



SERMON STUDY GUIDE

For the sermon preached on
Easter Sunday
4/12/2020:
"Overcome"
Mark 16:1-8

How to use the Study Guide During Our "Stay at Home" Online Group Meetings

Group life is even more critical during this incredible season. Over and over, group leaders are reporting that suddenly, there is a new hunger to connect, share, pray, and meditate on Scripture together and so we are making these guides available weekly and suggesting a new format during this season.

As you know, our Group Life's vision is to "practice the way of Jesus." And while Jesus never had to lead a Torah study over Zoom, he was strategic in his teaching ministry, and we want to be as well.

There are a number of differences between meeting in person and meeting online, ranging from the obvious to the subtle. One is, given our attention spans for online meetings, we want to encourage you to limit the length of your call between 45-60 minutes and we are calling this "Check-In Plus One." Meaning, spend a few minutes checking in with your group and see if there are any new needs with them (or even amongst their neighbors). "The One" is to spend time in study. As our Stay at Home continues, our desire for meaningful content and interaction will grow. Given our new format, the study guides based on Sunday's Sermon will be designed to be more application based (as opposed to unpacking the text with the Inductive Bible Study method). You might consider sharing the passage beforehand with your group in hopes that they might spend more time with the Scripture before the gathering.

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do in practicing the way of Jesus in community.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the Group Life Team

"Check-In Plus One"

Welcome everyone to the Zoom call, outline the goal of this call being 45 minutes, spending 15-20 minutes checking with one another, then moving into a time of prayer, and then spending some time discussing the application of the Scripture passage.

A "Check-in" question might be, "Now that we have completed 4 weeks of our Stay at Home quarantine, how are you doing, and is there anything new that has arisen in your life or in your neighborhood that we can pray about?"

When we began Lent on Ash Wednesday, it was hard to imagine that our Easter would be celebrated with an online service and all of us remaining at home. But praise God, for the Lord has shown us that we can worship our risen Savior from literally anywhere in any format. Today we want to look at the Easter message that Pastor Bryan preached from Mark 16:1-8 and see what we can learn and apply from it today.

Pastor Bryan opened the message by reminding us that good stories have good endings. He listed a few examples and said, “Good stories have **good endings, right?** Now “good” doesn’t have to mean “**happily ever after.**” A good ending brings **resolution**; it ties up **loose ends**. A **mystery** is solved. A **secret** is revealed. A **lesson** is learned. A good ending brings a sense of **satisfaction**, and even **hope**. Good stories have **good endings**.

Q - Whether it be from a movie, a musical, or a show, what have been your favorite story endings and why?

Given this, the gospel of Mark ends with the crucifixion of Jesus and then in mystery. Let’s read:

“¹When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus’ body. ²Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?”

⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

⁶“Don’t be alarmed,” he said. “You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’”

⁸Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.”

Mark 16-1-8

Q – What is your reaction to this story? What do you find interesting, perplexing, or intriguing?

Q – Pastor Bryan made the point that the women were not expecting a resurrection, and perhaps in their grief, they were not thinking clearly. They had gathered spices and yet were wondering what they were going to do about the tombstone as they walked along. And they certainly were not expecting an angel to talk to them. No wonder verse 8 reads, “Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.”

Now an actual angel told them that Jesus had been raised from the dead. He even began his words with, “Do not be alarmed.” (which makes us realize that angels don’t know how humans really work but it was nice he tried.) But all they could feel was fear.

Challenging question here: Let's take a moment and think of our fears. Fears we have experienced throughout life, fear that we are experiencing in this very moment in the midst of a global pandemic. What is so powerful and paralyzing about fear?

(Leader note: Toughest question of the set. We want to remember that fear reminds us of our mortality, that we could experience even more pain, even our death or death of a loved one, and that despite our strength, we are not in control; there is little we can do to stop the threats.)

Q – The chosen theme of Jesus overcoming is an answer to the trembling fear that the women experienced and what we are experiencing today. Bryan summed it up by saying “We overcome fear through faith in Someone stronger.” What are the fears in your life that you need Jesus's help to overcome now?

Let's close our time in prayer, thanking God that we worship a living Savior who has overcome death itself and is with us now in the midst of our fear and uncertainty. We praise the Lord that we don't leave this moment in fear and trembling but rather with the opportunity to draw closer to the one who has overcome. Let's pray ...