

Find Grace, Not Grief

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[0:00] Let's take our Bibles and go to John's Gospel.

John's Gospel, once again, John chapter 20, John 20. John 20, if you need a Bible, pull out the black Bible in the chair in front of you and go to the back, find page 90, where you'll find John 20. John 20, 11. John chapter 20, verse 11, 11 through 18 this morning. So we should be done with John's Gospel, I think, mid-May.

We'll probably take a break. I might go through some of the Psalms just as a break, and then I'm gonna do a study in the book of Zephaniah. Go to the Old Testament again.

I'm like hitting the Old Testament, so Zephaniah, probably maybe like June, beginning of June. So somebody's gonna preach for me the first Sunday of June because our son Michael, whatever, he gets married.

[1:06] Golly, how inconvenient, right? I mean, come on. Can't you get a raise so I can preach or something? I tried to convince him of that, but he didn't go for it. So these kids these days, you know, I guess.

So anyway, so we'll start in Zephaniah probably in mid-June, probably is where we're gonna start it. Anyway, so John 20, chapter 20, look at verse 11, 11 through 18. Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene.

But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head, one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying.

And they said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, Because they've taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they've laid him. And when she said this, she turned around, she saw Jesus standing, and did not know that it was Jesus.

[2:07] Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek? Thinking him to be the gardener, she said to him, Sir, if you've carried him away, tell me where you've laid him, and I will take him. Jesus said to her, Mary.

Turning, she said to him in Hebrew, Rabboni, which means teacher. Jesus said to her, Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers, and say to them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and my God, and your God.

Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, I've seen the Lord. And he said these things to her. Have you ever been looking for something, and ended up finding something else, that you didn't expect, and then that something else, ended up being better, than the first item you had in mind.

I did that some time ago, I was trying to find a tool, and I found another tool, and I went, oh look at it, I didn't know I had this, it completely, I didn't realize I had this, and it ended up being a tool, working better than the first one, I had in mind.

I love that. Wow, look at what I found. Right? And that's what happens here with Mary. Mary. Mary's expecting death, grief, a body.

[3:33] Little did she know, there'll be benefits, that would come to her, through the resurrected Jesus, she had no idea.

And that's what we see here, come receive Jesus, find something, come know Jesus, you'll find something, come receive, believe into Jesus, trust Jesus, and you will find, we'll see today, grace, not grief.

Grace, not grief. Receive Jesus, trust Jesus, you'll find grace. Believe into Jesus, you'll find grace. Come know Jesus, you'll find grace, not grief. Actually, you'll find more than just grace, even though grace is really the, epitome in the bedrock, in the foundation of it all.

In the resurrected Jesus, we find grace, not grief, life, not death, spiritual, no, it's a capital S, of the spirits, and eternal, not partial and temporal, kinship, not distance.

[4:39] repentance. This is all due to the Father's grace toward us, and the accomplished mission of His Son. We're so grateful for Christ.

We're so grateful for what God has done. We find grace, life, of the spirits, and what's eternal, and we find kinship.

All in the resurrected Jesus. That's what we'll see today, in these verses. Jesus' resurrection is not a time for grief. No, Mary. It's a time for grace.

The empty tomb gives us the hope of grace and salvation, not grief and condemnation. If you don't view the tomb with grief, view it with grace.

It's God's grace to you. Because Jesus rose, we have an advocate before the Father. Because Jesus rose, we have the guarantee of our inheritance, and Jesus' presence through His Spirit.

[5:42] Because Jesus rose, we have the promise of His return, to resurrect us, taking us to Himself. And here's Mary. experiencing grief outside the tomb, not realizing that grace can be experienced inside the tomb.

Life is experienced inside the tomb. Because Jesus has conquered the power of sin and death, overcoming grief, overcoming death, with grace and life.

Interesting, too. Klink is so good at his commentary, I highly recommend it. He's been so helpful. He brings up this, taking us back, John's Gospel, to Genesis once again.

In the first garden, the woman was questioned, and her answer became the source of grief. And in the second garden, this garden, the woman was also questioned, and the answer would be the source of grace for all who believe.

Interesting. The irony there. And because of Jesus' resurrection, we share in His sonship with the Father.

[6:58] We share in His sonship to the Father. We are bound together as God's family. That's why we're saying, oh, how good it is. The family of God comes together.

We have kinship. We're all brothers and sisters in Christ with God as our Heavenly Father, us called His children, and Jesus as the unique, resurrected Son of God.

So, let's walk through the text. Here we'll see how we experience four benefits because of Jesus' resurrection from the dead. We'll see four benefits that comes to us because of Jesus' resurrection. And these first two come together. Grace, not grief. Life, not death. Verse 11 through 16. We experience grace. The benefit of grace, not grief.

