

GM // name is Jesse // Glad you're here celebrating Easter with us.

I'm going to be speaking from an account of the resurrection out of John 20.

If you brought a Bible you can turn there.

Otherwise we'll have verses on the screen if you want to read along.

Let's go for it.

John 20:11-18

11 But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. 13 They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." 14 Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." 16 Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). 17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 18

Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord” —and that he had said these things to her.

This account of the resurrection grabbed my attention earlier this year.

I’ve always read it from a distance ... not b/c I have bad eyesight...

I’d get the facts of the story, but never connected with what Mary was experiencing as this encounter evolves.

Here is how I typically read it.

Woman crying ... Jesus fixes it.

Kind of like guys’ expectation for marriage.

Wife cries, we fix, we go.

But there is a lot going on in the details of this story.

It can’t be understood from a distance.

It’s an encounter that moves from deep anguish to pure joy.

And it's in the details, as we slow down and look, that we see the power of the resurrection.

At first looks, we can draw an obvious conclusion as to why Mary is weeping.

Her close friend and teacher just died.

Not to mention he cast 7 demons out of her!

A good friend is there when you need them.

But I'll bet none of us have one in our Rolodex that does that.

[That's old school for the Contacts on your phone.]

Losing a good friend would bring any of us to tears.

But Jesus was more to Mary than just a friend.

Without him she is worse off than we realize.

And that is true for us too...

Without Jesus You Are Worse Off Than You Know

This Mary we are reading about was called Mary Magdalene.

Often the Bible just uses a person's first name unless it's trying to give you more information about them.

In John 19 it records 3 Mary's (disciples of Jesus) at the foot of the cross.

[Apparently it was a popular name.]

But the 2 other Mary's are defined by their relationship to their son or husband.

It says, Mary the mother of Jesus ... then it talks about Mary the wife of Clopas ...

Then it says Mary Magdalene.

Or, Mary from the town of Magdala.

This wasn't cool thing, like Snoop Dogg from the LBC or something...

This is the ancient way of saying ...

Mary... no husband and no family.

Most likely, this meant that Mary Magdalene had no husband or children.

Which today, isn't really a big deal.

"Maybe she was too busy working on her career or doing ministry with Jesus to start a family?"

That would be a viable option for us today.

But not back then...

B/C the way that society was structured was around family units.

And the men had significantly more independence than women.

Women didn't just marry for romance ... they married for survival and safety.

It was an agrarian society.

Which means you did everything yourself.

Built your own house... Grew and gathered your own food.

Your family had to do the work of Bob the Builder and Harris Teeter.

And women back then couldn't own property or start their own Etsy store.

Life was very different.

Now, Add on top of that ... to be an unmarried woman living outside your father's house was cultural taboo ...

You were looked upon with suspicion, and the worst was assumed about your character.

You were a social pariah. Lowest of the low.

Society turned their back on you.

This made women like Mary vulnerable to the appetites of worthless men.

Which in turn meant no man was interested in marrying her.

Mary's stuck with a bleak future ahead of her.
And all this is hitting her at the tomb.
She is weeping ... the word literally means to wail.
She's letting it out!

Everything she had gained when Jesus came into her life is gone...

The first man who saw her and had compassion.

... cast out 7 demons.

... Brought her into his discipleship school...

Which would have changed the game for her life.

Being attached to a Rabbi [teacher] was kind of like being adopted into a family.

With Jesus as her teacher she didn't have to worry about starving.

And her dignity in society restored.

But now Jesus is dead.

And his disciples are scattering.

Mary is heading back down to the bottom of the heap.

She will be hungry, despised, scorned, ridiculed, abused ...

And she will face it all alone.

We all have trials and difficulties in our life ...

To varying degrees we can feel Mary's pain.

Some of us can relate ... but I'm sure many of us can't...

We look ahead and see blue skies, rainbows, boats,
grandkids, steaks, **white Jeep Wrangler classic body big
tires ... :)**

The future looks bright and beautiful.

And we can take security in that.

**In fact, we can put so much hope in that, we don't see
how precarious our future is.**

Life on earth can be so good that we forget it will end.

The apostle James points out the futility of this thinking...

James 5:1

1 Come now, you rich,

***[most Americans live with as much or more privilege
and comfort as the rich in those times]***

**weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon
you.**

See, the rich have the same problem as the poor.

They may not experience much misery in this life...

But what about the next?

What about the life after this life?

Without Jesus you're as hopeless in Death as Mary was in life.

That's one of our biggest problems... we are too short-sighted.

Anguish and suffering can blind us to our need for the resurrection.

But so can the ambivalence brought on by the comforts of wealth.

All of us are blind.

Which is why we need outside help to see and believe.

