

Mark

Session 4

Suffering

(Mark 11:1-16:8)

**HEARING MARK
A LISTENER'S GUIDE**

By

Elizabeth Struthers Malbon

With additional material from:

**AUGSBURG COMMENTARY ON
THE NEW TESTAMENT
MARK**

By

Donald H. Juel

- ❖ Indicates material is from Malbon
- ◆ Indicates material is from Juel

SUFFERING

MARK 11:1-16:8

- ❖ First half of Mark, we see the Jesus of power
- ❖ Second half, we see the Jesus of paradox
 - The powerful must suffer and not use his power
 - This power is revealed by suffering
- ❖ Passion is most familiar of gospel stories and also most detailed
- As we approach the crucifixion, time gets stretched out; 1/6 of Mark's gospel covers Jesus' last 24 hours
- ❖ Passion story split in middle by eschatological discourse
 - Mark 11-12 passion of Jesus (prelude)
 - Mark 13 passion of the community
 - Mark 14-16 passion of Jesus

- Structure of Mark with grouping of controversy stories leads to impression of impending crisis
- There are historical accuracy questions that can be asked of the gospels; the synoptics as compared to John give a different time frame for the crucifixion
- Possibility that Hebrew scriptures dictated to the early church how the passion should be remembered
- Passion narrative is packed with scriptural allusions

The Longer Ending (Mark 16:9-20)

- ❖ Most scholars believe the original and intended ending of Mark is Mark 16:8
- ❖ Other endings break the tension characteristic of the rest of Mark
- ❖ Additional endings appear to have been added at about the time Matthew and Luke were written

The Prelude to the Passion of Jesus (Mark 11-12)

- ❖ Jesus and the disciples make Bethphage and Bethany at the Mount of Olives their base during the Passover
- ❖ These villages technically became part of Jerusalem during the Passover holidays

Entering Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11)

- ❖ Disciples receive prediction clothed as an instruction
- ♦ Note that some scholars believe that this signifies preparation by Jesus instead of prediction
- ❖ “Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately as you enter it, you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden: untie it and bring it.”

- Significance of unbinding the colt may derive from Gen. 49:10-12 (oracle on Judah)
- That the animal is fit for cultic use is hinted at by the words “on which no one has ever sat” (1 Sam. 6:7)
- ❖ Jesus rides into Jerusalem to a warm reception from the people who shout, “Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David!”
- The donkey played a role in the coronation of Israel’s kings (1 Kings 1:38-40)
- Placing garments and leafy branches in the path are a sign of respect (2 Kings 9:13)
- The crowd chants part of Psalm 118 which was used primarily at the Feast of Tabernacles and Passover
- Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem is that of a king
- ❖ Jesus the tourist: “Then he entered Jerusalem and went into the temple; and

when he had looked around at everything,
as it was already late, he went out to
Bethany with the twelve.”

- ❖ Mark is contrasting Jerusalem/temple with Bethany/Jesus/twelve
- ❖ Bethany and the Mount of Olives stand in opposition to the temple authorities

Cursing a Fig Tree (Mark 11:12-14)

- ❖ The next day, Jesus passes a fig tree on his way to Jerusalem, and curses it when he discerns there are no figs on it
- ❖ According to narrator, it wasn't the right season for figs
- ❖ Doesn't seem to make sense; So what does it mean
- ♦ Some scholars see this story as an allusion to Jeremiah 8:13
- ❖ Word for season is kairos in Greek
- ❖ First words spoken in Mark by Jesus are, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near"

Clearing the Temple (Mark 11:15-19)

- ❖ In the temple, Jesus throws out the sellers and the buyers
- ❖ If the problem here was crooked merchants, the buyers would not need to be thrown out
- ❖ In order to offer a sacrifice in the temple, it was necessary to exchange the money of the Roman empire for temple currency and to buy an animal that had not endured a long journey
- ♦ The setting here is in the Court of the Gentiles, giving additional meaning to Jesus' scripture quote
- ❖ Temple not really being cleansed here, but closed down
- ❖ Jesus quotes the prophets (Jeremiah 7:4-11), "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations, but you have made it a den of robbers"

