

**Erlo Stegen:**

**Mark 16:14-20**

1) Jesus ascended to Heaven 40 days after He had risen from the dead. On that day He assembled His disciples together on the mount. One thinks of Jacob who gathered his children around him and spoke a word to each one individually. Often the last words of a person are of great importance.

Jesus reveals His final will to His disciples. He had completed the task for which He came, and was now returning to His rightful place of glory in Heaven.

The Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus had suffered much, was also located on this mountain. He suffered the ultimate humiliation, and an angel came down from Heaven to strengthen Him. He even sweated drops of blood. The wrath of God was upon Him because of your sin and my sin. He prayed, "let this cup pass from Me; yet not My will but Your will be done." He suffered to such an extent that no human language can describe it and no human mind can comprehend it.

It is therefore shocking and fearful that some treat sin so lightly and joke about it. Such people could not have had a revelation of Jesus Christ and God the Father Who is holy.

If you have experienced the awfulness of sin and what it did to the Lord Jesus you can never treat sin lightly again. The wickedness of sin and God's attitude towards sin is revealed in the substitutionary penalty Jesus paid for your sin.

May God reveal to each and every one what happened at Gethsemane and Calvary!

2) Jesus humbled Himself and bowed completely under God the Father's will.

It was the fulfillment of the Heavenly truth that the one who humbles himself will be lifted up and the one who exalts himself will be abased. This is a Heavenly law which will happen without fail, every single time.

If you exalt yourself you will fall, but if you humble yourself under God's will, He will lift you up.

When you are humbled do not be discouraged; God wants to lift you up. He wants to give you new life, but not unless you have died to yourself. If your cry is like the psalmist, "My tears have been my food day and night" (Ps 42:3), do not lose heart, for God is refining you to give you a new life that's worth living.

3) This was the final goodbye between Jesus and His disciples. But in stead of embracing them and comforting them we read shocking words. Jesus rebuked them because of their hardness of heart and unbelief. His love was true love and care, lest they should be destroyed because of their sin. There is a so-called love which closes an eye at sin and doesn't care when a soul is destroyed, but it leads to death and hell. But Jesus truly loved them and rebuked them for their unbelief.

Because of His great love for you, Jesus will not allow sin in your life. He will rebuke, chastise and refine you until sin is removed from your life and you are conformed to His image.

On the other hand, His rebuke is also not an angry, hot-tempered carnal one. His love is holy, and He truly cares for the salvation and purification of His child.

4) The sin of unbelief is a terrible sin. The disciples of Jesus saw so many signs and wonders and heard the testimonies of those who had experienced the Lord revealing Himself to them; yet they did not believe.

What was the reason for their terrible unbelief? It was their hardness of heart.

A heart and mindset stuck in the things of this world causes hardness of heart.

Difficult experiences might make you unwilling to listen when God speaks. In the disciples' case, their deep sorrow and disappointment surrounding Jesus' death hardened their heart. Some of them also hoped that Jesus would "restore the kingdom to Israel." (Acts 1:6)

This was a moment of great triumph and victory where Jesus overcame death and sin and satan, yet they remained in hardness of heart and unbelief. So Jesus spoke with authority and rebuked them for they were in grave danger of losing enormous spiritual riches. He did not have nice smooth words but roused them from

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their spiritual sleep.

So too God might be speaking to you in various ways, yet you persist in your hardness of heart. Your mind is continually in the way and interpret everything in your own distorted ways.

Cry to God to deliver you from your own stubborn way. Pray that God would open your eyes to your own condition and sin.

May God also grant you a humble heart that you will submit yourself under His will. Then He will lift you up.