



EASTER READING

2025

DAY ONE

MARK 14:1-10 | JESUS' IMMINENT DEATH PUT INTO MOTION

Mark 14 opens with the chief priests and scribes seeking to have Jesus put to death. But this is all part of God's redemptive plan. Jesus is anointed with fragrant perfume in preparation for His burial as Judas Iscariot is triggered to betray the Son of God.

Read: Mark 14:1-10

The leaders of the day, filled with evil intent, want to kill God on earth. But they are slaves to fear, the fear of man. They are actively seeking a way to kill Jesus but they need someone to betray Him.

Meanwhile, Jesus is having a meal at Simon the Leper's house when a woman arrives with a jar of costly perfume. Breaking the jar, she pours the perfume over His head, filling the house with the aroma and anointing Him. Some don't understand what is taking place and chide what she is doing as wrong and wasteful. But Jesus defends her actions and explains that He will die and this is for his burial. She has anointed Him now, the last opportunity to do so, and it is a beautiful thing to Him. This is an extraordinary and unique moment with Him in contrast with always having the poor with us whom we can help at any time.

As this narrative unfolds, we see something change in Judas Iscariot. He is full of greed and becomes resentful. The complete opposite to this woman. She sacrificed to bless the Lord Jesus, but he is taking money to see the Lord killed.

Reflection:

Judas' response shows a heart wrought with legalism: optimising, counting, and scrutinising everything. Legalism wants rewards and blessings for what is done, overshadowing the heart of love as

demonstrated by the woman, and resulting in a performance mindset of right and wrong. It leads to missing out on the opportunity to love people where no reward can be given.

Being reward-motivated is dangerous. Here Judas, motivated by money, is prepared to hand over the Christ to be killed. This is very sobering. How can one who has seen the deaf hear, the blind see, and the lame walk; who has seen bread multiplied and Christ walk on water, betray Him for money? Let us not allow this performance motivation to be in our hearts. Instead, let us be motivated by love.

This demonstration of the love of money and the twisted view of the extravagant gift the woman poured on Christ reveals a gnostic subtlety. It is the idea that we should not give or use money in extravagant ways on Jesus. It appears to be wise, to not be wasteful, but there is a place to bless the Lord and those around us, even ourselves, with the physical means that God has provided. This can be a real challenge for some who, like Judas, love money and treat it with more respect than God.

Remember what Jesus taught in Luke 16:9, to use money to buy friends! Perhaps some of us would rebuke Jesus saying that today. Many view money like that of a god, it gives power and why would we give power away? Yet Jesus' view of money is that it is there to serve others and ourselves. Jesus' challenge to these gnostic thoughts is to keep money serving you as opposed to serving money.

Jesus' ways are far superior. A heart reborn through faith in Him, renewed and filled with His Spirit, is free to love and be loved without performance.

DAY TWO

MARK 14:12-26 | THE OLD PASSES AND THE NEW COMES

Jesus, the Word of God, now speaks about the New Covenant which He will later fulfil, complete, and ratify with His death and blood. Mark also shares the account, a sign and wonder, of how the upper room is found for the Passover meal, and Judas is exposed as the betrayer of the Christ.

Read: Mark 14:12-26

It is nearing Passover and Jesus gives some of His disciples specific instructions about how they are to find the room to prepare for the Passover. This is an accurate prophecy Jesus gives. Remember, this is a very busy time, and many rooms would have been "booked out" long before. The disciples do as Jesus says and follow the man with the water jar, meet the owner, and secure the room. This is a miraculous thing. It is so easy to read over it, but we must consider the significance of Jesus' words being fulfilled here. This is a small sign of the greater works which will be fulfilled shortly in His death and resurrection.

As the evening approaches, they are all reclining at the table miraculously made available for them. And here, Jesus continues to prepare His disciples for what is coming. He is determined to leave a strong witness for them, so they will not fall away, but gain strength in the coming days and weeks, even in the light of a betrayer amongst them.

