



The Resurrection For Real

Sunday 31st March 2024

JOHN 20:11-18

What moved Mary on from the pain of looking for a body she thought had been taken away to seeing her Saviour who would propel her life in an entirely different direction is the same thing that must move us if you are to serve God's purposes in your generation.

What keeps us stuck on looking at our pain and pity and thinking 'oh well, I guess that's that' is the same thing that would have kept Mary stuck in the pain of an empty tomb and an apparently missing body.

Do not let the familiarity of this story blind you to the truth God is speaking to you today. Do not be content with simply knowing this story. Do not be satisfied with just see someone else's struggle resolved.

1

You have got things you are struggling with today, right now, in this very moment. Right now, stop. Pray that God would open your eyes just as He opened the eyes of Mary Magdelene to see that what she thought she saw was not all there was to see.

Today, I tell you, you need a revelation from God. You need God to show Himself to you. You do not need Him to reveal to you a faultless future perfectly formed around your wants and desires. What you need revealed to you is what God revealed to Mary that resurrection Sunday just outside an empty tomb. You need Him to reveal Jesus to you today like never before.

2

Let's follow the story of this revelation to Mary starting verses 11 to 13,

But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. ¹²And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

3

Some of you are stuck in a place you do not want to be, out work, out of time, out of resources, out of energy, out of ideas, out of money, out of friends, out of health. And God could send an angel to ask the very same question, "why are you weeping?" Why are you upset about this? Why has this broken you? Why are you feeling this way? And it will not change a thing, because you will

simply give your reason why you have no hope in your situation just as Mary did,

4 She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.”

And that, just like us, reveals why we stay stuck on what we see as the problem. And we give similar answers – because my health is failing and I don’t know how I can take care of my family; because my endeavours to get work are coming to nothing and I do not see what else I can do; or because my friends seem to have deserted me and I do not know what I can do to get them back.

5 Just like Mary, without a revelation from God you will stay believing all hope is gone because there is nothing more that *you* can do. You are looking into your fading hopes and dreams and all you can feel is the cold echo of an empty tomb.

6 And this is where the story turns; this is where your story turns, in verses 14 and 15 everything changes,

Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”

In a moment Jesus brings Mary, with her short term issues and her hopeless solutions, face to face with the Son of God when He asks her ‘whom are you seeking?’

7 In that moment the cause of her pain and anguish comes face to face with the only question that will redirect her whole life – whom are you seeking? Who is this all about? Ask it this way,

_____ *[insert your name]*

who is this really all about?

You or Me?

8 Verse 15 continues,

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, “Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away.”

You see she believes she talking to a garden keeper, someone in charge of keeping things tidy and looking just the way they should look. And that is why you struggle to hear what God is saying because you suppose Him to be one who is just there to take care of things and keep them the way they we want them kept.

9

Just like Mary, your situation does not need a keeper (someone to look after it). Just like Mary, your situation needs a resurrection – it needs a Saviour!!

You need God to reveal Himself to you and you need to see the God behind the revelation and live in the reality of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and not just the small-minded version of tomorrow you've been dreaming of.

Too often we think we got the rough deal, the impossible life, the weak body, the less than average mind, the limited resources as a consequence of the choices of others, as a function of the family we were born into. Some of you even think this is all down to plain old bad luck. Well you need to hear the words of Jesus from John 9:1-7,

10

Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. ²And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

³Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

Jonh devotes a whole chapter to the discussions around a man's circumstances and what could be the reason for them. And if you will go home and read John 9, then as clearly as Mary saw Jesus, you will see Jesus too.

You too will realise the reason why, you have debilitating illnesses; you have experienced abusive relationships, you can't find work, you have a marriage that seems headed for destruction, you have jobs that are unfulfilling, you can't find a godly man to marry, you can't seem to make the grades, you struggle with addiction, you can't cope with all the stress, you cannot see a future for yourself, and many more struggles beside. The reason for these circumstances is

11

So that the works of God should be revealed in you!

So others will see what God is going to do and give glory to his name.

As long as you and I are trying to make a name of ourselves and get glory for ourselves and seek comfort for ourselves then you and I are going to feel like all hope is gone and like not even angels or even God Himself is on our side.

Do you see how powerful and personal the resurrection is? Do you see how unless the resurrection really is about Jesus Christ then it offers no more hope than the death of a good man and every day will feel like you've showed up to the funeral of a good man – it will feel both the right thing to do and empty of hope?

12

13

Let me leave you with the words of Henry Blackaby,

'God's purpose in working through you is not to help you to be successful but to use your life to reveal Himself. This is a crucial way of God. He is not there to reveal you to a watching world. He is there to reveal *Himself* to a watching world.'

14

John 20:16 says,

'Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

In that moment she saw. She Heard. She believed. The empty tomb was no longer a picture of her greatest anguish. It became her greatest joy. And her whole life changed direction and she went to tell the world of her risen Lord. All her brokenness was behind her. **It no longer mattered what she wasn't and what she could not do but who He IS and what He HAS DONE!**

15

16

So what shall we do? How shall we follow God's will for our lives?

- Who is Jesus to you?
- Whom are you seeking – self or the risen Christ?
- What brokenness are you holding onto/fixing – give it up to HIM
- Give thanks for your brokenness and ask Him to use it to reveal Himself to a broken world.
- Make yourself available – new job, new home, new place, new skills, new people – whatever and wherever, I will go.
- God wants to reveal Himself – I is crucified; live out the Christ who lives in you!