



I Have Seen the Lord

Message Notes, November 13, 2016

John 20: 1-18

Last week, we walked through the agony of the Cross, the horror of sin, the depth of our lostness. This week we celebrate the Resurrection! Today changes everything – He is risen; He is risen indeed!

Yes, the Cross is the climax of John's gospel, of God's *entire* story, but without the Resurrection, it would be utterly meaningless.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-14. How does Paul express here the absolute necessity of the Resurrection?

Why was Paul so convinced of the truth of the Resurrection?

- The awe-inspiring testimony of Stephen as he was being stoned; he died in utter joy and peace, beholding the Lord.
- Paul's own transforming, personal encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.
- The authentic testimony of the disciples who beheld the empty tomb and encountered the risen Jesus on multiple occasions.

Jesus was not merely a good man or even a sacrificial hero. The Resurrection reveals his divinity and Lordship. Belief in the Resurrection marks the difference between "nominal" Christianity (those who simply adhere to a moral system and a guide for life) and true followers of Jesus – the risen Lord. True believers no longer live primarily for this world, but for eternity.

Walking through the Resurrection story:

1. Mary came early in the morning. Jesus died on Friday afternoon, just before the Sabbath began (6:00 p.m.). There was not sufficient time to fully prepare his body for burial. Mary Magdalene (and three other women noted in the other gospels) came first thing, as the Sabbath ended. John only mentions Mary Magdalene, perhaps to accent her story in particular. We know only a few things:

- Jesus had healed her from possession of seven demons.
- She was present at the foot of the Cross when he died.
- She was the first to come to the tomb that morning.
- She was one dramatically saved and transformed by Jesus and thus had a deep love and devotion to Him.

2. The stone was rolled away. The tomb had been "sealed" – watched by a Roman cohort of guards who were under orders to keep it secure under threat of death (if they failed). The massive stone was rolled away and the cohort was gone.

3. She ran back to Peter and "the disciple Jesus loved" (John). They in turn ran to the tomb. John arrived first (being much younger and more fit) but he hesitated, while impulsive Peter rushed in.

4. Details of the empty tomb. John is quite specific about the linen burial cloth and head-wrap – lying there where the body had been laid. The point? If someone had stolen the body, they would have grabbed it, linen and all. They would not have taken time to unwrap the body.



John states that he “saw and believed,” but goes on to say “but they did not understand” the OT prophecies. Why is this significant? It reinforces that they clearly did not manufacture this story to align with OT scripture because they did not really understand the fulfillment of scripture until later.

5. Mary lingered at the tomb after Peter and John left. She was confused, sad, still overcome with grief. One of the angels (whom she did not recognize as such) addressed her – “Why are you weeping?” This was not a reprimand, but a gentle address to raise her awareness, to spark hope.

6. She saw Jesus but did not know who he was.

- His physical appearance was clearly different.
- Jesus, too, asked her, “Why are you weeping?” That same gentle, spark of hope and encouragement.
- He asked, “Who are you looking for?” Not “what” are you looking for. There is perhaps a playful, joyful tone in his voice, a twinkle in his eye. He was, after all, RISEN! He was delighted to share this glorious news with her.

7. She still couldn’t see him He called her by name. She instantly heard his voice and recognized Him.

- How does this reflect the truth John proclaimed earlier in his gospel? (see John 10: 4-3.)
- She immediately responded in worship.

8. “Don’t cling to me, Mary.” Again, not a reprimand. Jesus was not offended; he was simply revealing to her that he was now in a different form. She would henceforth connect with him spiritually rather than in the flesh.

9. Jesus sent her to tell her “brothers” in the Lord that his time to ascend back to Father is coming. She went back with joyful, enthusiasm to tell them – “I have seen the Lord!”

Jesus chose Mary – one who had been fractured by demons, and a woman with no social or legal clout in that day – to reveal his resurrection.

A dead body rises. A restored woman becomes the messenger of glory. It’s a new day indeed!

What difference in your daily life does the Resurrection really make?