

Title: “The question we can’t ask”

Chris Ryan

Mark 16:14-20

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Summary: The resurrection of Jesus gives us strength to endure the brokenness of the world.

Message:

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

There is a song by Kari Jobe, a popular Christian singer, called Forever. It starts with just very simple piano chords and a single voice singing these lyrics:

The moon and stars they wept
The morning sun was dead
The savior of the world was fallen
His body on the cross
His blood poured out for us
The weight of every curse upon him

As the next verse ends the volume begins its crescendo. The guitars that had earlier “snuck in” are now louder, more prominent, the drums and cymbals are unrestrained, the piano chords are much more complex, and the singer is now joined with others as they sing the lead-in to the refrain:

The ground began to shake
The stone was rolled away
His perfect love could not be overcome
Now death where is your sting
Our resurrected king has rendered you defeated
Forever, he is glorified
Forever, he is lifted high
Forever, He is risen
He is alive
He is alive

Now, had she lived at the same time of Jesus, I could imagine that she would have composed this song immediately upon seeing the empty tomb. And running back to the disciples she would have proclaimed what she witnessed by singing it. Not able to contain her excitement she would belt out “Forever, He is risen. He is alive! He is alive!” And the disciples might have replied, “Yea, yea. We heard. So what? What are we supposed to do with that information? Go out and *tell* people? And end up like Jesus? We are already being hunted because of him! Thanks, but no thanks. And besides, even if we did venture out into the masses, what would people even *do* with that information? What *good* would it do them?”

And the next question might follow in a whisper because no one would dare ask it out loud: “What good did it do *us*?” I can tell you that throughout all my years of leading study groups, especially for teens, that question is one that I normally have to ask because no one else wants to. They all wonder about it, especially as late teens, especially when they find themselves under pressure from society because of their beliefs, but they never ask because they think it’s inappropriate to do so in a Bible group setting. They know - we know - that on the cross he became sin and felt the full

weight of God's judgement. They know that he gave up his life for them. And they know that his resurrection gave them assurance that death had been defeated, that their sins had been atoned for, and that they had hope of everlasting life. The teens know all of this but even that knowledge doesn't fully answer their question. And so, they are afraid to ask because it makes them feel guilty. They think that this knowledge *should* be enough for them, but it isn't. It isn't because the question they are asking is really about them and about their friends and about their world. It's a question about the personal application of Christ's resurrection on their own, immediate lives. And so, I am typically the one that brings it up, that asks the question. And this morning I bring it up and I ask it to you. What did Jesus' death and resurrection *actually* accomplish for you? We can talk about it all we want but from *a* contemporary worldview, it looks like it did nothing. The world is still a dangerous place. Demons still roam the earth, there is still sickness, death, disease, and those are just things that we can't really control. I'm not even talking about the sins that humanity voluntarily carries out.

You see, Christians can *talk* all they want about what it accomplished. We can use big church words like justification and atonement, and we can explain it and even sing about it, but that will never be enough for the world, and if you are being honest, it will never be enough for you, either. The world needs more than just words, more than just signs. *We* need more than just words, more than just signs. Even the disciples needed more. Remember, they saw Jesus resurrected and they *still* didn't understand what good it did them in their lives, in that day! The other gospels record how they *continued* to hide, even after seeing him because they couldn't answer that question. A sign simply wasn't enough. They needed more. And, today our teens need more. And the world needs more. And even *we* need more. *We* need more than a sign!

But Jesus wasn't even *offering* a sign. Listen again to the gospel passage and you'll see what I mean:

¹⁴ Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸ they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Did you catch that? Jesus wasn't offering signs *so that* people would believe. These signs were not a sales pitch for Christianity. You didn't have to believe in the sign before you believed in Christ! Jesus was telling them that these would be the outward signs of an inward changes that would take place in a Christian's life. These were signs that proclaimed to the world that Satan had lost his grip on them, that even sickness and death had no power over them. These were signs that told the world that the person had been adopted into the family of God and was a new creation. These were signs of the affect that Jesus' death and resurrection had on a person. But these were signs; they were *still just* signs. And if seeing Jesus resurrected from the dead wasn't enough, these surely wouldn't

be, either. They *still* wouldn't be enough to answer the question set before the disciples and set before us this morning.

"What good did it do *us*? What did his death and resurrection *actually* accomplish for us, personally?" This passage answers that, not by describing the signs, or even by describing the people that were impacted by the signs. The answer is in the power *behind* the signs. What Jesus was saying to them was this:

"The world is still broken. There are still demons. There is still sickness and disease and death. There is still pain and suffering. You will experience it, even unto death. But fear not because I have overcome the world. My resurrection has brought you into a life with me. I am alive in you and you are alive in me and now you have the strength to persevere until you are called home."

And this passage speaks to us and our teens as well. Jesus says to them:

"Your world is still broken. There is still evil. You will still experience events that affect your life but that you have no control over. You will still experience the humiliation from your peers. You will still be pressured to find no meaning in your life. The world will still tell you that there is no hope, no God, no anything beyond yourself. But fear not because I have overcome the world. My resurrection has brought you into a life with me. I am alive in you and you are alive in me. I have given you strength to place your *hope* in me, even when all the world tells you that there is none to be found. I have given you strength to find *meaning* to your life even when the world tells you that there is none to be found.

What good did my resurrection do you? It saved your life. And it gave meaning to your life. And it gave you hope. And it gave you strength to live another day.

My resurrection gave you more than just signs. It gave you more than just words.

My resurrection gave you me. And my resurrection gave me you.

Let us pray.

Lord, you have risen, you are alive, and we sing Hallelujah because you have given us new life, new hope, and strength to endure. Go before us as we take this message out into the world, a world that continues to reject you. Use us to reach those whose ears are open to hearing your Word.