

Sermon John 20- Let's Go All the Way (Lessons from the Garden) Part 1

Preached at Cloverdale and Maxwell March 2024

John 20: 1-10

Now the first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb. ²Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

First day of the week – she started her week off right looking for Jesus. What time of day? It was early. That's a good idea to start your day off early looking for Jesus. I need to seek him before folk start clowning during the day.

When she got there it was dark which means when she started to seek him, it was a dark situation. You can't see too well in the dark. The death of Jesus was just 3 days ago, so it was indeed a dark situation and she wasn't going there expecting to see Jesus alive.

I don't care how dark it gets, you keep looking for Jesus.

When she gets there, she notices that something that should be in her way has been moved out of the way. What was in the way, wasn't in the way anymore. She knew before she got there that something was going to be blocking her way. She knew before she got there that she had a problem waiting on her. What she didn't know was how she was going to be able to deal with that problem when she got there. But she didn't let the problem that was waiting for her, stop her from coming to Jesus. She didn't give up. Let's go all the way.

Too much give up today. Don't let the problem that you don't have an answer to keep you from Jesus. Don't let that class keep you from graduating, don't let those people on your job keep you from getting promoted, don't let those crazy people in your life keep you from your breakthrough. Somebody up in here got some stones waiting on them and you know when you get to work tomorrow, or you get to school tomorrow, or heck, you ain't got to wait that long, you might have some rocks waiting for you when you get home and you don't know how to deal with it but you know it's still there. Don't let that keep you from your goal because truth be told, Mary didn't let that stop her from getting there and when she got to that place, she found that what she expected to be in the way, was now out of the way. She didn't let the stone cause her to give up.

He still moves rocks, still moves things around.

God wants you to see something. Based upon what Mary sees, she makes an assumption. Here is what she knows as fact, Jesus ain't where she expected him to be. The dead body is missing. Second, she doesn't know where the body is at. Based upon these facts, she makes the assumption someone has taken the body away.

She ran and told somebody else what she saw along with her assumptions. What God has shown you in your situation, be prepared to run and tell somebody else....so they can come running too. So they can see it too. So they can get to that same place too.....looking for Jesus.

1. Notice, they didn't go looking for him until she came with her testimony.
2. I want my testimony to cause you to run to seek Jesus.
3. You don't have to fully understand it or have a degree in it, before you can tell it.

³ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴ So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵ And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, ⁷ and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

They could have just stayed there and accepted the assumptions of Mary. Instead, they decided to hurry up and get there. They are running to get closer so they can see for themselves the truth. They didn't just accept Mary's account or her assumptions.

Assumptions might be truth, but they are the lowest form of knowledge, you may need to run and get closer to the situation before you discover the truth.

A careful note, Mary has an incomplete testimony though since she didn't know all the facts yet. In fact some of her comments or assumptions were incorrect. Just because part of the testimony is true, that doesn't always mean the whole testimony is accurate. It was true that Jesus was no longer in the grave, but no man had taken him away. You better go check it out for yourself.

Application for Today: Be careful of Facebook and folk who got just a little revelation; just because it starts off right doesn't mean they got the whole thing right. Truth be told, she didn't have this thing totally right.

John outran Peter and got there first. They started out together but John got there first.

He looked in, had to stoop down, or get low in order to see inside. Saw the linen clothes left behind, but didn't go any closer, didn't go in, even though he got there first. He went further than Mary, so he saw more than she did and should understand that the body probably wasn't taken away as Mary assumed.

- I don't know anyone who is going to steal a naked body. The wrappings were left behind, that tells me something in the natural.

John doesn't go all the way in though. He stops right there.

Doesn't matter who gets there first, what are you going to do when you get there.

- Some people been there for years but ain't going any farther than right there, peeking in from the outside. Not fully experiencing the fullness of the resurrection. Still not going any further or any closer even though they have been there for a while and got there first.
- That was me for a long time. Okay in that position, had come a long way, but wasn't trying or willing to go any further than that. Not fully experiencing the resurrection. I was just happy I made it this far.
- Back in the day, you better be happy I even made it to church. Sunday used to be my ball playing day, Sunday used to be my sleep in day. I ain't trying to get any higher than this....I'm gonna keep this Jesus thing on the down low –shhhhhhhh.

