

DAILY TIME**SECTION 1 | JOHN 20:1-18**

Jesus is dead and buried. As far as Christ's earliest followers were concerned, the hope of the world laid defeated in burial clothes. It's Black Saturday. The altars are covered. The lights are out. On Sunday morning, as soon as she can, Mary Magdalene goes to Jesus' tomb.

Mary's encounter with Jesus is one of the most beautiful stories in Scripture. She arrives at the tomb to pay her respects, much like you might approach a tombstone of a loved one to lay flowers and say a few words. When she arrives, she finds the tomb empty. For readers of the Gospel of John, this shouldn't be a surprise. Jesus has predicted his death and resurrection multiple times, including John 2:18-22 and John 10:17-18. Jesus told his followers what was coming next. Yet upon finding the empty tomb, Mary didn't rejoice. She ran to the disciples and said, "They have taken the body."

¹ Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. ² So she came running to Simon Peter and the other

disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!”

³ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. ⁴ Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. ⁵ He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, ⁷ as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’ head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. ⁸ Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. ⁹ (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

¹³ They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?”

“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

¹⁵ He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.”

¹⁶ Jesus said to her, “Mary.”

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”).

¹⁷ Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”

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¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them that he had said these things to her.

- ② What was Mary’s reaction to the body of Christ missing? What did she feel? Why do you think she felt this?
- ② Why do you think Jesus chose to reveal himself first to Mary?
- ② What made Mary finally able to recognize the risen Christ for who he is?

SECTION 2 | JOHN 20:19-23

Jesus appeared to Mary. Now he appears to his disciples, who are locked away because of fear.

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

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- ⑦ Jesus' first word to his disciples is *peace*. Why did they need to hear this word first? Where does the peace of Christ need to enter your life?
 - ⑦ Jesus breathes on his disciples. Take a moment and read Genesis 1:7. What does this connection suggest about the Holy Spirit? Have you experienced the Holy Spirit in your life?
 - ⑦ Pray for the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. Write out that prayer here.
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SECTION 3 | JOHN 20:24-31

Finally Jesus appears to Thomas, who was not present. Reflect on Christ's approach.

²⁴Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

²⁶A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

²⁸Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

²⁹Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

³⁰Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

- ❓ Is Thomas wrong or unreasonable in verse 25?
- ❓ What is Christ’s attitude toward Thomas? How do you imagine he’s speaking (in anger, with pity, with compassion, with derision, etc.)?
- ❓ Where do you experience doubt about faith? Have you shared those doubts with anyone?

GROUP TIME

WEEK 9 - THE RESURRECTION MEETS THE CAMPUS SKEPTICS

We’re going to revisit the core of the passages that you read earlier this week. These three passages all have a unifying theme: a living Christ comes to those who don’t look for him. In some way all of these characters doubt. They’ve been told—they’re supposed to know!—that Jesus would rise. He’s performed miracles in front of them. They’ve heard the testimony of others about him. They witnessed the earthquake and blackout which boomed and blinded as Christ’s death rattle. We live in a skeptical age. But perhaps in this they weren’t so different from us.

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JOHN 19:1-3; 14-30

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❓ Of all the characters in these stories, which do you personally feel most like? If you were one of these characters, who would you be? Why?

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❓ Describe Christ as you see him in all of these passages. What do you imagine he was like as a person when he talked to these people? How did he respond to having his best friends repeatedly not believe in him?

❓ How does the end of the gospel address *us*? What is promised when we believe? How does believing in Christ lead to more life, now and in eternity?

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❓ The disciples were hiding, but Christ told them he was going to send them out. Is there any place you're hiding from Christ? Where do you think is the place Christ is sending you?

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A PRAYER IN THE TRADITION OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

How does this prayer intersect with the reading? Pray this prayer this week as part of your devotions.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.*

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LIVING IT OUT

As a group, decide how you're going to apply something from this week's discussion. Write out what you decide here.

