

Resurrection Sunday

John 20: 1-18

Resurrection Sunday! I remember celebrating this day as a little girl...My grandfather pastored a church called Riverside Baptist in Natchez, MS. Papaw's church always held Easter Sunrise services. I remember shivering in the cool morning air with my sisters, our cousins, and the other church kids, warming our hands at a roaring fire the men built in big black drums, and eating donuts.

The adults were there to celebrate the resurrection, but the store-bought pastries were the highlights of our Sunrise services. Those early morning celebrations were too early in our opinion, but they were non-negotiable with our parents. Being roused from sleep to gather with the faithful, sporting the sponge rollers that would soon grant us our Easter ringlets, this was all my sisters and I knew.

There are many resurrection stories we could look at today, but I've chosen to focus on Mary Magdalene. Mary arrived at the tomb early Sunday morning expecting life as she knew it. Jesus was dead and by now His body was stinking. We know this because she came with other women bearing spices to anoint Jesus' dead body, in hopes of masking the smell of his decomposing corpse.

Read Mark 16:3. What question was on the women's minds as they walked to the tomb?

Once they arrived, they found stone was already rolled away from the tomb. Read John 20: 2. What did Mary do when she saw it?

We're not told what the other women did in that moment, but Mary looked inside, noted that Jesus was gone, and took off running! John also 20: 2 tells us where she went and why. Record those details below.

Mary finds Peter and John and announces that Jesus' body has been taken and no one knows where. I have a healthy imagination, but I can see Mary with her hands on her hips, panting for breath, and demanding that someone do something!

She still doesn't believe Jesus is alive. Peter and John take off to the empty tomb to investigate for themselves. When they see the empty tomb, the men immediately began rejoicing because Jesus is clearly alive. Right? Wrong!

According to John 20: 9-10, Peter and John still didn't get it. Where does verse 10 say they went when they left the tomb?

They went to their own houses. We're looking at the biggest breaking news of all times, and the boys go home with it. They sit on it. Who does that? I don't know, maybe you and me?

Read 2nd Cor. 5: 17-21. What ministry does this verse tell us we've been given?

We're supposed to tell the world that Jesus lives, and our lives are supposed to be the greatest witness! May we live up to our calling, starting now!

In John 20: 11- 17, we find Mary back at the tomb. It's a familiar scene, and a comforting one. Jesus and Mary share a tender moment. He tells Mary that His Father is now her Father and He tells her to go tell "my brethren."

He calls them "my brethren." Selah, pause and think calmly about that. Jesus is talking about the ones who had deserted Him.

*Oh, take courage, my soul. You've not always been
true to your Jesus, but He stays true to You!*

This time when Mary leaves, she's on an entirely different mission. She heads for the guys but her second report is vastly different than her first. She's like "Scratch what I said earlier—He's alive!"

Mary has spent time with Jesus. She has a living faith now, in a living Lord. Read I Cor. 15: 12-19 and join me in prayer.

Jesus, You are alive! You defeated death and the grave! You reign over heaven and earth and You're coming back. I want to believe it, to look for Your appearing, to long for Your kingdom

and to spread the news of Your return with all that is in me. Help me not to love my life to the death, but to understand while I'm here, that I'm here as a pilgrim. This is not our home. Because you walked out of the grave, one day, we'll walk, too! Help us live like it today and tomorrow, and until we see You face to face! Amen!