



GRACE CITY
CHURCH

Gospel Community Notes & Questions

Title: He Is Risen

Text: John 20:1-18

Theme: The only reasonable response to the resurrection of Jesus is to go and tell others.

Teaching Notes: It's Sunday morning after Good Friday. None of the disciples are at the tomb, watching for Jesus to rise from the dead as he promised. But Mary goes to anoint his dead body with burial spices. The tomb is empty! Jesus is gone, but his graveclothes remain! What does Jesus do to prove to the original skeptics that he is indeed alive – and that everything has changed?

Outline:

1. What the disciples saw. (vv. 1, 5, 6, 8, 12, 14, 18)

“See” or “saw” is the keyword in this text – the point being that there were eyewitnesses of a series of events:

- Mary saw the tomb had been opened. (v. 1)
- John saw an empty tomb with graveclothes left behind. (v. 5)
- Peter saw an empty tomb with graveclothes and a head cloth. (v. 6)
- John went into the tomb and saw what Peter had seen. (v. 8)
- Mary saw two angels sitting where Jesus had been laid. (v. 12)
- Mary saw Jesus standing in the garden. (v. 14)
- Mary saw and recognized that Jesus was risen. (v. 18)

2. What the disciples knew. (vv. 2, 9, 13, 14)

- They didn't know where the body of Jesus had gone. (vv. 2, 13)
- They didn't understand the Old Testament prophecies about the resurrection of the Messiah. (v. 9)
- Mary didn't perceive that the risen Jesus was the “gardener.” (v. 14)

3. What the disciples believed. (v. 8)

- Even before John saw the risen Jesus, and without fully comprehending the OT prophecies, he already believed Jesus was risen as the true Lord.

4. What the disciples did. (vv. 10, 18)

- Peter and John go and hide. (v. 10)
- Mary goes and tells. (v. 18)



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Questions on John 20:1-18 to explore individually and with your group:

1. What's something new you learned or what stood out to you most from this familiar story of Jesus' resurrection?
2. Give some examples of counterproductive details in this story. That is, what elements don't present the disciples in the best light? Why does that matter?
3. What's wrong with the modern-day assertion that the disciples were not necessarily "lying" but were merely "seeing what they wanted to see"? How do you respond to this notion that the disciples were superstitious mystics?
4. Put yourself in the disciples' sandals. What do you think you would've done that Sunday morning?
5. Why do you think John repeatedly reports what the disciples saw?
6. Why do you think Mary failed to recognize the risen Jesus by the garden tomb?
7. What do you make of John's belief in verse 8? What do you think he believes, given he didn't yet understand the Old Testament resurrection prophecies? How is that relevant to your life?
8. Why do you think Peter and John simply went back home after seeing the empty tomb? How are you like them?
9. What are your main objections to sharing the Good News of the resurrection? How do you rationalize or excuse not sharing this hope on a more regular basis? Honestly, what's the worst thing that could happen to you if you did?
10. What one actionable thing will you do this week in response to this Scripture?

Prayer Prompts:

1. Praise the Lord for rising victorious over death itself, so you can have the hope and confidence of eternal life in him.
2. Confess the fears, the apathies, the idols, and the misplaced priorities that hinder you from regularly sharing the hope of the Gospel with others.
3. Ask God to give you the joyful boldness of Mary to go and proclaim to others what you yourself have seen and experienced in Christ.