Then Peter comes later, but he doesn't stop there. He doesn't let coming in later stop him from going further inside. Just because you haven't been doing this Christian thing as long as others doesn't mean you can't go further or draw closer.

- Don't worry about getting there too late, just get there. Whenever you get there, it's always the right time. Getting there later doesn't disqualify you from getting closer or getting a better blessing.
- Didn't turn around and go back because he didn't get there first, and didn't stay where Mary and John had stopped....Peter kept going all the way. Stooping down to pray is good, but going all the way after prayer is so much better.

What he saw when he got there after he goes all the way into the tomb.

- Clothes lying there, but napkin was placed in a separate pile deliberately folded. Put your NCSI hat on. Shows that he probably wasn't stolen away as Mary had assumed. Nobody is going to take that kind of care if they are stealing something. Theft was not involved.
- Peter sees that the clothes have been laid aside. What was laid aside? The clothes he was buried in. The old stuff that they laid him down in. Burial clothes, but these were now laid aside so he must have had some new clothes.
- A folded napkin away from the burial clothes. It would appear Jesus did this himself. This is the way I get up in the morning. Some stuff just gets laid aside but I might fold some things separately off to the side. The assumptions are wrong. Peter is seeing the truth inside the tomb.

I like what John does next. When he sees Peter go in, he gets the courage to go further. He goes in too. When he goes further, that's when he believes.



- That's my ministry. To encourage people to go further and experience a deeper revelation. To encourage you to go all the way and experience the resurrection.
- He already believed in the life of Jesus, the miracles, and his death; but now he just reached another level of belief.....believed in the resurrection of Christ.
- Until John went into the tomb, until he went all the way in, he couldn't understand and believe.
- He didn't let his pride keep him on the outside. I got here first, who are these folks coming after me think they are? He didn't have a problem following someone else to go deeper.
- Today still, some of us will not go any further, until we see someone else go in first. That's cool, just don't stay where you are. Go all in.
- Tradition will keep you from going further. Religion can keep you from going further. Put all that aside. You can't put all that aside until you visit the inside of the tomb.

They still didn't understand the scriptures even though Jesus had explained to them about his death and resurrection. So they certainly knew the scriptures and the prophecy, but they didn't fully understand.

We can know and memorize scriptures too, and still not fully understand or believe.

Application and summary:

What about you? How far will you go? Until you visit and go inside the tomb, you will never truly experience the resurrection of Christ in your life. You will have assumptions but that may not be the whole truth.

I'm glad Jesus went all the way for me.

- He didn't stop at the manger; he didn't stop when they didn't believe in him.
- He didn't stop while praying in agony in the garden.
- He didn't stop or say timeout during the beatings or the crown of thorns.
- He went all the way to the cross, all the way into the tomb, and came all the out....for me so I can believe and have a new hope and a new life.

I can't just stop right there any longer. I can't just stop at carrying my cross. I have to go all the way for my Savior.

I have to go all the way. I have to follow him all the way into the tomb.

I have to start out like Mary, seek Him early by faith and not let external things stop me. I have to go out and invite someone else to see what I saw and know and tell them there's a place you need to get to.



I have to continue on like John and not just settle on what someone else said, I need to experience it and see for myself.

I have to go even further than just praying about it. I have to go all the way in the tomb so I can come out believing that if I follow him into the tomb, I'll come out with power like Jesus did. Jesus was down, so I'm down for my Savior.

Then I have to stay there like Mary to do more than just have knowledge, I want to see the resurrection in my life.

Where are you in this story? Are you a long distance Christian, are you working to get closer, or are you still at the crib not searching at all?

Sermon John 20- Why You Don't Recognize Me Now (Lessons from the Garden, Part 2)

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Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord

Background: Jesus has been crucified three days earlier and Mary Magdalene with several others have gone to the tomb to finish preparing the dead body of Jesus. However, she is surprised to find, the stone has been moved and the body is gone. Last week we saw how she told Peter and John. I showed you how they went further going all the way into the tomb before they started to believe that Jesus was not stolen but had arisen. However, while John now believes, Mary is still left behind at the tomb, wondering and still looking for the dead body of Jesus. Our story continues.

