

St. Michael Lichfield with St. John, Wall

Bible Study Lent 2021: Mark's Gospel 31st March Mark 16. 1-20 Jesus is Risen

Opening Prayer

Grant, Lord,

that we who are baptized into the death of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ may continually put to death our evil desires and be buried with him; and that through the grave and gate of death we may pass to our joyful resurrection; through his merits, who died and was buried and rose again for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Mark 16.1-20

16 When the sabbath was over, 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 They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" ⁴ When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. ⁵ As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. ⁶ But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." ⁸ So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Is there anything that strikes you about this account?

Imagine this is the only ending of the resurrection accounts! How would you feel about that? How might the growth and development of Christianity have been affected if this was the end of the gospel account?

THE SHORTER ENDING OF MARK

[[And all that had been commanded them they told briefly to those around Peter. And afterward Jesus himself sent out through them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.]]

THE LONGER ENDING OF MARK

⁹ [[Now after he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. ¹⁰ She went out and told

those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. ¹¹ But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

¹² After this he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. ¹³ And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

The desperate and terrible events of Jesus' passion and death are very quickly followed by the extraordinary joy and hope of Jesus' resurrection. In our Christian faith and life, what is the interplay between our 'Good Friday' experiences and our 'Easter Day' experiences? Are there times when it is difficult to believe hope and joy are possible, e.g. in the light of the last year living with the pandemic?

¹⁴ Later he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were sitting at the table; and he upbraided them for their lack of faith and stubbornness, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. ¹⁶ The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: by using my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸ they will pick up snakes in their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

¹⁹ So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.]]

Where, in our own lives or the life of the world, might we see the light of resurrection, new life and renewal? Where might we see the 'tombs', symbols of death, being broken open and the life of God beginning to burst out? Are there ways in which we can assist in 'rolling the stone away'?

Closing Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, who in your tender love towards the human race sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our flesh and to suffer death upon the cross:

grant that we may follow the example of his patience and humility, and also be made partakers of his resurrection;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.