We experience the benefit of life, not death. Look at verse 11. Peter and John, they left. Remember verse 10? They took off. Mary stayed at the tomb weeping.

[8:03] And this verse, weeping, is expressed twice. Four times total in this passage of her weeping. She wept outside and noticed, it says she stooped and looked into the tomb and found two angels.

One at the head, one at the feet. Now, this tells us a few things. The presence of angels tells us this is a sacred place. It's a big deal. And that God had something to do with Jesus' body being gone. Not the Jews. Not the religious leaders. It was God who had something to do with this. But even more vital is what John describes to us here in verse 12.

And she saw two angels in white, one at the head, one at the feet. Why does John point this out to his readers?

Why is this significant? I agree with Klink here. He brings out, there's a possible allusion here to the Ark of the Covenant.

[9:10] And even more specific, the atoning place or what's known as the mercy seat, which was a symbol of God's presence. Exodus 25, interesting.

Exodus 25, 21. If you're taking notes, you can write that down. Psalm 25, 21. It says this, the Lord says, Yahweh says to Moses, and you shall put the atoning place, the mercy seat, on top of the Ark and the Ark you shall put the testimony which I shall give to you and there I will meet with you.

And from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubs, there was two cherubs, there's a cherub on one side, a cherub on the other, which are upon the Ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.

That's where I will meet you, the presence of God, there at the atoning place, the mercy seat. That's Exodus. Now, it's in between the atoning place, there were two cherubs who guarded God's

holiness and guarded His grace, really.

It was both. They guarded His character. So, it was at this atoning place or the mercy seat that God met with sinners.

[10 : 32] Moses was a sinner. That's where he would meet Moses. So here, holiness and mercy kissed each other at the atoning place, the mercy seat.

This was the glory of God. That's what he said. The glory of God will be right there. And where do you see the glory of God climaxed in Jesus?

You just sang it. His death and resurrection. So, what does this mean? Jesus' resurrection manifested God's saving grace and mercy, manifested His ultimate presence, and manifested His saving life.

He's the atonement for all our sins and His resurrection. Seal the truth of that atonement. That's what Mary was supposed to see and understand. But the focus is upon her emotions, upon her grief.

Because in verse 13, she said to her, the angels, woman, why are you weeping? She said to them, because they've taken away my Lord. I do not know where they've laid Him.

[11 : 47] She just couldn't see. The title, woman, by the way, it's a distancing term, but also a way to maintain respect. It wasn't like you see today, ah, woman, what's up with you?

No, it wasn't like that. It was a way to distance themselves, but also to be respectful to her. But Mary only knew grief. She was only looking at the physical aspect.

My Lord is gone. There's no life here. She couldn't see that this empty tomb symbolized life and grace and God's mercy and His presence.

It didn't describe death or grief or justice or separation. Little did she understand.

Notice what happens in verse 14. Saying this, when she said this, turning around, she saw Jesus standing. She didn't know that it was Jesus, though.

[12 : 48] She turned back and forth from the tomb to Jesus. She had no idea it was Him. The irony here is thick. The answer to her grief, the answer to her sadness, was right in front of her face.

In both the empty tomb and now the resurrected Jesus. But she could not see or understand either one.

Notice verse 15. Jesus speaks here. Jesus said to her, Woman, again, a term to distance Himself from her, but also to maintain that relationship and that respect.

Why are you weeping? Whom do you seek? He probed her intentions of what she truly desired. Her grief and her emotions clouded her thinking she needed eyes to see. Next part of verse 15.

[13 : 53] Thinking Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, Sir, if you carried Him away, tell me where you've laid Him and I will take Him. How ironic. Again, the irony is here once again in that this gardener with a capital G tended this new garden where humans can be in God's presence once again.

the old garden with its liturgy gardener Adam they were removed from God's presence.

Remember that? So here Jesus, by the way, made His first post-resurrection appearance to Mary a female.

Now, you might see this is not a big deal because we're in the 21st century and in the first century explicitly with Jewish society this is a big deal whose testimony would not matter but God had a whole different plan, didn't He?

She says this to Him and then Jesus said to her verse 16, Mary. He spoke her name implies He spoke warmly, tenderly, inviting.

[15 : 21] John 10:3 My sheep hear my voice they respond to me said Jesus. Notice, now Mary recognized her resurrected Lord turning, she said to Him in Hebrew or Aramaic that got, this got her attention right away, right?

He got her attention. Rabboni! Teacher! The resurrected Jesus, the sacrificial Christ was very glorious grace and presence of God.

All her sadness, all her grief, all her despair, it changed to delight, to joy, to hope. So, in the resurrected Christ we find grace, not life.

Excuse me, we find grace, not grief. We find life, not death. This is what we find in Him. How wonderful this is. Grace, not grief. Life, not death.

