



GROWTH GROUP WINTER 2019 – ONE ON ONE WITH JESUS WEEK 7 – APRIL 21, 2019 - EASTER SUNDAY - JOHN 20:11-18

GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER

- 1) Share a favorite Easter experience.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

It is Easter morning. Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and found that the stone had been removed from the entrance. She ran back and found Simon Peter, as well as the beloved disciple (who most people identify as John). She told them that someone had taken Jesus out of the tomb and she didn't know where they had put him. Peter and the other disciple race to the tomb and discover the strips of linen and burial cloth. The tomb is empty. We are told that the beloved disciple "saw" and "believed." Then he and Peter went back home leaving Mary standing outside the tomb weeping.

As Mary was weeping she looked into the empty tomb and encountered the angels. Were the angels there when Peter and John went into the cave? Did Peter and John miss them? Was there something about Mary's grief that allowed her to see and hear from the angels? Though the angels talk with her they do not answer her question. As she turns to leave the cave, she encounters "the gardener" who asks her the same question the angels had asked...why are you crying?

The image of the gardener is an important one. It takes us back to Genesis. It takes us back to Adam. But in Jesus we now meet the new Adam. Pilate had declared earlier, "Here is the man," as he presented Jesus to the religious rulers. Pilate had no clue how truthful his words were. This is the "new" man and the "new" Adam. This is the man, the gardener, who has come to bring a brand new harvest. This "gardener" would uproot the brokenness and despair and bring light and hope.

Jesus calls her by her name and he is recognized. Mary now sees him for who he is. He has been raised from the dead! Peter and John didn't get to see the risen Lord because they had gone back home, but Mary gets to see the risen Jesus and hear from him. She falls at his feet.



Yet, Jesus tells her not to stay there. It is a powerful image of her worshiping at his feet, but Jesus makes it clear her work is not done. Just as he told the disciples at the Mount of Transfiguration that they needed to go back down the valley, he also tells Mary that she has work to do. Only this time, Jesus will not be going with her. She cannot hold onto him, because he is going to be returning to heaven and soon the Holy Spirit will arrive.

Mary becomes the apostle to the apostles. She is not offended by what Jesus has to say to her, but instead recognizes the mission that she has been called to. She heads back to the apostles and tells them all that Jesus had said to her. Just like in John 4 and the woman at the well, another woman is seen as being the prophetic and evangelistic voice that God uses to advance his kingdom.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

Read John 20:11-18

¹¹ Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb ¹² and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. ¹³ They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." ¹⁴ At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). ¹⁷ Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

- 2) Why do you think Mary Magdalene went back to the tomb? How do you think she was feeling?
- 3) Why do you think Mary was unable to recognize Jesus? Why do you think she recognized him once he called her by name?
- 4) Have you ever had an experience where you knew for certain that Jesus was speaking to you or calling you by name? What was that experience like?
- 5) Do you think it is significant in verse 17 when Jesus uses the word "brothers", instead of "disciples"? Do you think this was intentional? Why or why not?
- 6) Why does Jesus want Mary to tell the disciples that he is returning to "my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." Does that seem like a strange message to give them?
- 7) Why doesn't Jesus want Mary holding onto him? Is there a connection between this incident and the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost?

BRINGING IT HOME

- 8) Easter helps us celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. What does the resurrection mean to you? What is the significance of the resurrection as it relates to your faith?