Jesus then shares what we have now come to call Communion with His disciples. This is the start of the work which will change the entire cosmos, especially for us who trust in Christ. What a glorious act that the body of Christ (verse 22) is given for us, this living sacrifice; that the blood (verse 24) is poured out for us.

The sacrifices in the Hebrew Law are a shadow of what Jesus will do and how sin will be transferred from us to Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21, Leviticus 16:21-22). This one imminent act of Christ dying on the cross fulfils so much scripture and establishes a very different and new way of life for us. One that is connected to the living God (John 14:20).

Luke's account includes that we should do this in remembrance of Christ. Matthews calls out what is accomplished by the blood, the remission (release from bondage) of Sin. Sin is no longer our master. Satan is no longer our captor. We are free.

Jesus then sums up this historical meal with the coming of the Kingdom. This forms the foundation for the Gospel: the freedom from Sin, the new creation, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God in us.

Reflection:

For us as believers as we read this wonderful account, a strong witness is created in us about the death and resurrection of Christ. We are encouraged to stand firm, knowing Christ has done all that is needed to reconcile and join us back to the Father in Himself. The wages of sin having been fully paid for. We are now completely righteous before God and the devil has no hold on us.

Let us keep reminding ourselves of what Christ has done, and not allow gnostic or legalistic schemes to come in and steer us towards trying to improve our standing before God ourselves or trusting in our own righteousness through our own deeds, knowledge or actions. We stand righteous before our Holy God because of Christ alone.

Moreso, our freedom from sin is not realised through continual work and effort on our behalf, this is a legalistic subtlety. That fight is not won by learning more about sin, the why and motives, trying to use our intellect to try avoid sin. This is the lie gnostic schemes sow. Rather freedom from sin is a reality achieved by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ and His glorious and powerful work He does in us by His Spirit.

When the Son sets you free, you are free indeed (John 8:36)!

The Gospel removes the entity of Sin from us. We need to believe this and trust for the powerful work of God to take place within us, which makes us completely new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17), thereby completely changing our views of what sin is and our desires for it. This is the long-lasting way to be free and remain free from sin, the devil and the world, and this is done by the Spirit renewing us to the will of God.

DAY THREE

MARK 14:27-51 | CHRIST IS STRENGTHENED FOR WHAT IS TO COME

Jesus is now focused on encouraging the disciples about what is to come. The prophecy Jesus gives about them falling away, although it sounds terrible, is an encouragement. When the disciples later reflect on this, they will take comfort that it was written and had to be.

Read: Mark 14:27-51

"You will all fall away" seems like quite a discouraging thing to hear, and at the time, it might have caused great sorrow and confusion. But this is a moment that was prophesied about hundreds of years previously. The devil would strike Jesus and His disciples would scatter (Zechariah 13:7). God knew this was going to happen and therefore knows the final outcome. He wants his disciples to understand and hear this prophecy.

Jesus then proclaims the outcome, that after He has risen He will go on ahead of them to Galilee. They can take comfort that no matter what happens they will be reunited with Christ Jesus. But the disciples do not understand this, and in verse 29 it records that Peter and the other disciples declare they will not forsake Jesus, even to death. This actually sets them strangely against what God has said will pass. Jesus isn't disturbed or unsettled by this. He confirms the scripture with a specific prophecy about Peter and his imminent denial, but still the disciples continue to say they will remain with Him.

Now in Gethsemane, Jesus begins to pray about what is to come. He knows He is being betrayed unto death; He knows this will end with His resurrection. Yet, in the moment, there is much distress, trouble, and sorrow in his soul. Jesus is very open and honest with His disciples, sharing this with them, asking them to keep watch and pray.

He understands the importance of prayer at this juncture. It is a point where what He and the others do will have consequences. There will be temptations, so pray and be strengthened to stay fast to God's will.

In verse 35 we see that Jesus takes this distress and sorrow to His Father. He is seeking that this hour, the coming death at the hands of evil men, would not happen. "Let this cup pass." This shows us Jesus isn't looking to die. However, He does not leave His prayer at this. He continues, "Not what I will, but what You will." This is what this time of prayer is all about. It is about Jesus being strengthened by God's power to continue in God's will with something He Himself doesn't want at that moment.

