

Lesson #4 – Death and resurrection

Let's begin in prayer, saying together:

God, we thank you that you are living and active, that you are present here with us, and that you reveal yourself by your Word and Spirit. Lord, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts that understand what you want to teach us about yourself, and about our lives in you. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Next, read or listen to the story. As you do this, keep the following questions in mind:

- Is anything unclear in the story? What questions arose in your mind as you read or listened?
- What do you learn about Jesus in this story? Is that what you expected to see, or did it come as a surprise?
- How did the people around Jesus respond to him in this story? How might you have responded if you had been there?

Mark 15:33 – 16:8

Jesus Dies

³³At noon the whole country became dark. This darkness continued until three o'clock. ³⁴At three o'clock Jesus cried out loudly, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." This means "My God, my God, why have you left me alone?"

³⁵Some of the people standing there heard this. They said, "Listen! He is calling Elijah."

³⁶One man there ran and got a sponge. He filled the sponge with sour wine and tied it to a stick. Then he used the stick to give the sponge to Jesus to get a drink from it. The man said, "We should wait now and see if Elijah will come to take him down from the cross."

³⁷Then Jesus cried out loudly and died.

³⁸When Jesus died, the curtain in the Temple was torn into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom. ³⁹The army officer who was standing there in front of the cross saw what happened when Jesus died. The officer said, "This man really was the Son of God!"

⁴⁰Some women were standing away from the cross, watching. Among these women were Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph. (James was her youngest son.) ⁴¹These were the women who had followed Jesus in Galilee and cared for him. Many other women who had come with Jesus to Jerusalem were also there.

Jesus is Buried

⁴²This day was called Preparation day. (That means the day before the Sabbath day.) It was becoming dark. ⁴³A man named Joseph from Arimathea was brave enough to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus' body. Joseph was an important member of the high council. He was one of the people who wanted God's kingdom to come.

⁴⁴Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was already dead. So he called for the army officer in charge and asked him if Jesus was already dead. ⁴⁵When Pilate heard it from the officer, he told Joseph he could have the body.

⁴⁶Joseph bought some linen cloth. He took the body from the cross, wrapped it in the linen, and put the body in a tomb that was dug in a wall of rock. Then he closed the tomb by rolling a large stone to cover the entrance. ⁴⁷Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James saw the place where Jesus was put.

News that Jesus Has Risen from Death

16 The next day after the Sabbath day, Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James bought some sweet-smelling spices to put on Jesus' body. ²Very early on that day, the first day of the week, the women were going to the tomb. It was very early after sunrise. ³The women said to each other, "There is a large stone covering the entrance of the tomb. Who will move the stone for us?"

⁴Then the women looked and saw that the stone was moved. The stone was very large, but it was moved away from the entrance. ⁵The women walked into the tomb and saw a young man there wearing a white robe. He was sitting on the right side of the tomb. The women were afraid.

⁶But the man said, "Don't be afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, the one who was killed on a cross. He has risen from death! He is not here. Look, here is the place they put him when he was dead. ⁷Now go and tell his followers. And be sure to tell Peter. Tell them, 'Jesus is going into Galilee and will be there before you come. You will see him there, as he told you before.'"

⁸The women were very afraid and confused. They left the tomb and ran away. They did not tell about what happened, because they were afraid. 

Responding:

Spend some time responding to the general questions below, using the space provided to record your thoughts.

- Is anything unclear in the story? What questions arose in your mind as you read or listened?

- What do you learn about Jesus in this story? Is that what you expected to see, or did it come as a surprise?
- How did the people around Jesus respond to him in this story? How might you have responded if you had been there?

Now, spend some time drilling deeper into the story, and the meaning it might hold for your life, by responding to the following additional questions:

- Throughout this journey we have flexed our imagination muscles to put ourselves in the shoes of a variety of characters. I'd like to do this once again: **imagine yourself in Jesus' shoes**. When you hear his desperate cry, *"My God, my God, why have you left me alone?"* what do you imagine he was thinking? How do you think **he** thought **his** story was going to end?
- Think about a time in your life when you had to **trust** that things were going to work out, without any real certainty that you wouldn't be disappointed. When was this? What was it like to **trust** in this way? Did you find it easy, terrifying, or something in between? How did it work out?
- This story has a bewildering conclusion, so much so that the earliest copies of it ended very abruptly: *"They did not tell about what happened, because they were afraid."* (Obviously not entirely true – here we are still talking about it 😊)

I would like you to sit in this same sense of bewilderment for a moment. Imagine yourself as someone who is hearing the story of Jesus' resurrection for the very first time. In their shoes, what **would** you think it means?

- Now, back in your own shoes, what **do** you think it means? How have you heard this event explained? What meaning does it hold for your life, and for the world?

- If Jesus were here right now, what would you want to say to him? What might he want to say to you?

Conclude this lesson with a time of prayer, speaking with God as a friend (remember... ***The Lord is here; His Spirit is with us!***) about anything that you have noted above, or anything else that is on your heart and mind.