- ♦ “Jesus interprets his actions in terms of what has been written.” Juel
- ❖ Den of robbers not where thieves do most of their business, but their safe house
- ❖ “Thus the image suggests that something is wrong outside the temple, and the temple is the place used to bless and protect the wrongdoing.” Malbon

Withered Fig Tree and Prayer (Mark 11:20-25)

- ❖ The next day Jesus and the disciples pass the fig tree again - and it's dead
- ❖ Jesus uses the opportunity to teach the disciples about prayer
- ❖ The disciples should trust God to answer prayer
- ❖ Also, the disciples are to forgive others so that God will forgive them
- ◆ This type of sayings linkage is called "catchword"

Reviewing Mark 11:12-25 - The Time for Prayer

- ❖ Another sandwich
 - Fig tree
 - Temple
 - Fig tree

- ❖ Temples and trees both represent the sacred in the ancient world

- ❖ Destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. a catastrophe for Jews, and first Christians

- ❖ Sacrifices, specified for Jews, what is lost with the temple

- ❖ Prayer, for all peoples, is not lost

- ❖ A message of comfort for early church

Previewing Mark 11:27-12:44 - Teaching in the Temple

- ❖ Mark says that Jesus is walking in the temple; he does not sit, the position of the authoritative teacher
- ❖ While there, several Jewish groups try to trick him, but are tricked instead

By Whose Authority? (Mark 11:27-33)

- ❖ First question comes from the chief priests, scribes, and elders
- ❖ "By what authority are you doing these things?"
- ❖ Jesus' response: "Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?"
- ❖ If they say from heaven (or God), then Jesus can ask why they believe him
- ❖ If they say of human origin, they fear the crowds
- ♦ The crowds believe both John and Jesus are prophets
- ❖ So they say, "We do not know."
- ❖ And Jesus responds, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

Parable of the Vineyard (Mark 12:1-12)

- ❖ Then Jesus tells a parable directed against these people
- ❖ The parable is the story of a vineyard left by its owner in the care of tenants
- ❖ The tenants do not return to the owner the produce due him, but instead rough up the messengers and kill the owner's son
- ❖ "What then will the owner of the vineyard do?"
- ❖ Vineyards are a common symbol for Israel, especially for a rebellious Israel
- ◆ Especially prominent in Isaiah 5
- ◆ In Targum on this portion of Isaiah, vineyard is interpreted as symbol of temple in Jerusalem
- ◆ Previous Christian interpreters have extended the "others" of the parable to be Christians

- Not valid, as others are not specified here
- The tenants can be properly understood as the temple leaders, but not Jews in general
- Builders are also the temple leaders
- Mark ties the traditional, conservative, pacific traditions of the temple leadership to the politically revolutionary activities of the peasants in northern Israel

Taxes to the Emperor? (Mark 12:13-17)

- ❖ Second question comes from the Pharisees and Herodians
- ❖ "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?"
- ❖ Jesus asks for a coin
- ❖ Who has a pagan coin in the temple? Not Jesus, but the Pharisees and Herodians
- ♦ The coin itself is offensive to religious sensibilities by bearing the image of Caesar, and will become more so later, when the title lord is added to the coin's inscription
- ❖ Jesus then questions them about the images stamped on the coin
- ❖ "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's."
- ❖ Note the ambiguity of the answer

- Jesus' answer not so ambiguous
- One may pay taxes to the Roman government, and still be viewed as a threat to that regime through one's faithfulness to God

Questioning Resurrection (Mark 12:18-27)

- ❖ Next question comes from the Sadducees, who are the most conservative Jewish sect
- ❖ They tell an involved story about a woman who marries each of seven brothers according to levirate law
- ❖ "In the resurrection whose wife will she be?"
- ❖ Jesus responds first to the actual question, "When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage"
- "Jesus' response is thoroughly Pharisaic"
- Point about angels and marriage follows traditional Jewish thought of the time
- ❖ God's rules for running heaven are not the same as the rules you impose on earth
- ❖ Then Jesus responds to the question behind the question asked by Sadducees who do not believe in the resurrection

- ❖ He takes their scripture, that is the 5 books of Moses, and points to God's response to Moses at the burning bush
- ❖ Here, God identifies himself as the "God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"
- ❖ "He is God not of the dead, but of the living."