In verse 37, He returns and finds the disciples sleeping instead of praying. This is important, not to call them out but to show us that, unlike Jesus, they did not pray and receive the strength to hold to God's will - which was that Jesus be arrested, put on trial and be crucified. In verse 38, Jesus wakes them up a second time and shares this vital truth (verse 38): "Watch and pray so that you don't fall into temptation."

We must recognise the flesh is weak, we need God's intervention. We will see later Peter's temptation and failure, drawing his sword on the high priest's servant, going against the will of God because He didn't pray and wasn't strengthened towards God's will.

Jesus goes again to pray, while his disciples sleep instead of watching. Then the hour comes of His betrayal and He wakes them for the last time.

Judas has arrived in the garden with a mob from the leaders to arrest Jesus. Using a kiss to identify the Christ, he betrays the Lord into the hands of evil men and evil leaders. Jesus is bound and arrested.

In verse 47, we see how Peter (John 18:10) resists the arrest of Jesus, resisting the will of God, and strikes off the ear of the high priest's

servant. No one aims to cut off an ear; he was aiming for the head. Peter was trying to kill this man. The temptation to murder had entered Peter's heart. Not only this, but he is now opposing the will of God, which is that Christ would die and rise, establishing the New Covenant between God and men, enabling the Spirit to live in men.

Luke (22:51) tells us that Jesus heals the man and says to allow what is happening to take place. Jesus is proclaiming the will of God and encouraging the disciples to follow it. Even though it doesn't make sense, it looks like a mess, and all they have been hoping for is being destroyed – God is at work.

Verse 51 could be seen as comic relief with a young man fleeing the scene naked. However, the intention is to show the severity of the threat perceived by the disciples. So much so that even the embarrassment of fleeing naked was minor compared to being captured by this group. This helps us understand why the rest of the disciples indeed scattered. This wasn't a calm, orderly arrest. It was chaotic and violent.

Reflection:

As we think on the events that occurred that night, we can see how important prayer is. Prayer is given not only that we should ask and receive, but also that we should receive strength to submit to God's will.

Peter, unfortunately, slept rather than prayed. Jesus had warned him to watch and pray, but not obeying the Lord he finds himself attempting murder and opposing the will of God.

Let us heed the advice of Jesus to watch and pray. Let us draw aside and receive strength to submit our will to God's, like Jesus did, and avoid the temptation to oppose God and His Scripture.

If we do not know what God's will is, seek it out. Read the Scriptures. Pray and fellowship with the Spirit, seeking His guidance. Get to know more of who God is, His character and nature.

It is when we know what God wants to bring about that we can pray in faith and trust Him to bring it to pass.

This becomes more and more about Him, and less and less about ourselves as we seek His will for our lives and surrender our own. We trust Him to look after us, instead of trusting our “bless me” prayers and our “best life” declarations. We have a loving Father who is always with us, who hears our prayers, and acts mightily on our behalf.

DAY FOUR

MARK 14:53-72 | JESUS STANDS TRIAL

Jesus will now stand trial before the chief priests. Inconsistent testimonies will be brought to try to condemn Him but they will not be enough. As we read, we will see Jesus testify that He is the Christ and more prophecy fulfilled as Peter disowns Him before dawn.

Read: Mark 14:53-72

Jesus, having been arrested in the garden, is now taken for examination before the highest Jewish authority of the day, the high priest and elders. They want to put Jesus to death.

They seem to have gathered all sorts of people to testify against Jesus in an attempt to collect incriminating evidence, but the statements about what Jesus has apparently done wrong, don't agree and are false.

Finally, a few come forward with a similar testimony about Jesus saying He will destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days. While their claims still do not agree, we know that Jesus never said this concerning the Jewish Temple. The closest we have to this statement is found in John 2:19, where He speaks about His own death and resurrection: "Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.""