Third benefit, because Jesus rose. Spiritual and eternal, not partial and temporal. And when I say spiritual, I mean of the Spirit. I'm not meaning it like those who are secular and say, I'm not

religious, I'm the spiritual.

[16:36] They stole that word, that word belongs to us. Because what that word means is we're of the Spirit. That's what spiritual means. So we're of the Spirit. That's what I mean by that when I say spiritual. You'll see why in a moment.

So verse 17, excuse me, so verse 16, she cries out, Rabboni, my teacher. And then Jesus says, verse 17, New American Standard says, stop clinging to me for I'm not yet ascended to the Father. Now this is probably another difficult passage to interpret in John's gospel and really in the whole New Testament trying to figure out what Jesus means by this.

What is John trying to tell us when he communicates that Jesus said this to Mary? Okay, well, there's two ways to take this.

The standard way is how it's translated in New American Standard. Stop clinging to me. So the idea is Mary grabbed him or was about to reach out for Jesus. So Jesus stops, stop clinging to me or touching me.

[17:44] So that's kind of, there's one way to take it that way. Or it could be translated as a simple prohibition, don't touch me. Okay, so if we take the second option, then Jesus said this to guide Mary to see that her intense search for his body was misguided.

Remember, what was Mary thinking the whole time? Excuse me, since verse one. Since verse one, she's looking for his body. The physical body, that first physical body, that's what she's looking for. Her search is misguided. Again, clink is so helpful here. But instead of relying on his physical body, she needed to rely on him as the living Lord.

And the way we encounter Jesus in this way is in and by the Spirit. So Mary, it's not about touching my physical body.

It's not about, oh, you found my physical body. No, it's not about that. I have been resurrected with a new body. And she would need to see that encountering Jesus would be in and by the Spirit.

[18:57] not by this first physical body that she was used to. And notice he says, for, because I have not yet ascended to the Father, the basis of Jesus separating his physical presence and Mary was he had not ascended to the Father.

His ascension would come soon. And then the Spirit would come. So at the coming of the Spirit, spatial, partial, temporal separation would stop.

It would cease. Now, not to say that Mary, excuse me, not to say that Jesus spoke with Mary and then he ascended. That's not what Jesus means here.

And, this does not contradict with Thomas. We'll see that next week. Who was told by Jesus to touch him. Thomas was unbelieving.

He said he would not believe until he touched, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Mary was believing. Thomas was not clinging to the physical body of Jesus like Mary was.

[20:06] A misguided search by Mary. No. You encounter Jesus by the Spirit and that's what Jesus is looking, telling her, look forward to this. You're gonna encounter me by the Spirit, not by you clinging to this physical body that I used to have.

Now, a question will come to us. So how, how do we encounter Jesus today in the Spirit? In the church? The church body is Jesus' body here on earth.

We are the physical representation of Jesus because all of us have the Spirit of God inside of us. So how do you encounter, well, there's actually two ways, the body and His word.

That's how you encounter Jesus from His word. We encounter Jesus today in the Spirit through the church body, the congregation, because we all have the Spirit of God.

which actually leads to the fourth benefit. To be honest, you have the spiritual and eternal, not this partial, not just temporal. This leads to the next benefit that Jesus gives to us because He resurrected from the dead, all based upon His grace, obviously.

[21:23] Number four is kinship, not distance. Kinship. Look at what He says in the next part of verse 17. But go to my brothers and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father and my God and your God.

So Jesus' ascension would totally complete His mission. Then the Spirit would come. So now, He's going to say, Mary, you got a job. I got a work for you to accomplish now.

Young lady, tell my brothers. Interesting. This is the first time that this word brothers is used for Jesus' disciples because it was previously used in John's Gospel for biological kin, for biological brothers and sisters.

this is a major shift because it points to how one will encounter Jesus after His resurrection, yes, but also how Jesus' followers would interact with each other, their bekinship.

Because notice He says, my Father, your Father. my God, your God. So with this phrase, Jesus says this very carefully.

[22:44] Jesus maintained that He was the unique, distinct Son with His distinct relationship with the Father, but now His disciples can be received as sons of the Father.

We're the children of God. So in these two statements where Jesus says, don't touch me, I'm not ascendant, and then here, tell my brothers, Jesus introduced the way He'd be present with all His disciples with no limited or temporal separation and what that connection would look like among those who follow Him.

Their bekinship will be brothers and sisters in Christ. Notice that this connects us with membership. This is why membership is so vital. You're connected to each other like family.

You care for each other in that way. You're committed to each other. That's what membership is all about. And this fulfills what John says in John chapter 1.

You can go back there. John 1. Verse 12. John 1.12. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.

[24:09] To those who believe in His name, who were born not of blood, nor the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but born of God. So Jesus is saying something so vital here when He calls the disciples His brothers.

