

It's No Reason to Cry

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[0 : 01] He is risen, and everyone says, He is risen indeed. Well, good morning on this Sunday morning, this Resurrection Sunday morning.

We're glad that you're joining us for worship this morning. We trust that you enjoyed the music, and we are going to be spending some time this morning in God's Word in the Gospel of John, verses 11 through 18.

And today is a reason to rejoice, and the reason why we can rejoice is because Christ arose, and He is Lord.

We see that in Romans chapter 1, verse 4. Christ arose, and our salvation is secure, and Christ arose, and we shall rise also.

The Bible teaches us in 1 Corinthians chapter number 15. But on that first Sunday morning, not everyone was excited.

[1 : 12] As a matter of fact, most everyone who knew Jesus and were a part of His group, who were His followers, were very, very sad, because the one that they were hoping to be the Messiah was dead.

And up to this point, our first character that we're going to look at this morning was standing there outside of the tomb, and she was crying.

On that first Sunday morning, Mary Magdalene was weeping. We see that in verse number 11 of our text this morning that we're going to read in just a moment.

But why was she crying? Well, she was crying because her hope was gone. Her hopes had been dashed. The one that had changed her life, Jesus.

Mary Magdalene was the one that sometime before, Jesus had healed. She had been healed of various diseases, but more importantly, Mary of Magdalene, of Magdala, was healed, or had had seven demons cast out of her.

[2 : 33] They had complete control of her, and Jesus had rid her of these demons and also the diseases that she had.

And she was so wonderfully changed by the Lord Jesus Christ. And she had so much devotion for him.

As a matter of fact, she was one of the only ones that was there at the cross while Jesus was hanging. Most of his other disciples had, we don't really know where they were, but they were not around.

They were not there with Jesus around the cross except for John the Beloved and Jesus' mother Mary and Mary of Magdalene.

So let's start this morning and look in God's Word at the Gospel of John, chapter number 20, and beginning with verse number 11.

[3 : 39] And there we read, But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping. As she wept, she stooped down and looked into the tomb.

And so what we see is Mary is sad. Mary is weeping. We're going to get into the other verses in just a moment.

But before we do that, let's spend just a moment in prayer. Let's talk to our Heavenly Father this morning. Our Father, we are so, so very thankful for the resurrection of our Lord and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

It is because He rose again that we have the hope that we will see our Heavenly Father one day. And we have hope not only for eternity, but we have hope for today.

And Father, if there's anyone who is discouraged, if there's anyone listening to this that is depressed, I pray, Heavenly Father, that you would use your Word this morning to lift up their spirit,

lift up their soul, and that they might be able to understand that you are real, that our Lord Jesus did rise from the dead.

[5 : 03] And He lives today to not only give hope, but to change our lives and give us the power to live today, that we may be victorious over all of the obstacles in our lives.

We thank you, Father, for this. Teach us today. And may we rejoice together through your Word this morning. We pray, and I pray, this in Jesus' name.

Amen. So, why the tears on this day of triumph? Well, at this point in time, they did not realize the triumph.

Mary's tears, we'll see Mary's tears and how Jesus dries them. And so we'll look at Mary's journey from sorrow to service.

And as we begin, we'll take a look first at Mary's depression in these first three verses. Mary was downcast.

[6 : 05] Mary was sad. She was outside of the tomb weeping. She was crying because she was sad. And she was mourning the loss of her Savior, mourning the loss of a friend.

And you may be there this morning, mourning the loss of someone or something, and wondering, how can you get beyond this? Well, this morning, I trust that God's Word is going to lift your spirits and is going to provide you some hope this morning.

So let's jump in to these first three verses. We just read verse 11, but we'll read it again. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping.

And as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the tomb. 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.

Then they said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? And this is her reply. She said, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have lain him.

[7 : 22] So she says she doesn't know what is going on. And what she is seeing here is outside of the tomb. She is there crying. And what she does is she stooped down and she looked into the entrance of the tomb.

And what she saw didn't appear to surprise her, most likely because of her emotional state at this time. She was so sad that the only thing on her mind was her loss.

And she sees two angels in white at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus was.

But the body of Jesus was not there. So Mary had gone to the tomb, most likely to anoint the body of Jesus. And when she arrived, the tomb was empty.

She had gone to the tomb, most likely to be the one to unwrap the grave clothes and to anoint, or at least to anoint the grave clothes so that the smell wouldn't be so bad.

[8 : 38] But also this was a sign of respect and also love and adoration. She had come to the tomb to do the work of an undertaker.

Her spices for anointing showed her pessimism. And now her discovery seems to confirm her doubts. Somebody stole the body of Jesus is her first conclusion that we'll see in a moment. They've taken away my Lord, verse 13 says, and I don't know where they took him. I don't know where they've lain him. And many today, like Mary, they're defeated by their doubts.

They are not sure of something, or maybe they're expecting the worst and are defeated. Rather than being victorious, they are playing victim, or they've become the victim of their doubts.

And if that is where you are this morning, my prayer is that God's word and the beauty and the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ could encourage you this morning on this resurrection Sunday.