The examination continues and the high priest asks Jesus why He is remaining silent and not defending Himself again these accusations. This fulfils the prophesy in Isaiah 53:7: "...He did not open His mouth."

The next question, however, Jesus does answer. The chief priest asks Him directly if He is the Messiah. To which He shockingly replies, "I Am." Those in the room would surely have known what Jesus was saying.

It would have immediately taken them back to when Moses asked God who he should say had sent him, God replies with, "I Am Who I Am" (see Exodus 3:13-14). This was the first time God named Himself before His people. Those words mean the Ever-existing God, the One Who is and always will be.

Jesus is the Ever-existing God now in a man, and has just replied as His Father did using the exact same Hebrew words (Ἐγώ εἰμι - I am and exist).

Jesus continues to speak and tell them how they will all see Him at the right hand of The Mighty One. At hearing this, the high priest tears his clothes and declares that Jesus Christ is guilty of blasphemy and is now condemned to death.

Then our attention is moved to Peter. He is in the courtyard and when identified by a mere servant as a disciple of Jesus, he denies it. Peter has no courage left at all. The challenges keep coming, and he keeps denying that he knows Jesus.

The cycle is only broken when the prophecy is fulfilled, and the rooster crows a second time. Peter remembers with devastation what Jesus had said. His frailty is exposed, and his pride broken.

Reflection:

Jesus Christ was not condemned for doing anything wrong, for rebellion against a nation, or for starting a revolt. He was condemned to death because He truthfully stated that He is the Messiah, God's chosen One to bring deliverance to the nations. No incriminating testimony against Him could stand. But on the other hand, scripture prophesying about the Messiah was being fulfilled over and over as these events unfolded. Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Messiah!

Peter is broken after his denial of knowing Jesus, but here Peter's restoration begins. He will later become a strong leader in the early church, birthed when the Holy Spirit comes upon him.

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Before Christ's coming, the Law was seen as a way to relate to God. But now Jesus has changed everything (Hebrews 10:1, Romans 8:3, Colossians 2:17). The Law was a shadow pointing to our need for a Savior, a need for a righteousness that surpasses our own. The Savior has come, we have been rescued from the grasp of Sin and the devil. And through faith in the Messiah, we are made His righteousness, made right before God, filled with His Spirit and never again separated from Him.

Some are still in the habit of believing that we can get closer to God through knowing more, but this very thought and the actions which follow lead to us replacing faith in Christ with man's wisdom. This moves us further from the Father and subtly robs us of what the Messiah has won for us. We can never be closer to God than what Christ has made us. We are one with Him in Spirit and His Spirit dwells in us (John 14:20, John 17:21, 1 Corinthians 6:17, 1 Corinthians 3:16). We cannot be any more favoured; we are the fully blessed (Ephesians 1:3), and much loved children of God (1 John 3:1).

DAY FIVE

MARK 15:1-20 | JESUS IS TAKEN BEFORE PILOT

Jesus is taken before the Roman Court and there found innocent and not deserving of death. But the religious rulers of the day have an ulterior motive and continue to spread false testimony about Jesus, stirring up the crowds to crucify Christ.

Read: Mark 15:1-20

It is now morning and the Jewish leaders continue to meet to conspire against Jesus. They have already decided that He must die. So they take Him to Pilate, the Roman procurator of the region who is in charge of governing Jerusalem, to put their plan into motion and have Jesus killed.

Pilate directly questions Jesus whether He is indeed the "King of the Jews" as He has claimed, according to the testimony of the rulers. He confirms that He is. This is the only time He answers. The rulers continue to accuse and bring false evidence against Him, but Jesus remains silent, not answering or defending Himself.

This is the second fulfilment of Isaiah 53:7: "He opened not His mouth." Jesus knows that this is all fitting into the God's plan for man's salvation. In the garden, He had already surrendered and is now determined to do what must take place for the New Covenant to be established.

