Small Group Guide

"What Will You Do With the Good News?" — The End of Mark

BEFORE YOU MEET

Encourage group members to read Mark 16:1-8 before gathering. If time allows, they may also want to read the longer ending of Mark (verses 9-20) and note the bracketed manuscript note in their Bible.

OPENING QUESTION

Use this to get conversation flowing before diving into the content.

Think of a story — a book, a film, or even a real-life situation — that ended in a way that felt unresolved or incomplete. How did that feel? What did you want to happen next?

SERMON RECAP

Pastor Mike closed out 36 weeks in the Gospel of Mark by sitting with one of the most unusual endings in all of Scripture. Mark 16:8 leaves the women running from the tomb in silence, trembling and afraid — and the scroll stops there. Rather than tying everything together neatly, Mark hands the unfinished response back to the reader. The sermon also walked through how we got the Bible — covering inspiration, transmission, and textual criticism — to help the group trust the Scriptures they hold. The central question of the message: *What will I do with the good news I have heard?*

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Mark likely ended his gospel at verse 8 intentionally, leaving the reader's response unwritten on purpose.

- The longer ending of Mark (verses 9-20) is most likely not original to Mark, but it summarizes events confirmed elsewhere in the New Testament and does not contradict Scripture.
- Biblical inspiration means God gave his word *through* human authors, carrying his message through their unique voices and personalities.
- Transmission refers to the copying and passing down of Scripture over centuries, and textual criticism is the careful, scholarly process of comparing thousands of ancient manuscripts to identify the most accurate original wording.
- With over 5,800 New Testament manuscripts, we have strong reason to trust that what we hold today is as close as possible to the original text.
- Mark leaves the question of response open for every reader: *What will you do with the good news you have heard?*
- “Meeting Jesus in Galilee" — returning to the place where it all began — is an invitation extended even to those who failed, doubted, or ran away in fear.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Feel free to select the questions most relevant to your group. You do not need to cover all of them.

Understanding the Text

1. Mark 16:8 ends with the women fleeing in fear and saying nothing to anyone. What is your honest reaction to that ending? Does it feel unsatisfying, or does it resonate with you in some way?
2. Pastor Mike described the first hearers of Mark's gospel — a small, persecuted gathering in Rome meeting quietly and at great personal risk. How does imagining that original audience change the way you read this ending?
3. What is the difference between biblical *inspiration* and how we commonly use that word today? Why does that distinction matter?
4. The sermon described textual criticism as detective work — comparing thousands of manuscripts rather than playing a long game of telephone. Did learning about this process strengthen your confidence in Scripture, raise new questions, or both? Talk through your reaction.

Going Deeper

5. Pastor Mike suggested that Mark ended his gospel the way he did on purpose — to hand the question of response back to the reader. Do you agree with that interpretation? What does it mean to you that Mark leaves the ending open?

6. Pastor Mike said, "Jesus knew all of what was coming when he promised to meet them. He knew their weaknesses when he made the promise." How does that truth speak to where you are right now in your own faith?
7. The sermon offered three possible ways that "meeting him in Galilee" might look for someone today: letting him be King, choosing to follow him, or telling someone else the good news. Which of those resonates most with you, and why?

Personal Reflection

9. Pastor Mike asked the group to finish this sentence internally: *"Jesus, for me to say 'yes' to you today would mean..."* Are you willing to share what came to mind?
10. The sermon closed with this observation: the women's fear was not the end of the story. Peter's failure was not the end of the story. Someone said yes, and it passed down for 2,000 years all the way to this room. Who said yes on your behalf — who told you about Jesus? Have you ever thanked them?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one of the following to act on before your group meets again:

- **If you are still exploring faith:** Read the Gospel of Mark in one sitting — it takes about 90 minutes. Pay attention to the moments where you find yourself wanting to respond to Jesus, and write down what comes up.
- **If you are ready to let him be king:** Have an honest, private conversation with God this week. Acknowledge what has been holding you back, receive the forgiveness he purchased, and tell someone you trust about the step you took.
- **If you have been following from a safe distance:** Identify one specific area of your life where you have been unwilling to let Jesus lead. Bring it to him this week and ask what following him looks like in that area.
- **If you are ready to tell someone:** Write down the name of one person in your life who needs to hear the good news. Pray for them every day this week, and look for a natural opportunity to share what Jesus has meant in your own story. You do not need every answer — your story is enough to start.

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time together by reading Mark 16:6-7 aloud as a group — pausing after the angel's words to sit quietly for a moment. Then invite someone to pray, asking God to make clear to each person in the room what their next step looks like, and for the courage to take it.

"Mark didn't forget how to end his book. I think he left it open for you and I. What will I do with the good news I've heard? What is your next move after everything you've heard?" — Pastor Mike