

Have You Seen The Lord? John 20:1-18

Introduction

- The calm before the storm
 - In many ways this describes Palm Sunday.
 - Reflective of our human nature to turn on Jesus, just like the winds that shift in a storm.
 - Unusual twist to today's message
 - Preaching Resurrection on Palm Sunday
 - Yet this is what Jesus was preaching and no one listened to him- captured in the phrase "but they did not understand the scriptures"
 - Key to our Easter experience are found in the words of Mary Magdalene, "I have seen the Lord!"
 - Understand what the Bible says about Jesus
 - Ask yourself: What are we seeking?
 - Everything changes when Jesus calls your name

Understand what the Bible says about Jesus

- **John 20:1-2**
 - John's Gospel is unlike any of the other gospels
 - Contrast between light and darkness
 - Purpose of showing that Jesus is God
 - The miracles of Jesus are a reflection on his true identity
 - Came to the tomb early and it was dark
 - Think back to the creation story, and not just the Genesis account, but John's version.
 - Darkness before the light
 - God was creating something new
 - However there seems to be a great void in the hearts of Jesus' followers
 - The stone had been taken away
 - I stone just doesn't happen to roll away
 - Mary knew something was up, but she had no idea that God was the suspect
 - The body of Jesus has been taken away
 - Who was responsible?
 - Grave robbers, Jesus' enemies, the Romans?
- Mary's struggle: **John 20:9**
 - The significance of Jesus' death and resurrection is key to our faith
 - The fact that Jesus has conquered sin by paying for our debt through the cross, and conquered death through the resurrection is what gives us hope
 - It is why Easter is not the destination, but points us in the right direction
 - If we want to know what God is up to we have to understand what the Bible says about him.

- Holy Week Opportunities
 - Maunday Thursday service, Good Friday, Sunrise Service, Easter Service
 - Devotions
 - Experience the story, make it personal, understand what the cross and empty tomb mean
 - Understand what the Bible says about Jesus

What Are You Seeking?

- **John 20:11-15**
 - The emotions of this week were overwhelming. It included the highest of high's and the lowest of low's.
 - It was bad enough that Jesus had died on the cross, why would anyone steal his body?
 - Mary is left weeping outside of the tomb probably out of sorrow, but also out of the emotional toll she has experienced over the last few days.
 - Sometimes around the Easter Holiday I often wonder, what am I seeking?
 - So many activities, life is spinning around, and it seems like I get lost in it every once in awhile.
 - Can anyone relate?
 - The question that the angels and Jesus ask Mary is not a question of curiosity
 - They know that she is weeping because she can't find Jesus' body
 - Their question is not for their benefit so that they can help Mary.
 - Their question is for Mary's benefit.
 - Mary's sorrow is for all the wrong reasons
 - She has not understood the scriptures
 - If she had, she would be searching for the Resurrected Lord, not the one buried in a tomb!
 - Is our endless searching in life leading us to dead ends?
 - If Jesus were to ask you today, "What are you seeking?" - how would you respond?
 - Are we seeking what is dead or what is alive?
 - The hope that Mary needed was found in the scriptures- Jesus was to die and on the third day raise from the dead.
 - This was not a time for mourning, but for rejoicing
 - All things are about to be made new!
- **John 20:14**
 - Mary did not recognize Jesus
 - How is this even possible?!
 - She wasn't expecting him.
 - It's impossible to expect him when you don't know what the scriptures say
 - She Assumed he was the gardener
 - For just a moment, go back to the Creation story
 - Was God not the Gardener in Genesis 1?