Pilate now wants this decision to sit with the people, not himself. He recognizes that Jesus is innocent and finds no fault in Him (John 18:38). So, he uses the annual tradition of releasing a prisoner at the Passover Feast as a way to relinquish that responsibility and get the people to choose.

They cry out for Barabbas to be released. His name, interestingly,

means the son of Abba. This criminal is guilty of murder and causing a revolt, the very things that the chief priests had wanted to accuse Jesus of. Jesus, who is the true Son of Abba, is not set free, but condemned by the crowd to die. This is the exchange which took place for us: the sons of rebellion for the Son of God (2 Corinthians 5:21), that we may go free.

As Pilate (verse 12) asks what must be done with the King of the Jews, Psalm 2:1-6 is fulfilled, where God says He will install His King on the Holy Hill despite the nations coming against Him.

They cry to crucify Him and Jesus is led away where a whole battalion participate in having Jesus flogged and whipped. This could be as many as a few hundred, but it is unlikely to have been only one or two people. It is poignant that so many were present, beating, mocking, striking, and spitting on Him. No wonder He was marred beyond recognition. These actions fulfil Isaiah 50:6: "I gave my back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting." And also Isaiah 53:5: "And by his wounds we are healed."

Reflection:

The Word of God, who is Christ, has gone forth from the Father, and is and will accomplish what He sent Him to do (Isaiah 55:11). As we read through these historical events of the coming, the judgement, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are seeing the Word of God, prophesied many years, decades, and centuries earlier, fulfilled.

We can be encouraged that God's Word, Christ, has also been fulfilled in our lives for our salvation and deliverance from every sin, sickness, disease, lack, and all forms demonic influence (Col 1:13). We can stand on what the Word says Christ has done and it will come to pass in our lives. Our God does not sleep nor slumber but is at work in our lives. Continue to believe in the Son and see the deliverance of our God.

DAY SIX

MARK 15:21-32 | THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST'S DEATH (PART 1)

Jesus has been condemned to death by the crowd egged on by the priests. He has been beaten to unrecognizable and will now be led out to Golgotha where He will be crucified for the sins of the whole world—past, present and future. Mark's testimony of Jesus' physical death continues to confirm the fulfilment of scripture prophesied hundreds of years prior.

Read: Mark 15:21-32

Jesus is being led to Golgotha to be crucified, and Simon of Cyrene is ordered to carry the cross. Jesus must have been so severely beaten and wounded that He was unable to carry the cross any further Himself. They reach Golgotha, and Jesus is offered wine mixed with myrrh, which He refuses, fulfilling Psalm 69:21:

"They gave me poison for food, and for my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink." (ESV)

"They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." (NKJV)

Next, He is crucified, taking the curse of Sin upon Himself, and fulfilling the Law (see Galatians 3:13, Deuteronomy 21:22-23, and Hebrews 13:11-12).

In Psalm 22:18 it says: "They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing, they cast lots." This is exactly what happens between the soldiers as they crucify Jesus.

It is around 9am on Friday morning, the third hour (verse 25), when the

cross, with Him nailed to it, is fixed into position. On either side of Him hang two criminals, just as Isaiah 53:12b foretold: "And He was numbered with the transgressors, yet he bore the sin of many..." (ESV)

As passersby and Jewish leaders mock and ridicule Christ, Isaiah 53:4 is realized: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted." (ESV)

Refecation:

Jesus's death has been supported by many eye-witness testimonies, people present at His crucifixion. It has also fulfilled many Scriptures from the Law, Prophets and Psalms concerning the Messiah. Jesus died physically on a cross for you and me. He was the perfect Lamb of God without spot or blemish, who took our place and paid our debt to Sin. A debt we could never pay except with our own lives in slavery to it. But our Savior has come, He has fulfilled the Law perfectly in life and in death. He has taken our shame, borne our condemnation, our sorrow, our sickness, our grief, our pain. He has taken all the evil of the world upon Him, so that we might be saved! What a wonderful Savior we have. How great His love is for us that He would bear all of this on our behalf.

