



Growth Group Curriculum Easter – He is Risen!
Week 7 – April 4, 2021 – Mark 16:1-7, Hebrews 10:19-25

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at church. In this time of the virus and social distancing, please meet safely outside or online. If your growth group would like to meet online or if you are aware of needs that the church can help fill, please let us know at connect@ljpres.org. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

This past Sunday was Easter. That glorious day when our Savior, Jesus Christ, was raised from the dead. This week we are looking at texts from Mark 16 and Hebrews 10. In Mark 15, we read that Mary, Mary and Salome had seen where Jesus was buried. The next day was the Sabbath (Saturday) and so there was no work allowed. And so early on Sunday morning, they made their way to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus with spices. This was an act of devotion.

It is interesting to note that the disciples were nowhere to be found. The gospel of John tells us that they were hiding. Yet, Mary, Mary and Salome make their way to the tomb, even though they are uncertain who will roll the stone away for them. Their simple obedience is a wonderful illustration of moving out in faith, even when we are not certain of where our steps will lead us.

They soon discover that the stone had been rolled away by God. This should remind us that everything connected to the resurrection of Jesus is a result of God's work. Humankind serves as a witness, but they are not the workers. God does the work. The women had brought the spices to anoint the body, but there is no body to be found. Jesus has been raised from the dead and he has gone ahead of them into Galilee and they will find him there. This fulfills the words that Jesus had spoken in Mark 14:28.

The angel promises gathering and reunion with Jesus. The crucifixion will not have the last word. Jesus will meet with those who had let him down. The very first action of Jesus, in the gospel of Mark, was calling four fishermen to travel with him, and in Galilee he will "re-gather" his disciples and remind them of the mission given to them.

In Hebrews 10, we are reminded of what Christ has done for us, as well as encouraged to hold on to the hope offered to us in Jesus. Perhaps, what is most noticeable in this text is the importance of gathering together. The preacher tells the church that they are to spur one another onto good deeds. The Christian faith is not meant to



be lived in isolation. Jesus models that for us by choosing his own apostles and living in community with them and sharing in life together.

As Christians we are to travel together. Galatians 6:2 reminds us to bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. The preacher of Hebrews warns against living out the faith in isolation. His overarching concern is that people will fall away if they are not gathering with other believers.

Exploring the Text

Mark 16:1-7

16 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. ²Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb ³and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?" ⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. ⁵As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed. ⁶"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

Hebrews 10:19-25

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) Who was your favorite superhero when you were growing up?
- 2) As Mary, Mary and Salome make their way to the tomb, they question who will help roll away the stone? What are some of the questions you have about Christianity or your faith?
- 3) We read that when the women showed up at the tomb and saw the angel they were "alarmed." Can you think of a time in your life when God met you in your weakness and uncertainty and showed you who He really is? How did you respond? How did you feel?
- 4) In the days of Jesus, the testimony of women was not accepted in court cases. Yet, Mark makes it clear that the testimony of Mary, Mary and Salome was very important. What is the significance of this?
- 5) Pastor Paul talked a lot about how life is not always fair. How have you dealt with those "life's not fair" experiences? How did you keep on moving toward Jesus? What worked well? What didn't work well?
- 6) Who do you have in your life who encourages you and challenges you when it comes to living out your faith?
- 7) N.T. Wright says, "Jesus' resurrection is the beginning of God's new project, not to snatch people away from earth but to colonize earth with the life of heaven." What does it look like to "colonize earth with the life of heaven?" How can we do that?

