we're going to accomplish His work - to equip us with the Spirit of God to reach the world. And it's what the book of Acts begins with. Right? The book of Acts continues, and Luke starts his letter by saying, "I want to tell you what Jesus began both to do and to preach, and when He was taken up, how He, through the Holy Spirit upon the lives of the disciples, continued that work." And, in that regard, the book of Acts is still being written out today. So His presence and His power and His work can't be replaced with programs or schemes or hypes. I think so often today the church is relying upon slickness to get the Word out. The disciples just relied upon God's Spirit, and Peter preached a three-minute message. I think you can read it in three minutes, in Acts 2. In three minutes, he preaches a message where thousands get saved.

We would work for weeks, right? "Point 11, point 85." We try to work it up. And Peter just goes, "Here's the message. Jesus died, He rose. You want to get saved?" and three thousand came. And the disciples relied upon the power of God's Spirit and so should we.

So next week, when we finish the book of Mark, there're a couple things we want to look at. We want to look at absent Thomas. We want to look at seven guys going fishing (in John 21). And then we want to look at these last six verses in Mark's gospel and talk about the power of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church to reach the world.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
August 7, 2017