

VICTORY OVER THE GRAVE | JOHN 20:1–23 | PASTOR MARK BOFILL | 4/05/2026

I. Victorious Revelation (1-18) | II. Victorious Regeneration (19-23)

INTRO: This morning, we reach **the triumphant climax of HIS Story**—a story that began in prophecy, was fulfilled in sacrifice, and now **Explodes in Victory!**

- On **Palm Sunday**, we saw **His Entry** (*a humble King riding into Jerusalem, signaling the hope of salvation*)
- On **Good Friday**, we witnessed **His Sacrifice** (*the Son of God laying down His life, taking our sin upon Himself*)
- Today, Easter Sunday, we proclaim **His Victory** (*the grave could not hold Him; death could not defeat Him*)

Today's Message: **VICTORY OVER THE GRAVE**, is more than **A story...** It's **HIS story...** made **Personal to the believer!** – *In fact, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to you today! It begins with a...*

I. VICTORIOUS REVELATION (20:1-18) *Now was the time for Jesus' Victory to be Made Known!*

– Jesus had explicitly **PREDICTED His Death and Resurrection** at least three times in the Synoptic Gospels, with many additional references across the Gospels indicating His foreknowledge of the Passion. – Jesus had just been **Betrayed, Arrested, Tried and Denied**. – **He was brutally Crucified... and Died on a Roman Cross!** – Ahh... **but HIS Story continues... Death Did Not Win at the Cross... Death was Defeated at the Cross!**

A. Revelation At The Tomb (1–2) **READ:** Mark's account tells us of **three Mary's**, John's account focuses in on **Mary Magdalene**, who was first to find the stone rolled away.

1. **Mary Arrives Early in the Dark (1)** – That detail is not just physical... **it is Spiritual!** – Darkness still clouded her understanding. – (*God often reveals His work in moments that feel uncertain and dark!*)
2. **Mary Assumed the Worst (2)** – When she sees *the stone rolled away...* she ran to the disciples (*Peter and John; aka the disciple whom Jesus loved!*), telling them that *"They have taken away the Lord..."* – Her observation led to **assumption, fearing the worst possible scenario**. – Mary was unaware that **the Empty Tomb was a Revelation of Hope**, which is what she really needed!

B. Running To Realize (3-10) – **READ: Peter and John run to the tomb (3-5)** – They Ran with Urgency together, because they desired truth. (*Peter in his Zeal, John because of Love*).

1. **They Observe Carefully (6-7)** – The linen cloths lying there, the face cloth folded separately **infers that this is not Chaos; it is Calm... This is not Theft; it is Triumph!** The Resurrection left behind evidence of intention... not robbery! (*The religious leaders would later use this excuse to explain it away!*)
2. The Disciple *"whom Jesus loved,"* **SEES and Believes (8)** – **True love is always quick to believe!** – This tells us that faith can rise even before full understanding!
3. **They Return, still Not Grasping the Scriptures (9-10)** – This reaffirms that Spiritual Realization is not always comprehended immediately... **it takes time... it take faith!** – *And even faithful followers struggle to interpret what God was doing.* **The empty tomb initially created Perplexity, not Praise!**

P/A – **There are SEASONS in our lives when God is Clearly Working... but we are still confused:**

- When circumstances don't align with God's promises... when prayers seem delayed... when outcomes don't make sense. – **But the Resurrection reminds us: God's greatest work often begins where human understanding ends!**
- Don't interpret God's activity through your confusion—interpret your confusion through God's truth. **A.W. Tozer** said, *"Sometimes when we cannot trace His hand, we must trust His heart."*
Segue: What begins as perplexity moves to something deeper—a **personal encounter...**

C. Recognition of The Risen Lord (11-18) – **READ:** *Mary recognizes Jesus when He calls her by name.*

1. **Mary Reflects at the Tomb (11)** – Her devotion, her longing, and her love is evident here. – Jesus delivered her from demonic oppression; He gave her life and purpose... **Jesus was her Lord!** (*I've learned that much like Mary, those who remain near Jesus in sorrow are positioned for deeper revelation!*)

