

Why Are You Weeping

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[0 : 00] Welcome to this week's message from Faith Bible Church of Lake Charles. We're excited to share a practical Bible-based teaching that we hope will encourage you and strengthen your faith.

! Thanks for listening. Now, here's today's message. Most of us have had a moment when we went looking for something and we couldn't find it.

There was an absence of something. Maybe it was a relationship that you once had and that relationship's now gone. Maybe it was a season of life that you wish you were able to get back. And there's some grieving that's involved in that. That's where Mary Magdalene from the New Testament was on that early morning, the first day of the week.

She had spent time with Jesus. She had followed Him. She had heard Him speak and she wanted to hear more from Him.

[1 : 09] But when He died on the cross and when He was placed on the tomb, it was the end of something that was very, very important to her. And so on the morning of that first day of the week, she goes to the tomb hoping to be able to just be there, be a little closer to her Lord.

And what she found there was more than she could have ever predicted. She found an encounter with none other than the one she was seeking, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And here's what I want us to see this morning. That the resurrection is not just part of systematic theology. It's not just a doctrine that Christians defend at Easter and this morning.

All around the globe, we're going to be, people are going to be hearing about the resurrection and trying to prove the resurrection to skeptics and to those who may be a little unsure about the fact that Jesus rose from the grave.

But I want us to see this morning that it's a personal encounter. It's more than the empty tomb. It's more than the grave clothes that lay there flat and the head cloth that lay folded at the head of the tomb there this morning.

[2 : 40] And it's not even about the angels. It's about so much more than that. It's about one word. It's about a name. And this morning, we're going to walk through the Gospel of John, chapter 20, and the first 18 verses.

We have quite a few verses to cover this morning. We're going to go through them rather quickly. We're not going to spend a whole lot of time in each of the verses, but we're going to be looking at the high points, the things that I believe make such a difference.

This week as I was preparing and as I was studying for today's message, there's one thing that stuck out to me. Well, two things that stuck out to me more than anything, and that was Mary stayed at the tomb.

The two disciples came, they looked, they saw, and they left. But Mary stayed, and it was something else that helped her to recognize her Lord and her Savior.

And by the time that we're done this morning, I want you to hear Jesus call your name. Let's take a look at our text this morning.

[4 : 01] John chapter 20. Let's start with the first two verses this morning. Now, on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, and while it was still dark, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

Then she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved. Now, this is the Gospel of John. This was written by John.

And John doesn't refer to himself by name. He simply refers to himself as the one whom Jesus loved. So it's Peter and John. And said to them, They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have lain him.

Now, I want us to see the stage, or to set the stage this morning. Mary came while it was still dark. Early, early, early in the morning, while darkness still covered the land. But not only was it physically dark, I believe there's another thing that we see, is that Mary was also in the dark.

[5 : 13] She didn't know what had happened. She was in the dark physically, literally, as well as figuratively. She didn't know that Jesus was alive. She came to what she expected was a tomb.

Now, the question has always been, what did she expect to do? Stone was too big for her to roll away. So I don't know how she expected to get into the tomb to finish doing what they were planning on doing.

There are other portions of Scripture that tell us about bringing spices, wanting to complete the anointing of Jesus. But here she is, in the dark, not sure what's going on.

And there may be some here today, and there may be someone listening to this message right now, at some other time, wherever you are, and you may find yourself in the dark as well.

You know or you sense something's missing in your life. You sense that life should have more meaning than it has for you. There should be more purpose. And God may have been drawing you, may be drawing you, and you may be convicted about things in your life that need to change.

[6 : 26] But what I want you to know this morning is that there is hope that Jesus is alive, and He, and I want you to hear Him, call your name today.

So Mary came, verse 1, while it was still dark, both literally and figuratively. And there's a note here I want us to look at as the construction of the way John formed these words is the darkness is implied as the backdrop for this entire scene.

And interestingly enough, John, the writer, uses darkness symbolically throughout his gospel about people being in the dark, about the difference between light and darkness.

We see that in John, chapter 1, verse 5, chapter 3, verse 19, chapter 13, verse 30 as well. And so she comes, it's in the dark, she's still in the dark about what's happened, and what's her conclusion about the resurrection that we see in verse number 2?

What did she tell the disciples? When she went and she ran to the disciples, and she says, He's not there, what has she assumed?

[7 : 46] Huh? Somebody took Him? She assumes it's a body snatching. She assumes it's a robbery. And that's exactly what she tells them. So she assumes the worst.