- He was forming
 - He was planting
 - N.T. Wright, “Mary’s intuitive guess, that he must be the gardener, was wrong at one level and right, deeply right, at another. This is the new creation. He has come to uproot the thorns and thistles and replace them with blossoms and harvests.”¹
- Is it possible that what we are looking for is right in front of us, and we don’t even know it?
 - The very person that Mary was searching for was standing right in front of her
 - Jesus was not a ghost, or a spirit
 - This was not an hallucination
 - It could be that Mary was so overwhelmed with grief that she didn’t recognize Jesus in that moment
 - It could have been that she just was not expecting Jesus at all, so she didn’t recognize him
 - Whatever the case, what she was seeking was right in front of her.
- What are you seeking?
 - If we understand the scriptures, it will help us with our search
 - There is a good chance that what we are looking for is right in front of us, but we can’t see it.
 - God is probably trying to speak to us, but we don’t recognize his voice.

Everything Changes when we hear Jesus call our name

- **John 20:16-18**
 - Mary was awoken when she heard her name
 - Who could know her name?
 - She did not know the “gardener”
- I was at a service a week ago, and saw someone I didn’t initially recognize
 - Part of the issue was that I had not seen them for a really long time
 - The other issue was that I was not expecting them to be at this service
 - Had the person not said my name, there’s a good chance I would have never recognized who the person was.
 - All of a sudden I began to realize just how small the world really is!
- When Jesus spoke Mary’s name, her conversation with the supposed “gardener” became very personal.
 - Go back to the Creation story
 - Everything that God created came into being as he “spoke” it into being
 - **John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” ESV**
 - Everything changes when we hear Jesus call our name
 - Mary’s sorrow turned to overwhelming joy!

¹ N.T. Wright, *John for Everyone: Part 2*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, p. 146.

- “The sheep hear his (the shepherd’s) voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.” John 10:3b-4, ESV
- As soon as Jesus called her name, Mary knew who was speaking to her
- How can we hear the voice of God?
 - Search for Jesus in the right place
 - Understand the scriptures
 - Come in an attitude of worship
- A couple of things that the scriptures tell us about Jesus’ resurrection
 - “I am ascending”
 - John 19:30- Jesus gave up his spirit
 - His body remained on the earth, while his spirit went to heaven
 - Jesus’ words to the thief who believed on the cross- “Today you will be with me in paradise”
 - So what has occurred at the Resurrection is that Jesus’ spirit has reunited with his body, but the final part is for his spirit and body to join the Father in heaven.
 - Important aspect of the resurrection
 - 1 Corinthians 15:52-55, “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall all be changed. For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory? O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?’” ESV
 - Jesus’ resurrection offers us hope that death is not the end
 - One day Christ will return, and our spirit and body will reunite with God
 - Death will be no more
 - That victory is ours if we put our faith in the Risen Lord!
 - “I have seen the Lord”
 - This is the key to this passage
 - At the end of the day, Mary did see the Risen Lord
 - I’m preaching today about the Resurrection on Palm Sunday, so that by next week you can be in a position to see Jesus in your life!
 - Last week I was asked, “When did the age of grace begin? When were we covered by God’s grace instead of the O.T. Law?”
 - What does this passage tell us about this question?- What do the scriptures say?
 - Romans 7:7, “What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin.” ESV

- The O.T. Law is there to show that we are sinners
- It is impossible for us to live a righteous life on our own
- We can't keep the law
- Jeremiah 31:33-34, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those day, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." ESV
 - God makes a new covenant with us through Jesus' death and resurrection
 - There is hope that goes beyond just our actions, but to our heart
 - If our heart can be changed, there is hope for us!
- Romans 8:1-4, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." ESV
 - Sin has inhabited our flesh
 - BUT when Jesus calls our name it becomes personal, and our hearts are changed as the Spirit of God lives within us
- Jesus defies the laws of this world. When we hear Jesus call our name, he enables us to be transformed and live within the world, but with a power from God.

Conclusion

- Have you seen the Lord?
 - Jesus is calling your name today
 - Everything changes when we hear Jesus call your name
 - Know what the scriptures say
 - There is a good chance that what you are seeking in life is right in front of you.
 - Don't miss Jesus this Easter!