

...And Then Came Sunday!
April 16, 2017 Pastor Bill Bump

For the followers of Jesus, it had been the bleakest Sabbath of their lives, but in the darkness of Sunday morning, things began to change.

John 20:1 *Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance.*

We can learn a lot from Mary's experience about how God can lift us out of darkness and despair.

Mary was confused by the empty tomb. She didn't know what to make of it.

John 20:2 *She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"*

By leaving the tomb early, Mary Magdalene missed out on four pieces of evidence that could have convinced her the body was not stolen and that Jesus had risen from the grave:

1. The stone that had been rolled away
2. The appearance of angels at the tomb

Luke 24:4-6a ⁴*As they stood there puzzled, two men suddenly appeared to them, clothed in dazzling robes.*

⁵*The women were terrified and bowed with their faces to the ground. Then the men asked, "Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? ⁶He isn't here! He is risen from the dead!"*

3. The reminder of fulfilled prophecy

Luke 24:6b-7 ⁶*"Remember what he told you back in Galilee, ⁷that the Son of Man must be betrayed into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day."*

4. The grave clothes

John 20:6-7 ⁶*Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, ⁷while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings.*

After Peter and John left, Mary Magdalene arrived back at the tomb.

John 20:11 *Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in.*

The appearance of two angels was unmistakable testimony that the powers of heaven were at work.

John 20:12-14 ¹² *She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying.* ¹³ *“Dear woman, why are you crying?” the angels asked her.*

“Because they have taken away my Lord,” she replied, “and I don’t know where they have put him.”

¹⁴ *She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn’t recognize him.*

Mary’s confusion and despair were soon replaced by joy:

John 20:15-17 ¹⁵ *“Dear woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?” She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.”*

¹⁶ *“Mary!” Jesus said.*

She turned to him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which is Hebrew for “Teacher”).

¹⁷ *“Don’t cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven’t yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’”*

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Mary’s actions suggest three strategies that provide a good pattern for us to follow to experience a new morning filled with hope and joy:

1. Mary went to the place where it was most likely that something positive would happen.

When we are discouraged, we need to put ourselves in a position where, spiritually, something positive is going to happen.

1 John 1:5-7 ⁵ *This is the message we heard from Jesus and now declare to you: God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all.* ⁶ *So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness; we are not practicing the truth.* ⁷ *But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.*

2. Mary recognized the presence of Jesus when He called her name.

The primary way that God speaks to us is through the Bible.

3. Mary followed Jesus' instructions and shared her testimony about Him with others.

John 20:18 Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message.

Conclusion

Dark days of disappointment and hopelessness are a part of each person's life, but when we accept Jesus into our life, we have the assurance that days of hope and joy are coming.

Psalm 30:5b Weeping may last through the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Psalm 126:5-6 ⁵Those who plant in tears will harvest with shouts of joy. ⁶They weep as they go to plant their seed, but they sing as they return with the harvest.

Easter Survey

- A. I have already invited Jesus into my life and have experience the joy of resurrection morning.
- B. I have decided today to invite Jesus into my life and to experience the joy of resurrection morning.
- C. I'm in the process of considering inviting Jesus into my life so I can experience the joy of resurrection morning.
- D. I have no interest in inviting Jesus into my life.