

Live in Resurrection Power
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John Chapter 20

Here's the big idea: Just as the resurrection of Christ dramatically changed the lives of his closest friends and disciples over 2000 years ago, it changes those of us who follow Him today. As we study what happened to them, we can put ourselves "in their sandals."

When we left off last week, Jesus had been buried in a borrowed tomb. That was Friday, now it's the first day of the week, Sunday. Mary Magdalene and some other women have come to the tomb to further anoint Jesus' body with spices. They worried about how they would get someone to roll away the large stone...as they learned, that wasn't a problem.

- Mary gets to the tomb and though it's still dark, she can see the stone is rolled away.
- **What's her immediate conclusion?** So, she runs for Peter and John.
- They come running. The younger, faster John gets there first, looks in but hesitates.
- Peter gets there and charges into the tomb. The linen wrappings are still wound but empty, like a deflated cocoon. John went in and saw what Peter had seen. Verse 8 says: "...he saw and believed." John, the first person to believe in the resurrection
- Still verse 9 says they had not "connected the dots" that Jesus' resurrection was the plan all along. It should not have surprised them. So, they went home.
- Mary, came back to the tomb...crying and confused. She still thought this was a grave robbery.

John 20:11–14 (ESV)

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.

- **What do we know about Mary Magdalene? What special place in history does this passage give to Mary?**

- By the way, there's a typical "men verses women" thing here. What did the men do after they came and looked? What did the woman do? Isn't this typical of men?
- Verse 13 the angels asked: "Woman, why are you weeping?" Jesus asked the same in 15.
- Seems like it's obvious: "They've taken my Lord and I don't know where they've laid him."
- Who wouldn't be weeping? A natural human reaction. Mary had been weeping for three days!
- That wasn't what they meant. It's okay to grieve a loss. It's healthy to grieve a loss.
- **What did they REALLY mean by asking: "Why are you weeping?"**
- We'll have weeping in this life, but the resurrection gives us the HOPE that dries those tears! Psalm 30:5 says, Weeping may last for the night, But joy comes in the morning.
- **Why do you think Mary didn't recognize Jesus at first? Theories? Ideas?**
- Verse 15: Mary is still understandably confused. Jesus cleared up her confusion with one word. **What was it?**
- **Why is it comforting to you that Jesus knows your name?**
- He knew her name, and she knew his voice.
- In John 10 Jesus said He is the Good Shepherd and the sheep "know His voice."
- Every believer's eyes are opened to Jesus when He calls us by name.
- "Why can't I convince my unbelieving family member or friend to follow Christ?" Because just like Mary at the tomb, and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus has to open their eyes to who He is.
- Verse 17: Jesus gave Mary instructions. **What were they?** Another "first" for Mary!
- **Anything interesting about the wording? What do His words tell us had changed?**

Phil Ware writes:

"Jesus is speaking forgiveness and offering His empowering grace to His deeply flawed followers. This is the Lord, speaking of who they will become when they have fully yielded their heart to Him. In doing this for His first disciples, Jesus is also doing two things for us!"

Jesus is telling us that our lives can begin again, fresh and new (2 Corinthians 5:17), empowered by His grace to become something vital to the Kingdom and important to God (Titus 3:3-8). He can take the faithless, the failures, and the fearful and use them to change the world!

Second, Jesus is challenging us to forgive those who have let us down. Since Jesus forgave His eleven "brothers" of letting Him down so completely, how can we not forgive those who have wounded us? This is especially true when we realize how much the Lord has forgiven us! How can we withhold forgiveness and love from someone Jesus describes as a "brother for whom Christ died"? (Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 8:11)."
http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200906/20090618_mybrothers.html

You see, the resurrection gave these fallible disciples the power to change the world!

T.W. Hunt wrote:

“The cross changes lives because it changes our nature. The resurrection changes lives because it changes our outlook. The world was changed two thousand years ago because the outlook of the disciples changed.”

But the disciples weren't there yet, they are still perplexed and afraid. So they gather together...

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

- Verse 19: Locked doors couldn't keep the new “glorified” body of Jesus out.
- I see several lessons in this passage:
- His first words were, “Peace be with you.” We may be isolated behind the locked doors of fear and despair, but Jesus is there to bring PEACE.
- Verse 20: If we'll look, Jesus will confirm to our hearts that He is a risen, living Savior!
- When we accept this in faith, he will replace our sadness with GLADNESS.
- **Verse 21: What commission did Jesus give the disciples? What was their new job?**
- **Verse 22: What did he give them, and us, to carry out this job?**
- Verse 23 can be misunderstood. Let's read it again and look at the Greek words.

The ESV Study Bible tells us:

*“The expressions **they are forgiven** and **it is withheld** both represent perfect tense verbs in Greek and could also be translated, “they have been forgiven” and “it has been withheld, “since the perfect gives the sense of completed past action with continuing results in the present. The idea is not that individual Christians or churches have authority on their own to forgive or not forgive people, but rather that as the church proclaims the gospel message of forgiveness of sins and the power of the Holy Spirit, it proclaims that those who believe in Jesus have their sins forgiven, and those who do not believe in him do not have their sins forgiven – which simply reflects what God in heaven has already done.”*

Christ has already done the work on the cross. We can boldly assure those who believe that HE has forgiven them; and lovingly share with those who don't believe that there is no forgiveness apart from Christ.

The disciples were GLAD to see the risen Christ. But one of the group was missing...

24 Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

26 Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

- Doubting Thomas. **Why do you think John included this in his account? Why do we need to know that this disciple doubted and then CONFESSED?**
- It's been said that Thomas' confession (verse 28) is the CLIMAX of John's gospel. I've always found it to be a very MOVING and EMOTIONAL moment!
- None of us can access the power of Jesus' resurrection and eternal life, unless we can come to the same place Thomas came to. Resurrection power only comes when we can EXCLAIM with Thomas, Jesus, you are "My Lord and my God!"

So, What's the Takeaway?

The resurrection of Christ is PIVOTAL to the Christian faith.

1. Just as he said, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that he will accomplish all he has promised.
2. Jesus bodily resurrection shows us that the living Christ, not a false prophet or impostor, is the ruler of God's eternal kingdom.
3. We can be certain of our own resurrection because Jesus was resurrected. Death is not the end – there is future life.
4. The divine power that brought Jesus back to life is now available to us to bring our spiritually dead selves back to life.
5. The resurrection is the basis for the church's witness to the world.

(Life Application Commentary)

To sum it up: The resurrection is the REASON we have good news to bring. Who do you want to share that good news with this week?

Peter Marshall wrote:

"No tabloid will ever print the startling news that the mummified body of Jesus of Nazareth has been discovered in old Jerusalem. Christians have no carefully embalmed body enclosed in a glass case to worship. Thank God, we have an empty tomb. The glorious fact that the empty tomb proclaims to us is that life for us does not stop when death comes. Death is not a wall, but a door."