



04.04.10/ Mark 15:40-16:8

Materials Needed

Glass filled with water/juice/etc. halfway to the top

Opening Activity

Ask children how they would describe the glass – is it half-empty, or half-full? Depending on how you look at it, it could be either! Tell the students that we are going to hear about a story that could seem very happy or very sad, depending on how you look at it – just like the glass. Read passage and then continue with the activity.

Read Mark 15:40-16:8

“There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome. When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem. And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the Council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, ‘Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?’ And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back – it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.”

Activity (cont.)

Ask students how we could make the glass like Jesus’ tomb when the women came to visit (drink it, so that it will be empty!). Now how would you describe the glass – it is empty, and if this were your glass, you might be disappointed that there is no more juice. Now think about how the women at the tomb probably felt when they saw that the tomb was empty. They may have felt sad, disappointed, maybe even confused. However, what they didn’t know right away was why the tomb was empty – because Jesus was alive, risen from the dead! Looking at the tomb from that perspective, it was most certainly a joyous occasion – the best news of all!

Background

Joseph of Arimathea was a very influential person in his time. He was also a follower of Jesus. Joseph is a very good example of someone who used his influence and place of position to serve God. The Sabbath began at sunset on the day Jesus was crucified, only a few hours after Jesus’ death. The Jews were not allowed to bury their dead once the Sabbath began, so if Joseph had hesitated, he would have missed his chance to serve. He went to Pilate and requested Jesus’ body so he could give him a proper burial.

Discussion



We have talked many times about how God has given us each unique gifts and talents. Some people serve God with their finances by giving money. Others can serve God by donating their time to volunteer. Sometimes God puts us in a position where we can offer encouragement and help to a friend in need. Can you think of a time where God put you in a position (like Joseph) where you had an opportunity to serve God? Did you do it? What was it like? Who gets the credit when you serve God (God does!)?

Question 1

Jesus spoke of his death and resurrection many times (Mark 8, 9, and 10, the Transfiguration, etc.). However, everyone in our story seemed surprised to find out that Jesus had risen! If any of us promised something like that, we would probably say it was impossible! But that is exactly what Jesus did! Why are Jesus' predictions of his death and resurrection important? *Possible answers include: It shows that Jesus tells the truth and we can believe His words! Jesus kept His promise to His disciples, and He will keep His promises to us!*

Question 2

The angel's words were to tell the disciples as well as Peter. Do you remember what Peter's last interaction with Jesus was like? He denied even knowing Jesus, THREE TIMES! How can the angel's words be encouraging to us today? *Jesus died for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD – it doesn't matter what bad things we have done – Jesus' death covers it all, even Peter's sins of denying knowing Jesus!*

Question 3

How do we know for sure that Jesus' penalty was enough to cover all of our sins? *If the payment was not sufficient, we would have to continue offering sacrifices for our sins – or Jesus might even have to continue suffering for our sins in our place. But since he was raised and is alive, we can be sure that our debt is paid and we are free from our brokenness and sin when we believe in Him!*

Discussion

Verse 8 does not provide a lot of closure to the story. The story is not finished yet – in many ways it's just the beginning! We were dead in our sins and transgressions, but because of Jesus' sacrifice, we are made alive in him! That means that we are now part of this great story, and we play a role in determining what happens next. Are we going to continue to live in sin, pretending that Jesus' death and resurrection doesn't matter? Or will we surrender our lives to him, and live every moment in light of his amazing sacrifice for us? In Philippians 3:13, Paul wants to continue his story by forgetting what is behind and pressing on towards what is ahead. Take some time to reflect on how you want your story to continue. Share with the group if you are comfortable.

Wrap Up

Close in prayer, taking some extra time to thank God for the sacrifice He made in sending His son to earth to suffer and die for our sins – and thank Him especially that the penalty for our sins is paid and that Christ is alive!!! Pray that we would always believe in God's promises and not doubt His words. He fulfilled His promises then, and He continues to do so. He is risen! Pray that we would look at the empty tomb and see hope – He is risen indeed!