

EASTER SUNDAY

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (FOR APRIL 4, 2021)

For Community Groups or Personal Study

Who could have ever imagined that God would do what He did? Who could have ever imagined that God would love us as He does? Christian faith is built on what happened that first Easter morning, and even more importantly, on why God did what He did. If the central claim of Christian faith did not happen then every church should close, every hymnal tossed aside, the Bible placed on the shelf alongside other collections of myths, and every pastor run out of town. But **if the central claim of Christian faith happened, and Jesus rose from the dead**, it would be absolute foolishness to ignore, or pretend to ignore, what that means for the world, and for each of our lives. Here at Grace we seek Him, follow Him, love Him, and serve and love others, because we believe Easter happened! We are a collection of broken people discovering the healing offered by a Risen Jesus. We invite you to join us too.

EASTER MORNING

SELECTED PORTIONS OF THE SERMON PASSAGE: JOHN 20:1-22

1. (JOHN 20:1-10)

¹ 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. ² 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." ³ So Peter went out with the other disciple, and they were going toward the tomb. ⁴ Both of them were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first ...

2. (John 20:11-18)

... Having said this, she (Mary) turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ 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." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher) ...

3. (John 20:19-22)

... ²⁰ When he (Jesus) had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Read through the entire passage (John 20:1-22). This is John's account, as an eyewitness, of what happened that first Easter. Matthew (28:1-

15), Mark (16:1-8), and Luke (24:1-49) also provide details of that day. The fears, turmoil, sorrow, doubts, and finally amazement, of those who had known Him best are honestly conveyed in each report.

1. Who was the first to realize something had happened that Easter morning, and the first to meet the risen Jesus?
2. Before they believed Jesus, was alive again, how would you describe the state of mind of those who had followed Him?
3. What happened in John 20:1-22 that surprises you? Why did Mary not recognize Jesus until He spoke her name?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

4. Why did John include the account of the foot race between Peter and the "Disciple whom Jesus Loved" (Most scholars believe this was John's term for himself)?
5. Why did Mary think that Jesus' body had been taken away?
6. When Jesus finally appeared to His group of disciples (verses 19-20) why did He first offer a word of "peace" and then show them His hands and side?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

7. Imagine yourself as one of those who visited the tomb of Jesus that first Easter morning. What would you have thought once you realized the body of Jesus was not there?
8. If you had been Mary, overwhelmed by grief (not only because of Jesus' death, but now His missing body) what would your response have been when Jesus spoke your name and you knew it was Him, alive again?
9. Has the claim, or reality, of Easter changed your life? Why or why not? Why do you believe or not believe?

Notes: _____

Spend time in silence, praying (even if just for a minute or two). Prayer is simply a conversation with God. Be honest. If you don't know how or what to pray admit that and ask God to help you pray. In your prayer ask God to help you take a genuine look at Jesus. Ask God to speak to you and to confirm what is true about Easter, and to protect you from what isn't true. Ask Him to help you live differently, with less fear and more confidence, because of the reality of what happened on Easter. He will. He loves us (you).