2. **Mary's Encounters Two Angels (12-13)** – *Her overwhelming grief for Jesus is so strong*, that she wasn't even overwhelmed when talking to angels. **WHY? Because** True devotion values the Savior over supernatural signs. (*Information does not replace relationship!*) **Q:** *Do you weep for Jesus like Mary?*

3. **Mary Encounters Jesus (14-15)** – *She doesn't recognize Jesus at first.* – *She assumes He is the gardener.* She even converses with Jesus, and He asks her two important spiritual questions: **"Woman, why are you weeping? and Whom are you seeking?"**

- Jesus already knew her answer, but **He wanted her to Look to HIM, to SEE the Risen Lord!**
- **Jesus asks us the same question today:** Why are you Weeping... and Whom are you Seeking? – I emphasize this, because in my study time the **Holy Spirit reminded me** that **not all women weep for Jesus like this.** He reminded me that Ezekiel was shown what certain women of Israel wept for! *And He said to me, "Turn again, and you will see greater abominations..." 14 So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the Lord's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for Tammuz. (Ezk 8:13-14)* (*i.e the Sumerian goddess of fertility*)

P/A – Mary Magdalene was delivered from demonic deception, **so at the Tomb...** she got it right! **Because was Seeking Jesus... She Wept for Jesus!** *As a result...*

4. **Mary SEES Jesus (16)** – *And how does Jesus reveals Himself?* By calling her name... **"Mary!"** This teaches that recognition of Jesus is personal and relational.

- **In that moment:** Her confusion turns to clarity... Her sorrow turns to joy... Her searching turns to certainty! – She responds, **"Rabboni!"** – a deeply personal expression of devotion.
- **Jesus revealed His Victory Over The Grave to her first!** *To a woman simple devoted to Him!*

5. **Mary Hugs Jesus (17)**, as if to **HOLD ON** to His physical presence; **so that she would not lose Him again.** – But Jesus prevented her, because *in a short time He would ascend to His Father* (Acts 1:9-11)

- **Jesus' mission on earth was almost complete.** – It was pertinent for Him to depart so that the Holy Spirit would come to do His work on earth with us, in us, and upon us! (**tt. John 14:16-18**)
- **Jesus also instructed Mary to "Go Tell My Brethren"** of His Resurrection and Ascension – Back in (John 15:15), Jesus referred to them as His friend. Because of His finished work He calls them Brothers!

6. **Mary Reports to the Disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" (18)** – This communicates how everyone who Encounters the Risen Christ should respond... **Proclamation! Declaration! Exaltation!** [**He is Risen!**]

- **Resurrection is not immaterial... it Touches lives!** – The Risen Lord brings hope and assurance; our relationship with Him Transforms Despair into Joy. (**It is Victory to be Celebrated every day!**)
- **"To know Christ is to know life victorious over sin and death."** – **Charles Spurgeon**

P/A – **Christ's Victory was made Personal to Mary when He spoke her Name!** – Jesus likewise desires everyone to receive His **VICTORIOUS REVELATION**, which comes by believing in a **RISEN SAVIOR.**

Segue: From a Personal revelation to Mary, the Resurrection now produces **Powerful Transformation** amongst His Disciples...

II. VICTORIOUS REGENERATION (20:19-23) – **READ: *Jesus Removes Fear and Renews their Commission!*** – What takes place here, can be experienced by every believer in Jesus Christ. *First we see...*

A. His Presence in Their Panic (19) – The disciples were **shut in** and overwhelmed with fear! – **Even after hearing the news.** – They feared persecution from the Jews. (Prov 29:25) *Fear of man brings a snare.* – Fear make us hide... **but you Can't Hide from Jesus!**

1. Jesus Personally **Appeared Among Them (19a)** – Yes... even fear, His presence brings security! – **Chuck Smith, "God is always present in the dark times of life; He comes to meet us in our fear."**

- (Isa 41:10) **Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'**

2. Jesus came to Restore **Courage (19a)** – Jesus knew their hearts and granted His Peace. **"Peace be with you."** – But what Jesus accomplished through His Death and Resurrection was **"Peace with God"** which is justified by Faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 5:1) – **P/A:** As a Christian, **do you find yourself still fearful at times? Look to Jesus...** His Victory is experienced through His nearness!