An Exceptional Scribe (Mark 12:28-34)

- ❖ Next comes a scribe with a question, but not one intended to test Jesus
- ❖ "Which commandment is the first of all?"
- ❖ Jesus responds with the Shema and continues with the second commandment to love one's neighbor as oneself
- ♦ Jesus' response reflects traditional Jewish thought here
- ❖ This scribe agrees with Jesus' answer
- ♦ Scribe's addition reflects language of the Psalms where prayer is the "sacrifice of praise"
- ♦ Rabbinic scholars, after 70 A.D., "created a piety which substituted prayer and obedience to the Torah for bloody sacrifice."
- ❖ And Jesus says, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

Other Scribes (Mark 12:35-40)

- ❖ Now it's Jesus' turn to ask a question
- ❖ "How can the scribes say that the Messiah is the son of David?"
- ♦ Jesus' question may reflect early Christian interpretation
- ❖ He cites a passage from Psalm 110 and asks how David can call his son "my lord"
- ♦ Also reflects 2 Samuel 7:10-14 and Psalm 89
- ♦ Posing questions about apparent scriptural contradictions follows traditional Jewish scholarly discussion
- ♦ Contradiction can only be resolved if the Messiah is raised from the dead and exalted to God's right hand
- ❖ Then Jesus gives a general denouncement of the scribes who like the best places at

banquets, take the income of widows and like to say long prayers for appearance

- Scribes have not “loved their neighbors as themselves”

A Poor Widow (Mark 12:41-44)

- ❖ Then Jesus points out to the disciples a widow putting 2 small coins into the temple treasury
- ❖ "She out of her poverty has put in everything she had"
- ❖ In Greek, the word used is bios, or her whole life
- ❖ She foreshadows what Jesus will do; he will give his life
- ♦ Juel notes also the contrast with the rich man who cannot part with his possessions

Reviewing Mark 11:27-12:44 - Controversy in the Temple

- ❖ Story of the widow closes a series of controversy in the temple stories

- ❖ First group of controversies
 - Center on Jesus the healer
 - Scribes and pharisees are the religious authorities
 - Ends with pharisees and Herodians looking for a way to kill Jesus

- ❖ The last group of controversy stories
 - Target Jesus the teacher
 - Temple officials are the religious authorities
 - Temple leaders will turn Jesus over to the Roman authorities

The Passion of the Community (Mark 13)

- ❖ Covers the eschatological discourse
- ❖ Eschatology
 - Eschaton - the last things
 - Logos - teaching about
- Position of this section points to a time after Jesus
- “The empty tomb will not mark the end of what God has determined ‘must’ occur.”

Destruction of the Temple (Mark 13:1-3)

- ❖ On exiting the temple, the disciples express their admiration and astonishment over the large stones used to construct the temple
- ❖ Jesus' response is a prediction that the temple is to be totally destroyed
- ❖ Read after 70 A.D., this prediction is reassuring and hopeful, despite the devastation

Political and Natural Disasters (Mark 13:4-8)

- ❖ Back on the Mount of Olives, Jesus assumes the position of the authoritative teacher, he sits to give the disciples instruction
- ❖ Instruction is directed primarily toward Peter, James, John and Andrew, signaling an important event
- ❖ The disciples want to know “when will this be”
- ❖ Jesus responds by telling the disciples what will not signal the end, but the labor pains of the end
 - War
 - Earthquakes
 - Famine
 - Political disasters
 - Natural disasters
- Use of birth pangs points “to God’s control over history and to the essential hopefulness of the future”