¹¹ But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked into* the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ Then they said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

Mary stays there. She was probably sad when she got there, and she was still there, and still sad. You can be in the right place, and be seeking Jesus and still not experience the joy of the resurrection. Wait a minute. How come the two disciples can leave that place and go home believing, but she is still broke down and in the same place/state?

- Because she never went inside when she got there. Never investigated further what happened. There but not fully experiencing the joy of the resurrection even though she led others there. She could only show the disciples the place, but couldn't show them inside because she had never been inside herself. You can't effectively take somebody to where you haven't been.
- But here finally in this verse we see she finally stooped down. She was the first one there, but the last one to stoop down and look inside.
- You can be in the right place and in church for a good little while and still not fully understand the power of the resurrection.
- I am noticing that these scriptures continue to mention that first there must be the proper posture....stooping or bowing down before you can get closer to Christ. Humble submission is always the first step in following the plan of God for your life.

- When she stoops down and changes her position, she sees something she never saw before. Because she stayed right there, she saw something even the others didn't see. Don't go anywhere yet, he still has something for you to see.
- Two angels sitting on the ends in white. Reminds me of the mercy seat.

Angels speak to her and ask her a question. God still asks us questions today. Why are you crying?

After all she has seen and the evidence around her, why is she still crying? She was sad when she got there and still sad now. Let me ask you a question, with all the evidence around us, why are we still crying about stuff?

We must not be investigating the facts; must have limited knowledge of the scriptures if we are still crying about stuff after all of this and after getting this far.

Her answer is sincere, heartfelt, but not accurate. Still holding onto her original assumptions that someone has stolen the body despite the facts inside the tomb. Crying because she doesn't know where Jesus is.

- Some people are still like this today, regardless of the facts, they still believe in the erroneous assumptions about Jesus.
- When the Spirit asks you a question, please answer Him, because you will soon learn how crazy you sound.

¹⁴ Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, 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, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

If you don't know where Jesus is, you should be crying. But when you study the Word and find out where Jesus is, those tears should stop.

Okay, she turns back and sees Jesus, but doesn't recognize him. She makes another assumption that this can't be Jesus so it must be the gardener....why else would this man be here.

Jesus asks her the same question as the angels with an additional question, "whom are you seeking?"

Why does Jesus ask her a question that he already knows the answer to? It is not for his benefit but for Mary's benefit. It is also for our benefit. Why are you still weeping? Why are you still mad? Who are you really looking for? When you can answer that question, you won't be too far from finding Jesus.

She found Jesus and didn't know it. If you tell me where he is, I will take him away. Let me tell you where He is so you can leave here today with Him.

She doesn't realize it is Jesus until he calls her by name. All she had to hear and understand was that Jesus knew her name. When he said her name, she knew, this man knows her name. How could he have known her name, because it was Jesus.

- When she finally recognized it was Jesus, she was able to turn to him.
- When you finally recognize who it is that calls you, you can turn around.
- When she realized that Jesus answered her prayers right there and loved her enough to come back and see about her, she was able to turn some things around in her situation.
- She turns from sad to glad. From hopeless to very blessed. From seeking to finding.

How? All she did was seek Him by faith and she stayed right there. She came back to the tomb and stayed there until she experienced the resurrection.

Question – How come Mary didn't recognize Jesus?

- Went there with the wrong assumptions. Assumed that he would still look like the last time she saw him. He was messed up the last time she saw Him so she just assumed he was still like that.
- Assumed nobody was going to be able to recover or comeback from that situation.
- She went to his last known address and was surprised when he wasn't where she expected him to be. She didn't realize He had moved.
- He must have looked a little different, had a different glow or something.

Application for today:

That's how real resurrections should work.

- When I have really understood and experienced the tomb, when I come out of the tomb, you shouldn't recognize me either.
- You may expect me to look like I did when I got the bad news, when I lost the job, when the relationship went sour, when I was down and out and crying, you might remember how I used to look but when I've been crucified and resurrected with Christ, I won't look like I've been through what I just been through.
 - I know you probably expected me to still be mad, but I ain't.
 - You expected to be sad, but I'm glad.
 - You expected me to be broke, but I'm rich in Christ.
 - You expected me to go off like I used to do, but I'm chill.
 - You expected me to swing on you, but now I just swing the gospel.
- I know you remember when I was down, you thought I would never recover, but I did.
 - The resurrection is more than just getting up again, it's also getting back what you lost.
 - Got my peace back, joy back, strength back, walk back, I'm back.
 - I'm back like Rocky Balboa, I was down but I'm back.
 - Locked out like Jack Nicholson in the Shining, I'm back.

