

Meet the Resurrection

The Easter story begins with tears, with a woman crying, weeping, despair darkness and processing loss.

Jesus had said repeatedly that he was going to die and be raised up on the third day.

We begin to think that it should have at least made them curious about the third day. Yet there were just weeping women at the tomb at sunrise on the third day, but they weren't expecting what had happened.

Before we are too hard on them, let's consider that sometimes a frame of reference or worldview can blind people to the truth...as it can today for us.

The Resurrection

The Jewish people believed in the Resurrection, believed in one God and that he would bring all things back and make all things right...in the age to come.

They believed, without a doubt that this would occur at the end of history, as we know it.

This is reflected in the conversation that Jesus and Martha had after the death of her brother Lazarus in John 11.

²¹ "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴ Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

So their frame of reference didn't allow them to think of a resurrection in the middle of history. So the logical conclusion in their minds if the tomb was empty someone stole the body.

In Oregon we love sunny days, because we know it's going to rain soon.

The resurrection is a spring day in the middle of winter. There is still snow, (sin) on the ground. His resurrection validated his finished work on the cross. It was the *beginning* of putting all things right.

Main Text

"Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

entrance: 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying." **(John 20:1-10)**

Peter - The Guilty

There is a whole lot of running in this story. The reason that it is noteworthy is that it was considered socially improper in that culture, for a man to "hike up" his clothes and run. We see this action of running born out of something much deeper. As the Father of the prodigal son, see's his wayward son afar off and runs out to embrace him. Peter had experienced something in his denial of his Lord that devastated him:

*"Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly." **(Matthew 26:75)***

Peter didn't care at that point what anyone thought his impulse was to run. He was trapped in his guilt and shame and he don't know how to make this right. He ran to an empty tomb because if he was alive there was a possibility of redemption.

*"And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." **(I Corinthians 15:17)***

Like Peter sometimes we get into a "debt-debtor" relationship and we don't know how to make it right. In our world today it could be:

- A successful Businessperson who sacrificed their family/children and can never recover that which is lost.
- A person who has committed adultery and betrayed their spouse and reconciliation and restoration seems impossible.

Jesus never traffics in guilt and he never dispenses guilt.

*"For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him." **(John 3:17)***

For Peter the empty tomb brought with it (and for us) the possibility of forgiveness and a paying of the debt that he/we couldn't pay back. Jesus knows our personal helplessness and will come to us and bring us what we can't attain on our own.

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“But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.’” (Mark 16:7)

*“Later, knowing that everything had **now been finished**, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” 29 A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. 30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “**It is finished.**” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.” (John 19:28-30)*

That Greek word for “finished” is: **“tetelestai”** – *Describes a PAST completed act with PRESENT effect, emphasizing that the past completed event of Christ's death on the Cross has ongoing, even permanent effects.* It literally means: **the eternal debt owed for the sin of mankind was paid in full.**

The resurrection is the receipt and was validation that the full payment had been made.

“If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

(I Corinthians 15:32)

What Direction are you running?

Nothing we could ever do, will solve this issue outside of the work Jesus did on the cross and his resurrection.

Are we going to run to our good works or accomplishments or are we going to run to the empty tomb?

Mary Magdalene: Hope for the Grieving

*11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 13 They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don't know where they have put him.” 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. 15 He asked her, “**Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?**” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”*

*16 Jesus said to her, “**Mary.**” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “**Rabboni!**” (which means “Teacher”).*

“Woman” is not a demeaning term to the contrary it is an endearing phrase that Jesus uses.

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He calls her by her name in Aramaic: “Miriam” she immediately recognizes

She is desperately trying to find his body and doesn't recognize Jesus. He calls her by her name in Aramaic: "Miriam" she immediately recognizes his voice, knows he is risen, falls at his feet and calls him "Rabboni" which means teacher and *Lord*.

Mary was one of the women that followed Jesus and supported him financially.

"*Magdalene*" was not her last name but identifies where she came from. She came from Magdala, a city on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee.

She was a mess when she came to Jesus. Jesus cast 7 demons out of her and she would be devoted to him from that point on.

17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her." (John 20:11-18)

"After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out." (Luke 8:1-2)

Is it any wonder that she grabbed him and held on for dear life! He had saved and delivered her, he was her hope, her everything and now that had been restored by his resurrection.

Jesus will ask her two questions"

- *Why are you crying?* For Jesus this was an on-ramp into her life.
- *Who are you looking for?* Jesus goes to deeper places in our lives; he takes his time with people. *What* are you looking for, more to the point *who* are you looking for? Because He is the answer, especially during the foundational shaking of our lives.

Will you turn toward Jesus?

Elizabeth Smart was taken from her home some years ago. She was never far from her real home, but because of circumstances had forgotten who she was.

A police officer saw her and spoke to her, initially she denied that she was Elizabeth. He then called her by name and took her home.

Jesus calls us all by name, because we have lost our way, maybe our hope. When he calls us we need to turn toward him for he is the Resurrection.

