

06

JOHN 20:1-18

THE EMPTY TOMB



THIS WEEK'S focus

It's the world's greatest plot twist: a person who was totally, certainly dead was suddenly totally, certainly . . . not. Even though Jesus had been dropping hints about the incredible story God was writing, His followers struggled to grasp the reality of resurrection. Even though they believed Jesus was God, it was still beyond their grasp that God the Son could conquer death. Over the past weeks, we've been diving into Jesus's final teachings. Now we are looking ahead to the incredible event of Jesus's new life. The resurrection changed death into life, doubters into believers, and mere followers into true family. He is risen—and that changes everything!



CENTRAL truth

Jesus is the resurrected Savior.



EXPLORE

scripture

JOHN 20:1-18

JOHN 20:1-10

1 On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark. She saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. **2** So she went running to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said to them, “They’ve taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they’ve put him!” **3** At that, Peter and the other disciple went out, heading for the tomb. **4** The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and got to the tomb first. **5** Stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but

he did not go in. **6** Then, following him, Simon Peter also came. He entered the tomb and saw the linen cloths lying there. **7** The wrapping that had been on his head was not lying with the linen cloths but was folded up in a separate place by itself. **8** The other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, then also went in, saw, and believed. **9** For they did not yet understand the Scripture that he must rise from the dead. **10** Then the disciples returned to the place where they were staying.

JOHN 20:11-15

11 But Mary stood outside the tomb, crying. As she was crying, she stooped to look into the tomb. **12** She saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus’s body had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. **13** They said to her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “Because they’ve taken away my Lord,” she told them, “and I don’t know where they’ve put him.”

14 Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know it was Jesus. **15** “Woman,” Jesus said to her, “why are you crying? Who is it that you’re seeking?” Supposing he was the gardener, she replied, “Sir, if you’ve carried him away, tell me where you’ve put him, and I will take him away.”

JOHN 20:16-18

16 Jesus said to her, “Mary.” Turning around, she said to him in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” — which means “Teacher.” **17** “Don’t cling to me,” Jesus told her, “since I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them that

I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” **18** Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them what he had said to her.

DAILY devotions

MEMORIZE JOHN 20:8

7 ARROWS FOR BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



What does this passage tell us about humans?



How does this passage prompt me to pray?



What does this passage demand of me?

day 1

JOHN 20:1-4

DWELL

This text is full of immediacy: Mary Magdalene went to the tomb *first thing* in the morning; she ran to Peter and John *as soon as* she saw it was empty; she *immediately* assumed the body was stolen; Peter and John ran toward the tomb *right away*. After the horrors of Jesus's death on Friday and the silence of the tomb on Sunday, it makes sense that these devoted followers would be quick to move!



Why do you think Mary assumed the body was stolen?



What does this passage reveal about the relationships among Jesus's followers?

MEMORIZE

Using colored pencils or pens, creatively write out John 20:8 on a piece of paper. Read the verse out loud five times. Finally, try to say it out loud five times without looking, trying to picture it in your mind instead.

PRAY

Tell God about places in your life where you don't understand what He's doing and you're losing hope. Ask Him to encourage you with today's text.

day 2

JOHN 20:5-10

DWELL

↑ Why do you think John recorded details of Jesus's grave clothes?

→ How does John's belief motivate your own belief?

John, the writer of this Gospel, was an eyewitness to both Jesus dying on the cross (see John 19:26) and to the empty tomb. By all accounts the math doesn't add up: How could a man who was so certainly killed no longer be in His tomb? But John had walked closely with Jesus and believed that He was truly the Messiah. John recorded all of this so that we, too, could believe (see John 20:20-21).

MEMORIZE

Invent motions that match the words in John 20:8 and practice them while saying the words out loud a few times. It probably feels a little weird, but hey, sometimes movement can help engage our brains!

PRAY

Share with God places where you do not understand Him but desire to believe Him anyway. Ask Him to help you believe.

day 3

JOHN 20:11-13

DWELL

Mary Magdalene had experienced Jesus's delivery from evil (see Luke 8:1-2). Even so, the empty tomb seemed merely empty, and she was left feeling empty of all hope. Even when she saw angels seated inside the tomb where Jesus's body once was, she didn't lift her gaze to see what God was doing. Everything about the past few days had been horrific and tragic—it seemed unimaginable that any good could come from this.

↔ How could you use this passage to encourage someone who is feeling hopeless?

↓ Why do you think Mary was so quick to assume that men had done something bad rather than assume that God had done something good?

MEMORIZE

Write out John 20:8 on a piece of paper or note card, and place it next to your bed. Make it a goal to say it five times before you go to bed and five times when you wake up.

PRAY

Consider the question both the angels and Jesus asked Mary (vv. 13,15). Answer that question for yourself in prayer to the Lord.

day 4

JOHN 20:14-16

DWELL

↑ How does Jesus's one-word response to Mary in verse 16 reveal His love for her?

↪ How do you think Mary's love for Jesus was enhanced by this experience? How can her experience fuel your prayers?

Isn't it incredible that Jesus simply said Mary's name and suddenly everything changed? When life is deeply confusing, personal connection with Jesus can bring comfort and clarity. Even though we may not understand Him, we know Him—and He knows us. It's enough.

MEMORIZE

Write down the first letter of each word of John 20:8 on a note card. At least five times today, see if you can say the verse just by looking at the letters.

PRAY

Praise God for knowing your name! Ask Him to help you know Him better.

day 5

JOHN 20:17-18

DWELL

After finally "finding" Jesus, Mary likely did not want to leave His side! But Jesus commissioned her with the most precious message the world had ever seen. She was to go tell the disciples that He was alive—and they would go tell the rest of the world. Though first century culture would not have held Mary in high esteem, Jesus entrusted her with earth-shattering news.

← What does Mary's commissioning reveal about Jesus? How might this have challenged early believers?

→ How can Mary's testimony in verse 16 help you share your testimony?

MEMORIZE

Share John 20:8 with a friend or family member, and explain what it means. Then, invite them to randomly quiz you at some point today to see if you can remember the verse.

PRAY

Thank God that even when the world hates us, His followers are kept safe in His love.