

He is Risen, He is not here

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Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[0 : 0 0] now as we come to this final chapter in mark's account of the gospel we look in these last few verses then uh this chapter before us of the resurrection of christ and this is taking place you know within 48 hours or thereabouts um of the of his crucifixion he has been of course in the grave for part of the friday all of the saturday and now on the first day of the week he has risen early that day when the sabbath was passed mary magdalene and mary the mother of james and salome and we established this morning that salome is as it says in matthew's account of the gospel the mother of zebedee's children that is the mother of james and john so these women who are closely connected with jesus either as being mothers of apostles or as those whom jesus has directly helped mary magdalene of course is one described as one out of whom he had cast seven devils and they had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him obviously spices we know from the incident when mary and bethany anointed the feet of jesus that particular little box of alabaster ointment uh that was a year's wages not all spices would be quite as expensive as that but still they would be expensive they would be costly and these faithful women of whom we are told uh in luke's account of the gospel uh for example we read that there was mary called magdalene out of whom went seven devils joanna the wife of chusa herod steward and susanna and many others which ministered unto him of their substance in other words out of their own money their own pockets whatever they had they used to help and feed and look after jesus and the other apostles so they were spending themselves in the cause of christ and here now when as far as they know he is dead they are expending probably now all that they have the last of what they have on these expensive spices luke tells us that after the crucifixion when they had seen where jesus was laid we read it the last two verses of luke 23 the women also which came with him from galilee followed after and beheld the sepulchre and how his body was laid and they returned and prepared spices and ointments in other words they began to do that on the friday they got the spices and ointments which they obviously bought pretty much as soon as the crucifixion was over and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment even the anointing of jesus body was something which had to wait until after the sabbath was passed they rested the sabbath day according to the commandment this is a level of not only love for the lord but devout faithfulness to the commandments and teachings of his heavenly father and of himself as the lord of the sabbath so they had bought sweet spices that they might come and anoint him and very early in the morning the first day of the week they came onto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun john tells us in his account that maybe magdalene in particular maybe she was ahead of the others she came early while it was yet dark in other words dawn was just beginning to break unto the sepulchre and seared the stone taken away from the sepulchre now these women obviously as they come to the grave that the practice in those days was that they would it would be cut out of the rock a little sort of cavern a little sort of a chamber would be cut out uh not a huge area um the garden tomb for example in jerusalem is probably larger than most such tombs and you'd still have to stoop you know getting in and you'd still have to sort of creep about kind of halfway in some bits of it uh where the bodies would be laid on stone shelves and so on um so and the practice was there'd be a

groove cut in the ground outside it outside the opening and there wouldn't be a door or anything like that but obviously a circular stone like a millstone would be rolled over the entrance and they knew themselves they wouldn't have the physical strength to roll away the stones so who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre but for it was very great when they looked they saw the stone was rolled away already matthew's account tells us behold there was a great earthquake for the angel of the lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it his countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow and for fear of him the keepers that's the soldiers who were guarding the tomb remember did shake and became as dead men and the angel answered and said unto the women fear not ye for i know that ye seek jesus which was crucified and this is what he says to them here as well very much when they looked and they saw that the stone was rolled away and entering into the sepulchre they saw a young man sitting on the right side and again it's mark only who specifies where he was sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment and they were uprighted now it might be that uh there's only one at this time and subsequently there's two maybe there's two and they can only see one of them at the moment because john's account of the gospel um when they look in when mary magdalene looks in again after the peter and john have gone she can see if two angels in white sitting the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of jesus had lain now the fact that they may for now only see one or the fact that when peter and john come to the the sepulchre in john's account of the gospel they don't see any shouldn't unduly surprise us because clearly if the angels are there already it is down to the lord's intervention whether or not people are able to see them and we have scriptural you know uh precedence for this in second kings chapter six for example remember when uh elisha and his servant are in the city of dothan and the syrian king has sent all his armies to to capture him and we read in chapter six verse 15 of second kings and when the servant of the man of god was risen early and gone forth behold and host compassed the city both with horses and chariots and his servant said unto him alas my master how shall we do and he answered fear not for they that be with us are more than they that be with them and elisha prayed and said lord i pray thee open his eyes that he may see and the lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw and behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about elisha so whatever the syrians had against him the lord had far more angelic hosts there to overcome the enemy and to protect elisha and his servant but the servant couldn't see them initially just as well looking at a couple of weeks ago balaam and his donkey remember when balaam was going to supposedly try to prophesy against the israelites and we read in numbers 22 verse 31 then the lord opened the eyes of balaam and he saw the angel of the lord standing in the way and his sword drawn in his hand and he bowed down his head and fell flat in his face and one of the things the angel says to him is the ass saw me the donkey could see me and turn from me these three times unless she had turned from me surely now also i had slain thee and saved her alive so it is only by the lord's intervention that anyone is enabled to see the angels of the lord or the messengers of the lord in that sense so the fact that maybe they only see one to begin with and then after that peter and john have been