"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved." (Romans 10:9-10 NLT)

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Life Group Sermon Application Curriculum Leader's Guide

Week of **04/4-5/15 (Easter)**

"Open: Meet the Resurrection"

On a personal note this Easter weekend changed my life, the worship, the water baptism, the sermon, the decisions to follow Christ, everything. I'm still working through all that God did for us, allow me to list a few quotes from N.T. Wright concerning our weekend:

"Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, and found the stone rolled away.' Something has already happened, and we weren't ready for it. We weren't expecting it. Dead people stay dead. Dead Messiahs stay dead. Everybody knows that. Yes, we believe they will rise again on the last day, but not in the middle of history, not in the middle of the night, not in the middle and the middle of our twisted and fragmented and puzzling and grieving lives . . ."

"It's about believing what you thought you'd never imagine. It's about living in a way you'd never have dreamed possible. It's about Jesus returning from the dead and launching the new creation in which all is forgiven all is remade, all is reborn. That's why this is such a great time for baptism, as the earliest church knew well. Baptism is about sharing the journey of Jesus, down into the deep waters of death and up the other side into new life".

Main Sermon text: (John 20:1-20)

There are some **consistent themes**, and key points, that emerge from these passages:

- Jesus has been brutally crucified and buried. Even though Jesus had told them several times that he must die and will be raised on the 3rd day when it happened they couldn't see it because of their frame of reference or worldview. The Jewish people believed in the Resurrection and believed in one God and that he would make all things right at in the age to come. They believed that this would occur at the end of history, not in the middle of history.
- They were waiting for the Resurrection; Jesus was showing them he was the Resurrection. As Pastor Randy explained the resurrection that happened in the middle of history was like a spring day in the middle of winter. There is still snow, (sin) on the ground. His resurrection validated his finished work on the cross. It was the *beginning* of putting all things right.
- When Peter received word that the tomb was empty he ran to Jesus burial place, despite the violation of cultural standards. Peter had experienced something in his denial of his Lord that devastated him. He was trapped in his guilt and shame and he didn't know how to make this right. He ran to an empty tomb because if he was alive there was a possibility of redemption.
- We can find ourselves in similar situations of sin, loss or crisis where

- how to make this right. He ran to an empty tomb because if he was alive there was a possibility of redemption.
- We can find ourselves in similar situations of sin, loss or crisis where our marriage is gone, our career or our finances; even our family is in jeopardy. Through our own actions or by someone else's hand we can get to a place of losing hope but we can be assured that Jesus never traffics in or dispenses guilt.
 - When Jesus said the phrase; "it is finished" it spoke to a PAST completed act with PRESENT effect, emphasizing that the past completed event of Christ's death on the Cross has ongoing, even permanent effects. It literally means: the eternal debt owed for the sin of mankind was paid in full. The resurrection is the receipt and was validation that the full payment had been made.
 - If you have ever been absolutely lost and perplexed in your life like Mary was, listen for the Lord to call your name. Maybe he will ask the same two questions he asked her; "why are you crying" and "what (or who) are you looking for"? He is the answer you're looking for, especially when the foundations of your life have been shaken.

Discussion questions/prompts for your group: (These questions are designed to help your group go deeper, understanding and applying the Bible passage(s) and the sermon)

- 1) We discussed why many of the people around Jesus missed the possibility of his resurrection because of their frame of reference or worldview. Discuss people you have met that their worldview has blinded them to the Gospel and God's love. Also discuss possibilities of Believers frame of reference, (how they view things about God, the Bible, life in general, etc.) might hinder them from receiving all that God has for them.
- 2) The Jewish culture collectively believed that the Resurrection would usher in a new age, that God would make all things right. In reality when Jesus was resurrected it was the *beginning* of putting all things right. Discuss what this means to us today and that will culminate as told in Revelation 21:5 "I am making everything new".
- 3) We know that Peter was devastated by his failure; he was trapped in his guilt and shame and couldn't do anything about it. He ran to the empty tomb because of the possibility of redemption. Have you ever experienced anything like this? Possibly when you first put your faith in Christ or you found yourself in a situation where you had no answer to your dilemma? Please share with your group.
- 4) Pastor Randy pointed out that when Jesus said the phrase; "it is finished" it spoke to a PAST completed act with PRESENT effect, emphasizing that the past completed event of Christ's death on the Cross has ongoing, even permanent effects. As best you can, explain what this means to you.
- 5) Lastly, we get to see Mary in a time when she is weeping, looking for her Lord's dead body. Possibly many of us have all been at this point; Jesus asks her two questions "why are you crying" (this question was

5) Lastly, we get to see Mary in a time when she is weeping, looking for her Lord's dead body. Possibly many of us have all been at this point; Jesus asks her two questions, "why are you crying" (this question was an on-ramp into her life) and "who (what) are you looking for"? Discuss the importance of listening for the Lord's voice during times like this. Also if you have experienced this would you share your experience with the members of your group?

For those who might like to use visual aids in their Bible storying, or study preparation, especially for groups with children, here are some helpful links:

<http://ministry-to-children.com/many-silent-years/>

<http://www.raisingourkids.com/coloring-pages/printable/bible/index-02.html>

Log on and check "Right now Media" there are several good resources that will relate to this study for the kids. Some are for pre-school and older, so go surfing and see if you can find something for your group.