

“Return to the Lord” - Resurrection Sunday Sermon, Mark 16:1-14 - April 1st, 2018

- For today's Resurrection Sunday sermon, I sensed that the Lord would have me to do something a little bit different this year.
- After praying and seeking the Lord, He had really impressed upon my heart something He's been ministering to me as of late.
- Specifically, the resurrection bringing those who are distant from the Lord back to the Lord, or a saving knowledge of the Lord.

Mark 16:1–14 (NKJV) — 1 Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. 2 Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. 3 And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?” 4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. 5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6 But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. 7 But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.” 8 So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. 9 Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. 10 She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. 11 And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. 12 After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. 13 And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either. 14 Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

- The reason I chose Mark's gospel account is because, like many places in scripture, there are specific details within the text.
- Such is the case in verse seven where the women were instructed to tell the disciples, and Peter, as if to say especially Peter.
- The question becomes why? Why aren't they instructed to simply go tell the disciples? Why is the emphasis on only Peter?

- In order to answer this we need to fill in some of the blanks with Luke's account of what happened prior to the resurrection?
- Actually, it all started with what we affectionately refer to as “The Last Supper,” which we will celebrate today with communion.
- After celebrating the Passover together, Jesus then tells Peter how that Satan has asked for permission to sift him as wheat.

Luke 22:31–35 - 31 And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. 32 But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.” 33 But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” 34 Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.”

- After this, Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives, as He would often do, and the disciples follow him and he tells them to pray.
- Upon returning from His prayer, Jesus finds them sleeping instead of praying, and as He's talking they come to arrest Him.
- When Peter sees they are arresting Him, he takes out his sword and cuts off the ear of Malchus the servant of the high priest.

Luke 22:54–62 - 54 Having arrested Him, they led Him and brought Him into the high priest's house. But **Peter followed at a distance**. 55 Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, **Peter sat among them**. 56 And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, “This man was also with Him.” 57 But he denied Him, saying, “Woman, I do not know Him.” 58 And after a little while another saw him and said, “You also are of them.” But Peter said, “Man, I am not!” 59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, “Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean.” 60 But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are saying!” Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 **And the Lord turned and looked at Peter**. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

- Here in lies the answer to the aforementioned question of why they're told to make sure that they also tell Peter specifically.
- Peter is absolutely devastated having done the unthinkable in being ashamed of Jesus and denying that he even knew Jesus.
- He's convinced that Jesus wants nothing to do with him. As far as he's concerned his whole world has come crashing down.

- But God! But God is not through with Peter! What Peter doesn't yet know is that Jesus will restore him after the resurrection.
- Not only does God restore Peter, God has Peter be the first one to preach the Gospel, which is recorded in the book of Acts.

- Here's where I'm going with this, we like Peter, are prone to be distant from the Lord as we warm ourselves by the world's fire.
- I find it interesting that we're told Peter followed at a distance after we're told instead of praying, as he ought, he's sleeping.
- The reason I mention this is because, that's usually how it starts. In other words, when we don't pray, we'll become distant.

- I also find it interesting that when he sees Jesus being arrested, he immediately starts fighting a spiritual battle in the flesh.
- This is what happens when we don't pray and become distant from the Lord such that our Christian life is marked by carnality.
- To me, this explains why Peter became proud and was confident in himself that he would die before he would deny the Lord.

- I'll bring it to an end the way we began by encouraging those who, like Peter, have become distant in their walk with the Lord.
- In the words of the Savior to Peter, "return to the Lord." Perhaps for some, it's not "return to the Lord, its "turn to the Lord."
- Before we partake of communion, I would like to share with you the Gospel of Jesus Christ by way of the ABC's of salvation.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 -- 1 Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2 By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. 3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

The ABC's of Salvation - A is for Admit you're a sinner – Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. The B is for Believe. Romans 10:9-10 says if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved. The C is for Call. Romans 10:9-10 also says if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10:13 says that all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

Luke 22:14-20 - 14 When the hour had come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With fervent desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." 17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." 19 And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." 20 Likewise He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.