

The Resurrection of our Lord Sunrise  
03/31/2013  
Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church  
John 20:1-18  
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I bring you grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Word of God for our consideration this morning is from the Gospel according to Saint John the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter.

It must have seemed like a lifetime since that Friday night at Golgotha. In fact in a way it was a lifetime. Jesus, the One Mary Magdalene called Lord was dead. She called Him Lord not as she would call the supposed gardener at the tomb lord. The first Lord is Lord who is God. When she called Jesus Lord before His death she did so in the knowledge that He was God. She'd believed that Jesus was the Christ, God's anointed. She'd believed that He was the Son of God, which in the language of that day meant that she believed Jesus to be God. When she spoke to the mistaken gardener believing He was just a gardener she was using the familiar version of lord, like we use mister today.

That's important, these different uses of 'lord' by Mary. It's important because it gets to the root of her thought processes. Though she'd believed that Jesus was Lord, God, she really didn't anymore. At least not in any real sense. What kind of God dies? What kind of God suffers as Jesus did? He was Lord, God, to her right up to the time He'd breathed His last and said, "*It is finished.*" Now He appears to her, not disguised and she doesn't recognize Him.

In the midst of her suffering, in the midst of her sorrow over the death of Jesus her thinking was vain. In vanity she searched about in the garden looking

for the body of Jesus Christ. The tomb was open. There was no one lying where He should have been. There was nothing but the cloths. Somebody took his body.

Does that not sound odd? Someone took His body. Is that normal thinking? What would you do with the body? The Romans were afraid some of Jesus' disciples might get the body hence the guards and the stone over the entrance. They might steal Him to keep His political momentum going. But the disciples were too busy hiding to think about such things. Their mind was not on political maneuvers but on the loss of the One they thought was **the** One. "He is gone."

It's not hard to imagine such a thing, really is it? We've all been there, at least if you're more than 10 years old or so, and unfortunately for some of the young ones too. Life has a way of being brutal at times. This brutality can come in all manner of things such as death, sickness, financial troubles, spiritual weakness, a fall into grave sin and grave sins being committed against you.

Jesus in these times can be just as good as dead it seems. We're seemingly left groping about in the darkness of our own garden where nothing makes sense and with no hope. If things would only go back to what they were before whatever happened. Then things would be great, or at least normal.

That's where Mary Magdalene is in our Gospel for this morning. *"<sup>1</sup>Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup>So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved,*

*and said to them, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.”<sup>3</sup> So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. <sup>4</sup>Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. <sup>5</sup>And stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in. <sup>6</sup>Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying there, <sup>7</sup>and the face cloth, which had been on Jesus’ head, not lying with the linen cloths but folded up in a place by itself. <sup>8</sup>Then the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; <sup>9</sup>for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. <sup>10</sup>Then the disciples went back to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. <sup>12</sup>And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. <sup>13</sup>They said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them, “They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.” <sup>14</sup>Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?” Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.””*

“There’s no hope, but if I find His body I’ll take care of it.” But Jesus is not willing to leave Mary in such a state. He’s not willing that she should despair of His death or her sin or the state of the world or anything else. Christ is also not

willing that you should stay in a place of no hope. If Christ is anything He is Hope. And not hope like 'I hope to win the lottery', but Hope as in "Jesus is the Christ, my Savior" and "He is my Hope". He is true and will do what He has promised. Jesus told Mary and the Disciples that He had to die. He told them it was for their good. And He also said that they wouldn't understand.

But Jesus brings understanding to Mary. He speaks His Word and her eyes are opened. He says her name and faith suddenly comes rushing back. Jesus says, "*Mary*" and she's filled with Hope again. But there's still some vain thinking going on. "*Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).*"<sup>17</sup> *Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"*<sup>18</sup> *Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"—and that he had said these things to her."*

Mary turns and the Greek indicates she takes hold of Him like a child taking hold of a beloved parent who has been gone too long. She thinks He is back and things are going to be the same. But she's wrong. Things aren't going to be the same. Life has changed. Things are going to be better. Before Jesus was taken from her by the cruel enemy death. All she wanted was Jesus back the way He was. But it wasn't to be. Jesus wasn't the same.

Yes, He was still Lord. But He was no longer the Son of God in humiliation, now He was the Son of God glorified. He had accomplished Mary's salvation. He accomplished your salvation. He died upon the cross. He paid for

the penalty we owe for our sins. Nothing would be the same anymore. Jesus accomplished His reason for coming and Mary and you and I are forgiven. We're all restored to a relationship with the Father in which He is pleased with us, proud of us. We no longer have to fear His wrath. In Christ our sins are forgiven. You are forgiven for the sake of Christ. You and Mary now have true Hope because the victory over sin and death is won by Christ.

But still things aren't the same. Jesus will not let Mary cling physically to Him. But in this case change is good. Now Jesus would be with Mary all the time. Now instead of having to wait to see Him in the flesh as He traveled about the countryside Jesus would be with her always.

Jesus is glorified. Jesus is with us all the time. And I don't mean just in the sense that He's God and keeps all things running. That's true. He's with everyone in that sense. No, what's happening here is that He is now going to be with them through the Spirit, the Comforter He'd promised to send when He went away. That Comforter, the Holy Spirit is with us, how?

In the Word of God. Jesus is present with you always in the Word of God. You don't have to go find Him. He's not lost. He's right here as He comes to you in His Word. And being the gracious and forgiving God He is He gives you that Word in this preaching, in your Baptism, in the Lord's Supper and in the absolution wherein you time and again hear that your sins are forgiven.

See we have it better than Mary and the Disciples did for that three years. We have Jesus after He accomplished our salvation and after He'd sent the Holy Spirit to His people. We have Jesus constantly and continually in Word and

Sacrament. He's with us here in the place at this time again forgiving sin and strengthening faith.

Life changes. There are certainly ups and downs. But through it all Jesus is with you. Even when times are dark and challenging God is there through Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit working faith in you and forgiving your sins. Jesus is God! Jesus lives! Christ is risen!...Amen.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.