

EASTER SUNDAY

DATE: SUNDAY, 04 TH OF APRIL 2021

JOHN 20:11-29

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

Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!"

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

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; **blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**"

NOTE TO LEADERS:

We are back to four on-site services each

Sunday until regulations change:

07h30, 09h00, 10h30, 18h00

Booking is essential and can be done via the

website www.cityhillchurch.com

START TALKING

1. What stood out to you from Sunday's service or the Good Friday message?
2. If you had good news to share with someone, who would be the first three people you would tell? Why would you tell those people first?

START THINKING

1. If you had been Mary, what thoughts would have run through your mind when you discovered the empty tomb?
2. On Sunday, Steve shared three things about Jesus - He is present, personal and powerful. Which one of these three stands out to you the most and why?

START SHARING

1. What is your response to the resurrection of Christ? Is there hope in you, or are you perhaps, like Thomas, overcome with doubt. Or are you like Mary - He's right there with you, but you don't see Him? What do you think God is saying to you through these stories?
2. Read John 20:29. Have you ever been discouraged, and your faith started to waiver, but God did something that strengthened and encouraged you so that you were able to get through that difficult season? Share with the group.

START PRAYING

On Sunday, at the end of the service, we prayed this statement of belief. Let's pray it again...

Jesus Christ,

I believe that You are the Son of God.

I believe that You died on the cross for my sin.

I believe that You rose again on the third day and ascended to heaven.

I believe that You will return for Your own.

You are my Lord and my God.

Amen.

START DOING

Just like Mary, who experienced the risen Jesus first-hand, was compelled to tell others the good news, as Christ-followers who live in relationship with Jesus, we are called to share the good news of Him with others. Who will you tell this week about the power of the resurrection that can change their life?

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

In the Bible, all four Gospels tell us the amazing story of Jesus' resurrection. This Easter Sunday, we looked at what John the apostle wrote (John 20).

What is really interesting is that he tells the story of two witnesses to the resurrection back-to-back - Mary Magdalene and Thomas:

- Mary Magdalene was the first person to see Jesus after His resurrection.
- Thomas was the last person of Jesus' inner circle to see Him.

Both of them (along with all the disciples) had spent the weekend in shock and devastation and in no doubt processed it in different ways (as all of us do).

Now 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." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus.

So often, when Jesus is doing amazing things in our lives, we don't realise He is right there.

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." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!"

Imagine their shock and disbelief at what she was talking about!

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

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Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:11-29

It's a beautiful thing how John has juxtaposed these two stories (Mary

and Thomas) against each other. Both of them are in despair, but only one suffered crippling doubt. There is so much that we can learn about Jesus from these two stories:

3 P's:

1. Jesus is PRESENT

He was present with Mary, with the disciples, and later with Thomas. He is near. He is not frightened off by our sadness, despair or grief. He does not abandon Thomas because of doubts. No matter what we are going through, He is present! Through trauma, loss, grief or uncertainty - He is present!

The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. Psalm 34:18.

...God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5. Jesus has been present even when we doubted Him - He is near.

2. Jesus is PERSONAL

When He speaks to Mary, He calls her by name. He knows the words of doubt Thomas said when He was absent and repeats them back to him. Amazingly He let Thomas touch His hands and His side. *"Stop doubting and believe"* John 20:27. Through all the clutter, He calls our name. He knows us by name and knows everything about us, and He engages with us where we are at.

3. Jesus is POWERFUL

He walks through the locked doors! He is bigger than time or space. And most of all, He conquered sin and death - in one weekend! For all of human history, mankind has been grappling without to overcome those two things. *"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?"... thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Corinthians 15:55-57.

He conquered sin and death for US! He gives us the victory through Christ so that neither of them need have any hold on us so that we can have victory over sin and death.

Two angels announced His resurrection, and the Bible tells us that myriads of angels will announce His return. He is coming back for His own! This is where our hope comes from

Jesus said to Thomas: *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* John 20:29. All that is need for us to live in this victory in Christ is to stop doubting and believe!