to the tomb and then they go away in john's account maybe man from luke's in again then she sees two it doesn't mean there wasn't two there before when did the second one appear maybe there was two all along but they could only see one of them we are only unable to see that which the lord opens our eyes to see and what is true for his angelic messengers and the heavenly hosts such as elisha and his servants saw and likewise the shepherds at the time of jesus birth you know the whole sky was full uh of the heavenly hosts of praising god and saying glory to god in the highest and on earth peace goodwill toward men now if the whole sky was full of that don't you think people would have come out of bethlehem and said wow look at that you've never seen that before angels filling the sky who would have believed it it would have been the talk of the town it would have been buzzing with these angelic choirs that had filled the heavens but no word of it nobody says oh yeah somebody go and hell headed whole bunch of angels in the sky over bethlehem that must be where it's going to happen that must be where it's going to happen nobody mentions a word of it who sees it only the shepherds see it why don't only the shepherds see it because it is only revealed to them likewise zacharias in the temple at the beginning of luke's account of the gospel the angel standing on the right side of the altar and he appears to zacharias nobody else sees the angel nobody else is in there and the angel goes away it is only by the lord's opening of people's eyes that they are enabled to behold these spiritual messengers because they inhabit the spiritual realm and they're only revealed as the lord chooses to open the eyes of those who seek him and so as these women come to the tomb their eyes are opened enabled to behold this angel of the lord now clearly in matthew's account of the gospel the lord opens the eyes of the of those who are meant to be standing guard because we read for fear of him of the angel the keepers did shake and became as dead men so sometimes it is those who are even enemies to the lord that he enables to behold his angels and to strike fear into their hearts but likewise as it is for angels so it is for god's truth you know we can we can read it and read it and read it or we can sit under you know gospel sermons for years and nothing goes down or it doesn't change our hearts or it leaves us unmoved we can be brought up with the catechism and with the lord's day and the knowledge of the lord and know everything about the lord but that's not the same as knowing him and we're only enabled to know him in our hearts when the lord opens our hearts that faith we have not of ourselves it is the gift of god's for a grace and he saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of god ephesians 2 verse 8 not of works lest any man should boast for we are his workmanship created in christ jesus unto good works which the lord has before ordained that we should walk in them it is only the lord that enables our hearts to be changed and that shouldn't be just like oh that's fine i don't have to worry i can just sit here and that that's okay i'll just wait for the lightning strike i'll just wait for it to happen it doesn't happen well it's not my fault then so i can't be condemned believe you me without christ we will be condemned because we will be condemned justly for our sins our sins are a reality an inescapable reality for which we must give an account if we are not redeemed by christ we ought to be trembling in our boots because we will answer for every sin we have committed and a whole host that we didn't even know we had committed but we have except we be redeemed by christ we are as lost as lost as lost can be if we have not yet had our hearts open to receive his truth not yet being

