

Life in His Name – Part 49
I Have Seen The Lord! - John 20:1-18
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – March 3rd, 2024

Intro:

- Through this whole series, we have been getting to know Jesus through the writings of John in his gospel. We have seen what others said of Jesus; we have heard His teachings and witnessed His miracles. We have seen how people reacted to Him; some marveled, some hated, some believed. We have understood that Jesus fulfilled the messianic prophecies recorded in the Old Testament and watched His prophecies come true. We have beheld His courage and love as He stepped forward in power and took our place. We have seen His suffering, torture, and agonizing death. His dearest friends and closest companions are hiding in fear, and He is dead . . . or is He?
- Let's again pick up our Bibles as the story of Jesus continues to unfold in these final chapters of the Gospel of John. We are going to turn to John, chapter 20, to find out what happens next and what this means for you, me, and the whole world.

Jesus invites us to see

John 20:1-10 NIV

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

- Early on the first day of the week. It is interesting to note that all four gospel accounts mention it was the “first day of the week,” which is an important signal saying that this is a new beginning. Creation started on the first day of the week; the new creation starts again on the first day of the week. This, by the way, is the primary reason the church gathers as a community to worship on Sunday, which is a shift from the Old Testament day of rest and worship on Saturday.
- Mary Magdalene, one whom Jesus personally ministered to and freed from the bondage of demons, a close disciple and early follower of Jesus from the beginning and all the way through to the foot of the cross, came to the tomb to mourn. When she arrived, she found an alarming sight; the tomb had been broken into, the stone had been removed from the entrance, and the body of Jesus was gone. How could someone have done this?
- Shocked and horrified, Mary ran to Peter and John to tell them that Jesus’s body had been stolen from the tomb, and that she didn’t know who had done this or where they had hidden

the body. From her reaction and conclusion, we can see that she did not yet believe that Jesus was resurrected.

- On hearing this news, Peter and John full out ran to the tomb to see it for themselves. John, the younger man, outran Peter and, perhaps not to disturb the “crime scene,” looked in and saw just the linen strips that the body of Jesus was wrapped in. Peter, who was slower than John, was also bolder than John and ran straight into the tomb where he saw the linen strips that had wrapped His body and the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus's head. The head cloth was lying in its place, separate from the linen strips.
- At this point, John finally entered the tomb, saw the evidence up close for himself, and then the pieces came together in his mind. If people had robbed the tomb, they would not have left the linen strips and head cloth like this. Who would take the time to do that if they were taking the body? It would be way easier and faster to take the body as it was, and in that way, they could have also taken the valuable spices as well. And if they had unwrapped the body, they would not have arranged the cloths just as they were and at least would have taken the head covering for its value and to conceal who this was. The strips were left in a way as if Jesus passed right through them and left them behind. Then why was the stone rolled away? *Not so Jesus could get out, but so that we could get in. Jesus invites us to see.* Then, in a rush of understanding, John remembered Jesus told them that He would rise from the dead, even though they should have known this fact from the Old Testament scriptures (i.e., Isa. 52:15, 53:10-12, Psalm 16:10, 22:22-31, Hos. 6:2). He believed the glorious transforming truth that Jesus was alive.
- All of the evidence that John told through the account of Jesus's life led him to believe in the resurrection, that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in Him, you will have life in His name. If you do not believe in who Jesus is and have not entrusted yourself to Him for the forgiveness of your sin and received His promise of new life, will you do so today based on the evidence of what you have seen and heard? Jesus invites you to see and believe.
- Now, John continued to record what happened next. Peter and John went back to where they were staying while Mary returned again to the tomb (they must have missed each other in the passing). In this section, we are going to learn another marvelous truth about Jesus; He calls us by name.

