

more than SUNDAY

Part 6: The Resurrection
Scripture: Mark 16
April 5, 2026

Group Discussion Questions

1. The resurrection gives us security in God's love. What are some situations in your life where you struggle to feel secure in your relationship with God?
2. How does understanding the resurrection as God's "verdict" (that Jesus' sacrifice was accepted) change the way you think about forgiveness and grace?
3. The cross represents "the great exchange," not a reset. What is the difference between those two ideas, and why does that matter for how you live your faith?
4. The disciples failed Jesus in significant ways, yet the resurrection shows that Jesus restores failed followers. Can you think of a time when you experienced God's restoration after failure?
5. Why do you think it's often easier to believe we're forgiven than to actually live like we're secure and accepted by God?
6. Mark's Gospel ends with a sense of tension, asking, "Will you believe?" What does it look like for someone to respond to the resurrection not just intellectually, but personally?
7. What are some practical ways you can carry the truth of the resurrection into your everyday life this week?
8. Is there an area in your life right now where you feel like you've drifted from God? What would it look like to take a step back toward Him this week?
9. The women at the tomb responded with fear and amazement. How do you typically respond when God does something unexpected in your life, and what might it look like to respond with faith instead of fear?
10. If the resurrection truly means you are fully forgiven and secure in Christ, how should that shape the way you view yourself and interact with others this week?

Why the Resurrection Matters: Finding True Security in the Empty Tomb

There's an interesting historical account about Thomas Jefferson, one of America's founding fathers and the third president of the United States. Jefferson admired the teachings and moral philosophy of Jesus—especially passages like the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount. However, he rejected the supernatural elements of the Gospels.

So, he took a literal approach to removing them.

Jefferson cut out every miracle from the Gospels—removing the virgin birth, healings, exorcisms, and even the resurrection. What remained was a collection of Jesus' ethical teachings, compiled into a document titled *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*.

What's most striking is how Jefferson's version ends. It concludes with Jesus being placed in the tomb, the stone rolled shut—and that's it.

For Jefferson, that's where the story ended.

But that's not why we gather every Sunday—especially Easter Sunday. We gather because we believe the story didn't end in the tomb. Jesus died, was buried, and on the third day, the stone was rolled away. The tomb is empty, and Jesus is alive.

That truth raises an important question: **Why does the resurrection matter?**

While Christians often emphasize the cross—and rightly so—we sometimes overlook the significance of the resurrection. Yet the empty tomb is essential because it provides something every believer longs for: **security**.

Security that your sins are forgiven.

Security that you belong to God.

Security that His love for you is unshakable—now and forever.

This matters because spiritual life isn't lived only on Sundays. The energy of Easter fades as Monday and Tuesday arrive. Doubt creeps in. Sin resurfaces. Faith can feel unsteady. And in those moments, we begin to wonder: *Am I really secure in Christ?*

Mark 16:1–8 helps answer that question.

The Empty Tomb: The First Easter Morning

After the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went to Jesus' tomb early in the morning to complete the burial process. Because of

the urgency surrounding Jesus' death on Friday, His burial had been rushed and incomplete.

In Jewish custom, bodies were washed, wrapped in linen, and covered with large amounts of spices—sometimes up to 100 pounds—to slow the effects of decomposition. These women came to finish what had been started.

On their way, they realized a problem: *Who will roll away the stone?*

But when they arrived, the stone had already been rolled inside the tomb, they encountered a young man dressed in a white robe—an angel—who delivered a stunning message:

“You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here.”

The women were overwhelmed—trembling, confused, and afraid. Though Jesus had predicted His resurrection, they hadn't fully understood. In shock, they fled the tomb.

Mark's account ends in tension. But the resurrection is not just an event to observe—it's a truth that demands interpretation.

What does it mean?

1. The Resurrection Secures Your Standing with God

The resurrection is God's declaration that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was accepted.

