

Sunday School Lesson, March 31, 2024
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Lesson—Life Beyond Death¹

Text—Mark 16:1-8

I. Aim for Change/Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, we will...

1. Validate how the women pushed through their grief and fear to accomplish their task.
2. Value God's presence and guidance amid difficult and unknown circumstances.
3. Move out in faith instead of fear when confronting challenges.

Why This Lesson Matters: The women who came to the tomb did not let their grief hinder them, and God rewarded their faithfulness with the good news of Christ's resurrection.

Key Verse—(Mark 6:9-10) He saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. (KJV)

Song of Praise and Worship: "He Lives" by the Alfred H. Ackley

II. *Points to be Emphasized*

- a. Mark subtly reinforces the finality of Jesus' death by identifying Mary in terms of her next surviving son: "Mary the mother of James".
- b. Normally the anointing would have taken place before the burial, but the Sabbath began before Jesus disciples could care for his body.
- c. The question by the women highlights the absence of the disciples, but underscores their faithfulness and commitment to carry out their last service to Jesus.
- d. There are significant parallels between the women at the tomb and the shepherds at Jesus' birth: both were frightened at the angelic figures; both were given an announcement that ushers in a world changing work of God.

¹ Outline Content courtesy of the Sunday School Publishing Board Teacher Manual, which should be purchased at www.sspbnbc.com

III. Historical/Biblical Background and Lesson Context

The writer of the gospel of Mark endeavored to encourage Roman Christians and unequivocally proved that Jesus was the Messiah. Scholars identify the author as John Mark, a close companion of Peters (Paul's former associate and cousin of Paul's Co-laborer, Barnabas). Mark focused primarily on what Jesus did, his ministry and sacrifice, more so than on what he taught. Mark's primary theological theme is captured in Mark 10:45 "for even the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

In the lesson it is now the first day of the week, Sunday. The Jewish Sabbath was over and the women, hastened as quickly as they could to the tomb when Jesus was buried. When they arrived, Jesus was not there. His absence would have been a cause of great concern for many reasons (though, most notably, grave robbery). The robbery of graves was well attested to in antiquity. An inscription attributed to the reign of 1st century emperor Claudius prohibited grave robbing in Nazareth.

Jewish tradition called for the immediate burial of a dead person on the day of his or her death if possible. Normally, preparation of the body included washing the body with perfumes and ointments and wrapping it in a burial shroud. Embalming was not a common Jewish practice, so bodies had to be prepared and buried as quickly as possible; they would deteriorate rapidly in the warm or hot temperatures normal for that region. This is why Joseph of Arimathea asked for the body of Christ and took him immediately to the tomb.

IV. Prominent Character(s) in the Lesson

Jesus: the son of God.

The Disciples: the 11 (Judas was dead) unfortunately exemplified a lack of faith in the Lord's resurrection prediction.

The "women": Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary the mother of James, they were strong followers and supporters of Jesus and His Ministry.

V. Key Terms in the Lesson (KJV)

- a. **Afraid (verse 8)**—Greek: *phobeo*: had fear; was reverent; terrified; put to flight.
- b. **Anoint (v. 1)**—Greek: *aleipho*: to rub or smear olive oil on the body (festival, in homage, medicinally, or in anointing the dead).

VI. Topical Outline of the Lesson

1. Introduction
2. Encountering the Unexpected (Mark 16:1-5)
3. An Unexpected Assignment (vv. 6—8)

Food for thought and question for consideration: **(What have we learned Charlie Brown?) Jesus is Alive!!!**