You Can't Find Jesus, He Finds You

Mary comes and sees the empty tomb, but she's still weeping.

Why?

B/C She went looking for a dead body, not a living Savior.

Then she sees two men inside the tomb.

We know there angels b/c the account said they were ...

But in that moment she sees two men...

And talks to them like dudes hanging out in tombs at sunrise is normal. [I might have asked some follow up questions]

Then she turns around and looks right at Jesus ... doesn't know it's him.

Jesus speaks to her ...

She's still clueless.

Here's the point ...

You can't just live off the facts of the resurrection.

Not saying truth is irrelevant.

But the resurrection can't be facts that you agree upon.

It has to be a revelation!!

Revelation is something that happens to you.

You don't have control about how and when it comes.

Jesus did this quite a few times with his disciples after the resurrection.

I've always wondered why all those accounts were in the Bible.

Why not just say, “Jesus rose, the disciple believed... Boom done. Let’s move on.”

On one of the accounts, Jesus walked for hours with two of his disciples explaining to them the Scriptures about himself.

The whole time they didn’t realize it was Jesus.

Then suddenly their eyes were opened to see him.

But God always has a purpose in everything he does.

All these disciples spent 3 years with Jesus ...

That’s a lot of time together....

Still they couldn’t pick Jesus out of a lineup, or know him by his voice.

The most qualified people failed to see the resurrected Jesus.

Now if they couldn’t do it ... what hope do you and I have?

And that's the point ... we can't on our own.

Jesus has to open our eyes.

We don't find Jesus, He finds us.

[And never at our best ... might I add.]

But when our eyes are opened, the effect it has is nothing short of miraculous.

When the resurrected Jesus becomes a revelation it doesn't slightly change your life...

The Resurrection Brings You Into A Whole New Life

I love the progression in Jesus' encounter with Mary.

Before he reveals himself he addresses her as "Woman."

It's impersonal.

He's acting like a stranger to her just like she is doing to him.

But then he says her name, "Mary".

He doesn't say anything else ... just her name.

One of the sweetest sounds to the ear is your name said with love.

When you are filled with compassion and love for people it comes out in your voice.

And Our hearts have a radar system to pick that up.

As loving and compassion any of us could be ...

It pales in comparison to Jesus.

He oozes compassion and love.

And that is what Mary heard when He called her name.

Has that happened to you?

Have you ever heard Jesus call your name like that?

Maybe you have, but it's just been a long time.

That is what our soul longs for more than anything else.

It's more precious than all the riches of life ...

It shines brighter than the darkness we are in.

It comforts us despite the bleak future we are facing.

Just like Mary's weeping turns to joy...

So does ours when the resurrected Jesus calls our name like that.

But that is just the beginning of this new life with the resurrected Jesus.

Jesus is always full of surprises.

I'm sure Mary expected Jesus to stick around ...

But He quickly points out to her that won't be the case.

Now, you would think this would send Mary right back to weeping.

[He's gone ... He's BACK!! ... He's gone again]

What the heck!!!

But this time she doesn't fall apart.

Which means the revelation of the resurrection for Mary was complete.

She knows she isn't losing Jesus ever again, He's beaten death!

And she also understood what Jesus' Ascension meant.

Jesus wasn't going to be there in the flesh ...

But he would be with her through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

That is the gift of the Holy Spirit to the church.
He gives us the full experience of Jesus without the body.

In addition to the gift of the Holy Spirit ...
Jesus gives Mary another equally incredible gift.

He says to her in V17 ...

John 20:17

“... go to my brothers and say to them, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

Let me tell you what Mary heard ...

“You thought you were back to being alone, without family.”

“You were in despair because no one was going to be with you to care for you and sustain you and protect you.”

But here, Jesus calls his disciples “brothers.”
He tells her that His Father is now Her Father too.
Family language.

Mary was just adopted into a new forever family.
A family that supersedes all other bloodlines.

This new life of the resurrection, resets new boundaries in our lives.

Church family watches out for each other.

Church family cares for one another's physical and spiritual well being.

You need other Christian brothers and sisters.

And guess what, they need you.

But the boundaries we are called to are beyond the borders of the church too.

Jesus calls us to take this message of the resurrection to those who don't know yet know it.

In obedience, Mary went and told the others.

"I have seen the Lord."

That is our part of our new life ... to go and declare that to the world.

"I have seen the Lord."

CALL BAND / LET'S PRAY

Open our eyes to see that without you there is no hope or joy in life or death.

- Pray for those who don't yet believe ...
 - Call them by name like only you can.
 - Open their eyes to see this is true and you are real.
- Pray for those who do believe ...
 - Help us live in the resurrection revelation ...
 - We need you to call our name too ...
 - We need to see you too ...
 - We need to be reminded.

COMMUNION