

Marks

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading
Giving Time, Talents & Resources
Spiritual Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church

of Discipleship

April 4, 2021

Day 1: John 20:1-2

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. 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!"

The Sabbath ended on our Saturday night, at 6:00 - too late to go to the tomb. Sunday was referred to by many early congregations as "first day." This day changes forever how we look at the dawn. From this day on the dawn is no longer associated with cold, semi-light, and despair. It is no longer the beginning of another awful experience in living. Jesus turns dawn into the primary image of hope. For Jesus is the dayspring from on high. There is new life in Christ!

Question: Would you rather see a sunrise or sunset?

Challenge: How can we tell someone that there is hope in Christ if they are suffering?

Scripture: Acts 20:7-12, 1 Corinthians 16:1-4

Day 2: John 20:3-10

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to their homes,

Early followers of Jesus did not study the Jewish Bible and then discover passages about the death and Resurrection of Jesus. They first experienced the Resurrection and then went back to the scripture and found statements of how Jesus must suffer. I came to believe and commit my life to Christ and then began to read the Bible and only then really began to understand it.

Question: Why do you think the tombs were either above ground or in caves?

Challenge: How did you become a follower of Christ?

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 1:17-31

Day 3: John 20:11-13

but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. 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."

God created life, not death. All of creation strives toward life. Mary is not able, because of her grief, to understand that God can and will do more than she can ever imagine (this is no criticism of her).

God will not waste His power in giving us wealth or fame, but uses his power to give us real life. Like Mary we can have a hard time recognizing God's acts because of our fear or grief.

Question: Why wasn't the woman afraid of the angels?

Challenge: Can you give an example of God doing more than you imagined?

Scripture: Psalm 91

Day 4: John 20:14-15

At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. "Woman," he said, "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."

John Wesley understood grace in three phases. The first was preventing grace. This was grace that kept us in a state of mind so that we would not be totally depraved and therefore be able to recognize Christ when we see him. God loves us even when we do not believe.

Question: What do you think Jesus looked like on that morning?

Challenge: What do you think: does God ever get to a place where He says, "Enough, I forget you and will never take you back" or not? If God could entirely forget a person, what would it take for God to make such a decision?

Scripture: Romans 5:1-10

Day 5: John 20:16-18

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" 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.

Notice it was the mention of her name that got Mary's attention. God calls each of us by name. Mary does what is natural, she shares the Good News with the rest of the followers. God may not speak to us in such a dramatic fashion, as He does in this event but if we listen, God does give us assurances of salvation.

Question: Why did Jesus reveal himself to Mary at the tomb and not to the others?

Challenge: What would be the best way for God to communicate with you?

Day 6: John 20:19-20

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace is with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

Fear still gripped the Disciples so Jesus came to again assure them that they would be safe in Him. "Peace is with you" is a blessing that means, "May you feel the presence of God, may you have food for today, may your family be healthy and safe, may you be in harmony with all your neighbors, and may you not fear for your life."

Question: Why did Jesus show His hands and side specifically to the disciples?

Challenge: Write a blessing that you could give to those you meet (besides "have a good day").

Scripture: John 14:1-31