B. His Peace is Proven (20-21a) – Jesus grants His Peace a second time: **"Peace TO YOU!"** It's **directed!** – Jesus didn't just Speak Peace... **HE PROVED IT** by showing His hands and side. – **The very Marks of Crucifixion** become the **Proof of Resurrection.** PROOF of **HIS VICTORY OVER THE GRAVE!**

1. Their fear immediately turned to **GLADNESS** *"as they saw the evidence of His resurrection,"* reminding us that His **Peace is grounded in what He had accomplished.**

- **Christ's Victory** brings inner calm in the midst of life's storms.
- **Christ's Victory** is not just historical... **it actually impacts daily life,** giving peace to believers. – **Just a few days before His crucifixion** Jesus Promised Peace, in (John 14:27) **"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you."** – Now, after His Resurrection... **He brought Reassurance!**

2. True peace is never found in circumstances... **"True Peace is the fruit of trusting in the resurrected Christ."** – **W. Wiersbe**

C. His Power Provided (21b-23) – Jesus doesn't rebuke them for their Fear, He **Empowers them** and **Sends them** to "Go Forth" in His name! (cf. Matt 28:18-20)

1. **His Commissioning (21b):** **Jesus entrusted His disciples with His Mission...** To carry on His work here on earth. – This commission fulfilled what He had already prayed in (John 17:18), "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world." – Lit. *"a sending out" aka apostleship.*

2. **His Empowering (22):** **Jesus gave His disciples the Holy Spirit, imparting New Life for them and Empowering their mission.** – As God **breathed life** into man at creation, **Jesus' breath** signifies **A New Work of Re-creation: aka REGENERATION!** – **This is when the disciples were Born Again!**

- **One must Believe that Jesus is the Christ and that He Rose from the Dead!** – In (John 3:3,7) Jesus told Nicodemus, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born-again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; ...Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'"*
- **Q: Are You Born-Again today?** If you are not sure, I'll give you the opportunity in a moment...

3. His Confirming Work of Forgiveness (23) – **Through His Victory**, Jesus entrusted His disciples with **Spirit-Empowered *authority to proclaim* (confirm) *the forgiveness of sins*** and to warn of remaining guilt for those who reject Him. – This Regenerative Power is seen in action **when Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, calls people to repentance and new life, declaring, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (Acts 2:38).**

CLOSING THOUGHTS: The Resurrection of Jesus Christ Changed Everything! The resurrection does not merely **inform us... it Transforms us!**

- **FEAR** is replaced with peace... **DOUBT** is replaced with confidence... **WEAKNESS** is replaced with boldness. – **When the risen Christ steps into your life, everything changes!**
- **Many believers today are MUCH like these disciples: Saved**, but still struggling... **Forgiven**, but still fearful... **Redeemed**, but still restrained.
- Many of us today are just **STUCK!** But you know what... **JESUS still enters locked rooms!** ... He still speaks peace! He still reveals His Victory Over The Grave!

Because He lives: You don't have to live in fear... You don't have to remain in bondage... You don't have to stay the same! You can live the Resurrected Life today!

CONCLUSION: As we step back and look at the full picture, we see that this is not just our story—it is **HIS STORY:**

- **His Entry (Palm Sunday):** He came intentionally
- **His Sacrifice (Good Friday):** He died substitutionally
- **His Victory (Easter Sunday):** He rose triumphantly

This is the Gospel: He entered our world... He took our place... He conquered the grave... And now He offers us life. – I INVITE YOU TO RECEIVE HIM TODAY!

“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart... you shall be saved.” (Rom 10:9)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Cor 5:17)

Live in His Victorious Power... Because the story does not end at the grave...