

Easter Episode
"A Future Free from Fear"
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Mark 16:1-7 "Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body. Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. On the way they were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside. When they entered the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked, but the angel said, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died."

Three Reasons You Can Have a Future Free From Fear

1. Jesus has power over your past.

Mark 16:6 "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead!"

Colossians 2:13-14 "He has forgiven all of your sins. He has utterly wiped out the evidence of broken commandments which always hung over our heads and has completely annulled it by nailing it to the cross."

2 Corinthians 5:14, 17 "Since we believe that Christ died for all, we also believe that we have all died to our old life. This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"

2. Jesus has provided for your present.

Mark 16:7 "Now go and tell his disciples, **including Peter**, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee."

Deuteronomy 31:8 "The Lord Himself will go before you. He will not leave you or forget you. So don't be afraid and don't worry."

Isaiah 43:2 "When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you."

Ephesians 2:18 "For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."

John 10:27-29 "My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand."

Romans 8:38-39 "And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow – not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below - indeed, nothing in all

creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

3. Jesus has a promise for your future.

“You will see him there, just as he told you before he died.”

1 Peter 1:3-4 (Msg) “Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we’ve been given a brand-new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven – and the future starts now!”

When there is no faith in the future, there is no power for the present.

John 6:40 “Everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up in the last day.”

John 14:1–3 “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust in me. There are many rooms in my Father’s house; I would not tell you this if it were not true. I am going there to prepare a place for you. After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me so that you may be where I am.”

1 John 5:13 “I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.”

Study Questions

- Do you ever feel burdened by your sin? What are the sources of your guilt? Which of these do you think are legitimate? How does your background affect your present tendency to feel guilty?
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 17. How is it possible for us to receive a new life? What is the “old life” and what is the “new life”?
- Can a Christian really be sinless? Is sanctification a lifelong process? Why or why not?
- The apostle John writes that “no one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.” (1 John 3:9). What does he mean? What is the impact of this truth on the spiritual life?
- Read Hebrews 10:1–3, 10, 14. Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Through Jesus, we have been made holy once for all. If that is the case, why do we still feel guilty? If you are burdened by false guilt, how can you move past that guilt?
- Read John 10:2-6 and John 20:1-18. Jesus desires to break down our misconceptions and false ideas so that we can know the truth, just as He demonstrated the truth of His resurrection to Mary. When pain blinds us to His presence, He calls us by name and tells us that we are His own. He longs to come to us when we are weeping with sorrow and grief. His presence brings us comfort. By his Word, He strengthens us to do His will, just as He strengthened Mary to fulfill His purpose in her life.
- Why do you think Jesus appeared to Mary before he appeared to any of his other followers? Why do you think Jesus met Mary alone instead of appearing when Peter and John also were at the tomb?

- Mary believed Christ's body was taken away. Her misconception kept her from recognizing Jesus. How can preconceived ideas about God keep us from recognizing him in our lives?
- Mary did not recognize Jesus, even when he spoke to her. Why do you think she knew him when he called her by name? How does God call us by name today?
- What evidence in this passage suggests that Mary's grief paralyzed her? How did Jesus help her? Share a time that God met you when you were paralyzed with grief.
- How did Mary's physical demeanor, emotional response, and spiritual well-being change when she recognized her risen Lord? How did Jesus change her thinking and help her to understand the truth about his resurrection?

This is the reality brought about by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. The old powers have been defeated, the old self has been crucified, and the futility of creation is being undone. A new king is lord, the new self has been raised, and the creation is catching a glimpse of an eternity with hope. Read Colossians 3:1–11.

- According to verses 1–4, what are we told to seek? Why are we told to do it? What is our ultimate reward?
- Make a list of the various commands (vv. 5, 8–10). Which are negative, and which are positive?
- What are the reasons given for this new focus (vv. 6–7, 11)? How many involve God and how many involve us?
- Read 1 Corinthians 15:12–28. Why is our future state linked to Jesus' resurrection (vv. 12–13)? What are the consequences for us if Christ has not been raised (vv. 14–18)?
- In vv. 21–22, the contrast is between the effect of Adam's choice (death) and the effect of Christ's, which undoes the curse (life). It is a fresh start. How does this perspective help you as you contemplate your own death or that of a loved one?

Next Paul sketches out the order of this fresh start for believers (vv. 23–28): Christ rises, Christ rules, Christ comes and raises his people, Christ destroys all false powers (including death), Christ delivers the kingdom to the Father.

- How does this narrative place the Resurrection in context? What is the ultimate goal?
- Consider how Christ's followers responded to his resurrection. What should be our souls' response to the resurrection of Christ? Take time each day this week to thank God for His wonderful gift of life through Jesus Christ. Thank Him for a past that is overcome by the blood of Christ, a present that is provided for by His love, and a future that is secure in His promises.