

The Resurrection, Three People

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[0:00] Now, I don't have a voice anymore. I lost it somewhere in Sunday school. If you find it, please return it. We're in chapter 20 of John's Gospel.

So I need you to turn to chapter 20 Because we're going to read the whole thing. And I'm not going to read it. I'm going to need a volunteer to do that. I don't have to read all of it. It's verses 1 through 18. And we can break it up.

So if you say, I'll do the first five. That's fine. As long as someone will pick up the rest. We're going to be talking about the resurrection. The discovery of the empty tomb. And the reaction of three people that John records as being there when it's found.

They were all very close to the Lord. And they all react differently from what they see. So if somebody would read chapter 21 through 18.

Go ahead. Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the ark. She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciples, the one who sees his love.

[1:06] She said, They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb and I don't know where they have sent him. Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb of the tomb. The other disciple outran Peter and got that hurt.

He took and both saw the linen and saw the body there, but he didn't go in. Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying in.

While the cloth had been covered, or, while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lined to the side. Then the other disciple also went in and he saw and believed.

For until then, they hadn't realized that the scripture said he had arrived from the dead. Then they went home. Mary was standing outside the tomb crying and as she wept, she was serious and looked in.

She saw two white-robed angels sitting at the head and foot of the place where the body is in the matching line. Why are you trying, he made me look after. Because they have taken away my glory, he replied, and I don't know where they were playing.

[2:08] She glanced over her shoulder and saw someone standing behind her. It was stupid, but she didn't recognize her. Why are you trying, you made me look after. Who are you looking for?

She thought he was a gardener. Sir, she said, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put this and I will go and get this. Mary, she said, she turned forth to him and explained, teacher, don't claim to me, she said, for I haven't yet attended to the father.

So go, find my brothers and tell them that I am attending to my father and your father and my God and your God. Mary and I went down to the disciples and told them, I have seen the Lord.

Then he gave them to the Lord. Thank you. So the three disciples in John's gospel are John, the disciple of Jesus.

We heard about that a lot last time. Peter and Mary Magdalene. Now if you look in the other gospels you'll find out that when Mary went to the tomb she went with other women. But John only is interested in the three because he has a particular point for us, I think.

[3:14] Each of them looked in the tomb and each saw that it was empty and each responded in a different way. So let's look at them. First we'll start with Mary.

She's at the very beginning of the story. It goes like this. Mary goes to the tomb early. It's still dark. She's with other women. They're there.

They have aromatic spices that they prepared to put on the body. If you remember back, Joseph of Arimathea had how many pounds? Does anyone remember? 75 pounds of aloe and spices that he was going to put in with the body.

But these women were going to do the normal, take care of the body before burial. And John tells us they saw the stone was rolled away from the entrance.

What you don't hear is they looked in. I mean, they didn't actually go in the tomb. They just looked. In fact, it says that Mary looked at it and saw the stone rolled away.

[4:14] She doesn't look at it right away. She just sees the stone. She assumes the body is gone. She doesn't know for sure, but the stone's missing. Something happened.

And she runs to tell Peter and John. Now, Luke tells us the other women looked in the tomb and were perplexed. They didn't understand why it was empty. And in the story, the focus turns again. And of course, John outruns him. Right? He's probably younger. We don't know that for sure, but some scholars say the fact that he outran Peter probably means he's a young man. He's, in fact, Gary Weber said he was probably a teenager.

I think he's probably 19, 20, something, but he's a young man. Peter's probably a little heavier. I think he's probably a little older, a little heavier, a little slower. It's sort of like me running against Parker there.

He could outrun me and not even try. I'd be lucky if I got to the corner. Even though John gets there first, he doesn't look, he looks in the tomb, but he doesn't go in.

[5:22] He looks, but he doesn't go in. He bends down and looks in. Now, the entrance, probably, despite the pictures we see, you know, he's in this big hole, big entrance and this huge stone, it was probably, most of them were about three feet.