And this is the natural response of grief. There was an absence, and she viewed it as a loss. She could not find the very one that she loved, and that she had followed for nearly three years.

So she assumes that the body has been taken away, the body has been stolen. But I want you to notice, what does she call Jesus as she's talking to the disciples?

She calls Him what? They have taken away the Lord. The Greek word kurios for Lord.

What's interesting is grief hadn't destroyed her devotion. She still believed that He was the Lord, that He was a teacher sent from God.

[8 : 52] I believe that detail matters. Her understanding, limited though it was, still her hope had been in Jesus as the Lord.

And the thing is, you may know about Jesus today. You may have heard about Jesus growing up. You may have heard messages about Jesus lived, about what Jesus did as He walked the earth, and He performed miracles, and that Jesus died.

You might have even seen the movie. But what does it mean to you personally this morning? And you may be like Mary, still in the dark. You want to know, but maybe there's still something in the back of your mind that you're wondering, how can I know?

How can I know that my sin can be forgiven? How can I know that Jesus takes away, has taken away my sin? Well, I want you to know this morning that that is possible.

[10 : 04] And just like Mary, just simply show up. And you're here this morning, if you're here physically, if you're listening to this somewhere else or at some other time, you showed up.

You're listening to this message. The God of this story, and it's not a fable, it's not a tale, it's a real life event that the writers of Scripture are telling us about.

The God of this story meets people where they are, even in the dark. Now let's move on to the next section, verses 3 through verse 10, rather long section.

Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together. Now these are men, these are adult men.

They were fishermen, they were rough guys. And they run to the tomb, and the other disciple, John outran Peter.

[11:01] I don't know if maybe John was a little more physically fit than Peter was, but whatever. He gets there first, and stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen cloths were lying there, yet he did not go in.

So John peers in at the opening of the tomb, and he saw the linen cloths lying there. No body. That would be interesting.

You come expecting to see the dead body of Jesus, and the wrappings that they had wrapped the body in, as they were wont to do during this time period, were lying flat, on most likely a stone ledge that was cut out of the side of the cave.

And the handkerchief, or the cloth that covered his head, had been around his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.

And the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also, and he saw, and believed. For as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

[12:11] One of the other passages says that Peter went in first. Now that was typical Peter. And it says, Then the disciples went again to their own homes.

What they see is some evidence. What's the evidence that they saw? They saw what? They saw nothing. That was the evidence.

They saw an empty tomb, the absence of the body of our Lord Jesus. So they saw evidence, but what they lacked was understanding. They didn't know what it meant. So Peter and John run to the tomb.

John arrives first, but he stops at the mouth of the tomb. Peter goes straight in, and then we see them both go in.

Well, they find, if what Mary had said, they took the body of Jesus, it was a body snatching, what would you think you would probably find if they had snatched the body?

[13:11] If someone came in and stole the body of Jesus, for whatever reason, that we don't want to steal it. There are some out there who believe, some of the skeptics believe, Jesus didn't really rise again from the dead.

What happened was, his disciples came in, stole his body, and went and buried it somewhere, just so that it would look like it was a resurrection, just like it would be a miracle.

But what they see is not anything ransacked. They don't see, now if they were, come in and stolen the body. Do you think they would have taken the time to unwrap the grave clothes binding Jesus, and then lie them flat on the ledge, taken the head cloth, and neatly folded it at the head?

I don't think they would have taken that much time to do that. But that's beside the point. That's what they see. They see the evidence, but they're still not sure what they're looking at.

So the linen wrappings are still there. The head cloth is folded by itself in a separate place. You see, grave robbers don't fold things. Grave robbers don't do that.

[14:30] But what does it say John did? It says, Then the other disciple, verse 8, who came to the tomb first, went in also. It says, He saw and he believed.

Now the tense, this does make a difference, the tense of the verb that John used here, the aorist tense, mark these as a decisive, or these as decisive, instantaneous acts.

John saw and believed, but I believe verse 9 qualifies, his understanding, his lack of a full understanding of what this meant, what the evidence meant.

Because verse 9 says, For as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead. Well, he believed that Jesus was gone, but he wasn't sure with a full understanding of what it all meant yet.

See, verse 9 says that he believed. Here's the thing. Faith and full understanding don't always happen at the same time.