DAY SEVEN

MARK 15:33-47 | THE TESTIMONY OF CHRIST'S DEATH (PART 2)

We now read of the death of Jesus, who is the Christ. Silence fills the universe and the heavens so much so that the earth is in darkness. God knows the end from the beginning. His plan of redemption is in motion. He has the power to accomplish it through Christ's life and death. Now we reap all that God Almighty and Christ have sowed. Praise be to God our Father!

Read: Mark 15:33-47

Christ has been crucified and as a sign darkness has come over the land. From noon (the sixth hour) until about 3pm (the ninth hour) a likely eclipse covers the sun, fulfilling the extraordinary prophecy given by Amos in Amos 8:9: "And on that day," declares the Lord God, "I will make the sun go down at noon and darken the earth in broad daylight." Amos (8:10c) continues to speak of this hour, revealing the Father's heart towards His only begotten Son as He dies: "I will make it like the mourning for an only son and the end of it like a bitter day." (NKJV)

Jesus then cries out, quoting the first line of Psalm 22. This statement connects this Psalm to what is happening at that very moment, causing its contents and meaning to be recalled in the minds of those around Him. In quoting this Psalm Jesus is declaring that He is the Messiah, that the devil is judged, and that righteousness is won for all who believe. This Psalm is now put into effect.

He is again offered some sour wine, another ode to Psalm 69:21: "...For my thirst they gave me sour wine to drink."

And then Jesus dies. For the disciples watching at a distance, this

moment must have been devastating. Perhaps they had been watching in hope that He would somehow come down, but now there was no hope. He had breathed His last.

In the midst of this great sorrow, we know this is the start of the New Covenant and a New Era for the world. There is so much more to come. This is the birth of true hope, our Hope.

The curtain in the temple, which separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place where God's presence dwelt, is torn in two! This has incredible and eternal ramifications. God is no longer limiting His Presence to that space or only accessed through that way. But, as promised in Joel 2:28-32, will now be in every person who believes unto righteousness in the work of Christ. The curtain being torn from the top to the bottom shows that this is the work of Christ and of God, not ourselves. He is reaching from the top down to humanity and saving us. He wants to dwell with us, this is His will and desire, and He has made it so through Christ. With such hope, we read (verse 39) of the first gentile, after Christ's death, recognizing that Jesus is the Son of God. True hope and salvation was released to mankind on this very day.

As the evening approaches and the sun sets, the Sabbath begins. The religious of the day want the bodies to be removed and request their legs to be broken, making those who had been crucified die quicker (John 19:31). When they go to do this, they find Jesus is already dead and pierce his side causing blood and water to flow (John 19:34).

Joseph of Arimathea, who is on the council, hears of these plans to remove those crucified and requests Jesus' body from Pilate. His body is then wrapped in linen, using over a hundred pounds of spices and oils in the process, and finally He is laid in the tomb. The entrance is then blocked and later sealed and guarded (Matthew 27:66). Both Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus witness this.

Christ has suffered on the cross, borne our sins, died, and is now buried.

But we know this is not the end. Our Saviour will rise from the dead!

Reflections:

God has reached down to us through His Son. It is not our efforts, thoughts, or actions that have opened this new and living way, but His! And because of this we can boldly come before Him as His children in the righteousness He has gifted all who believe in His Son. Not only this, but He has forged a way to dwell with each and every one of us who believe. He will never leave us, nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Nothing can take the Almighty God and His presence from us. We are eternally one with Him (John 14:19-23). The sin and shame that once separated us from Him has been destroyed in one victorious work on the cross. The devil's power and claim over us has been broken. We are the Lord's, called by His name, redeemed by His blood, clothed in His righteousness, and drenched in His love!

DAY EIGHT

MARK 16:1-20 | HE HAS RISEN! GO IN POWER AND PROCLAIM IT!

Jesus has risen! He has fulfilled Scripture, borne the sins and sickness of the whole world, and with this final blow of resurrection He has conquered death itself along with the devil and his works.