changed in our hearts and born again we should be praying the lord to do so because the lord has promised that whosoever prays to him whatsoever we ask in faith believing we shall receive and that him that comes to me i will in no wise cast out nobody is ever turned away by the lord the afflicted's prayer he will not scorn so if we have not yet embraced christ as our savior we shouldn't be complacent about it say oh it's not my fault unless the lord opens my eyes to behold his angelic messengers or his or his gospel truth i can't be blamed we will still be blamed for our sins we will still be judged for what we have done and unless we have a mediator unless we have somebody to stand in as our savior and redeemer we will be lost so it's nothing for us to be complacent about oh that's okay i'm going to be lost but it won't be my fault i'm sure that would be a great comfort to us in our lost eternity it is not my fault well actually it is my fault because of all the sins i chose to commit even if you eliminate all the original sin which we inherit you could say we had no choice about what about all the multitude that we have chosen freely to do we won't be condemned because our eyes won't open we'll be condemned for our sin it is the lord however that opens our lives and our hearts whether to behold his angels or whether to understand his truth whether to know his son as our savior or not pray that the lord would open your heart because without such a savior you and i would be lost so the women come to the sepulcher and entering in they see i saw a young man sitting on the right side clothed the long white garment and they were affrighted which is more than just sort of afraid he said unto them be not affrighted and this is a stronger term and just no be not you know don't fear it's uh be not afraid it's a stronger time it's it's like overcoming greater fear it's like soothing more than just oh be not afraid it's it's a it's a stronger time ye seek jesus of nazareth which was crucified he has risen he is not here behold the place where they laid him but go your way tell his disciples and peter that he goeth before you to galilee there shall you see him as he said unto you now as we begin to think in terms of the message that the women bring to the disciples um we have to recognize that a feature a recurring feature throughout this chapter in particular is sad to say the unbelief of those who follow jesus and whilst you know we do read a little bit further down afterwards he appeared to the 11 verse 14 as they sat and meet upbraided them with an unbelief and hardness of heart because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen in the nicest possible way how can we put it even the women at the tomb whose love no one can fault and whose expending of themselves has been utterly selfless and faithful and devoted and of a sound heart but there is in the sense of preparing and bringing these spices for the body of jesus afterwards there is the expectation that he's still going to be dead in the nicest possible way they don't actually believe or expect that he's going to be risen they believe he's still going to be dead even those who love the lord do not think he's going to rise again they will not believe it because they just don't dare believe it it would be too cruel to them to hold on to a hope and then have it taken away again so they just don't go there they just don't want to believe it for fear of being even more crushed and this is true of

the apostles it is true also as we've said in the gentlest possible way we have to acknowledge it even of these devout men because the very fact that they're coming with spices means they expect them still to be dead they do not go with the expectation quick let's go to the tomb and see if he's risen yet because that's what he said he was going to do no they are just completely crushed and sometimes love and faith gets to that stage and i would just um just want the the council of our possible any who may be in that condition it doesn't mean that you are cast off from the lord it doesn't mean that he has abandoned you it just means that sometimes even love itself will be dealt such a glow that even though it seeks to continue to act and live and follow in faith and love that faith itself has almost been crushed out it is the smoking flax which is almost on the point of being quenched but not quite they expect jesus to be dead they don't believe as yet in his resurrection but they are seeking to do what they can in love and in faithfulness it is this love for the lord which is that little rising wisp of smoke which is at the end of the day unquenchable love for the lord cannot be extinguished because he himself has placed it in the heart of the believer so yes they're affrighted and yes they don't know what to do but he says don't be affrighted he is risen he is not here look here's the place where they laid him but go your way tell his disciples and peter that he goeth before you into galilee now as we said mark's account of the gospel is so so much of it is thought to be the recollections and recounting of peter and the lord's ministry amongst the disciples there it is clearly written by somebody who was an eyewitness or with reference to somebody who was an eyewitness we've mentioned over the course of mark's account of the gospel all the little hints of uh of aramaic or syriac galilean sort of uh a dialect in there and the local language that jesus spoke as opposed to scriptural hebrew and all these little hints are sprinkled throughout mark's account which make it certainly the work of one at least being fed or dictated to by an eyewitness so there's nothing sort of um shall we say glossed over there's nothing photoshopped about mark's account of the gospel it is the first account written it is the raw if you like most recently remembered account of jesus life and ministry and here is this little little touch that which mark alone mentions again tell his disciples yes and peter peter the one who has denied him peter the one who has fled just with all the others but the one who probably feels the most devastated of all because he predicted he would always stay loyal and the courage it must have taken to go into the high priest's house and to be as it were in the very lion's den and to stay there and even after he was challenged the first time anybody with half a brain or or concern for their own skin would have turned tail and fled that time or the second time but peter doesn't he stays he stays determined to see the end his courage if you like is is perhaps you know almost insane courage but his loyalty to jesus is nevertheless punctured by the fact that he ends up doing what he promised he would never do he ends up denying jesus three times and jesus turns and looks at him as luke's account of the gospel tells us