- On "Beware that no one leads you astray," Juel suggests there is a hint of temptations from within the community as well
- Later, especially in the second century there will be much dissension within the church

Challenges for Followers (Mark 13:9-13)

- ❖ Jesus tells the disciples that their future will include persecution and forced appearances before the councils of the powerful
- ❖ But first the good news must be proclaimed to all nations
- Also a reassurance that persecution will not stop the spread of the gospel
- ❖ The disciples are not to be concerned about the words they will speak, because the Holy Spirit will speak through them
- This is the imagery of prophecy
- ❖ "The one who endures to the end will be saved."

Apocalyptic Events (Mark 13:14-23)

- ❖ Apocalyptic means revealed
- ❖ Jesus quotes Daniel, "When you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought not to be (let the reader understand), then those in Judea must flee to the mountains"
- ❖ In Daniel, this text appears to refer to the desecrations of Antiochus Epiphanes who sacrificed a pig on the temple altar
- ❖ Most scholars think Jesus use of this material refers to the destruction of the temple by the Romans
- ♦ Notes that Gaius Caligula ordered a statue of himself placed in the temple; his demise averted rebellion
- ♦ The Roman general Titus stood in the Holy of Holies
- ❖ Jesus warns his disciples of false messiahs

- ♦ Didache confirms the problem of false prophets in the early church
- ❖ For the disciples and Mark's community, this would have been reassuring

Cosmic Events (Mark 13:24-27)

- ❖ Then there is additional apocalyptic material from traditional Judaism
- ❖ All the heavenly sources of light will fail, the sun, moon and stars
- Partial fulfillment takes place at Jesus' crucifixion when the sky darkens and at Jesus' trial with his appearance before authorities
- Combined with Jesus' three-fold prediction of his death and resurrection, the disciples can be assured that Jesus can be trusted
- ❖ Jesus quotes Daniel again, "They will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory."
- Note that there will be a general healing of blindness; the messianic secret will be an open one
- Jesus will use this passage later at his trial

- ❖ In addition the angels will gather the elect from “the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven”
- ❖ This is the picture of the epoch of the kingdom of God

Parable of the Fig Tree (Mark 13:28-31)

- ❖ “From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.”
- ❖ The disciples’ generation will see the predictions take place and are given this hope
- ❖ “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”

God Only Knows (Mark 13:32-33)

- ❖ Then at the end of the eschatological discourse, Jesus tells the disciples that only God the Father knows the timing of these end time events
- ♦ “If Jesus is uncertain of God’s timing, there is good reason to be suspicious of other forecasters boasting knowledge of matters reserved for God alone.” Juel
- ❖ The disciples are to be prepared for the end times at any time

Parable of the Doorkeeper (Mark 13:34-37)

- ❖ A doorkeeper is placed in charge of his master's home while the master goes on a journey
- Remember Jesus is the strong man who has bound Satan and is despoiling his house; now he goes on a journey, leaving his servants in charge
- ❖ The master's return date is uncertain
- ❖ Jesus is the lord of the house and his disciples are to be prepared for his return at any time
- Notes how the times suggest the outline of the passion narrative
 - Evening Last Supper
 - Midnight Prayer in the garden & arrest
 - Cockcrow Peter's denial
 - Morning Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin and then Pilate

- ❖ As Jesus states it, "What I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."
- ♦ Mark addresses this message to the audience as well; don't fall asleep like the disciples

The Passion of Jesus (Mark 14-16)

Plot against Jesus (Mark 14:1-12)

- ❖ “The chief priests would have many things to do at that time, but they’ve added a new item to their agenda: ...a way to kill Jesus.”
- ❖ The primary concern of the priests is whether the crowds will interfere with their plans
- ❖ Their plan is an “unholy action” at a “holy time of the year”
- Remember what the Passover celebration was about - the liberation of enslaved Hebrews

A Woman's Anointing (Mark 14:3-9)

