

John 20:1-18

Teaching Points

The resurrection of Jesus Christ stands unrivaled as the most radical event in history. When we say a radical change takes place, we mean that an extreme or substantial change occurs. Someone said, "A radical event is an event that takes the current system and flips it on its head. Something truly radical changes all we know in an instant." Nothing brought more extreme changes than the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

First, let's notice these changes that resulted from the resurrection of Jesus:

1. The change in the grave from full to empty.

Mary Magdalene arrived at Jesus' tomb having witnessed Jesus' torturous death. Imagine what kind of emotional state she must have been in. She did not find what she expected.

Discussion Questions: What had Mary Magdalene just witnessed on Friday? What did she expect to find when she arrived at the tomb?

Thoughts: The Gospel writers tell us that Mary Magdalene was there at the cross when Jesus was crucified. She was an eye-witness of the death of the Son of God (Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25). And she witnessed where Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus buried Jesus (Matthew 27:61; Mark 15:47). She was on her way to the tomb fully expecting to find the body of Jesus.

2. The change in John as he looks and believes.

John and Peter both ran to the tomb and went inside of the tomb. What did they find? The grave clothes (linen cloths and handkerchief) that had been used to wrap Jesus' body. What did they not find? The body of Jesus.

Discussion Question: Verse 8 says that John (who is most likely the "other disciple") "**went in also; and he saw and believed.**" What did John believe?

Thoughts: John believed that Jesus rose from the dead without truly understanding it. That's what the word "**know**" means in verse 9. John had knowledge of the empty tomb and believed Jesus was risen, but he didn't comprehend what the Scripture meant by it all.

3. The change in Mary from weeping to rejoicing.

Mary was focused on the location of Jesus' body. Three times she refers to "where they have laid Him" (verses 2,13,15). Mary saw the empty tomb for herself and then told Peter and John. Then she saw the angels in the tomb who asked her why she was crying. And then she sees Jesus Himself, but thinks He's the gardener!

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Jesus graciously and lovingly calls her by name and then she knows! Imagine what it was like for her to hear Jesus say, “Mary.” Her mourning was turned to joy. She heard the powerful voice of the Good Shepherd (John 10) and she knew it.

Next, let's notice a couple of earthshaking radical changes brought about by the resurrection. You might say that those changes we listed above are “small changes” like aftershocks. When Jesus rose from the dead, the existing system was irrevocably altered. It will never be the same. Here are a couple of deep, fundamental changes explained by Jesus' resurrection:

1. The Power of Death Has Forever Been Defeated.

The most common of human experiences is life and death. They are simply unavoidable. That's why Mary went looking for Jesus' body. Her mind-set was the same as ours would have been: Find the part of Him that's left when His life is extinguished. But look at what she says in verse 18. Notice she doesn't say, “I have seen the Lord's body.” She says, “I have seen the Lord!” Jesus conquered death. “He stared into death's cold, cruel eyes, and with infinite power He defeated death, rendering death impotent. Prior to the resurrection of Jesus, every person walked this earth with an executioner's blade above His neck, never sure when death would strike, but Jesus disarmed death—He showed us what awaits those who are His once they pass from this life” (Exalting Jesus in John, by Carter and Wredberg).

Discussion Questions: How has your life changed through belief in the resurrection? How would your life be different if you didn't believe in the resurrection? How does the resurrection free you from the fear of death in day-to-day life?

2. The Position of Jesus' Disciples is Radically Changed.

In verse 17, Jesus tells Mary something astounding about the relationship of His disciples to the Heavenly Father. One hundred and eight times in the Gospel of John, Jesus refers to God as “Father.” Twenty-seven times he says “My Father.” Seventy-one times He says, “the Father.” Only one time does He refer to God as the disciples' Father. He does that in verse 17.

What did Jesus accomplish in His death, burial, and resurrection? He radically altered the position of His disciples. We were once cut off from God, enemies, dead in trespasses and sins. But that is no longer the case! In Christ, we are family members. Through Christ we have been ushered into a new family where Christ is our brother and God is our Father.

Discussion Questions: What has God promised to His children? How can you approach God in prayer as His child?

Thoughts: *There are many wonderful promises that have become ours because of our position as children of God. We have an inheritance from our Father. We are loved by our Father. We are forever accepted by our Father. Praise God! You have access to His presence as His child which means you can approach Him with confidence and boldness and without fear of rejection.*