[15:39] I've shared the gospel with many people, and some who trusted Jesus said, Yes, I believe that Jesus died on the cross, and he rose again, and he paid for my sin.

And they trusted Jesus, and they began to follow him. But then, weeks later, they find out a little more, and they go, Now I really understand.

So it was a full understanding. They knew enough to believe. But then more information came in, and then came a fuller understanding. And also, what I've seen in my own experience is that there are people who learn about Jesus and want to know more about him, and they begin on a path of

understanding.

And they are at various points at various times in their belief and understanding. Think about the disciples as they follow Jesus. When Jesus first called them, when he called Peter, when he called John, when he called Matthew, when he called the others, and said, Follow me.

I'll make you fishers of men. Did they fully understand who Jesus was? The Bible says no. The Bible says they kept being astounded.

[17:07] And they kept saying, Well, no. That can't be. And so what happened with the disciples, they followed him without fully understanding who he was. Because when he said he was going to have to die and rise again, it blew their mind.

They said, No, it can't be. So they didn't understand the gospel. Even as they had been following him three years, they didn't fully get it. When did they get it?

I believe they fully got it after Jesus showed himself to them and said, Look, I'm alive. Do you remember what I told you?

And for those that doubted, like Thomas, he said, See? Here? Come. See my hands? Come. Feel my sight. Touch me. And know that I am real. And so he believed.

He wasn't quite sure the fullness of what he understood. But then, what happens in verse number 10? Then the disciples went again to their own homes.

[18:11] This was exciting news. Jesus wasn't there. He was gone. He rose again from the dead. And I can see John and Peter going back home.

They didn't understand. They didn't fully understand the implication of what happened on that morning while in the dark on the first day of the week.

And I think that's important for the narrative because the disciples leave, but Mary doesn't. Mary stays. I think that showed the level of her devotion to the Lord Jesus.

I'm not sure what happened, but I'm going to stay here. And it's like that when we lose someone. You ever lost a loved one?

House is empty. You go to the closet and you smell their clothes. You go to the bed where they laid their head and you smell the pillow.

[19:14] You just want to be close to them, right? They're gone from here physically, but you want to be close. Mary wanted to still be close to her Lord. So she stayed.

She stayed. You may be in that position today. You may not fully understand the gospel. You may not fully understand what it means to follow Jesus, but I trust this morning that you'll hear his name. And we're going to see in just a moment what happened. You may not have it all figured out, and that's honest. The disciples, they stood there. They saw the evidence. They left to go home uncertain, but Mary stayed.

And for Mary, staying made all the difference in the world. Now I think this next section makes it extremely personal. The resurrection is not just part of systematic theology.

It's not just something that I, and some of you here, and went to Bible college or seminary, studied in theology.

[20:15] It's more than just a doctrine. It's intensely personal. I don't want any of us to miss it.

Verse 11. But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept, she stooped down, and she looked into the tomb.

And what did she see? She saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, Woman, why are you weeping?

And she says, Well, because they've taken away my Lord. And I don't know where they've laid Him. Verse 14.

Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there. And I find this unusual. Here's the one in her intense devotion, she didn't want to leave the place where He last laid.

The other disciples, they left, they went home, still unsure about what happened. Mary stayed. She wanted to be close to the last place she had seen her Lord lain. And then the angel said, Mary, why are you crying?

[21:36] And she said, because they took away the body of my Lord and I don't know where they put Him. And she turns around and she sees who other than Jesus standing there and did not know that it was Jesus.

I'm not going to assume what was going through Mary's mind and what caused that temporary face blindness. I don't know what's going on at the time. But I want you to notice verse number 15.

Jesus said to her, Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking? She, supposing him to be the gardener.

And I think this is pretty ironic because the first Adam had a garden and he left the garden.

Jesus, the Bible called the second Adam, came to finish tending what Adam had left. And said to him, Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away.

[22 : 49] Now I think because of this intense devotion, Mary's promising something. How do you think as a woman she was going to carry a dead body away?

So she says, I will take him away. But notice verse 16. This is extremely important. Jesus said to her, what did Jesus say? Mary.

Jesus calls her by name. And what's important, I think, it's interesting here is, when Jesus, when John's writing this, and Jesus calls her Mary, he didn't use her Greek name.

He said, Mariam. He used her Hebrew name. In the Hebrew, it was, it's a name that you call people when you know them.

You know, you know people and you call them by a name, but if you know someone who's personal, who's close, and they're dear to you, it's a name that people know you, call you by.

