

John 20:1-18 (NIV)

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!"

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.

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").

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.

Sermon for March 31, 2024: www.collegechurch.org/college-church-online

CELEBRATION: Today we witnessed God's means of grace through the baptisms of our sisters and brothers at CCUA! Praise the Lord! Begin your time together celebrating these baptisms and the beautiful testimonies shared. Remember again your baptism. Give thanks to God for his grace and mercy extended to you. If you have not been baptized, consider talking with one of CCUA's pastors about it.

KNOW ... *God and his Word.*

- In the dark of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene (one of Jesus' disciples) arrives at Jesus' tomb and finds something disturbing. What did she find awaiting her there? What did she assume happened? Why might she have made that assumption? How did she respond to what she found?
- Peter and the other disciple came to see for themselves what Mary had witnessed. How did they investigate the scene? What evidence was left behind? What did they do after going to the tomb? Discuss the conclusion(s) you would have made based on the evidence. How would you have responded after seeing what they saw?
- After Peter and the other disciple left, Mary stayed, looked into the tomb and had a conversation with angels and a "gardener." What did each of them ask Mary? Who was the "gardener"? How did the light dawn on Mary and cause her to recognize Jesus?

- What did Jesus command Mary to do after she realized who he was? In that time and culture, why might Jesus' command to Mary been considered unusual? What does Jesus' choice to reveal himself to her first say about the way his kingdom operates?
- What stood out to you in this passage or from Pastor Mark's sermon? Discuss any additional insights, thoughts or questions you may have.

ACT ... responding to & applying what we know.

- Contrast and compare belief and understanding. Based on verses 8-9, the other disciple's belief was limited — full understanding was yet to come. Share an example from your own life where you believed in Jesus, a promise he made or specific Scriptural truth, but the full understanding of what that belief meant took time to grow.
- A common feature of Jesus' resurrection appearances is a failure of his disciples to recognize him (see Matt. 28:17; Mark 16:12; Luke 24:16, 31, 37; John 21:4, 7). Share why you think they did not recognize him. Think about your own life. Are there times you fail to recognize Jesus in your life? How can we become more aware of our Lord's presence with us?
- Pastor Mark said John believed "when he saw the results, effect, impact — the evidence of Jesus having been raised from the dead." What evidence brought you to faith? Discuss the evidence in/around your life or at College Church that bears witness to Jesus being RISEN indeed!

BE ... living in light of what we've heard, becoming more like Christ.

Jesus is risen. He is RISEN INDEED!

This truth is at the very core of our Christian faith.

This week I challenge you to spend time thinking about our resurrected Savior. WRITE down the evidence (results, effect, impact) that could be used to help someone believe that Jesus is indeed our risen Lord. Find at least one person you can SHARE this evidence with, serving as a witness to them.

Each day this week, LOOK for evidence of Jesus through the Spirit being present with you. THANK GOD for his nearness and presence.

KEEP becoming more like Jesus!

Grace and peace,
Pastor Angela

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