- ❖ Jesus and his disciples are in the house of Simon the Leper
- ❖ Malbon notes that we don't know whether Simon was healed or not
- ❖ While there, an unnamed woman pours precious ointment on Jesus' head
- ♦ Mark tells us nothing about the character of this woman
- ❖ Jesus is literally anointed now
- ❖ Some present think the ointment should have been sold with the proceeds going to the poor
- ♦ "Even a virtuous" concern about money can choke off growth of the seed, resulting in a barren piety." Juel
- ❖ But Jesus says, "You always have the poor with you...She has anointed my body beforehand for its burial"

❖ And Jesus says that she will be remembered for her actions

Judas's Betrayal (Mark 14:10-11)

- ❖ The narrator reminds us that Judas was one of the twelve, highlighting the poignancy of his betrayal
- ❖ Judas' action is no surprise as we were prepared for it in Mark 3
- ❖ Notice the juxtaposition of this story with the one previous
 - The woman spends a great deal of money to anoint Jesus
 - Judas receives money to betray Jesus
- ❖ Also note what the two groups of men are planning
 - The chief priests, scribes, and elders are planning Jesus' murder
 - Jesus and the disciples are planning to celebrate the Passover

Observing the Passover (Mark 14:12-25)

- ❖ The disciples question Jesus on his plans for the Passover celebration
- ❖ Jesus instructs them to look for a man carrying a jar of water
- ❖ This would have been unusual enough to be noticed
- ❖ Malbon emphasizes the reliability of Jesus' predictions
- ❖ Then when evening comes, the Passover celebration begins
- ❖ And Jesus takes the bread, blesses the bread, breaks the bread, and gives the bread to the disciples
- ♦ Blessing may have been
 - “Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the Universe,
 - Who has caused bread to sprout forth from the earth.”

- ❖ Bread and wine are also elements of the Passover
- ❖ When we celebrate communion, we also celebrate Jesus' presence with us
- ❖ "The kingdom of God is indeed breaking into history, and at that moment of communion you are receiving a foretaste of the kingdom of God." Malbon

Predicting Peter's Denial (Mark 14:26-31)

- ❖ Jesus and the disciples end the Passover celebration with the traditional hymn
- ❖ They proceed to the Mount of Olives
- ❖ Jesus quotes Zechariah, "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered."
- ❖ Then Jesus adds that after he is raised up, he will precede the disciples to Galilee
- ❖ Then Jesus frankly tells the disciples that they will all desert him and that Peter will deny him

Praying at Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42)

- ❖ At Gethsemane, which seems to be located on the Mount of Olives, Jesus takes aside 3 disciples, Peter, James and John
- ❖ Jesus requests these 3 to stay awake while he prays some distance from them
- ❖ Jesus' prayer is that God will make his crucifixion unnecessary, but that God's will be done
- ♦ Image of cup comes from scripture (Psalm 60:3; Isaiah 51:17-22, & Jeremiah 49:12)
- ❖ "Jesus does not have a martyr complex."
Malbon
- ❖ Three times Jesus returns to his disciples, only to find them asleep
- ❖ What does this portend for disciples who have been instructed previously to stay awake?

- ♦ “The disciples, like others, require redemption and liberation.” Juel
- ❖ Then Jesus says, “The hour has come”

Betrayal, Arrest, Desertion (Mark 14:43-52)

- ❖ At this point, Judas leads the crowd of chief priests, scribes and elders to betray Jesus with a kiss
- ❖ Jesus is arrested and someone cuts off the ear of the high priest's slave
- ❖ Jesus then questions the crowd, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me."
- ♦ Term bandit was used by Josephus to speak of the insurrectionists who exerted guerilla war against the Romans
- ❖ The disciples all flee, and a young man wearing only a linen cloth also flees
- ❖ Some think this is a reference to Mark, the author

- ❖ But linen cloths were used
 - As night wear
 - Shrouds
 - Ritual garments for the newly baptized

- ❖ Sindon, Greek for linen, is used only here in Mark 14:51 and in Mark 15:46 for the cloth that was Jesus' shroud

- ❖ Young man is used only here in Mark 14:51 and in Mark 16:5 of the being who meets the women at the tomb

- ❖ "Desertion as a disciple, death, resurrection... All seem to be connected"
Malbon

- ❖ Baptism is also connected with Jesus' death (Romans 6:3-4)

- ❖ Early Christians were baptized in the nude and then given a linen cloth

- ❖ Some think that Mark's gospel was read at early baptismal services

- ❖ Malbon sees this as a reminder that “Discipleship is a death and resurrection experience.”

