

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. **Enjoy discovering more about Him!**

"2 GRAVES AND 2 GARDENS" | JOHN 19: 41-20: 1-18 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

What would you most want to grow in a garden and why?

"Death is Reversed" 1 Cor. 15: 45-49

When Jesus walked out of the tomb into the garden, He restored what was lost when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden of Eden.

What was lost when Adam and Eve sinned? How does Jesus' resurrection change how people can approach dying?

"Alienation is Replaced with Connection" John 19:41- 20:16

Mary is upset the tomb is empty because she came to finish the burial rituals. She doesn't recognize Jesus until He says her name.

What does Jesus' approach to Mary show about Him? How does Jesus reveal himself to people today? ?

"Disgrace is Replaced with Grace" John 20: 16-18

Mary came to the tomb upset and lost but leaves with joy and purpose. **Who are people today that are examples of a similar change in their life? What are ways a relationship with Jesus changes someone's identity?**

REFLECTION QUESTION:

Jesus' resurrection changes everything. It reversed the curse and condemnation of sin and the penalty of death. Instead, all people can have a close relationship with God and be filled with joy and purpose. How has Jesus called you specifically. **How have you responded to His gentle approach? How has God reversed sin in your life? Pray that God will fill you with the joy of knowing Jesus is risen.**

2 Graves and 2 Gardens

Slide1 **Welcome:** online & in Fellowship Hall.

Prayer: *Jesus said, I tell you the truth, those who **listen** to my message and **believe** in God who sent me **have eternal life**. They will **never be condemned** for their **sins**, but they have **already passed** from death into **life**.* Jn.5:24 Ohh, that's good news! *Christ in the Crisis*

I. Slide2 **Intro: 2 Graves and 2 Gardens**

A. Do you know which **2 graves**? Which **2 gardens**?

B. In *Superman Returns*, Superman saves a **jetliner** in front of a **stadium** full of people. That's how a **Superhero** does it.

1. **Here**, **Jesus** reveals Himself **subtly/gently**, to a woman, named **Mary**.

a) *By asking her questions, by allowing her to think, wonder, and feel, just like **you** this morning.*

2. Behold, our **gentle Savior**. He is **Risen**. Yet He is still **gentle**.

II. Slide3,4a **1 DEATH IS REVERSED**

A. **So** which **2 graves**? which **2 gardens**?

1. The **2 graves**: Adam's & Jesus'. The **2 gardens**: Eden & Garden Tomb.¹

B. **Easter changes Our Lives**. Easter changed Everything. **Easter Reverses**: *sins curse, death, and condemnation.*

C. 1 Cor. 15:45-49 *NLT The Scriptures tell us, "The first man, **Adam**, became a living person." But the last Adam - that is, **Christ** - is a life-giving Spirit. 46 What comes **first** is the natural body, then the spiritual body comes **later**. 47 **Adam**, the first man, was made from the dust of the earth, while **Christ**, the second man, came from heaven. 48 Earthly people are like the earthly man, and **heavenly people** are like the heavenly man. 49 Just as we are now like the earthly man, we will someday be like the heavenly man.*

¹ Genesis 3:23; 5:5.

D. **Slide4b** Russell Moore said, “*I walks from a garden into a grave/Adam, and I walks from a grave into a garden/Jesus.*” (Editor-in-Chief, Christianity Today)

E. **We contrast** what was **lost** in the 1st garden, **to** what was **redeemed** in the 2nd.

1. From **darkness** of the grave **to** the light of Resurrection morning.
2. From the emotions of **grief and confusion** **to** ultimate **awe and joy**.
3. From **Garden of Eden** **to** **Garden Tomb**.

F. *As a garden blooms from barren soil. From desolation into beauty. Bringing Beauty from Ashes, life from death. Celebration & gratitude for the profound truth of Easter.*

III. **Slide5,6 2 ALIENATION IS REPLACED WITH CONNECTION**

A. **Read** John 19:41-20:1-18.

B. **In the 1st garden**, we found *a man and a woman*. **And here**, once again we have *a man and a woman in a garden*, *restoring all things*.

1. The woman in the garden wasn't facing just *a personal crisis*, **but an ancient curse**.
2. What she sees is **not a happy ending to a story she's been watching lived out**. **But** what she sees is **God reversing the whole story of the universe**.

C. When you think of **Garden**, don't think of the a perfectly manicured *Forest Lawn Cemetery*. **It was a rich man's garden property** where the owner *simply hewn out a small cavity into his hillside* for his own burial one day.