So you actually had to bend down to look into it. In fact, to get a body in that in there, you had to pretty much crawl in there on your hands and knees to get in there. But he bends down and he looks. And bending down and looking, he sees the linen strips that were, the body had been wrapped in, laying there.

But he didn't go in. Now, the way the text reads about the strips, it sounds like they were just like they were when the body was in it, except the body's gone and they've collapsed.

They're in the same place. They're laid out there on the shelf. And it talks about the head cloth. And most of those were tied around the chin and up around the head and the goal was to keep the mouth from opening, to cover the face.

And it says it was rolled up. Well, the word really means it's sort of set aside, but it's probably where the head was, but it implies that it still had the shape of a head in it.

[6:37] It collapsed a bit, but it still looked like it had been before it was taken or before the body disappeared. Then verse 9 says, after he ventures in, he saw and he believed.

He saw and he believed. Now that word saw means he observed intently. He looked at it closely. He examined it visually. He didn't just look at it and go, oh. He processed that, what he saw. And it made him believe.

Now we're not told what he believed, but what do you think it is that he believed that Jesus had raised from the dead? Peter looked at it from a different point.

His word is, he looked at it and he didn't know what to make of it. He didn't understand. There's no body, but there are the linens. It looks like he should be there, but he's not.

[7:46] Where is he? What's happened? And his mind doesn't click. Now we go back to Mary.

She stood outside the tomb. She hadn't gone in yet and she's weeping. Now the word weeping there is not whoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo. It is wailing and screaming and crying and mourning. Like, remember the story of Lazarus and the women were outside mourning. They were making all this loud noise. You've seen, hopefully you've seen pictures of women in the Middle East mourning. There is not a quiet little affair. They're making loud noises. They're crying out. She's crying. Her eyes are filled with you. She's probably got her hands on her face. She is wailing.

And she bends down and she looks and she sees two angels in there sitting on the shelf where the body had been. And they ask her, why are you crying like that?

[8:50] And she says, they have taken the body away. We don't know where he's, I don't know where they've taken him. And then she turns.

She bends, stands up and she notices there's somebody behind her and she turns. Now she's still wailing. She's still crying. She's still mourning. She's still doing all this stuff.

And she doesn't recognize who's in front of her. In fact, the way it talks about it, she hears her name called before she turns around. But she knows there's someone there.

And she says, assuming it's the garden or someone, where have you, tell me where they've taken him. Tell me where they, I'll go get him.

Now, there's a couple problems here with Mary. She's not thinking. First of all, if you've been down and looked in the tomb and saw two men sitting there on the, what would you do?

[9:47] Would you say, what'd you do with the body? You go, what are you doing in there? She didn't do that. She'd just say, overlooked, you know, glossed over the fact that there were two men sitting there where the body was.

And she goes out, she's outside crying and she, she tells her, what she thinks is the gardener. Tell me where he is and I'll take him. I'll go get him. Here's a woman going to carry a dead man in her arms from wherever he was to wherever she was going to take him.

She couldn't have done it alone. She wasn't thinking. It was an emotional reaction to the situation. Now, why would she be so emotional about Jesus?

Well, this is Mary Magdalene. Those that are forgiven much, love much. Mary was forgiven of a lot. And she loved Jesus intensely. She calls him my Lord, my Master. And when she turns, when she hears her name spoken, Mary, she immediately recognizes not the sight, but the sound.

[11:11] Only one person ever said her name like that. It was Jesus. Now, unfortunately, our translations say she got a hold of him.

What she did is she grabbed him. This is what the Greek says. She grabbed him. She wasn't going to let him go. And Jesus says, let go of me because I haven't ascended yet.

And what he's telling her is, don't, he's not, he's not saying, don't touch me. He's saying, you got to let me go because I'm not the same Jesus you knew before.

I'm not just the man that you were following as teacher. I'm the ascended Lord. I'm resurrected. I'm going to the Father, and I'm going to sit at his right hand.

Our relationship has changed. it's moved from friends into something else. Lord and follower.

[12:20] And so he, she runs back to tell the disciples that she's seen Jesus. sometimes I think we're a lot like her.

