

Discussion Notes

October 18, 2015

Mark 15.42-16.8

Rikk Watts

This is the end of the “beginning of the Good News” that Mark has been laying before us. Mark intends to show us: who is God, really?

At the end of the Gospel of Mark we have two stories. What makes them remarkable (other than the obvious) is just how unremarkable they are. There are no special effects here!

15.42-47 Joseph and the Tomb

- Joseph is likely from another town, influential and a part of the Sanhedrin. It is here we learn that not all of the Council wanted Jesus dead.
- He takes a considerable risk in asking for the body (not being family and also may be understood to be standing in opposition to the Council and Rome’s decision). Jesus was a condemned criminal after all.
- Pilate is “amazed”, yet again, that Jesus is dead. Jesus gave up his life – he did not have it taken from him. Note: Jesus’ loud cry that John gives us the lyrics to - “It is finished!”

16.1-8

- This is quite the unsatisfying ending. Where are all the fireworks?
- We know what people do when they try and make an impression. Here, no such impression is made. It is as if this resurrection is the most natural thing in the world.
- We have the names of the women (they would have been known in the first Church) what they were going to do (to finish what had been rushed – ordinary business), and normal question (“who will roll away the stone?”)
- No one goes to the tomb to check if Jesus had risen because his prediction of the “third day” would not have been understood as the day the women went. It was Jewish language for the general future. They women were not expecting what they saw.
- The young man in white (celebration colour) is there to greet them. Jesus has gone ahead of them, and because he has, they can go ahead with the Gospel.
- They women enter the tomb because they are curious – all we really have is our experience – and this is what we are invited into in the Christian story.
- We do not control this story – some things are so big the world can’t change them, the world is changed *by* them.
- This resurrection life Jesus gives us might not be all that supernatural. What if it’s the most natural thing in the world?

Discussion Questions

- What strikes you about this ending?

- What is the intent of the ending and what does it lead us to do?
- Have you thought much about how Jesus' resurrection is "the most natural thing in the world" not supernatural? What does this say about and mean for our relationship with God's Spirit?