[9 : 52] Did a dark cloud follow you? Or is a dark cloud following you this morning? Maybe you're filled with anxiety, fears, or doubts.

And I trust this morning that you're not doubting the power of Jesus. If you this morning believe in the power of Christ, believe in Christ, but maybe at some level are doubting his power, then maybe today is going to be the turning point in your life.

If Jesus Christ arose in power and he is alive, he was alive not only that resurrection Sunday morning, but he is still alive today and he is sitting at the right hand of God, the Bible says, and he is always making intercession for you and for me.

So the angel's question was, why are you crying? Why weepest thou? Why are you crying? Well, why indeed is the question.

Mary, if we really think about it, what was Mary doubting? What had Jesus told them? He said, you will see me again.

[11:14] This is not the end. He had given them some hints. He said, you tear this temple down in three days, I will build it back up. And that was a reference to, most likely, the three days that he would be in the earth or in the tomb, and on the third day, he would rise again.

So in effect, what Mary did was, Mary doubted the promise of Jesus Christ. Secondly, what did she doubt? She doubted his power. If she truly believed that Jesus was the Messiah, if she understood that Jesus was God in the flesh, why would she doubt his power?

Obviously, she was a recipient of one of his miracles, and undoubtedly she had seen many of the miracles of Jesus. She had seen the lame walk again.

She had seen others who were demon-possessed be rid of the demon possession and control. She had seen others who weren't able to speak speak.

She had seen the blind given sight, and yet she's doubting that Jesus had the power to rise again from the dead. And Mary doubted the Lord's presence.

[12:41] She went immediately, like most of us do. Immediately she went to the natural. Rather than trusting the promise, and trusting the power, and trusting that she could see his presence, she went to the natural.

Obviously, somebody took his body, and I don't know where they took him. How many times do we do that? Rather than immediately going to trust and immediately going to prayer, we fall prey to the natural, and immediately we wonder how it's going to be fixed, or how are we ever going to be able to get through this?

Rather than looking up, we look down. And it's exactly what Mary did. She stooped down, and she was looking for Jesus, where he was no longer, because he is risen.

And I can almost hear you, as we were recording this, and you were in your home, or wherever it is that you're listening, you're saying, he is risen indeed. So Mary's tears were needless, because Christ had risen.

Are you worrying about something this morning that may not happen, that hopefully will not happen? Well, this morning, how about we trade our fears for faith, and rest in the risen Christ.

[14:11] And then, number two, we saw Mary's depression first in those three verses. Then we see Mary's devotion in verses 14 through 16.

Mary's devotion, her renewed devotion for her Lord and her Savior. And I trust this morning that if you are anxious, or maybe if you are not where you would like to be, may your devotion for Jesus be restored, or maybe if you've never experienced a relationship with Jesus Christ, then maybe this morning you will understand completely and fully that Jesus is alive, and he died on the cross in your place and in mine.

And the way to be right with God, to have your sins forgiven, is simply to trust that Jesus is Lord. He died on the cross in your place.

And simply by confessing that Jesus is, and that you want him in your life, and you're trusting what Jesus did on the cross alone for your salvation, the Bible promises, all who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, shall be delivered from the penalty of sin, and ultimately from the presence of sin.

So let's look at Mary's devotion, beginning in verse number 14. Verse 14 says, Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there and did not know that it was Jesus.

[16:03] And verse number 15. Now you may ask, How did she not know? Bible scholars are not really sure. Some say, Well, maybe her eyes were so full of tears, she didn't recognize him.

It may have been because of her profound grief and her mental state at the moment. We're not sure the reason. But nonetheless, she didn't recognize him.

In verse 15, Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?

And she, supposing him to be the gardener. Now come on. Mary is confusing Jesus for the gardener.

Supposing him to be the gardener, said to him, Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have lain him, and I will take him away. I'll take him off your hands.

[17:02] I'll take care of his body. That was the devotion that she had for Jesus. And then notice verse 16. And this sets the stage probably for the second greatest recognition scene of all time.

The first being Joseph when he reveals himself to his brothers. And he says, I am Joseph. And for the first time, they realize who he is.

And we see in verse 16, Jesus said to her, all he had to say was her name, Mary. She turned to him and said, Rabboni, which is to say teacher or master, teacher.

All she had to hear was the name, the voice of Jesus when he spoke her name. My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they know me.

And so Mary recognized her Lord and her Savior. Mary may have felt the cross and the loss potentially more than many of the others, possibly except for Mary, the mother of Jesus, the earthly mother of Jesus.

[18 : 24] And so here she is, she is in extreme sorrow, experiencing profound grief and she doesn't recognize Jesus.

Mark 16, 9, she had been delivered from seven demons, that perfect number seven, potentially showing that she was completely under their power and Christ had set her free.

And the Lord's question is, woman, why are you weeping? Why are you crying? Mary turns to him. As we saw, she doesn't recognize him.

Sometimes deep emotion can blind us to the presence of Jesus. Have you experienced that? Maybe you are experiencing that right now.