Bad things happen, and we get so wrapped up in our grief and our troubled minds and our distress that we never see Jesus standing right there.

we miss his angels, and some of them look just like you. I remember when I was in Germany, I had come back from Germany as a brand new believer.

I met some people in Columbia, South Carolina. I got out at Fort Jackson, and I was staying with his family and they invited me to stay, and at the door when I was getting ready to leave they said, are you an angel?

I told the story before. Are you an angel? I thought, I don't think so. But to them, I was an angel because I brought them something they had been looking for, freshness in my perspective because I was a young boy.

[13:29] I didn't know any better. I was just telling them what I knew, what I thought. And it was like fresh wind blowing into their lives. And they thought maybe I was an angel. We miss those that come to comfort us.

We cry and we wail. until Jesus speaks our name. Now Mary could have missed Jesus saying her name.

Now remember what she's doing. I don't have a voice, I'd do it for you. If someone want to do that, you want to wail and scream and cry? You know all that drama?

No, George says no, don't do that. either Jesus had to speak loudly to overpower her noise or, like God speaking to Elijah in the storm, he spoke with a small, quiet voice, Mary, Mary.

And it got through. She heard it. And turning, she saw him there before. How often do we miss the voice speaking peace and grace to us?

[14:49] How often do we fret, worry, despair, cry in our circumstances and miss the small, quiet voice? Our circumstances scream loudly at us, but in that verbal storm, God speaks quietly and gently to us.

He is to assure us that he is with us and loves us. What did Jesus say? I will never leave you or forsake you. And at another time he says, no one can snatch those the Father has given me out of my hand.

We're secure in him. He's always with us. He'll never leave us. We just need to turn and in a sense grab hold of him.

There's a verse that I want you to know, and I just ran across this accidentally. I'm not a fan of verse of the day, even though I put them on the Facebook page for our church, but this one was good. I'd never seen it before. Isaiah 41, 13. I would really encourage you to memorize this. For I am the Lord your God, the one who takes hold of your right hand, who says to you, don't be afraid, I am helping you.

[16:05] I read that again. For I am the Lord your God, the one who takes hold of your right hand, who says to you, don't be afraid, I am helping you.

He holds us tight like a parent. Have you ever, you probably, some of us, we're that parent, holding on to our child's hand in a crowd or in a busy place, holding on tight, and the child's holding on tight too.

Why? They don't want to get lost. They don't want to get separated from their parent. What are you doing? You're guiding them through the chaos of a situation. You're bringing them, and they trust you to do that.

God says, I do the same thing. I hold you by the right hand. And as you go through life and you encounter all these things that are trying to disrupt you in life and trying to disturb you and trying to hurt you, I am there to protect you.

Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. God will be in the heart. You see, he loyal and intense love.

[17:14] He asks us only to trust him that everything is in his control, that all will work out as he wants it to, as is best for us. And not to believe our eyes.

our eyes deceive us. Because a lot of what our eyes tell us is what we want them to tell us. We need to take hold of his hand and know that no matter what, we're going to get through this.

We all have the same evidence. Peter, John, and Mary all had the same evidence, but they came to different conclusions. Only one of them understood that Jesus had risen from the grave.

One of them didn't know what to think, and the other one was all upset because the body was gone.

We all have the same evidence in our lives. We have a singing song that says, it's all around us.

The evidence is clear. It is, if you stop and think about it. Examine your life. What has the Lord done in your life?

[18:28] What has he done in your day? How has he worked? All we have to do is believe it and trust God. Jesus is risen and alive.

So shall we rise and live. what else is needed? Let's pray. Lord, I just thank you that you did rise from the dead.

Lord, where would we be if that weren't true? What hope would we have if we didn't understand that and believe the witnesses that saw the empty tomb?

who encountered you, who saw you, who touched you, who heard you. Because of our witness, Lord, we know it's true.

I thank you, Lord, that in you all things are possible and one day we will stand with you alive in new bodies on a new earth and all our hopes will turn into realities.

[19:39] peace. We thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.