There is strong historical evidence supporting the resurrection. For example, the Gospels consistently report that women were the first witnesses to the empty tomb. In the first-century cultural context, this would have been an unlikely fabrication, since women's testimony was not highly regarded in legal settings. The most reasonable explanation is simple: they were included because they were actually there.

Additionally, the disciples—who had been told repeatedly that Jesus would rise—were nowhere to be found at the crucifixion. They were hiding in fear. Yet later, these same men boldly proclaimed the resurrection, even at the cost of their lives.

And then there is the empty tomb itself. While theories have attempted to explain it away, they fail under scrutiny. Jesus had been brutally beaten, crucified, and confirmed dead by Roman soldiers. Yet three days later, the tomb was empty—and many witnessed the risen Christ.

But beyond the evidence lies the meaning.

The resurrection is God's verdict: **Jesus' payment for sin was sufficient.**

Apart from Christ, we stand guilty before God. Sin is not just breaking rules—it is rejecting God's authority and choosing our own way. As a result, we carry a debt we cannot pay.

But through Jesus, that changes.

When you place your faith in Him, you are **justified**—declared righteous before God. As Romans 4:25 explains, Jesus “was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.”

This is not a “reset,” like starting over in a video game.

It is something far greater: **the great exchange**

Your sin is placed on Jesus.
His righteousness is placed on you.

Because of that, God now sees you as He sees His Son—fully accepted, fully loved, fully forgiven.

The empty tomb means you are secure in God's love. Not temporarily, but eternally.

2. The Resurrection Restores Failed Followers

Even with that security, believers still struggle.

Faith can feel strong one day and weak the next. We stumble. We sin. We drift.

The disciples experienced this firsthand.

After following Jesus for three years, they abandoned Him when He needed them most. In the Garden of Gethsemane, they couldn't even stay awake to pray. When Jesus was arrested, they fled.

Peter, one of Jesus' closest companions, denied Him three times. Overcome with shame, he wept bitterly.

And yet, in Mark 16:7, the angel gives a remarkable instruction:

“Go, tell His disciples and Peter...”

That small phrase carries immense weight.

Jesus specifically includes Peter—the one who failed most publicly—to make it clear: **failure is not the end of the story.**

The resurrection proves that Jesus does not abandon His followers when they fall short. He restores them.

That truth still applies today.

There are moments—sometimes seasons—when we drift from God. We return to old patterns. We feel distant, ashamed, or unworthy.

But the resurrection reminds us: Jesus is still calling us back.

He restores, not rejects.

If you've drifted, the invitation is simple—return to Him.

3. The Resurrection Requires a Response

Mark's Gospel ends abruptly in verse 8:

The women flee the tomb, trembling and afraid, saying nothing to anyone.

It feels like a cliffhanger.

But this ending is intentional. Throughout his Gospel, Mark often highlights people's reactions to Jesus—amazement, fear, awe. Here, he leaves the story open-ended.

Why?

Because the question is no longer just about the women.

It's about you.

Will you believe?

Not just intellectually—but personally.

Will you follow Him?

Allowing His victory over sin and death to transform your life?

The resurrection is not merely a historical event to acknowledge. It is an invitation:

- To be forgiven
- To be restored
- To live with purpose and hope

The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in those who follow Him. That power strengthens us to face each day with courage and confidence, knowing that nothing can separate us from God's love.

Living Beyond Sunday

Easter Sunday is a celebration—but it's meant to lead to something more.

A faith that goes beyond a single day.

The empty tomb gives you security: your sins are forgiven, your identity is secure, and your future is certain in Christ.

It reminds you that failure is not final—restoration is always possible.

And it calls you to respond—to believe, to follow, and to live in light of the resurrection.

Because the story didn't end at the tomb.

And because of that, your story doesn't have to end in fear, doubt, or uncertainty either.

It can be marked by confidence, hope, and a deep, unshakable security in the love of God.