[24 : 03] Have you ever introduced yourself and, well, my name is such and such, but my friends call me. Her friend called her Mariam, called her by her name.

She turns to him, verse 16, and says to him, Rabboni, which is to say, teacher. But also, this wasn't classroom language. This was a term of endearment that she calls him.

She recognized him as Jesus. So Jesus says 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, so he sends her on a mission, I am ascending to my father and your father and to my God and your God.

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

But Mary stood outside the tomb weeping, and as she wept, says she stooped and looked into the tomb. So Mary was still there, and staying there gave her access to something that Peter and John missed.

[25 : 17] They missed seeing Jesus. They missed hearing Jesus call their name. And so she encounters Jesus right here.

And what we find is her response, she calls him her Lord. And then what Jesus says in verse 17 is a little bit interesting. Jesus said, do not cling to me.

In the Greek, it means don't hold me, don't hold on to me, and it's a present imperative as a command, which would imply that the action was already in progress.

In other words, Jesus says, don't hold on to me because I have more to do, and I'm going to send you on a mission. If you don't let me go, I can't go about the rest of my business.

So the word that he said to her is, don't hold on to me. And what does she become? She becomes the first preacher of the resurrection. She becomes the first one who goes out and proclaims Jesus being raised from the dead.

[26 : 27] She went to the tomb to mourn, but she left as a witness. She had seen the Lord, and she couldn't keep quiet about it. I want you to notice, when did Mary recognize Jesus?

When Jesus made it personal, when he called her name. You know, God doesn't meet us with propositions first. He doesn't meet us with, necessarily, with all the theology that we need to understand.

God meets us in our greatest moment of need, and he calls us by name. And the resurrection is not just about something that happened 2,000 years ago.

The resurrection is about the risen Christ stepping into our darkness and calling us by name and calling us to him. So as we finish this, we see John chapter 20, verses 1 through 8, gives us three movements throughout the passage.

Starts in darkness, brings us to the evidence, and then last, we have an encounter. Mary goes to the tomb in the dark.

[27 : 36] Mary sees the evidence of an empty tomb, but she didn't encounter Jesus until she heard him call her name. And I know every person in here today, every person listening to this message today is at a different place in their journey or their walk with Jesus or your lack thereof.

Some are standing at an empty tomb, like Mary was, and you're not sure what to make of it. You're not sure what to make of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What does it mean to me?

I've been to church, but what does a personal encounter with Jesus look like? So if you're in the dark today, I'm glad you showed up. If you're looking for evidence, maybe still uncertain, you're not sure what to do, my prayer today is that you would find Jesus.

He's already found you, and all he's wanting from you is your belief. And if you're ready to say, Lord, today, my prayer is that you would trust Christ as your Savior today.

See, the risen Jesus Christ is not just a religious category. He's a person, and he's calling your name. Now, for believers, Mary understood, and Mary went out and shared the gospel.

[29 : 11] She shared that Jesus was risen from the tomb. This morning, before we leave, I want to make sure that every single person here this morning has an opportunity to make sure that they know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Savior. Maybe you've been following a religion. Maybe you have believed doctrines, but you've never yet had what we would call a personal encounter with Jesus.

You've never placed your full faith in Jesus Christ alone and what he did on the cross of Calvary to take away your sin. This morning, my prayer is that you wouldn't leave today without making sure that you've had a personal encounter with Jesus.

You've heard him call your name, and you say, here I am, Lord. I believe. In a moment, we're going to give you an opportunity.

If that's you this morning, I would ask that you just make your way out and just come see me, and if you need, we'll have someone go in a private place and take a Bible and show you how you can know for sure your sins are forgiven, how you can know for sure that you're a part of God's family.

[30 : 35] Otherwise, maybe there's someone here this morning and would say, you know, I haven't really been living for Jesus. I recommit myself to him today. I don't want anyone to leave without making sure that you're right with God.

Father, we come to you today. We thank you for the resurrection. We thank you for what it means to us, those who know what it's like to hear you call our name and to trust Jesus as our Savior.

Father, this morning we pray that if there's anyone here that doesn't know for sure if they're right with you, that today they could leave with that full assurance. Father, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Thanks for joining us today. We hope this message encouraged you and gave you something to apply to your life this week. If you'd like to learn more about Faith Bible Church or connect with us, visit our website at meetfaith.org.

We'd love to hear from you. Have a great week and we'll see you next time.