

The Life Challenge

"I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

Series: Easter 2022
Title: Fix Your Eyes on Jesus
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WARM-UP

1. Why do you (if you do) prefer a happy ending to a story?
2. What are the implications of Jesus' resurrection as the happy ending to the Good Friday story of his crucifixion?
3. What is the most unbelievable event you have ever witnessed? Were you silent or excited about retelling the story?

DISCUSSION

Most of us prefer good endings to a story. An ending where there is resolve, relationships made right, justice served, good triumphing over evil; everyone lives happily ever after. Our desire for good endings leaves us unsettled over the conclusion to Mark's gospel story. Mark's rather abrupt ending in verse 8 with the women bewildered and fleeing in fear, failing to carry the good news leaves us frustrated. It is no wonder that later scribes added to the ending including resurrection appearances, the great commission and the ascension – as well as a comment on the disciples' obedience to Jesus' command.

Read Mark 16:1 - 8

1. What troubles you about this short ending to Mark's gospel?

Read Mark 16:9 - 20

2. How do the additional verses answer the questions raised in your discussion by the short ending?
3. In 14:28 the disciples are told by Jesus that after his resurrection he will go to Galilee to meet them. In 16:7 the women are told that Jesus is going ahead of them to Galilee. What is the significance of the invitation to go to Galilee? See Mark 1:9

DISCUSSION

4. Why is it important for us to remember our starting point with Jesus (our salvation)?
5. The gospel story tells of Jesus' faithfulness and the unfaithfulness of the disciples - albeit with a commitment to follow him. In what ways do you find encouragement from the disciples' need to go back to Galilee? Why is forgiveness and fresh starts such an important aspect of the gospel?
6. How can Mark's final statement - "They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid" - be a challenge to us?
7. How does the short ending of Mark invite us into the gospel story?

Application

8. What are some tangible steps that you can take to share the good news of Easter?
 1. Your witness can ensure the Easter message continues to contribute to the ultimate happy ending Jesus' life, death and resurrection bring to all who follow him - forgiveness, life abundant, a friend and hope in troublesome times, life eternal. Mark's story is still being written.