

Truth to Wonder

Ministries - God's truth brings wonder to the soul

Let us gather together in thanksgiving and supplication before the Lord, as brothers and sisters in Christ, no matter how far removed we are from each other's presence during times of trial.

Dear Lord and Heavenly Father, we thank you for your constant care and provision in these days of suffering. We marvel at your grace and mercy to undeserving sinners such as we. We pray for those so afflicted by illness and suffering at this time and we pray you will be their portion each hour. We ask that you will strengthen those who place themselves in harms way in the service and care of others and those in government, so that they lead according to your will and not under their own foolish wisdom. Lord bring us together once again if it be your will, so that we may sing together the words of praise written for your glory by those who have gone before us. We cry out to you merciful Lord that you will be merciful to this nation and call it back from its wicked ways. Use this time of suffering to lead this nation back to your word, that you will extend your grace to this lost people and call many souls to be adopted into your heavenly family. Let our hearts be filled with wonder and awe at this Easter time, over the enormity of love you showed on the



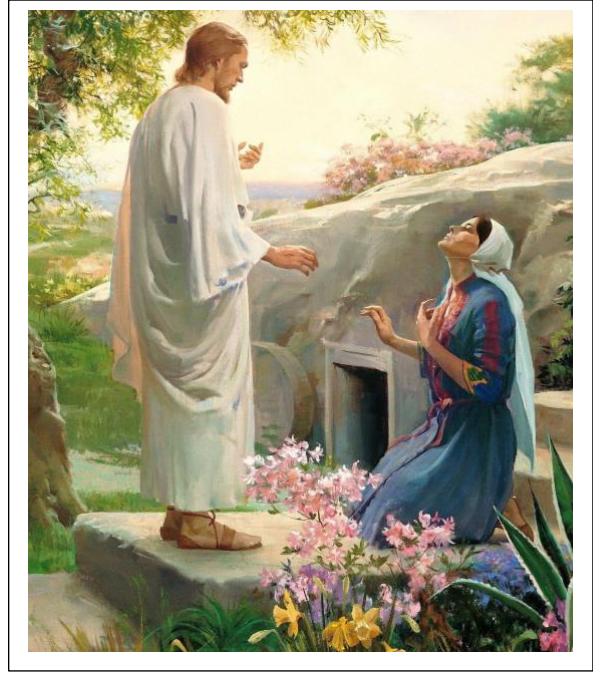
Cross at Calvary. Let our hearts be humbled under the shadow of the cross as we see the enormity of the sacrifice given your blessed Son for our sins. Let our souls sing with hymns of thanksgiving for the willing sacrifice of Christ Jesus. Let our souls praise the purity of Christ Jesus, who laying down of His spotless life was sufficient to satisfy your just wrath against the horror of our sins. Fill our spirit with songs of worship for the obedience of love given by the Son unto the Father, who in doing your will, He fulfilled your loving plan of our redemption first spoken so long ago in the garden of Eden. Fill our hearts with the joy of the Holy Spirit, in that we may likewise show obedience to your will dear Lord, so that each of our days is spent in loving service of your will. Fill our hearts with the joy of salvation, ours alone through the shedding of the Lamb's blood, so that we are restored to you forever and that we may know no more pain or sadness, only the glory of Christ Jesus. All this we do pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Compassion in Glory

John 20:15 - *Jesus saith unto her, Woman why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?*

In the Book of John chapter 20 verse 15, we read of the first words spoken by our risen Saviour after he had conquered the last enemy, death. At this point of the narrative, we are witness to a grief stricken Mary Magdalene, whose heart is broken at the sight of the empty tomb where just days before, her Lord had been laid to rest.

Mary seeing the empty tomb is distraught at the thought of her Masters body having been stolen. After seeing two angels in the place where Jesus' body had laid, they ask her why she is crying. Mary replies that she weeps, **'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him'** - John 20:13. What is interesting to note is that even though Mary has just seen two



angels sat in front of her, she is not comforted as in the next verse we read, **'And when she had said thus, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.'** - John 20:14. Despite the power and beauty of angelic presence before her, Mary's heart longs for her Lord and nothing else will suffice in bringing comfort to her broken heart. What a stunning Gospel message this is in itself, in that in Christ Jesus alone is the broken heart healed.