[20 : 13] and peter went out and wept bitterly he knows that he has been destroyed and devastated in terms of his own strength and integrity that was his last night in his own strength he doesn't have any now the implication of this verse seven is that whilst the other disciples are probably gathering together whether in the upper room or some other place where they're gathering together in jerusalem remember most of them are not naked to jerusalem they're galileans they're down in jerusalem for the passover or because jesus has led them there they're in somebody's borrowed house and probably peter has not been able to bring himself to join himself back to them again probably after his denial if he was there watching the crucifixion from a distance he couldn't bring himself to come and stand beside john and marry the mother of jesus he couldn't bring himself to stand and mix with the women who were watching from a distance he couldn't go with joseph of anamathia and nicodemus to lay jesus in the tomb he just could not face anyone that is the implication of this verse that peter was not with the other disciples at the time but rather the lord knew he was hiding himself away in the shame of his denial but mark mentions this go your way tell his disciples and peter this personal extra special note that is to be given to him and the lord goes further than that because after he appears to the various people that he he meets on that first day of his resurrection we remember in luke's account of the gospel how you know when the two returned from the road to emmaus when jesus had appeared to them they rose up the same hour returned to jerusalem and found the eleven gathered together and then that were with them saying the lord is risen indeed and has appeared to sign in other words he appeared specially to peter as well as the different people maybe magdalene and the others and so on that he appeared to he made a special appearance to samuel peter the one who needed it perhaps most of all the apostles yes he appears again to the midst of them yes he appears for thomas's benefit a week later and he doesn't take time his back on on any of it any of them you know in first corinthians 15 uh paul says i delivered unto you first of all that which else was received how that christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures and that he was seen of cephas in other words peter then of the twelve and after that he was seen of about 500 brethren at once of whom the greater part remain under this present but some are fallen asleep after that he was seen of james that is the lord's brother then of all the apostles and last of all he was seen of me also as one born out of due time the appearance that paul gets is a resurrection appears of course christ from his enthronement in glory appearing to paul on the damascus road but in the days of his post-resurrection appearances the 40 days after the resurrection after he's appeared to to mary magdalene and to the other women he appears especially to peter but first of all peter is to be told tell his disciples and peter that he goes before you into galilee there shall you see him as he said unto you now he does that but before even he goes before them into galilee he appears to them a number of times in jerusalem and of course we have those recorded in the other uh gospel accounts now jesus has already mentioned to them that he's going to to go ahead of him um chapter 14 verse 28 says after i am risen i will go before you into galilee and that's what he does he meets within there matthew especially mentions that uh chapter 28 verse 16

then the eleven disciples went away into galilee into a mountain where jesus had appointed them and when they saw him they worshiped him but some doubted almost certainly the doubters are not amongst the twelve this is probably the appearance in in galilee of above 500 brethren at once um some who haven't seen him before that day um that may be their first sight of the risen christ and yet some doubted probably not amongst the eleven who doubted but anyway peter gets his own special appearance as we have mentioned to you and they went out quickly in front of the sepulcher for they trembled and were amazed neither said they anything to any man for they were afraid presumably that means didn't say anything to anyone else they would go and say it to the apostles as they were told now the remaining verses 9 to 20 are in a different slightly different category from verses 1 to 8 whether or not mark uh stopped writing initially at verse 8 because he didn't have all the material that he wanted to finish off the account or whether the sort of completing of it was postponed for a year or two or whatever and maybe peter's recollections only go up as far as there but the verses 9 to 20 it's not true as some you know commentators say that all the best manuscripts don't have these verses it's not a case of the best manuscripts it's a case of some of the higher critical manuscripts the ones that have been considered perhaps of dodgy origin don't include them but other manuscripts do they are included here in the canon of scripture they are put under mark's authorship but it would appear that they have actually been transcribed at a slightly later date some of the things which mark describes in the latter verses seem to be describing and not simply what jesus is saying in advance this is what's going to happen but also jesus having said these things mark is obviously uh writing that which he remembers has happened to the apostles you know that they have on occasion taken up deadly serpents and not been harmed by them think of paul at the end of his journey after his shipwreck in malta where the serpent seized on his hand and then he just shook it off into the fire and he was okay they drink any deadly thing it will not hurt them he's presumably got some particular instance in mind they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover we've got plenty of instances of that in the acts of the apostles but it would appear that these things are are um characteristics of the apostolic ministry which followed you know this there's great debate in um amongst the church as to whether or not have the gifts ceased or should we nowadays be expecting people to have the gift of prophecy or the gifts of healing or opening the eyes of the blind or whatever um we don't necessarily have to say uh that nobody is gifted in these ways anymore at all but what we can say with definite authority is that the written word of god is our ultimate authority now that the apostles at that time did not have a complete canon of scripture whereas we do we have everything that the lord has revealed and written down for us and we see that even in the days of the apostles whilst the apostles themselves were gifted to do these miraculous works you know paul and barnabas and ditha and others you know they they raised people from the dead they opened the eyes of the blind or they struck people blind or whatever it may be uh that we don't actually read of the next generation doing these kind of miracles we don't read for example that timothy or titus uh or or those of the the next generation of non-apostles