Before the Council (Mark 14:53-65)

- ❖ Jesus is taken to the home of the high priest, where the council is assembled
- ❖ Many give false testimony before the council
 - Contrast this with the Mishnah's demand that defense give testimony first
 - Also that no trials be held during festivals
 - Must allow a night to pass between trial and sentencing
 - Torah demands at least two witnesses (Numbers 35:30 and Deuteronomy 19:15)
- ❖ The high priest demands that Jesus answer this question, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"
 - First time the title, "Son of God" uttered by human being

- ❖ Jesus says briefly, "I am" and continues with "You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power"
- Psalm 110 and Daniel 7 were controversial for Jews
- One rabbi was banned for insisting that he had seen an angel seated in God's presence in a vision
- ❖ Jesus never refers to himself as the Christ in Mark, but only as the Son of Man
- ❖ Jesus is given the death penalty by the council for his blasphemy (but remember, do they have the authority to do this?)
- Penalty for blasphemy is stoning not crucifixion

Peter's Denial (Mark 14:66-72)

- ❖ At the same moment that the high priest's guards are striking Jesus and demanding that he prophesy, Jesus' prophecy to Peter is coming true
- This simultaneity is a picture of two trials
- Notes that the detail about Peter warming himself at the fire suggests self focus
- ❖ Peter denies Jesus 3 times, the rooster crows, and Peter weeps

Before Pilate (Mark 15:1-15)

- ❖ The Jewish council turns Jesus over to Pilate, the Roman governor
- ❖ Pilate is interested in the political aspects of the case, so he asks Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"
- ❖ Jesus responds, "You say so."
- ♦ Note the irony that Jesus does not deny his kingship, but it is Pilate who must mouth the words
- ❖ Pilate decides to use a Passover tradition to release a prisoner to get rid of this thorny problem
- ❖ This is a tradition only known to us through the Gospels
- ❖ Pilate gives the crowd a choice, Jesus or Barabbas
- ❖ Barabbas literally means son of the father

- ❖ The crowd chooses Barabbas to be released and Jesus to be crucified
- Pilate's action not one of good will, but is designed to provoke the religious authorities
- "Pilate capitulates to the will of the mob - the behavior of an incompetent administrator." Juel
- ❖ Malbon cautions us to be careful in assigning blame for the crucifixion
- ❖ The conflict of Mark is an internal conflict within the Jewish community; Jesus' death is determined by Roman authority

Crucifixion (Mark 15:16-32)

- ❖ Prior to the crucifixion, Jesus is mocked by the Roman soldiers
- ❖ They put a purple robe on him and a crown of thorns
- ❖ Jesus is crucified because he is a perceived threat to the Roman Empire
- ❖ Weakened by the preliminary flogging, Jesus is unable to carry the crossbeam, as was usual
- ❖ So Simon of Cyrene is impressed to take on this task
- ❖ On the cross, Jesus is offered wine and myrrh, a mild anesthetic, which he refuses
- ❖ Part of the humiliation of crucifixion is that the prisoner is crucified in the nude, and so Jesus' clothes are parceled out by throwing lots
- ♦ As in Psalm 22

- ❖ On the cross, Jesus is mocked by all including the two crucified with him
- ❖ They say, "Let the Messiah, the King of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe."
- Wording is from the psalms, except that "blasphemed" is used instead of "mocked"
- ❖ Who is blind and who can see?
- Taunt that Jesus cannot save himself is a play on Jesus' name
- "It is precisely by not saving himself that he will save others." Juel