Now we see the compassion of the risen Christ gently flow unabated towards those of a broken heart, fulfilling all promises to those who follow him as Lord. Seeing and knowing the despair of Mary's heart, Jesus gently enquires of her, **'Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?'** - John 20:15. The first question is the same as the one asked by the angels on seeing Mary's grief stricken state but here the implications of the question are far weightier now the one asking the question holds all authority in heaven and earth. The angels could pose the question but not satisfactorily answer the question apart from point to the simple fact that Christ is no longer in the tomb but risen. Their consolation comes in pointing to the victory of Jesus. Yet when Jesus asks the same question, we the reader know that this time, the one posing the question is the consolation and triumph. Jesus, having triumphed over death has defeated the last enemy and now fulfils that glorious promise in Isaiah 25:8, **'He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces.'** Here standing before Mary, is the one who can alone both ask the question of why does she weep and also have the power to dry those tears.

Yet why does Jesus ask this question, prolonging Mary's grief and not just immediately console her? For her good and indeed our good to this day, and His glory. The sweetest balm to a wound is the one applied to the greatest pain felt. The agony of a soul separated from the source of its life is healed only in the healing presence of the Lord Jesus. This short delay strengthens Mary's joy in His resurrection and our joy in our salvation through His resurrection a hundred fold, for love is increased when it is first threatened with its end before being rescued and restored. It is not an act of prolonged cruelty by Jesus here, He is revealing to Mary and to us through His word, the enormity of love that He has felt towards us since before He created all things. He is sharing His very nature with both Mary and us today. What a blessing that only mankind enjoys this is, to know God in His fullness.

In asking Mary, 'whom seekest thou?' we cannot help but think of Song of Solomon 3:2, ***'I will rise now, and go about the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth, I sought him, but I found him not.'*** Like the young bride to be in this verse, Mary is desperately looking for the one her soul loves but she cannot find him. Here though again the Lord's mercy bursts forth, for now He again fulfils this longing as He alone is the answer to the question posed to Mary. Haven't all believers felt this longing, this seemingly empty search for the one who'll heal our souls need to love and be loved? Haven't we all felt as though it's answer would never come yet The Lord himself stands before our tear filled eyes the entire time?

Then comes the sweetest healing of the soul the broken heart can know. ***'Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.'*** John 20:16. Why is this simple utterance by Jesus so beautiful, profound and powerful? The conquering King, to whom all honour and glory has been given by the Father has condescended to know this poor, sinful woman personally. The one who made the heavens and the earth, the one who upholds all things by the power of His word, has brought himself to the side of the lowly heart of Mary to heal her broken heart and share His risen glory with her. In simply speaking her name, Jesus is showing His compassion and love towards her and that even though He now stands the eternal victor, His love towards His sheep, those who He gave His life for remains undiminished. Who apart from the Lord, when they have triumphed over their greatest adversary, goes immediately to share the glory and joy with the lowest of those they have encountered in their journey? What a gracious Lord He truly is and it brings David's words, ***'What is man that you are mindful of him,'*** Psalm 8:4, into the richness of its revelation.

Then with that simple utterance, the joy of realisation that her Lord stands before her, risen in glory, fills Mary's once broken heart and the tears are wiped away as the one her soul seeks is now in front of her. Yet notice the reaction of Mary at this joyous realisation, it is to worship and bow down to Jesus by calling Him *Rabboni* or Master. The joy found in seeing our salvation in the risen Christ Jesus, is only felt by those who bow down in wonder and humility before the King of Kings. The truly regenerate of heart though bursting with joy, are compelled in reverence to bow the knee of worship and do so gladly and thankfully.

Here in this beautiful exchange between the broken hearted and Our Saviour, we see the fullness of the Gospel message in action. The broken hearted, with tear filled eyes, searching for the only one they know will bring them peace are brought close by the Lord Jesus. In this drawing near of Christ to the grief stricken, the tears that once flowed are ended and eternal security in His conquering of death is unfurled. At this wondrous revelation, the once broken hearted now bow in worship before the Lord, who in His risen glory, promises to share this same glory with you when he brings you out from the tomb to enjoy eternal life through Him. Amen.

By Jonathan Badger

Over the Easter weekend, Answers in Genesis are streaming a series of lectures on a variety of subjects each relating to the events of the Easter weekend. These lectures are free to view on the Answers in Genesis YouTube channel throughout Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Further information is available via the Answers in Genesis website answersingenesis.org.