those who became christians on the testimony of the apostles in ephesus or in corinth or whatever yes they may have had spiritual gifts and speaking in tongues and so on but we don't read of them doing the kind of things that the apostles did it's a different kind of spiritual gifting that the lord is conferring on his church after that it would appear that it is to give testimony to the truth of what the apostles are preaching that the signs and wonders follow them the lord working with them verse 20 and confirming the word with signs following it seems from the scriptural record as much as anything else that it is one generation's worth of miracles and signs and wonders which should not surprise us because as i've mentioned in the past although we think that the bible is just non-stop signs and wonders and miracles from start to finish it's not actually there are actually only three periods in history where in bible history where you really have signs and wonders and miracles happening on what you might call a regular basis and these are um roses and joshua in other words coming out of egypt and going into the promised land elijah and elisha and then christ and the apostles if you think about it all the intervening things beforehand yes you could say well god's speaking to noah that's miraculous but you know it took no 100 years to build the ark so it wasn't exactly sort of super fast and miraculously putting it all together and yes the animals came to noah by the the moving of god's spirit two by two and in sevens and what have you and the flood itself yes a great work of of god but noah himself isn't doing miracles noah himself isn't raising people from the dead or opening the eyes of the blind or whatever we don't read of abraham isaac or jacob doing these things we don't read of king david doing miraculous things we don't actually read of the prophets obviously they've got the gift of prophecy uh but they don't seem to be doing signs and wonders other than elijah and elisha in that particular period of salvation history there are just these three periods the exodus from egypt and the entry into the promised land moises and joshua elijah and elisha christ and the apostles for the rest of the thousands of years that bible history covers the lord is working in ordinary ways to ordinary faithful men and women who are distinguished not by the fact of the spectacular works they can do but by their faithfulness to the lord and what he enables them to live out in his name so these verses 9 to 20 then we have the account when jesus was risen early in the first day of the week he appeared first to mary magdalene and of remia cast seven devils she went and told them that i've been with them and they mourned and wept and they when they had heard that he was alive and had been seen of her believe not there's that unbelief again we mentioned about this in the gentlest way how the women bringing their spices to the tomb expected him still to be dead in a sense you can see that's unbelief that's perhaps being harsh but there is an element in which they expect him still to be dead the disciples do not accept that jesus has risen they just don't want to accept it after that he appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country this is the two disciples on the road to amaze we counted in luke 24 and they went and told it unto the residue neither believed they then afterward and from luke's account it would appear almost immediately that same evening he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at me and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart and this is what we we read of course that jesus says to the two on the road to amaze

oh fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken and he says also to the disciples you know these are the words which i speak unto you while i was yet with you that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of moses and in the prophets and the psalms concerning me then open he their understanding that they might understand the scriptures this is a work of christ's own grace just as being able to see the angels just as being able to understand that the scriptures all apply to christ it is a work of his mercy is a work of his grace and it is carrying on in the teeth of the unbelief of his own people now you might think well that's us being a bit harsh on the disciples that's us criticizing the disciples who are we to criticize the disciples no we don't mean it in that sense what we have to understand is that this very unbelief works to the glory of god how can unbelief work to the glory of god because when the disciples are then changed and transformed and converted by the power of god's spirit it means that they are being equipped by his spirit to testify publicly and out loud in danger of their own lives and ultimately they begin one by one to pay with their own lives for the testimony which they bear to a resurrection in which to begin with they themselves did not believe it is these unbelieving disciples whose lives have been so transformed and changed that that which they could not believe they can now no longer deny and it has become as jeremiah says you as a fire within their bones that they just have to speak it out they just have to testify as paul says in first current these nine woe is me if i preach not the gospel they cannot contain it anymore and that is the effect on men who could not believe before and now who just cannot contain that which they now must testify to their very unbelief testifies both to the reality and to the power of the resurrection and of christ's the effect that is working through it and the effect that this resurrection has on the lives of those who are witnesses of it and those who trust in the witness and testimony of those who have themselves seen it for two thousand years we have generation after generation been called to put our faith and trust in a testimony which we ourselves were not witnesses faith is the substance of things hoped for the evidence of things not seen we trust in a god whom we have not seen but we see the effects of his work and the outworking of his grace in life people who stick up all these these wind farms all over the place and we don't say oh you must be mad there's no such thing as wind nobody's ever seen the wind you can't see it you can't touch it you can't taste it no but you can see its effects you can feel it you can you can see the power of it and you know it's there even though you cannot see it so likewise the effects of the lord's spirit the wind bloweth when it listed john 3 says you know and now here's the sound thereof and can't stop tell once it cometh or whether it goeth so is everyone that is born of the spirit of course in the greek in which the new testament is written the word for spirit and the word for wind are the same thing the same word from which we get you know like pneumatic tires filled with air filled with the wind and the spirit is

