



## First Baptist Church At The Villages

Easter / Resurrection • Living with a Resurrection Attitude • John 20:11-18 •

For Use by Groups 4/12 through 4/18/2020

### MAIN POINT

Jesus' resurrection gives real hope and purpose.

### INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What life experiences produce the greatest doubts or challenges?**

**How can the same difficulty or challenge cause one person to gain strength and another to wilt? What factors can be pointed to that help a person grow from a difficult life experience?**

Life sometimes hurts. Challenges and losses in life can cause us to question ourselves, our purpose, and our beliefs and values. However, these same experiences can push us to greater understanding of ourselves and of life as well. Mary Magdalene sought to understand a loss in her life and, in the process, discovered real hope and purpose.

### UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Mary Magdalene went to the tomb of Jesus early on the Sunday morning following His crucifixion. She found the stone over the tomb removed and sought out the disciples. Peter and John ran to the tomb to investigate. After entering the tomb, the two disciples left.

| Ask a volunteer to read John 20:1, 11-12.

**How would you characterize Mary at this point in her life? What experiences might we face that could cause us to respond with the same intense emotion?**

**How did the presence of angels change the experience? How does God's presence or involvement being realized change a person's perspective?**

Heartbroken over the death of Jesus, the empty tomb only added to Mary's deep grief. However, the presence of angels gave her a reason to reflect on what was actually happening. God's activity in our lives should push us to reflect on His purposes even when we face deep hurts in life.

| Ask a volunteer to read John 20:13-15.

**What is the significance of the questions asked of Mary by the angels and Jesus?**

**Why was it important for Mary to tend to the body of Jesus? What does Mary's response to the questions reveal about her? How might a person's response to a question reveal their true emotions and desires?**

When questioned by the angels and Jesus, Mary expressed her desire to care for Jesus' body and provide a proper burial. Failing to provide the proper burial would only add to her despair and leave this chapter in her life unfinished. Unmet expectations can lead to greater despair and regrets.

| Ask a volunteer to read John 20:16-18.

**How does someone calling your name impact a conversation?**

Jesus directed Mary to stop holding to His feet, pointing to His ascension to the Father. He was reminding her that the old relationship was being replaced by a new spiritual relationship.

**How did the relationship between Jesus and those who knew Him prior to His death, burial, and resurrection change afterwards? How is hope found in this new way of relating to Jesus?**

**How was Mary's new purpose tied to the reality of Jesus' resurrection? How do the directions given to Mary compare to the directions given by Jesus to the disciples in Matthew 28:18-20?**

Mary was given a new purpose by Jesus that focused on telling others about Him. Her encounter with Jesus and the assignment given to her renewed her hope and gave her a new purpose.

Jesus offers hope to those who seek Him, offering them a life of purpose through following Him.

## APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What life experiences cause you the greatest despair? Ask God to help you find His purposes in those experiences, committing to willingly follow Him as He reveals to you His truth.**

**How would you describe your life purpose? What gives you true hope? What do you need to do to align your answers to these questions with God's purposes for you?**

**Identify the names of three people who are distraught or lack hope. How can you use insights from today's passage to help them find hope and purpose? Set an appointment with at least one of these people this week and share with them about Jesus.**

## PRAYER

Thank the Lord for the assurance of the resurrection and the hope we have as a result of that resurrection. Ask Him to help us depend on Him as we face life's challenges, never forgetting the purpose we find in sharing Him with others.

## COMMENTARY

| John 20:1, 11-18

No other book in the Bible has a prologue as overtly theological as does the Gospel of John. First, John made a clear and decisive statement regarding the nature of Jesus: "the Word was God" and that "Word became flesh." John wanted it known that Jesus Christ was fully God in human form. That is the meaning of "incarnation," from the Latin *incarnatus*, which means made flesh. God has made Himself known through Christ. Christ was both "Word" and "flesh," not one to the exclusion of the other, and thus was the perfect and only God-man. Christ made His "dwelling" with us, a word associated with "tent" or "tabernacle," intimating the literalness of God's coming to humanity. This word usage should not be lost on the reader, for the tabernacle of the Old Testament was an earthly building filled with the glory of God (Exod. 40:34-35).

In using the term "Word" (*logos*), John was using a term familiar to both Jews and Greeks, though each attributed a different meaning to the term. For the Greek mind the "Word" referred to

the rational principle that supervised or governed the universe. To the Jew, "Word" was a reference to God. Thus John wanted to equate the "Word" with God while noting that the Word was distinct from the Father. John stated that Jesus was with God "in the beginning" and that through Christ "all things were made." Jesus is therefore seen as co-eternal with God and as the Creator.

John then discussed the purpose of the Word becoming flesh, namely that Christ brought life, a life that serves as the "light" for all people. The life Christ offers is beyond that of mere human life; it is life eternal with God. Therefore Jesus brought the light of truth and the life of salvation. The questions and concerns of this world that find no ultimate answers are met by the Light that pierces all darkness with the brilliance of truth, yet this truth has been rejected.

The bitter irony of this should not be lost on the reader. John emphasized this irony, stating that though He created the world, the world did not recognize Him. Though He came to His own, His own did not receive Him. God has come to the world for acceptance and relationship. Those who accept the Light, who believe in the message Christ proclaimed about Himself, are given the "right to become the children of God." To be born into the kingdom of God is not something achieved on human energy (see Eph. 2:8–9) but by the grace of the living God through Christ Jesus. This is to be balanced by the emphasis on the need to "receive" Christ. Though we bring nothing to God and contribute nothing to our salvation, the gift itself is dependent on our willingness to receive it from the one who offers it.