Jesus' Death (Mark 15:33-41)

- ❖ At Jesus' death, great darkness falls although it is three in the afternoon, reminiscent of the prediction that the sun would fail
- ❖ Just prior to his death, Jesus quotes Psalm 22 in Aramaic, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- ❖ Is Jesus using the first line as a reminder of the entire Psalm?
- ❖ The people around think Jesus is calling on Elijah because of the similarity of the words
- ❖ Then the curtain in the temple is torn from top to bottom
- ❖ Sacred boundaries are being destroyed
- "The curtain provided protection from God's holy presence, for that presence could mean death for any who encountered it. The tearing of the curtain implies the end of that protection." Juel

- ❖ Then the centurion says, "This man was God's son."
- ❖ Notice the irony of a Roman soldier being the first human to acknowledge Jesus as son of God
- ❖ Who buries Jesus?
- ❖ Unlike John's disciples, Jesus' disciples have fled, except for a few women observing from a distance
- ❖ These are women who ministered or "deaconed" Jesus
- ❖ In Mark, only angels (Mark 1:13) and women (Mark 1:13, 15:41) serve as Jesus had instructed his disciples (Mark 10:45)
- ❖ It is the women who endure to the end in Mark

Jesus' Burial (Mark 15:42-47)

- ❖ Jesus' died on the Day of Preparation for the Sabbath, requiring observant Jews to rush his burial
- ❖ Instead of the disciples, it is Joseph of Arimathea, a "respected member of the council" who tends to the body of Jesus
- ❖ If we thought that all members of the Jewish council acted in opposition to Jesus, our expectations are turned upside down once again
- ❖ Joseph goes through the appropriate authority, Pilate, who verifies that Jesus is dead
- ❖ Then Joseph wraps Jesus' body in a linen cloth and places it in a tomb with a rolling stone

At the Tomb (Mark 16:1-8)

- ❖ Two women observe the location of Jesus' burial and wish to prepare Jesus' body for burial with spices, but are unable to do so because of the nearness of the Sabbath
- ❖ The morning after the Sabbath is over, the women return to the tomb with spices, and some concerns about the stone
- ❖ But at the tomb, the stone is rolled away and a young man in white is seated on the right side of the tomb
- ❖ The young man says, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here....Go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee."
- ❖ But the women flee in terror and amazement
- ♦ The women ultimately flee like the disciples

- ❖ Jesus is not in the tomb, but is moving to Galilee ahead of them
- “Yet the world is not the same. The tomb is empty. Jesus is out, beyond death’s reach, on the loose.” Juel

After words

- ❖ Disciples will understand that Jesus is there to give comfort, to continue the proclamation of the kingdom of God, to grow in community, to deepen their discipleship and to deal with suffering that comes their way
- ❖ "Jesus' death is not the end - that is the meaning of resurrection." Malbon
- ♦ "Jesus is full of surprises. Old skins cannot contain the new wine. The world's uneasiness in the presence of Jesus is fully justified. He will not be bound by tradition that defines human life; even death has no final power over him. The end only marks a new beginning - a beginning of the good news that Jesus, the one who is the ultimate threat to our autonomy, now becomes our source of life." Juel
- ❖ Mark wrote his gospel for a community that was powerless and persecuted

- ❖ The suffering of Jesus helps this community to give meaning to their own suffering
- ❖ Our community is unlike Mark's community
- ❖ "What are the dangers when the good news told to the powerless is taken over and proclaimed by the powerful?"
- ❖ Can this good news both comfort the afflicted, as it was meant to do in the first place, and afflict the comfortable, which it probably needs to do for us today?
- ❖ Can the good news of God's presence in the world be heard by all of us - powerful as well as powerless?
- ❖ How do the powerful need to hear things and tell things differently from the powerless?
- ❖ The end of Mark says the women told no one, but have we heard?
- ❖ Jesus' death is not the end of the good news about Jesus