

Ward

SOME FIRST DESIRES OF THE RISEN CHRIST.
Mark 16:14-18.

Introduction . The last chapter of Mark records three appearances of Jesus on the first day of the week.

- 1) To Mary Magdalene
- 2) To two as they walked on the way into the country
- 3) To the eleven themselves as they sat at meat.

We believe this to be the same appearance as recorded by John and Luke which we have considered under the subjects, "The Glory of a Sunday Night Meeting" and "Grace Abounding at a Sunday Night Meeting." With this paragraph in Mark before us let us consider, "Some first desires of the Risen Christ."

1. That the Gospel Condition of Salvation be fulfilled by His own disciples. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." The disciples had disbelieved Mary who had told them that she had seen the risen Christ--Verse 11. Neither believed they the witness of the two who had had the interview with the risen Jesus on the way to Emmaus.

Then when Jesus appeared to the eleven themselves "He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen Him after He was risen."

There is no record of Jesus rebuking His disciples for their all forsaking Him on the night before the crucifixion. He looks deeper at the heart of the cause, to root of all sinning, namely, unbelief. Faith in Christian people is all important. It is a first desire of the Living Lord. Like Abraham we need a faith that believes and keeps on believing that God is able to do the impossible.

Rom. 4:21-22.

2. To see the missionary commission carried out.

Having emphasized the need of faith in the disciples the missionary command immediately follows-- Verse 15. Go ye and preach the gospel.

Mark's gospel is a book of good tidings, from the first chapter to the last.

1) The first line in the book says, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." In fact this good news began in the garden of Eden, and is recorded in Genesis 3:15.

2) Mark 1:14-15 tells us that Jesus came preaching the gospel, and He said, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

3) In 8:35 He says, "For whosoever would save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it."-- Here linking the gospel definitely with himself. Similarly in 10:29 He says, "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."

5) In 13:10 He says, "And the gospel must first be preached unto all the nations."

6) In 14:9- He said concerning the woman who anointed him with the precious ointment, "Whosoever the gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

7) Then in this last chapter comes the climactic good news that the Lord is Risen-- the climactic content of the gospel message.

The first General Assembly of our Southern Presbyterian church recognizing this desire of the Risen Lord that His Missionary Commission be carried out proclaimed it in this way;

"The General Assembly desires distinctly and deliberately to proclaim on its banner as it is unfurled to the world the command of our Savior, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,' regarding this as the supreme end of its organization, and obedience to it the indispensable condition of her Lord's promised presence."

3. To see the Whole Creation redeemed and renewed.

We must not fail to get the cosmic significance of the last command of the Risen Lord.

1) Word "world". The word "world" is used in several senses:

- a. It sometimes means the earth only.
- b. It sometimes means mankind only.
- c. It sometimes refers to part of mankind as the the Roman world or the heathen world.
- d. Dr. Webb says, "In its true and comprehensive meaning the 'world' (cosmos) includes the earth, its plants and animals and human inhabitants and all that belongs to this mundane system."
Someone else has said that Psalm 24:1 "Suggests all that is included in the term cosmos."

The crowning act of God's creation was the creation of man, and He made him not only in His likeness, but also made him as Dr. Morgan expresses it, "the king of the cosmos."

2) Curse of World. - The fall not only brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery, but the very ground was cursed, because of man's sin. It became a "sin-blighted and perverted globe." Is. 24:5.

"Sin is a burden to the whole creation."

There was an earthquake at the crucifixion of Christ.

We sing-

"Well might the sun in darkness hide
And shut his glories in,
When God the mighty Maker died
For man, the creature's sin."

Romans 8 speaks not only of the groaning of the Holy Spirit, and the groaning of the church, but also of the groaning of the whole creation.

"Unintelligent nature personified"- earth vain, perverted, not willingly, but result of sin, a prisoner of hope-waiting for deliverance from bondage.

3) Savior of World. - Christ came as the renewer and restorer of the whole creation. First and foremost came to save. ~~Believe and be saved.~~

"Joy to the world, the Lord is come!" Believe and be saved. Power and blessing to accompany them that believe. Purpose of Christ goes even beyond human race to whole creation. Man the crown of creation. Not willing that any should perish, and to restore the lost creation.

"No more let sins and sorrows grow,
Nor thorns infest the ground
He comes to make His blessings flow
Far as the curse is found."

Col. 1:20 and 2 Peter 3:13.

4) Dr. Webb- "The Christian scriptures represents God as having three looks at this earth of ours. First, in the morning of its creation, when it swam a new made thing in the amplitudes of space; and then He stood on the steps of His throne and admired it as good, very good, superlatively good. Second, in the day of its fall, when it lay before Him, a sin-blighted ~~globe~~ perverted globe; and then He rose in His judicial wrath and cursed the very ground because of the moral infamy of the race for which He had made it, and to whom He had graciously given it. Third, in the consummation of the redeeming work of Christ, when it floated before His vision as the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwells righteousness, and then He stood on the steps of His Great White Throne, and admired its beauty, and crowned His Son for His glorious success in the restoration of all things."

5) How? The Plan. - What then is the plan of the Triune God for bringing about this glorious consummation? In the words of Campbell Morgan, "The cosmos will be redeemed when man who is the king of the cosmos is regenerated--the mastery of forces in men -- The man who believes shall have mastery over spiritual forces, social disorders, all destructive forces- Mark 16:17-18.

"The term" cosmos includes man and everything beneath him. The preaching

of the gospel to individual men is the beginning of the work, but the gospel is to be proclaimed to the whole creation. He can only reach the cosmos and the whole creation through men—through the renewed man the whole creation is affected and redeemed as it passes under the dominion of love."

Hence our obedience to the Great Commission—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation."

"Tell how He stooped to save His lost creation."—What a great gospel we have for a lost world in this atomic age in which we are living!
Jesus Christ is the only hope for this lost world.
Christ in us is the hope of glory.