

“Why Weepest Thou? Whom Seekest Thou?”

John 20:1-18 (text: v. 15)

- Mary Magdalene was the first person to visit Christ’s tomb after His resurrection.
- She was the first person to see Jesus after His resurrection (Mk. 16:9).
- The first words Jesus spoke after His resurrection were to a weeping woman—*“Woman, why weepest Thou? Whom seekest thou?”*

Mary loved Jesus. Her life was transformed when He cast seven devils out of her and set her free from Satan’s bondage. From that day forward, Mary became one of Christ’s most devoted followers.

When Jesus was crucified, Mary remained at the foot of the cross and watched her beloved Savior die. The One who changed her life is gone.

As they took Jesus’ body from the cross, the Sabbath day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread was at hand. There was little time to prepare His body for burial. Along with the other women, they waited for the men to make arrangements to bury Jesus’ body... somewhere... anywhere. Joseph of Arimathaea offers the use of his tomb. They hurriedly wrap Jesus’ body in linens and spices and place it in the borrowed tomb. They intend to return later after the Sabbath to finish anointing Jesus’ body.

I. Mary’s amazing DISCOVERY (vs. 1-2a)

- A. **Her ARRIVAL** at the tomb. On the first day of the week Mary goes first to the tomb. Other women will also come shortly, but Mary arrives first. It is early morning and still dark (v. 1).
- B. **Her AMAZEMENT** at the tomb. To her amazement the guards are gone — Where are they? The stone has been removed from the opening of the grave—Who moved it? What does this all mean? She must go tell Peter and John (v. 2).

II. Mary’s abrupt DEDUCTION (v. 2b).

- A. **Her erroneous CONJECTURE.** Mary does not tell them Christ was risen. No, Mary “jumped to the conclusion” and supposes, *“They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher...”* (v. 2).

The thought Jesus was risen from the dead didn't enter her mind.

We must not rush to judge Mary's faulty deduction too harshly. First, as far as we know, she was unaware of Christ telling His disciples He would rise on the third day. Second, this was unprecedented—nothing like this had ever happened before. Put yourself in Mary's place—How would you respond in her situation? How you would feel if you went to a cemetery to put flowers on a loved one's grave only to find it uncovered and empty.

B. **John's correct CONCLUSION** (vs. 3-9). Peter and John run to check it out (vs. 3-8). [HUMOR v. 4—Evidently God wanted us to know John was faster than Peter. Or, John wanted us to know he was a faster runner than Peter.].

- After Peter arrives, he bursts into the tomb, looks around, and probably said something to John like, "Yep! It is empty!"
- Jesus' body was gone. Only the grave clothes and the napkin that covered His face remained. If Jesus body was taken, why did they leave the linens? John concludes Christ was risen! No need to stay there so they return to their home (v. 10).

III. **Mary's anxious DESPAIR** (vs. 11-15).

➡ Shortly after Peter and John leave, Mary arrives back at the tomb. She lingered there weeping as she stared into the empty tomb. She sees two angels (vs. 11-12).

A. **The question of the Angels**—"Woman, why weepest thou?" (v. 13). To the angels, they must have thought it strange for Mary to be weeping when her Lord was alive and only a few feet away.

1. Mary is weeping because she thinks Jesus is dead.
2. Mary is weeping because her purpose for being there was frustrated—"Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She had already witnessed the brutal crucifixion of her Lord. Now His body has been taken also. She was devastated and heartbroken.

- ***“The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart”*** (Ps. 34:18).
3. As Mary turns from the tomb she sees a man standing behind her. Mary did not recognize it was Jesus. She was blinded by grief and supposed He is the gardener.
 - The deep pain of losing a loved one may lead a person to make wrong conclusions concerning the Lord’s presence in their life.
 - As Jacob said in the midst of his grief over his missing son Joseph, *“All these things are against me,”* when in reality they were working for him.
- B. The questions of Jesus** (v. 15). *“Woman, why weepst Thou? Whom seekest thou?”* This was NOT a question of rebuke.
1. The first question was an expression of empathy. Jesus sees every tear you shed and He CARES.
 2. The second question was a diagnostic question to reveal her source of her grief.
 - We must remember when Jesus asks someone a question, He is not asking because He doesn’t know. He asks to reveal something to us that we do not know.
 3. Mary did not answer the question since she assumed the “gardener” would know WHOM she was seeking—*“Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”*
 - Perhaps Mary thought Joseph of Arimathaea only allowed Jesus’ body to be laid in his grave temporarily until it could be relocated to a permanent grave elsewhere. All Mary wanted to know was where was Jesus, her Lord.
 - Mary came seeking to find Jesus, and Jesus was there to find her. Never worry—Even when you cannot sense Christ’s presence, He is there and He sees your grief.

IV. Mary’s agony DISPELLED (vs. 16-18).

A. Jesus is DISCERNED (v. 16).

1. Jesus saw her despair and was touched by her grief. [He spoke only one word—“*Mary*,” [not “*Woman*” as He said the first time]. That was enough. With one word Mary recognized her Lord! She answers with one word—“*Rabboni*.”
2. Mary did not recognize Jesus’ outward appearance, but she recognized His voice!
 - Jesus said, “*Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*” Jesus calls “*his own sheep by name*” (John 10:3). Jesus said, “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me*” (John 10:27).

B. **Mary is DISPATCHED** (vs. 17-18). Mary was the first person to tell the good news that Jesus was risen from the dead.

SUMMATION—“*Why weepst thou?*” Because she had no reason to hope—She believed Jesus was dead and gone. She felt alone.

- ➡ This is a picture of a world without the Lord... without hope... living frustrated lives without a purpose worth living for.
- ➡ The answer to Mary’s weeping was Jesus! Jesus was right there, but not in the place she was looking, nor in the form she expected.
- ➡ Once Mary knew her Lord was alive and with her, her despair were turned to delight.

“*Whom seekest thou?*” The question was NOT, “WHAT seekest thou?” but “*WHOM seekest thou?*” Life and purpose is not found in a “what,” but in a PERSON—Only Jesus Christ can give you a PURPOSE in life worth living for.

- ➡ People are seeking life where life cannot be found. They are seeking life from things that are dead (Luke 12:15; 24:5).
- ➡ Jesus gave her PURPOSE—Go and tell the news HE LIVES!
 - If Jesus is missing from your life, you have reason to weep.
 - But when you know Jesus is alive in your life, you need not weep! He knows your sorrows... He sees your tears... He feels your pain.

He is risen— BELIEVE IT!

He is risen— REJOICE!

He is risen— RELAX! Cast your care upon Him for He careth for you.

He is risen— GO AND TELL IT!