

04.04.10 / Mark 16:1-8**Passage Insight**

As this passage opens, three women are preparing to anoint the body of this man whom they loved and followed. Because according to Jewish law they couldn't purchase anything or do any work on the Sabbath, they had dutifully waited for the Sabbath to pass, then quickly purchased spices to use for preserving Jesus' body and covering up the smell that they thought would soon result from decaying flesh. They thought Jesus was dead. They were wrong.

Are we really that different from these ladies? They saw Jesus in the flesh constantly; they ate with Him, talked with Him, prayed with Him, and learned from Him. They did all this for years. They believed He was the promised one from God, the Anointed one. As they approached the tomb, they likely wanted desperately to believe that maybe, just maybe, Jesus could still be alive . . . but their actions betrayed what they truly believed in their hearts: they brought spices. They expected rotting flesh. If we're honest with ourselves, and if we really look at our hearts closely, we're likely to uncover a part of us that fails to believe Jesus could really be alive and well today. In some of the questions below, we'll work to expose these areas of our lives and explore how we can address this unbelief.

Jesus knew this would be the case. He knew that even those who believed in Him would struggle. He knew we would act out of fear, pride, greed, stubbornness, and more. He knew it would be a fight. Throughout Scripture there are prayers for assistance with unbelief and references to fighting to maintain faith in Jesus amidst a world of doubt.

This Easter week, let's focus on asking God to reveal those areas of our lives that clearly demonstrate our lack of faith. Then, let's approach these areas with vigilance and discipline, praying for God's strength to fight, repenting where sin is revealed, and praying that one day our actions would instead reveal a depth of faith that is worthy of the sacrifice of Jesus. Then, instead of bringing spices to a dead man, may we instead bring praises to the living God.

Application Questions**Our Actions Betray Our Hearts**

- 1) Name one sin that you regularly choose to commit (be sensitive to gender considerations here, please).
- 2) What does that sin provide you?
- 3) By choosing this sin you are saying with your actions that you will provide for yourself better than God will, that you see the situation more clearly than God does, and that you do, in fact, need what that sin provides. How does this make you feel?
- 4) Sometimes we can't see when this is happening, and it takes someone from the outside to notice it and to call us out in the moment. The good news is that there's likely an indicator that tells when this is happening, some way you are behaving or some way you are coming across to others that clues them in to your struggle. What is one thing that you regularly do that is the equivalent of buying spices – an action that reveals your struggle to believe?
- 5) Who in your Community Group can you trust to bring this to your attention when they see it in your life?
- 6) What needs to happen for you to repent fully from choosing this sin?

Acting From Sin

- 1) What decisions do you currently make motivated by greed, fear, or pride?

- 2) What truth about Jesus are you failing to believe when your actions are motivated by greed, fear, and pride?
- 3) How would your actions look different if you actually believed that truth instead?
- 4) How would taking these new actions affect your day to day life?
- 5) What do you need to let go of in order to believe the truth over the lie?
- 6) Who in your Community Group can help you with this?

Praising God for Fulfilling His Promises

- 1) Consider the promises God makes to His people. What is a tangible way you have seen God fulfill one of these promises in your own life?
 - 2) What is a way you've seen Him fulfill one of these promises in the life of someone else in your Community Group?
 - 3) Praise Him right now for these things as a Community Group, giving Him all the glory for always doing what He says He will do.
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