D. Mary is upset that grave robbers have taken the body, **of the One** that she has given up everything for.

1. What the angels do is *point her back out of the grave and into the garden so that* she might learn about *the reversal of the corruption*.
2. **We are all** headed into that **grave/corruption**, **but** our reminder this morning is ... *That Isn't The End!*

E. The angels sent her *out of the grave and into the garden*.

1. **And** in the garden she meets One, who she thinks is *the gardener*, **but** is actually *the Owner of, not only the Garden, but the world*.
2. **Re-read** Jn.19:16. The world turns on this revelation (in slow-mo)

F. In this garden, He **Reverses** the story of **Alienation**.

1. **Remember**, in the 1st garden there stood a woman who ate of the forbidden fruit; **as** did the man, *thus flinging all of mankind into sin, corruption, and death*.
2. **And it brought about Alienation**. Alienation from **each other**, and from **God**. They hid themselves!

G. This is reversed in this other garden, where Jesus **doesn't** ask, "*Where are you?*" **but** instead *comes up to her* and calls her out *by name*, **Mary**. She is known!

H. The way the risen Christ meets **Mary**, is in some ways *the summary of the whole bible*. Do you know why? Mary was such an admirable character **yet**, *she would have never found Jesus if He didn't come to find her*. (she was looking for a dead Jesus, a human Jesus)

1. That's *the gospel story* for all of us. Humanly speaking *faith is impossible*.
2. **Unless Jesus** breaks through. **Unless Jesus** opens your eyes. **Even** your *reasoning skills* will go no where, **unless Jesus** helps you with it.
[everything else makes Jesus *too small* ... *i.e.* your upbringing, where you grew up in the world. Schools you attended]

IV. Slide7a 3 **DISGRACE IS REPLACED WITH GRACE**

A. What **Jesus** is saying to **Mary** (and to you this morning) is about **Identity**.

1. *As The Greatest Being in the universe Jesus is saying, I love you Personally - Expensively - and Eternally.*
2. **By saying her name, Mary!** He reveals **Himself**, **but** reveals **herself** at the same time. **I love you**.
 - a) I am not *a dead founder of an ethical religion* that you can somehow get to know by following my rules. I'm *the living Savior* and you can know **Me**. **You**

don't have to *hold onto me* like you're afraid to lose me. I'm going to heaven. I'll be at the right hand of God, and I'm going to send the HS, and then you will **have Me** in a way that you **don't** even have me *right now*.

3. *Oh, and the more you know Me, the more you'll really know who you are Mary!*

B. *Slide7b* When we don't have a relationship with Jesus, we all live *under that shadow of condemnation*. We all live our lives **hiding**.

1. And some of you are still **hiding**. Just like *Adam and Eve* who probably *slowed their breathing down, stood as still as they could behind those bushes, so God wouldn't notice them*.

2. Oh, you're not hiding behind *bushes*, but you're thinking you are going unnoticed hiding somewhere in His big world, *hoping He doesn't see you*. You're hiding behind the life that God has giving you.

C. *But the good news of the gospel is:* Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart and calling you by your name, *Where are you? Adam, Shiela, Lucas, Anna?*

1. We play, even as adults, *hide and go seek* from God *like a toddler standing behind the drapes, being as still as they possibly can, but with their feet sticking out the bottom. Where are you?*

D. *Slide7c* *This morning:* will you let God count **Jesus' death** as your death; count **Jesus' resurrection** as your resurrection?

1. Let Him reverse your story of *condemnation* for *commendation*.

Let Him reverse your *alienation* for *connection*.

Let Him reverse your *disgrace* for *grace*. Let Him reverse your story.

E. God reversed *Adam's story, Eve's story, Mary's story, and my story*. How about reversing *your story* today?

1. By the way if you think you're *too bad* ... Mary Magdalene, once had 7 demons. *So she was demonized, a hopeless woman, and yet God reversed her life!* And God reverses her story *to save the world*. (no not by herself) **But immediately** Mary went and took **the good news** to the

men in hiding. Who took it to others. Who took it to others. On and on, until this **good news** was passed on to **me**. And this morning, *I'm sharing it with you.*

2. *Slide7d* It doesn't matter how awful your story was or is, *you're invited to reverse your life story today.*
3. Is.61:3 it says **God will give you beauty for ashes.** (garland/lei for ashes)
4. *Today*, give Him your **ashes**. He will **reverse** what you bring Him, and **replace** them with: the ashes of **fear** with **hope**, the ashes of **hate** with **love**, the ashes of **regret** with **new promises**, the ashes of **loneliness** with **divine friendship**, the ashes of **sorrow in sin** with **joy in God**, the ashes of **soul sickness** with **inward healing**, the ashes of **defeat** with **moral victory**, the ashes of **bondage** with **spiritual liberty**, the ashes of **unrest** with **heart's ease**, the ashes of **worldly envy** with **godly contentment**, the ashes of **defeat** with **victory** and **holiness**, the ashes of **godless pleasure** with **a worthwhile life**.² **God will give you beauty for ashes.**

F. Pray:

G. **Afterwards:** 3 next steps: *Baptism & Fellowship. Starting Point/welcome class. Fresh Faith Class.*

H. Keywords: garden, grave, good news.

² Taken from a poem in *Awake My Heart*, J. Sidlow Baxter, pg.313