Jesus calls us by name

John 20:11-16 NIV

Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13 They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15 He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

16 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

- This is a powerful and enduring scene. Mary went back to the tomb in great grief and weeping. At this time, she looked into the tomb, and saw two angels in white, one at each end of where Jesus's body was, like the two angles that are on the ends of the top of the ark of the covenant that guard the mercy seat (Ex. 25:17-22). The resurrection of Jesus is the true "mercy seat" – the place we are given mercy and forgiveness, to make us right with God and to be able to be in His presence.
- The angels asked Mary a question. "Woman, why are you crying?" Her answer revealed her understanding, "they have taken my Lord – and I don't know where they have put Him." She did not yet realize that Jesus had risen. At that, perhaps the angles motioned for her to turn around, or she heard something that made her turn around. Jesus was there, but she did not know it was Him and perhaps did not even consider that it could be Him, so she did not recognize Him.
- Jesus asked her the exact same question in the exact same way (signifying that he had sent the angels and that they spoke for Him). Then Jesus added, "Who are you looking for?" She still did not understand who it was, thinking it was the gardener and hoping that he could help her locate the body of Jesus.
- And then, Jesus called her by name, "Mary." What a moment to hear your name from the lips of Jesus. In hearing the voice of the "Good Shepherd – who calls His own sheep by name . . . and they follow Him because they know His voice" (John 10:3-5), there was an immediate and instantaneous recognition of who it was, and she was overcome with emotion, going from the depths of despair to the heights of exaltation. It was Jesus! What a glorious reunion and revelation!
- We must ask why the angels appeared to Mary and not to Peter and John. I think this is another great reversal. Mary knew what demons were, in all their darkness and fury, and she had seen them. Now, Jesus, in His mercy and love, showed her angels in their light and glory. It was a great reversal for her, and there will be a great reversal for us.
- Mary was also chosen to see the risen Lord first, before any of the men or prominent disciples, to further reveal His heart and His plan.

Jesus entrusts us to share

John 20:17-18 NIV

Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

- After Mary realized it was Jesus, in her emotion and exaltation, she either fell down and clung to His feet or gave Him a big hug and would not let go. Jesus had to tell her not to continue to hold on to Him for herself, that He was not going to ascend to the Father yet. He would be around for a while, but He had a special request of her that she was to go to the others and tell them the good news!
- So why did Jesus do it this way? He could have appeared to them Himself (which later He does), but He asked her to go and tell them. What does this mean for her and for us? It means that when Jesus calls our name, and we realize who is calling us, and we turn to Him and cling

to Him, we also are entrusted not to just keep Him to ourselves and for ourselves but to go and tell others and tell them of Him.

- And why was she, a woman whose testimony was not respected or allowed in court, one of low esteem and estate? Why her and not the respected John or the bold leader Peter? Why? Because (God chooses . . .)

1 Cor 1:27-30 ESV

God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

- This is the way of God, this is the choice of God, and this is why He has chosen you to know Him and share His story with others. We are to tell them what we know and what we have experienced. What a joy, what a privilege, what a Savior!

Conclusion

- Jesus invites us to see – look for Him, learn of Him, and entrust yourself to Him.
- Jesus calls us by name – know the voice of your friend, your brother, and your Lord. Listen to Him and know Him.
- Jesus entrusts us to share – tell His story near, far and wide. Share Him with others living in fear and looking for hope. Share what you know and have experienced with the world.
- Peter, later in his life (and we will get to know more of His story in a few weeks), wrote a letter to the church reflecting on the meaning of the resurrection of Jesus. He wrote:

1 Peter 1:3-6a ESV

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you rejoice!

- Rejoice that God, through the resurrection of Jesus, has caused us to be born again into a living hope and a glorious inheritance!

Benediction

May God be gracious to you and bless you and make His face to shine upon you, that His way may be known on earth, His saving power among all nations. (Ps. 67:1-2)

Questions for growth groups

- How did Jesus draw you to Himself? What led you to become a Christian?
- What, through this passage, has God communicated to you? What strengthened your faith or caused your love for Jesus to increase?
- We have an invitation and responsibility to share the message of Christ. What would help you to do so more? What obstacles need to be overcome for the message of Christ to reach the hearts of humankind?