Jesus is the unique Son, but we are also children of God and can truly call God our Father and God our God.

And so, we're brothers and sisters in Christ. We share in His sonship to the Father because of His hour, the death, resurrection, and ascension.

We're kinship. Oh, how good it is when the family of God dwells together in spirit and faith and unity where the bonds of peace of acceptance and love are the fruit of His presence here among us.

What good it is on this journey we share to rejoice with the happy, to weep with those who mourn, the weak find grace, the afflicted find grace, when we offer the blessing of belonging, how good it is to embrace His command to prefer one another, forgive as He forgives.

[25:28] And this part, when we live as one, we all share in the love of the Son with the Father and the Spirit. This is what we're singing about, what we sang about. So with one voice we'll sing to the Lord, with one heart we'll live out His word to the whole earth sees the Redeemer has come.

Why? For He dwells in the presence of His people. And we're now brothers and sisters in Christ. This is what binds us together. This is why membership is so vital to a church.

Why we believe that. You're connected to each other in this way. And this is why it's so vital. So I say to you, you can have a relationship with God. He can be your Father.

He can be your God through Jesus. Repent and trust in Christ and you'll be saved. You'll have that kinship with Jesus. He will be your brother. He will be your God.

You'll be worshiping Him. Come and He'll save you. Leads us right into the Gospel. We are no longer distant from the Father.

[26:35] We are now close and near to God being His children in kinship with each other. This is something the world does not know. Oh yeah, yeah.

You have their connection with each other because we're the same political party. Or we like the same football team. We like the same baseball team. We like to knit together or things like that. This goes way beyond that.

Here you go. Galatians, listen to this. Paul brings this up in Galatians chapter 3 verse 25.

But now that faith has come, you're no longer under a tutor for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Chapter 4 of Galatians verse 5. That He might redeem those who are under the law that we might receive the adoption as sons and because you are sons God has sent forth the Spirit of the Son into our hearts crying Abba Father.

We're now children of God. We're connected together. Here, this is what Jesus means by this when He says this to Mary. Tell this to my brothers.

[27:43] I ascend to my Father and your Father my God and your God. Kinship. Well notice what happens verse 18. Mary's all excited.

Came down to the disciples. I've seen the Lord. He said these and that He said these things to her immediately and obediently responded to Jesus' command.

Notice how Mary's part here was so significant. She was at the cross when Jesus was dying. She was the first one to discover the empty tomb. The first one to see and talk to the resurrected Jesus. This is important. She was important here. John's trying to point this out to us. Once again, this stands in stark contrast to the first woman of Genesis 3.

For that woman, she was deceived by lies, wasn't she? Eve was deceived by lies and what did she face? Separation from God. For this woman, Mary Magdalene, she was given truth and experienced the very presence of God and His grace and His life and His spirit, His familiar love all because of His grace.

[29:01] Mary experienced grief outside the tomb not realizing that grace can be experienced inside the tomb. Life was there in the tomb. Why?

Because Jesus conquered the power of sin and death overcoming grief, overcoming death with His grace and His life. Because Jesus rose, we have an advocate before the Father.

Because Jesus rose, we have the guarantee of our inheritance. because Jesus rose, we have the presence of Jesus through His spirit. Because Jesus rose, we have the promise of return and to resurrect and take us to Himself.

Because Jesus rose, we have the kinship with each other. In the resurrected Jesus, we find grace, not grief. We find life, not death.

Spiritual, of the Spirit and eternal, not something that's partial, not something that's temporary. We find kinship, not distance. This is all due to the Father's grace toward us and the accomplished mission of the Son.

[30:09] This is what John is trying to communicate to us through this historical event that takes place in Jesus' resurrection. So let us express gratefulness to Him.

Let's do that. Our Father, we express thanks to You. We express thanks to You. We express thanks to You. the aspect, as we sang, when we offer the blessing of belonging, we can encounter the Lord Jesus in the spirits within the body of Christ.

And this kinship is eternal. This relationship is eternal. eternal. We've been given life. We know experience of death.

We're given grace. Not grief, not sorrow over our sin, but grace and mercy there at the atoning place, at the mercy seat.

We express to You thanks. We express to You our gratitude. We express to You realizing we don't deserve this.

[31:35] And we continue to pray that we would be a people who display that grace to each other. And we would be a people who speak of this gospel of grace to the lost who are filled with grief.

They're filled with sorrow. They're facing death and separation. There's no true kinship. Use us for Your glory in that way.

I want to encourage you to take these few moments to focus and to allow truth to overwhelm your mind.

Ponder of what we've seen from God's word this morning. that it may encourage you to ponder and let gospel truth overtake you to fill us with thanks and with praise.

And then we'll sing, we'll pray. Take these few moments between you and the Lord. Would you do that now, please? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[33:07] Amen. Amen. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. So, yes. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.