the same word so when jesus is risen early the first day of the week those to whom he appears and those to whom he testifies are those who initially do not believe it and he upbraids them with their unbelief and hardness of heart but in the fullness of time that very unbelief that very hardness of heart is part of that which the lord uses to make them powerful and mighty in their testimony in their witness have they been credulous meaning mouth oh yeah we'll believe anything well if the women say it must be true so they know they take some convincing and it is the very fact of their unbelief which the lord overcomes and testifies to their unbelief being overcome and overwhelmed by the truth of his resurrection and so he commissions them go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned without faith it is impossible to please him as we saw this morning and these signs shall follow them that believe well we've talked about now now it's not that baptism is some kind of magic cypher of course it's not he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved doesn't say he that isn't baptized shall be damned he that believeth not shall be damned baptism and sacraments that we have they are the outward sign and seal of the inward reality if we believe with the heart we ought to be prepared to testify with the lips if it is what is the truth of what is within it should be testified without so that the whole man or woman the whole person is involved the inside spirit soul and outside the body and action that the one should match the other we are not being torn apart or being pulled in two directions the lord would have us whole the lord would have us complete the lord would have us fulfilled we only become the men and women that we were born and intended to be when we become complete in christ the spirit within and the word without testifying one in the same he that believeth in his baptized shall be saved but he that believeth not shall be damned so after the lord had spoken unto them he was received up into heaven and sat on the right hand of god this is the position in which of course stephen sees him in acts chapter 7 verses 55 and 56 these these the heavens open and jesus standing interestingly not sitting in that particular vision on the right hand of god and they went forth and preached everywhere the lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following and this is what the lord chooses to do he could he could just wave his hand and convert the whole world if he wanted to but he chooses to work through the likes of you and me he chooses to work through the clay in the potter's hand why because one reason being because if it is earth and vessels like us that are being used then the treasure within them is seen to be all the greater in contrast that people will not say oh look at so and so wow what a person i would like to follow what they follow i'd love to believe what they believe because i want to be like them and then of course that might mean that some of the glory appears to be ours but that is not the case with any true follower of christ because nobody will say wow i want to be like them they'd rather say wow i want to be like jesus this person has been changed they've been transformed their life has been renewed they will look at us and say wow look what giants of the faith these men and women are but rather how

[40 : 30] how ordinary they are how comparatively inept they seem to be how unspectacular but this jesus in whom they trust this is treasure indeed and the lord chooses to work through the likes of us so that his beloved sun will shine all the more brightly if the lord wants the stars to be spectacular first of all he makes it night the stars are always there but we don't see them and if the lord chooses to work through the likes of you and me to take us up in his hands to make up his jewels from the likes of us rough diamonds as we all are then that should be caused not only for thanksgiving but for hope that none of us can be out with the the gracious offer of the gospel none of us can say this isn't for me god isn't interested in me this is a gospel for service this is good news to mankind because all of mankind is in a fallen condition all of mankind will be lost lost without christ peace and art good will toward men god's good will to mankind because without him we are lost they went forth and preached everywhere the lord working with them and confirming the word not confirming them let's say what a great guy peter is what a wonderful person thomas is what a great disciple nathaniel and matthias and all these other people are praise them up no the lord not confirming the men the lord confirming the word with signs following don't look at the earthen vessels and say they're not very impressive look at the treasure look at the lord don't say oh well that person they must be a hypocrite or look at how they fall look how they stumble they're not a very good example of a christian all of that will be true but you're not going to be saved by how good an example of a christian somebody is you're going to be saved by christ or not as the case may be the lord working with them may the lord work with us and through us and in our lives and confirm not us but his word at the beginning of mark's account of the gospel we have these words the beginning of the gospel of jesus christ and here we have the conclusion of the gospel of jesus christ as mark gives us we have the beginning and we have the end and it is all bound up in him the alpha and the omega what can we say to these things that what we have here amen so we say to the lord bless you to us let us pray you