

Sermon Follow-up | April 12, 2020

Easter — “Back to the Garden”

Focus Passage: John 19:41–20:18

Additional Context: John 19:38–20:23

Other Passages Referenced: Genesis 1

Sermon Recap: The sermon began with an illustration about the pastor as a child being dishonest about the reason he was crying. He was actually crying about being afraid of going to a new school but lied to classmates, saying he was crying because his hamster had died. On the first Sunday after Jesus’ crucifixion, there were lots of tears and confusion among the grieving disciples of Jesus. Mary Magdalene had found Jesus’ tomb empty that morning and began to weep. She assumed someone had taken the LORD’s body. Jesus then appeared to her and, calling her by name, asked, “Woman why are you weeping? Mary recognized His voice and turned to Him in faith that He was alive. The resurrected Jesus meets those who weep and invites us to get honest with Him about the source of our tears. He invites us to repent by turning away from our self-centeredness and sin, so we can turn toward Him as the resurrected Messiah. It is significant that the tomb in which Jesus body was placed was located in a garden (John 19:41). Death began in the Garden of Eden with the first sin, and death was conquered in a garden where Jesus was resurrected.

Introductory Comments

- **Chapel Food Drive: Saturday, April 18, from 10 am to 2 pm.**

Bags of non-perishable food items can be dropped off in a drive-up at the Main South Entrance under the portico. These food donations will be delivered to local ministry partners who are involved in daily food distribution in our community. Items needed: canned/dry/shelf-stable milk, peanut butter, jelly, pasta sauce, spaghetti sauce, pasta noodles, spaghetti noodles, canned fruit, fruit-squeeze packs, cups of fruit, canned ham, canned meat, canned pasta meals, canned soups, hearty soups, granola bars, crackers, hot cereal, cold cereal, juice, rice, stuffing, mashed potatoes, mac and cheese, canned potatoes, canned sweet potatoes, canned corn, canned green beans, canned beans, canned tomatoes, canned veggies (any), bags of dried beans, ramen, cleaning products, razors, soap, lotion, shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, baby diapers, baby wipes, baby hygiene items, kid-friendly food.

- **Mary Magdalene** — Mary, like John, was a common name in the New Testament. Mark’s gospel mentions three different women named Mary at the cross on the day of Jesus’ crucifixion—Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Clopas. Two other women named Mary are also mentioned in the New Testament: Mary, the mother of James and John, and Mary of Bethany—the sister of Lazarus and Martha. Some argue that Mary Magdalene was the same person as Mary of Bethany, but that connection is not clear in the Bible.
- **Joseph of Arimathea** — “The picture of Joseph from Arimathea in the various Gospel accounts provides a fascinating collage. He was said to be rich (Matt 27:57), an important member of the Sanhedrin (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50) who apparently was both a good and righteous person (Luke 23:50) and one who lived with the expectation of God fulfilling the promise of the coming of the kingdom (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51). But beyond

these descriptions he was also said to be a disciple of Jesus (Matt 27:57; John 19:38), whom John adds was a closet or secret disciple because he apparently feared reprisal from the Jews (John 19:38).”¹

- **The disciple whom Jesus loved** — The phrase “the disciple whom Jesus loved” is found four times in John 19–21. We can be pretty sure that the phrase identifies John himself, the author of the Gospel of John. If so, it was likely that John was not trying to call attention to himself as if Jesus loved him more than the other disciples. Instead, John was impacted by Jesus’ love for him.
- **The Tomb** — “Mark refers to the tomb as one that was “cut out of rock” (Mark 15:46). Matthew (27:60) and John (19:41) indicate that it was a new tomb, and Luke (23:53) states that no one had been buried in it. Matthew (27:60) adds that it was Joseph’s own tomb. To understand these statements, particularly that of Luke, one must realize that tombs were valuable pieces of property and were used repeatedly by families. A person was placed on a burial slab in the tomb until the flesh decomposed, then the bones were collected and put in an ossuary (a small box), which was kept in another part of the tomb. Then the burial slab could be reused. According to Matthew’s account, the tomb was apparently a new tomb for Joseph and his family.”²

Group ~~Gathering~~ Interaction

Connect: Making Honest Connections with One Another (Pick one)

1. Please share briefly one of the following:
 - a. Do you tend to be more of a crier or a never-crier?
 - b. What was your favorite Easter moment this year?
 - c. What has God been saying to you through His word, the sermon, or other people?

Grow: Listening to and Learning from God’s Word

Read John 19:41–20:18

1. The overarching theme of our annual focus on the Bible has been creation, rebellion, redemption, and new creation with Jesus at the center. We see garden connections in all four of those big events. Describe in your own words how the resurrection of Jesus from a garden tomb fits into overall storyline of the Bible.
2. What did the disciple who arrived first at the empty tomb believe when he saw the empty tomb with the grave clothes folded?
3. Who was the first person to whom Jesus appeared after His resurrection?
4. What two questions did Jesus ask Mary in John 20:15? Have you felt, “I don’t know where Jesus is” in your times of crying, or times when you were figuratively crying on the inside with no visible tears? How did Jesus meet you

¹ Gerald L. Borchert, [John 12–21](#), vol. 25B, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2002), 279.

² Ibid, 282–283.

in those times?

Serve: Serving King Jesus and Others, By Living Out and Letting Others Know God’s Word

1. Do you have a source of tears or sadness to get honest about with Jesus or others? Do any of these apply to you:
 - a. Grief over loss
 - b. A sense of failing to be the person you want to be
 - c. Broken relationships with someone you were once close to
 - d. Destructive habits
 - e. Abuse from others
 - f. Financial struggles
 - g. Fears or anxieties

How does the resurrection of Jesus speak to your sadness?

2. How is repentance different from remorse? ... How is repentance different from confessing wrongdoing and apologizing?
3. Believing that God resurrected Jesus after His being dead for three days and that He lives forever is at the heart of becoming a genuine disciple of Jesus. The Apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 15:14–17:

“And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.”

None of us has seen someone who had been dead for three days and is now alive again. Science cannot explain how such a resurrection could happen. It is a supernatural act of God and a matter of faith. How did you become convinced that God raised Jesus from the dead and that He lives forevermore? ... Can you think of someone with whom you could share your story?

Further Resources

- Bible Project –
 - John Part 2 – <https://www.rightnowmedia.org/Content/Series/181310?episode=47>
- Illustrations and quotes from the sermon can be found on the “Sermon Slides” link at the bottom of www.wcchapel.org