Read: Mark 16:1-19

It is early Sunday morning, the first day of the week, and a group of women have come to honour Jesus and anoint Him for His burial. But when they arrive at the tomb, they find the stone rolled away, and someone sitting inside. It is important to note that the motive for visiting the tomb of Jesus was to anoint His dead body, not to find a risen Lord. They did not yet believe He had risen.

The angel seated in the tomb testifies to them that Jesus has indeed risen. He then gives them a message for the disciples, that Jesus will meet them in Galilee, "just as He told you." This phrase is important. Jesus had previously told His disciples that He would rise and meet them in Galilee, but they have not obeyed this instruction of the Lord. They have not returned to Galilee. The angel now repeats this instruction. The women flee after this astonishing experience with the angel.

Jesus, the risen Christ, then appears first to Mary Magdalene and then to two other disciples as they walk in the country. They all testify to the disciples that Jesus is alive and that they have seen Him; however, the disciples are incredulous. The text is screaming: "Don't be like the eleven and not believe this testimony about Jesus. Rather believe Jesus has risen and be saved!"

The eleven are now eating, sitting at the table, and Jesus Himself

appears to them. He rebukes them for their unbelief and hardness of heart. They did not believe those who had testified to them about Jesus having risen. Many will not have this opportunity of Jesus Himself coming to them. Many will have to believe the testimony of Jesus from others.

But having now believed, Jesus commissions them to do the work which He has been preparing them for as His disciples. That work is to proclaim this Gospel throughout the world.

The word proclaim in Greek doesn't mean to argue or logically convince, but it is to be a herald, to speak out the message. This is vital. Just like the disciples had heard the message from others that Jesus had risen, they should declare the same message now that they have believed and have seen.

There is a wonderful promise accompanying the Gospel, that if we believe and are baptised, we will be saved and not condemned. Other New Testament writings explain how baptism is an outward action of the inward belief. We go to a watery grave and rise to new life in Christ (1 Peter 3:21, Colossians 2:12-13, Galatians 3:27). This is what it is to be saved. It means we are born again. The old dies and we are made new. We become new creations. The One who does the saving is Christ and the one who is saved is us. This is vital. We don't save ourselves. He saves us.

Now that we are saved, we receive the Holy Spirit and have power to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). This means because of faith in Christ, not any other action or reason, we receive the Spirit and can cast out demons in Jesus' name. We will have divine protection against elements of nature, symbolised by the snake bite, and schemes of men, symbolised by poison-literally and figuratively. We lay hands on the sick, and they recover instead of remaining sick or getting worse unto death.

These are seen as signs of the Gospel. They are like witnesses and

testimonies that Jesus has risen from the dead. Every time we pray for someone and they are healed and delivered, it is a testimony that Jesus is the risen Messiah. As we go about performing miracles, we preach Christ so that the miracles point to Him.

As the book of Mark closes, we read how the disciples went out proclaiming and preaching (not arguing) the Goodnews that Jesus the Christ had risen from the dead, and how the Lord Jesus worked alongside them confirming the message by signs. These were miraculous in nature, such as what we saw during the ministry of Jesus and greater (John 14:12).

Reflection:

Let us be amongst those who believe the testimony of Christ and who put their faith and trust in Him for their salvation. For when we believe, we take the outward action of the watery grave of baptism, dying to sin, the world, and the devil. We rise to Christ and God Almighty as children of God, adopted into His family. When we believe in the work of Christ and His confirmation of it, His resurrection from the dead, we become the righteousness of God. We become of God, fit to receive the Holy Spirit of God. Then by God's power and might we work the works of God, testifying and showing Christ is alive and bringing others into God's family.

We are invited to spend each and every day with the Lord, fellowshiping with His Spirit, receiving His grace and power in our own lives. Seeing the fruit of the Kingdom of God grow in us, and bringing encouragement and strength to those around us both in the family of God and those whom we hope will join us in this wonderful salvation.

"This was the Lord's doing;
It is marvellous in our eyes."

Psalms 118:23 (NKJV)