

Teaching Plan
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: May 26, 2019

Lesson Title: "Lives"

Lesson Passage: Mark 15:42-47; 16:1-8

ABOUT THIS LESSON

After Joseph of Arimathea had placed the crucified Jesus in a tomb, three women came, intending to anoint the body; but they were astonished when a heavenly messenger informed them that Jesus had risen.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Summarize what the Gospel writers tell us about the women who witnessed the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. (2) Identify the outstanding virtues of Joseph of Arimathea.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

Observe that the words "There were also women" in Mk. 15:40 remind us that women played a key role in the earthly ministry of Jesus. Their courageous loyalty had brought them to the terrible scene of the crucifixion; and now they were at the burial place, where they had come to perform the sad task of embalming the body of their crucified Master.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. With reference to Mark 15:42-46, discuss the character of Joseph of Arimathea: (1) Most first-century Christians were poor people (1 Cor. 1:26). But, occasionally, wealthy, influential persons played important roles in the Gospel accounts. Joseph of Arimathea, who placed the body of Jesus in the tomb, belongs in this category. (2) Matthew 27:57 describes him as a rich man and as a disciple of Jesus. (3) Mark 15:43 tells us that he was a "respected member of the council" (i.e., the Sanhedrin). And Luke 23:50-51 tells us that he was "a good and righteous man" who opposed the other members of the Sanhedrin when they were plotting against Jesus. (4) It took courage for Joseph to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus (Mk. 15:44), and what he did was no small task. He had to take the body down from the cross, buy linen in which to wrap it, and move a massive stone from across the door of the tomb. And he had to do all of this under considerable time pressure, since Jewish law required that the body had to be buried before the Sabbath began at sunset. Joseph probably had servants helping him, since he could not have done this alone.

2. Comment on the identification of the women at the scene of the crucifixion, mentioned in Mark 15:40-41: (1) Mary Magdalene, referred to several times in the Gospels, witnessed the crucifixion (Mt. 27:56; Mk. 15:40; Jn. 19:25), Jesus' burial (Mt. 27:61; Mk. 15:47) and the empty tomb (Mt. 28:1-10; Mk. 16:18; Lk. 24:10), and played a major role in John's account of the resurrection (Jn. 20:1-18). (2) Another Mary, the mother of James, Joses and Salome (Mark 15:40-41), was one of Jesus' followers from Galilee who moved about with him during his public ministry. (3) "Many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem" probably were also from Galilee.

3. Examine the account of the discovery that Christ had risen from the grave (Mark 16:1-8): (1) The stone at the entrance to the tomb was of major concern to the women, for such stones (round millstones set on edge) weighed a ton or more and had to be rolled up a slight incline to open the tomb. The Greek verb tense in v. 3 indicates that “they kept saying to one another, ‘Who will roll the stone away for us?’” (2) They undoubtedly were surprised to find the stone moved aside (v. 4), and were even more startled to see the “young man dressed in a white robe” inside the tomb (v. 5). (3) The good news, “He has risen, he is not here,” was followed immediately by the instructions, “Go, tell...” (vv. 6-7). (4) “He is going before you to Galilee” is related to Jesus’ promise in Mk. 14:28.

4. Comment further on Mark 16:1-8: (1) Though Jesus had foretold his resurrection (Mk. 9:9), it seems to have taken His followers by surprise. In Luke’s account, when the women reported to the disciples what they had experienced at the empty tomb, their “words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them” (Lk. 24:11). And the fact that the women who went to the tomb took spices to anoint the body of Jesus (Mk. 16:1) implies that they thought his burial was permanent. (2) Though the conversion of Paul came later, biblical scholars tell us that the earliest written account of the resurrection was set forth by Paul in 1 Cor. 15:3-8, where he wrote of the glorified, exalted Mes-siah, who appeared repeatedly to his followers. (3) Perhaps there is practical significance in the words, “he is going before you to Gali-lee; there you will see him” (16:7). Rather than gathering them on some high mountain peak (as in the Transfiguration scene), he met with them in Galilee, in the ordinary surroundings where they had spent most of their lives and where they had first met him. APPLICATION: Perhaps this is where the presence of the Resurrected Christ means the most to us, not just on Easter Sunday, but in the routine affairs of everyday life, where even the dullest days are illumined by His presence.

CLOSING THE LESSON

Conclude with these observations: The reaction of the women noted in Mark 16:8 might seem surprising. (Why not celebration and rejoicing, rather than trembling and astonishment?) But, the immediate response of the women was not unlike the response of the disciples when they first heard the report of the resurrection (Luke 24:11). However, had we not had the advantage of 2,000 years of interpretation of this event, we might have reacted in similar fashion. Mark’s unvarnished description of the quite human reaction to the awesome news of the resurrection underscores the authenticity of his account. He was not writing “theo-logy.” He was reporting history.

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