You are in such a low place emotionally, psychologically, even spiritually, that it's difficult for us to recognize Jesus, to recognize his presence with us.

[19 : 28] What was one of the promises of Jesus? He said, I will never leave you. I will never forsake you. That is a promise that he gave.

And because of the power that was shown in the resurrection, he has the power to keep that promise. So, even if you're weighed down in your sorrow, even if you're weighed down in your depression, and you may not even be able to see or feel Jesus, just know this.

Jesus promised, I'll be there. I won't leave you. I will never forsake you. Jesus is with you whether you realize it and feel it or see him or not.

Sometimes, deep emotion blinds us to the presence of Jesus. Potentially, deep depression, so sad, we don't see him. Or, maybe deep anger, so mad, that all we see is red and we don't see Jesus in that moment.

Or maybe even deep joy. You know, there's such a thing as being so happy and so excited that maybe we forget who it is that allows us to have the joy and who's the real source of joy in our life.

[20 : 50] So, her assumption was that somebody's bound to have taken away my Lord. Now, if that had been true, her tears would have been timely because there would have been a reason to cry and we would be like others who have no hope.

But because Jesus is alive, there's reason to rejoice. But we know in the Gospel of John, chapter 10, verses 28 through 30, no one can take our joy from us.

Jesus is alive. Jesus speaks and she responds, Master, it's you. And I'm sure she wondered how could that be.

And then, next we see Mary's direction, the direction that she is given in verses 17 and verse 18 of the Gospel of John.

Let's look at this direction that is given to her. Verse 17 says, Jesus said to her, Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to my Father.

[21 : 58] Now, Jesus didn't tell her, don't touch me. That's not the exact word that Jesus used. The word that John wrote that Jesus said is the exact same word in Revelation chapter 2 where it says, He who holds the seven stars in his hand.

So, literally, what Jesus said to her and what we can infer from this is, because of her overwhelming joy, she must have gone and embraced Jesus and she was holding on to him, clinging to him because of her excitement.

And so, literally, because of the word that Jesus used, the meaning of that word is to grasp and to hold on to something. He was telling her, Don't hold on to me.

I have somewhere to go. Don't hold on to me because you can't keep me all to yourself. I know you may wish to, but I need to go. I have a place to go.

Don't hold on to me. Don't cling to me is the word that Jesus used. And maybe, even today, we want to, we may feel like we want to hold on to Jesus, but we have to be able to go and tell others, which is exactly what Jesus told her.

[23 : 22] It says, For I have not yet ascended to my Father. He had things to do, but go to my brethren. Now, let's stop here for just a moment.

Before, do you remember in scripture, Jesus said that now you are my friend. No more like as in the Old Testament where the way that God the Father was referenced.

Well, it was not as a friend. It was more as a reverential awe or a reverential fear. And that was the relationship that God's people had with him.

But New Testament is more of a friendship relationship. But notice here what Jesus called his disciples. He said, Go to my brethren.

Jesus called Matthew and John and Peter and Thomas, even the one who doubted him. He said, Go to my brethren.

[24 : 26] You and I, even today, if we know Christ as our Savior, we are his brethren. Go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God.

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

So what is her direction? Go to my brethren. The first time that his disciples are referred to as brethren. So Mary is given a mission, a mission to carry out for Jesus.

You and I as well have been given a mission that we are to go and to make disciples and to teach and to baptize. That is our mission today.

So what is God telling you this morning? What is your mission? Now that you know that he is risen, he is alive, and he died on the cross in your place, salvation is yours for the receiving.

[25 : 35] It is a gift. It's not of works. We can't earn it. We can't work for it. It's just simply something that he offers to us as a gift.

The price has already been paid. It was paid by his shed blood on the cross of Calvary. And it's appropriated we receive it simply by trusting that it was finished and it was enough.

For Jesus, I know I'm a sinner. I know I don't deserve salvation. And I'm trusting you right now to come into my life to forgive my sin and to make me a part of your family.

That's the only thing. That's a prayer that is a saving prayer if you mean it within your heart. That's all it takes to become right with God and to have your sin forgiven.

So what is God telling you this morning? Life is good when we give ourselves to the work of Christ. That doesn't mean everything will be good.

[26 : 42] but life will have a newfound purpose when we walk, step into that power that Jesus Christ provides us through his Holy Spirit.

So where are you this morning? Are you in grief, in sadness, in fear, in anger, or in joy?

Whatever it is, God has raised Jesus from the dead through the power of his Holy Spirit. He is alive. So this morning as we invite all who are discouraged to come to Jesus. Come to Jesus this morning.

He is alive. Trust him and move from tears to triumph. Let's pray. Lord Jesus, thank you so very much for the truth of your word, for providing joy through tears.

[27 : 49] For although Mary was weeping, she was able to see her Savior and was given the direction to go and tell others. And may we this morning share in that joy and share in that task of making our faith known to others that others may share in our joy of knowing Jesus as our Savior.

Please be with each one today. Keep everyone safe. And Father, we thank you for what you're going to provide. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen.