

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to John 20

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through the Gospel of John

And we currently find ourselves in the portion of John's gospel that deals with the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior.

And this morning, we are going to be looking at this amazing encounter that Jesus has with Mary Magdalen -

Let's pray...

Paul tells us in Romans

[Rom 10:17 NKJV] 17 So then faith [comes] by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Many people demand evidence so that they may believe – the problem is that no amount of evidence can save you

Jesus when He told the story of the rich man and Lazarus –

The rich man as he was in torment in Hades - cried out to Abraham – send Lazarus back to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.

And Abraham responds - ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’

And then he adds to it -

‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’ ”

Translation – even if Lazarus showed up at their front door – they are not going to believe –

You see, it only comes through believing the Word – not through seeing a lot of evidence – because even if we had a lot of evidence – we would simply question the evidence.

[Eph 2:8-9 NKJV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

So, God saves us – doesn’t He?

Through faith - in His Word

[Jhn 20:31 NKJV] 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

Now – why do I bring this up –

Because in our study last week, we saw the progression of faith in Peter and John.

At the beginning of the chapter when Mary Magdalene finds the stone rolled away at the tomb – she is devastated and runs to tell the disciples, John and Peter don't believe her report.

They go to see for themselves only to find an empty tomb

And we looked closely at the progression of their faith – it went from quick glances to careful observation – to finally believing what Jesus had told them over and over again that He was going to die and rise again.

God's Word confirmed their faith in what they believed

And the same thing is true today – that is why it is so important to hold to the things that He has written for us.

Now, Peter and John – have left the tomb – verse 10 tells us that they went home / they didn't stick around.

And as they left, Mary arrives –

It is too bad that they didn't stick around for a little bit –

Because they would have been able to fellowship with Mary

They would have been able to encourage Mary

Because what Peter and John were experiencing in verse 8 – is what Mary needed to hear.

But they are gone

And Mary arrives alone to the tomb.

[Jhn 20:11-18 NKJV] 11 But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down [and looked] into the tomb.

I had you make a note of the word weeping – because the Greek word that is used here describes a convulsive weep.

It describes a weeping without hope

Mary is not simply sad about what has happened – she is devastated

Remember – not only is she devastated that Jesus is dead – she also strongly believes that Jesus' body was taken away by grave robbers.

The same word that is used to describe Mary Magdalen here at the tomb – is the same word that John uses to describe Mary of Bethany when she approached Jesus as she wept for her brother Lazarus.

[Jhn 11:32-35 NKJV] 32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother

would not have died.” 33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. 34 And He said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” 35 Jesus wept.

Jesus wept at what He saw,

Jesus wept at the hopelessness

Jesus wept at what death had done to man

And therefore, Jesus met Mary where she was – and He wept.

Turn with me to 1 Thess 4

Here in 1 Thess – Paul addresses a concern that was going on in the church – and that was that some in the early church were concerned because their loved ones had died and Jesus had not returned.

So they were questioning, “What is going to happen to their loved ones that had passed away – are they going to be left behind or what?”

And there were many that were weeping there with this hopelessness –

Paul addresses this -

[1Th 4:13-14 NKJV] 13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14

For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

Paul is not saying that they shouldn't be sad for their loved ones that passed away or that they shouldn't weep for them.

What he is saying is that they shouldn't sorrow in the same way that world sorrows.

As believers in Jesus Christ – we have hope – In Christ, we have hope that we will see them again.

And oh, what a comfort it brings, when we lose a loved one and they go home to be with the Lord, and we know that we are going to see them again.

It reminds me of David – you could read it later on in 2 Sam 12

When his son was sick, he was grieved, he was full of sorrow – he couldn't be comforted, he didn't want to eat

When his servants told him that his son was dead – what did he do?

He got up, showered and went to the house of the Lord

When he got back, he told his servants, give me something to eat – he continued on with life.

His servants looked at David – what changed???

[2Sa 12:22-23 NKJV] 22 And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell [whether] the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' 23 "But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? **I shall go to him**, but he shall not return to me."

David was confident that he would see his son in heaven

The hope that keeps us going -

12 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.

Now, from the text we studied last week – as Peter and John went into the tomb to take a closer look at the linen and the handkerchief – there is no mention of these two angels being there –

They could have been there –

As we read in scriptures, we have examples where they can make themselves visible or not.

We have the example of Elisha and his servant when they are surrounded by the Syrian army -

The servant is full of fear

And Elisha prays - "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the servant was able to see the entire mountain full of horses and chariots of fire.

So they appear and disappear

Notice – how these angels were seated

One at the head and one at the foot of the bench where Jesus' body had laid.

And the reason that I point it out is because in the Ark of the Covenant – God dwelt in between the two cherubins – on the mercy seat

Jesus is our mercy seat

He paid the price for sin

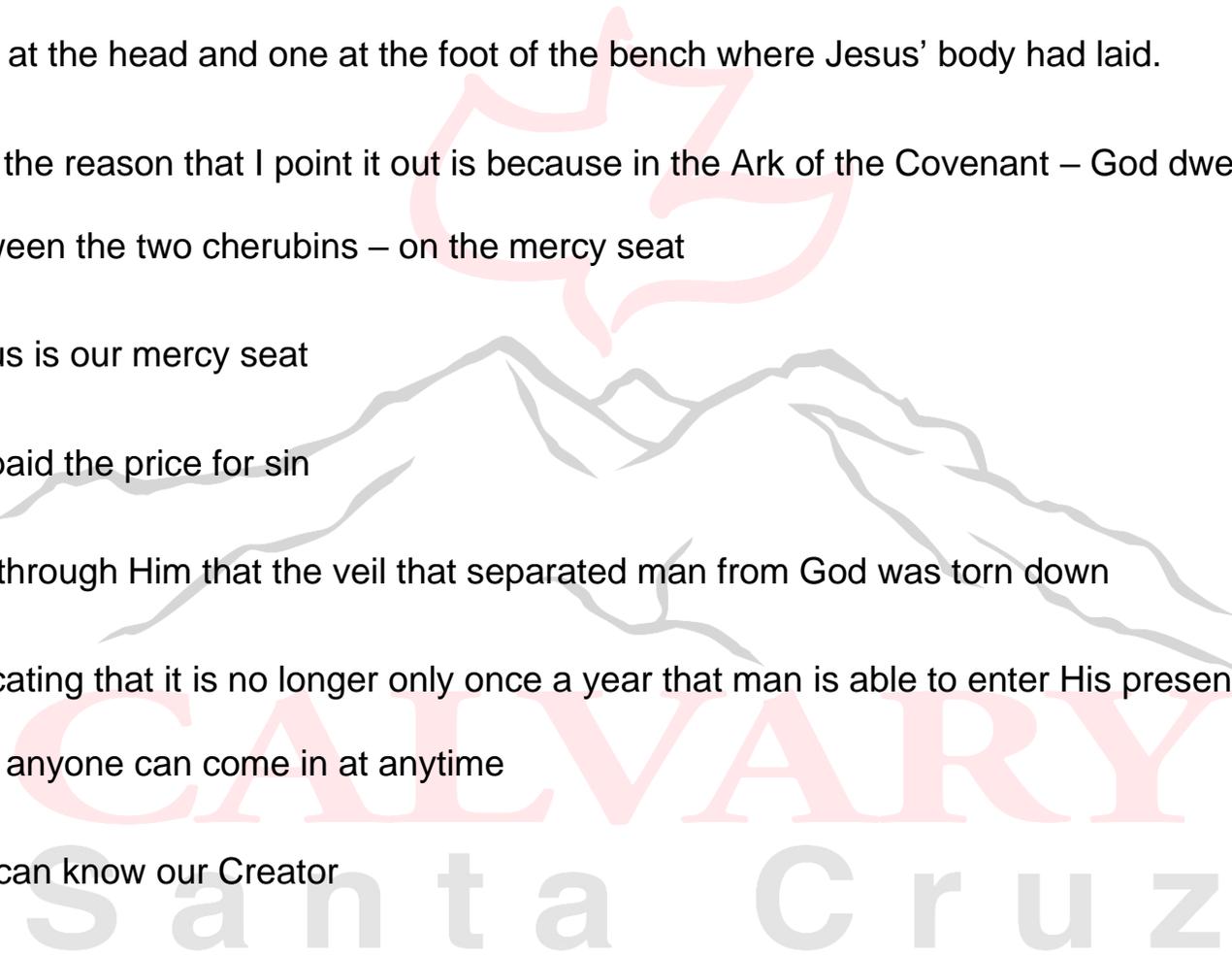
It is through Him that the veil that separated man from God was torn down

Indicating that it is no longer only once a year that man is able to enter His presence – now anyone can come in at anytime

We can know our Creator

We can have fellowship with Him

We can call Him Father



13 Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

Notice the love that Mary Magdalen had for Jesus –

As the disciples went home – she stayed there in the garden

As she looks in the tomb, the angels that were sitting there in the tomb – they begin to have a dialogue with her – and notice, she is so obsessed with the Lord, she just wants the dead body.

She doesn't care that she is having a conversation with the angels – all she cares about - is Jesus' dead body

There is no substitute for the Lord

"Even though He is dead, He is still my Lord" –

that was her mindset

Her life had been changed by Jesus

He had delivered her from seven demons

He had rescued her from herself

Whoever has been forgiven much, loves much – that was Mary

14 Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing [there], and **did not know that it was Jesus.**

So as soon as Mary says, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

She turns –

We don't know what made her turn –

Maybe she heard a noise or maybe they angels looked in the direction where Jesus appeared

So Mary turns, sees Jesus – but she doesn't recognize Him

Why didn't Mary recognize Jesus?

There are some that say that Mary didn't recognize Jesus because she had been crying so much – the tears were covering her eyesight, so everything was blurry – so she couldn't see Him

Other people say that it was early in the morning and it was still dark -

Remember in our study last week – how we looked at the 3 different words that John used for saw –

When Peter went into the cave – and saw the linens – the word that John used was a word that meant that he looked at the evidence and could only conclude what it was not.

Peter could only conclude that it wasn't grave robbers who took Jesus' body (because the strips of linen were laying flat on the bench) – but he could not conclude that Jesus had risen from the dead

That word is the same word that is used here to describe Mary when she went into the cave and saw the angels and when she looked at Jesus yet didn't recognize Him

She looked at the evidence and could only conclude what it was not –

In her eyes – this man standing in front of her couldn't be Jesus

Was it the tears? Was it the lack of lighting?

Or was it unbelief? What about hopelessness? What about despair?

Can these things cloud our vision?

Absolutely

Think about the encounter that Jesus had with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

For seven miles – they walked along Jesus and they too did not recognize Him

15 Jesus said to her, "**Woman, why are you weeping?** Whom are you seeking?"

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

Woman, why are you weeping? – that is the same question that the two angels asked Mary inside the tomb –

But Jesus adds another question –

Whom are you seeking?

Whether we realize it or not—that is one of the most profound and important questions in the Bible—

in other words, "What Jesus are you seeking?"—a dead prophet or a resurrected Savior—

Because up to this point – Mary is still seeking a dead body – she is not seeking a resurrected Savior

She thinks that He is the gardener

Remember in the beginning of Genesis – when God created Adam –

What was Adam? What was his occupation?

He was told by God to tend and keep what? The garden

He was a gardener

And now Mary is looking at Jesus – thinking He is the gardener

So the first Adam was a gardener and the last Adam was recognized as a gardener

Mary tells Him -

“Tell me where He is? Tell me where I can find Him? I will carry Him – I will take Him away”

She was willing to do whatever it took – even if it meant carrying Jesus’ body by herself

Love bears all things – 1 Cor 13:7

Jesus asks -

Woman, Why are you weeping???

Jesus knows what we are going through –

Jesus tells us in Luke 4:18 that He came to heal the brokenhearted

The scriptures tell us (Rev 21:4) that He will wipe away every tear from their eyes;

Mary was brokenhearted

Mary had tear in her eyes

The grief was crushing her – so Jesus appeared to calm & comfort her

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

Notice that Jesus doesn't rebuke Mary for her unbelief

He just wants to reveal Himself to her

In the same way He reveals Himself to you and me

So He calls her by name, Mary –

And suddenly it clicked -

The gardener wouldn't have known her name

It was Jesus

[Jhn 10:3-4 NKJV] 3 "To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 "And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

Jesus, the True Shepherd calls His own sheep by name –

He makes it personal

When He called Lazarus from the tomb - "Lazarus, come forth!"

Jesus makes it personal

And the moment He said Mary – she knew who was calling her name.

And at that moment – she saw the face of the One she loved so much

“You’re alive”

And it is at that moment that Mary walks over to Jesus and gives Him a death grip.

“I am never going to let go of You again”

Look at verse 17

17 Jesus said 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, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and [to] My God and your God.' "

There is a problem here –

You see in Matthew’s gospel –

When Jesus appears to the other women

It says -

[Mat 28:9 NKJV] 9 And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him.

The scriptures do not say anything about Jesus telling this group of women to not touch Him as they held Him by the feet”

Later on – when Jesus appears to Thomas, Jesus actually invites Thomas to touch Him – “Thomas, touch the nail prints, run your hands through my pierced side – don’t be shy”

But with Mary – Jesus says, do not cling to Me

In the Greek – the phrase actually means to stop an action already begun rather than to avoid starting it.’

Mary was holding on to Jesus and did not want to let Him go.

Jesus was not protesting that Mary should not touch Him lest He be defiled but was admonishing her not to detain Him because He would see her and the disciples again.”

You see – there was going to be an opportunity for Mary to cling to Jesus – but it was not going to happen until He ascended to the Father

Don’t forget – the reason that Jesus came and died for us and conquered death and ascended into Heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father was for the purpose that man can be reconciled with the Father

But He also tells her not to cling to Him because He tells her to go tell my brethren

Mary is the first one to see the Risen Christ

And she is the first one to be told to be a missionary and go tell the other guys the good news!

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

And what was the disciple's response?

[Mar 16:11 NKJV] 11 And when they (the 11 disciples) heard that He was alive and had been seen by her (Mary Magdalen), they did not believe.

David in the Psalms writes – (30:5b) Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.

That was Mary that Sunday morning –

And that is the life of the believer as we place our trust in our Living Hope

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

In our text today – Mary could care less about angels –

She didn't want a substitute – she wanted the real thing

If Jesus Christ is our one and only love,

if our heart casts out all substitutes,

we will soon enjoy the comfort of His presence -

Let our heart, like Mary's, be full of Christ, and our love, like hers, will be satisfied with nothing short of Himself.

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