- I'm back like Freddie Krueger, and I don't play hockey but Jason can't come back like I'm coming back.
- I'm back like original Coke, I'm back like capri pants.
- And when I'm hitting the wall again and wake up down and wake up distressed and depressed I know how to go back and pick up my cross and go back into that tomb and in the midst of my problem go into Arnold Schwarzenegger Terminator mode and proclaim, "I'll be back".
- When I'm, down with Christ, I'll be back up with Him. I'm like the thief on the right side of the cross. I know you expected me to never recover from my last situation, but I'm in paradise with my King.
- I know you went looking for me at my last address. Heartbreak Hotel, Wall Street, Nightmare on Elm Street, Sesame Street, but I've moved to Mircle on 34th Street, I live somewhere along the King's Highway. If you look for me at my last condition you probably won't find me there. You won't find me in my last attitude, I've got a new attitude.
- Don't mistake me for the gardener, I might have the answer to your question of what you are looking for.

When you see me get up from this mess, you shouldn't recognize me.

When I have had a true resurrection experience, you should have a hard time recognizing me from what I used to be before.

We've been changed.

What about you? If you are still the same person after visiting the tomb, you haven't really experienced the resurrection. You should come out of your past situation looking like Jesus.

If you still tripping today like you used to trip yesterday, make a trip back to the cross and hang out in the tomb and go all the way in.

- Drop off all the stuff you brought in there with you and leave it there.
- Leave the grave clothes there, leave the hurt feelings there, leave the heartache and rejection there, leave the mistakes there, leave your pride there and come out brand new in Christ.
- When you feel the old you rising up out of the tomb, go back in.
- Stay there until your change comes.
- When you experience a true resurrection, you should be able to lay some stuff aside, and put on some new stuff. Too many night of the living dead saints walking around. Still got the same old stinky burial clothes on but trying to walk in newness of life with old clothes on.
- Jesus leaves these old clothes in the grave, didn't take them with him. Application, what is it that you need to leave in that grave what Christ has delivered you from? Some stuff that should have been buried, needs to be left in that old place.
- Stop bringing up that old stuff, it's done, bury that old stuff and get up. You can't get up if you stay low, and you can't really experience the resurrection if you still walking around with that hurt, that pain, that suffering, that disappointment.

- Jesus was beat up, cut up, and the blood from those cuts had stained the clothes he was buried in. And baby, brother, I know some of us been beat down, and we done suffered some pain, and we got some open wounds that been bleeding. And when you see us, you can still see the damage, and the hurt, and the pain, but when you really experience the resurrection, those old clothes, that old pain, you can't tell I've been hurt cause I don't wear those clothes any more. Some stuff just needs to be buried, everything don't need to be resurrected, some stuff needs to stay dead and buried.

I'm not the same, I'm brand new. Somebody told me that before but I didn't believe it. I heard it before but I really didn't understand how this is supposed to work. I believe it now and I know how it works.

It is not an assumption, because He has resurrected some things in my life. I see it now. Resurrected knees, job situation, marriage, relationships, ministry.

My best days are not behind me, they are still in front. Now we have work to do. When you fully experience the resurrection, you can leave that place and spread the good news....He lives.

So, why are you still standing in the same place?

She was going to touch him but he tells her not to. Don't touch or hold him back from what he needed to do as our high priest. Notice, after the resurrection, he still has a mission to accomplish for us. Intercession for us. Doesn't want anything to keep him from going all the way up.

Even after your resurrection, don't let anything keep you from going all the way up. There is still another level after this.

¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"

¹⁸ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* He had spoken these things to her.

Obedience is always required. Now she has a greater testimony. We should too. The same woman who had seven demons now honored (Luke 8). She is the first one to see and speak to Jesus after his resurrection.

She experiences the true resurrection. So she gets new instructions. There is a word and instructions for every season you enter. Her instructions now are to go tell the brothers where I'm going.....a place where we can go too because He's our Father and God too.

Notice the close connection we have and will have with his resurrection; he calls them his brothers...wow!

Sunday is not coming, Sunday is here!